

TABLE of EXPERTS

FUTURE OF CITIES



Opportunities, Challenges & How KC Moves Forward

MODERATOR



Stacie Prosser

PUBLISHER / MARKET PRESIDENT
Kansas City Business Journal

In her role as Market President and Publisher, Stacie Prosser leads the KCBJ team to execute our mission of helping local executives and entrepreneurs grow their businesses, advance their careers and simplify their professional lives. She has been with the KCBJ for more than 20 years and served in both sales and management roles prior to being named to her current position in 2014.

PANELISTS



Mike DeBacker

VICE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER, TRANSPORTATION
Burns & McDonnell

Mike DeBacker, vice president and general manager of the transportation practice at Burns & McDonnell, has nearly three decades of experience in transportation policy, planning and design. He leads the transportation practice vision, guides market and client development, and delivers transportation infrastructure across the U.S. DeBacker is also the co-champion of the Big 5 transportation initiative, an effort with the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce to develop future transportation strategies for the region.



Courtney Dunbar

SITE SELECTION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER
Burns & McDonnell

With more than 20 years of experience, Courtney Dunbar serves as the site selection and economic development manager at Burns & McDonnell. Dunbar specializes in site planning, site selection, economic analysis and community planning for industrial, manufacturing, mission critical and municipal market sectors. Throughout her career, she's been engaged in the planning and positioning of more than 50 industrial sites, ranging from 25 to 3,500 acres.



Kevin McGinnis

CEO
Keystone Community Corporation

After a long career at Sprint and leading numerous entrepreneurial and technology initiatives, Kevin McGinnis is now the CEO of the Keystone Community Corporation, a nonprofit organization leading a regional initiative to develop an innovation community in downtown Kansas City. He also hosts a weekly webinar for the KC chapter of the Urban Land Institute called "District Conversations," which covers important issues related to creating a stronger, more inclusive development community.



Tim Schaffer

FOUNDER & PRESIDENT
AREA Real Estate Advisors

Tim Schaffer serves as the founder and president of AREA Real Estate Advisors. Schaffer has a well-deserved reputation as one of the most notable forces in the Kansas City real estate community. His more than 30-year career showcases many of the area's most significant and most high-profile real estate transactions, effectively changing the skyline and helping to reshape the modern-day workplace in the metro.

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Before the pandemic, the global population migration from rural to urban areas was expected to continue. The World Health Organization projected that 60% of people worldwide would be living in urban areas by 2030.

Kansas City seems to be following this trend. Currently, the Greater Kansas City region is home to 1.9 million people — and that number is expected to grow by 31 percent over the coming decades, to roughly 2.5 million residents in 2040, according to Mid-America Regional Council's Transportation Outlook 2040.

Recently, the *Kansas City Business Journal* gathered several area leaders to discuss how we can sustain this growth in the Kansas City region after the pandemic subsides. Publisher Stacie Prosser moderated the discussion, which ranged from the lasting effects of Covid-19 on work environments and habits to positioning public-private partnerships.

Stacie Prosser of the Kansas City Business Journal: How has COVID-19 affected our city, both

positively and negatively?

Courtney Dunbar of Burns & McDonnell: The pandemic is changing how people navigate the city and shifting the dynamics economically. How do we get our goods and services? How often do we leave our homes? Exactly how are we interacting with other people? How are we using infrastructure?

This changing dynamic is something that we clearly have to watch because aspects of it have been very positive and others have been quite negative. This shift in dynamics will lead to some long-term changes, especially as it pertains to consumer purchasing patterns and impacts on local services.

Tim Schaffer of AREA Real Estate Advisors: It's hard to say how it's affecting the entire city, because it's really affecting each sector a little bit differently. We have a number of clients who are in the restaurant business, and everybody knows how difficult it's been for them.

But at the same time, for every one of those vacant restaurants, there are two or three other

er operators who want to backfill those restaurants with new concepts. And those leases are getting signed. Capital is going into those restaurants, and they're anticipating a significant shift back into restaurants the second half of 2021. There's quite a bit of positivity out there, and people are looking forward to the future.

In March, people in my industry were very concerned. But the commercial real estate business has held up. Things continued to move forward. In our world, most of the activity is local and regional right now. The corporate national businesses are in a hold-ing pattern.

Kansas City's local and regional businesses seem to be far more positive about the future than the general world is.

Prosser: Kevin, how would you describe the impact of COVID-19?

Kevin McGinnis of Keystone Community Corporation: As a city and as a region, the magnitude of impact on people has been huge across the board, and to Tim's point, it has impacted everybody just a little bit different-

ly. I don't think there's anybody in any industry or business sector that hasn't been affected in some way. Unfortunately, I think the greatest impact has been to those who could least afford it — our small businesses and our essential workforce.

In the post-pandemic world, some of these changes will stay with us, and many of those are positive. But I also don't think we will see the full impact for years to come.

Prosser: Mike, do you agree?

Mike DeBacker of Burns & McDonnell: Yes, the pandemic has had an incredible impact because it has been so disruptive.

I'm also equally amazed at how resilient we are as a business community and region. We're all getting tired of the word "pivot," but our ability to pivot and continue to make progress has been impressive.

In the transportation industry, we took everybody off of the roads and rails in March, and we put them on our tech highways. Many

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are still only on the tech highways.

The ability of people who worked in an office before the pandemic and were able to remain productive working from home is pretty incredible.

As everyone has already said, the impact on those who don't work in an office, such as people who work in the service and hospitality sectors, has been profound.

Prosser: Mike, to drill down a little bit, how has COVID-19 affected the infrastructure of Kansas City?

DeBacker: It's a mixed bag. Because so many people are working from home, our highways are significantly less congested. Both bus and streetcar ridership has been down dramatically, and service has been cut accordingly.

So that's impactful for our workforce who needs to physically get to a job. They have had less opportunity to use transit to get to work. The Kansas City Area Transit Authority (KCATA) and the city have done a nice job



Courtney Dunbar, Burns & McDonnell

of addressing that, but it needs to remain front and center in our minds here in Kansas City.

A silver lining is that our departments of transportation have been able to accelerate several roadway construction projects. Working in less congestion is much safer. At Burns &

McDonnell, we've been able to help clients get ahead on several road construction projects.

Prosser: Tim, staying with infrastructure and transportation, how is the expansion of the streetcar going to affect the city?

Schaffer: The streetcar has contributed to the huge change in the area between Crown Center and Downtown over the past five or six years. Most of the land and property acquisitions activity in Midtown between the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) and Downtown has surprisingly been from out-of-town investors.

Even though we've seen proof that the streetcar does change neighborhoods, people in Kansas City seem to be slow to wrap their arms around it and how transformative it will be for Midtown. Forty-seven percent of the streetcar ridership right now is from people who are coming and going to work. It is a people mover. But, more important, it's an economic development tool that is transforming neighborhoods in ways we never thought possible.

The streetcar extension is going to change the relationship between the Plaza and Downtown because it will bring people into these two areas and the area in between that never spent time there before. It will be a game changer.

Prosser: Courtney, what attracts investors and companies to a city or a specific area of a city?

Dunbar: It really depends on the company and their needs. But among the most important characteristics is skilled workforce availability.

The critical reliance on workforce as a siting factor beckons the need for strong support attributes, such as quality of place and quality of life.

Low unemployment rates at a national level allow for broad choices in employment. This amplifies pressures to build and maintain a quality of place to attract and maintain workforce locally. Excellent schools, community services, health care options, housing availability, consumer goods availability and community infrastructure are leading quality of place factors that bolster the attraction of workforce and maintenance of that workforce for years to come.

Prosser: Kevin, what are the main factors that will drive decisions for people when choosing where to live?

McGinnis: The first thing any city has to do is to look at it from a potential employee's perspective. In Kansas City, we get insu-

lar sometimes about how we think about the city. We're not viewing it from the perspective of someone who's deciding between Austin, Nashville, Miami and Kansas City.

We have to view ourselves as a complete region that is competing with these other metro regions. When people are thinking about moving to Kansas City, they don't think about Roeland Park versus Overland Park versus North Kansas City versus Parkville. They look at full picture views of what each region has to offer them.

In terms of what will attract them to a city, there are the basics:

- Livability issues — walkability, quality of life, schools and other infrastructure considerations.

- Lifestyle variety across incomes — the ability to move to a place like Kansas City and with a similar income range choose an urban, suburban, exurban or rural life and still have accessibility to everything and a congruent experience.

- Diversity and inclusivity — You have to remember a lot of cities on the coast that people are leaving are diverse communities, and they value this part of their current experiences. They look to see if a community embraces issues related to diversity and equity.

- Sustainability — We can't underestimate the importance of issues related to the environment and supporting a healthy lifestyle for a large subset of people.

Prosser: Tim, from your experience showing clients around the city, what do we need to focus on to keep Kansas City an attractive option for employees and companies?

Schaffer: I'll share the experience of one of our clients, ChowNow, a Los Angeles-based restaurant tech company. They were having difficulty growing their business in Los Angeles. So they did a search of five different cities and hired a consultant to evaluate all of those cities.

When they were evaluating Kansas City, we spent a lot of time with them not only looking at office space but also in restaurants and coffee shops Downtown and in the suburbs. Outside of the hard data, they wanted to see firsthand the diversity of people living in the neighborhoods they were considering moving their business to.

They chose Kansas City. One of the founders moved his family from Los Angeles to Kansas City, bought a house and put his kids in school. And he says he's not going back. He loves Kansas City.

The founders are born-and-bred West Coasters who had very little knowledge of Kansas City at the time. They were pleasantly surprised by our city's diversity and how well it aligned with their core values. Diversity and inclusion are economic development issues especially for technology-focused companies.

DeBacker: To add to what Kevin and Tim have said, historically Kansas City has been a philanthropic group of people — generous both individually and at the corporate level. That reputation does get out there, but it often does take a visit.

The steps that many local companies are doing on the entrepreneurial side, such as investing in KCRise Fund, also help create the environment younger, entrepreneurial-type people seek. When you couple that with our cost of living and the other attributes Kevin and Tim mentioned, Kansas City becomes even more attractive.

During the pandemic, we have seen a bit of an exodus from a few places, particularly some of the larger cities. But it's a little premature to declare victory that people are all coming to midwestern cities. But this is definitely an opportunity for Kansas City and cities like us in the Midwest to attract some great companies and great talent.

Prosser: Kevin, what other strategies would help Kansas City stay competitive?

McGinnis: So first, to Tim's point about ChowNow, the ability to attract entrepreneurs or new ventures is important, because we know that's where new job creation and new job growth comes from.

For a startup or an entrepreneur, choosing a location begins with talent pools. We get a little bit enamored with engineering talent in Kansas City, and we forget that there are other skills that these businesses need to grow. Do we, as a region, have the creative class and the sales talent, all at scale, to help countless businesses grow, not just a select few?

At the end of the day, it boils down to whether our learning institutions are able to be reactive and agile enough to support the dynamic nature of their business. Period.

That's one of the big things that we have to focus on. Whether our city has a heartbeat and a culture that allows for inspiration and growth these innovative companies seek will be extremely important.

Access to capital is also crucial. We can't forget that capital is attracted to density and deal



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Tim Schaffer, AREA Real Estate Advisors

flow. Victor W. Hwang of Right to Start was recently highlighting research that showed entrepreneurs succeed in communities where there are a thousand or more startups running concurrently. That's the kind of density that we're talking about to be a true entrepreneurial or innovation hub.

Sector relevance is another factor. In our work at Keystone, people from outside of the city who reach out to me ask about what the design community looks like. And they're not talking about a specific company. They're not talking about a specific job. They're talking about the overall opportunity within their sector or the overall vibrancy of the design ecosystem. Do we have the talent clusters that attract like talent?

So, these companies are looking at a larger picture of opportunity: Can my company thrive? Will my team be happy? And that has more to do with the things that surround their sector. It is not just about whether their business can be successful.

Prosser: Courtney, how does comprehensive planning need to adjust to ensure that there's economic opportunity at the local level?

Dunbar: It's really interesting. I went to grad school for community and regional planning. When I graduated, I began my career in economic development, assuming there would be congruity in approach between the goals of economic development and community planning. I found they often prioritize land uses differently, which can prove a detriment to the recruitment of new primary and industrial employers — employers providing jobs that lead to multiplied jobs in the retail and commercial sectors.

The primary responsibility of

community planners is to consider the safety, health and well-being of humans in designating land uses at the local level. This well-meaning logic can lead to planning and zoning priorities that peripheralize industrial uses to under-resourced land tracts, far from human impact, wreaking havoc on the provision of infrastructure to both attract and serve primary and industrial facilities. This is important because the jobs created within the industrial and primary sector create a multiplier of two to three jobs in the retail, commercial and service sectors that support community growth and stability. It behooves community planners and economic developers to consider accessibility and integration of their industrial and primary employers, both from a tactical standpoint of infrastructure demands and proximity to the workforce they employ.

As industrial and primary companies have considerable infrastructure demands, finding ideal locations to accommodate these employers vital to community stability can be challenging.

Communities that consider the needs of primary employers in comprehensive planning to allow for well-resourced and accessible land tracts for development are not only supporting the growth of their local industrial sector, but also the growth of overall quality of place at the local level.

Prosser: Mike, with your role on the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce's Big Five transportation initiative, how are the kinds of issues Courtney raised being addressed?

DeBacker: Our focus has been on convening the business community and the transportation agencies in the region and looking for opportunities to improve workforce access and regional transportation investment.

A lot of businesses in the region rely on the transit system to help their workforce get to their jobs. Right now, about 10% of businesses in Kansas City are accessible by transit. It's a small community of employees who are able to get to work without hav-

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ing a vehicle.

So part of the initiative with the Chamber is working with the KCATA and streetcar authority in the city to connect people to these corridors of jobs. A lot of those are service-oriented jobs south and north of the city.

The KCATA has done a good job of using micro transit and other programs to accelerate that.

More broadly, through this initiative, the Chamber is working to address these problems through regional investment. It's a good partnership with both Kansas and Missouri, but there are some unique regional challenges in transportation in places that we need investment, and we'll continue to work with all of those players.

We're kicking that off again in 2021. So stay tuned. But there's a lot of momentum around investment for the region, and we're excited to take the next step with the business community.

Prosser: Kevin, you've been covering issues around mobility, equity and development in your weekly webinar series, "District Conversations." What are some of the big takeaways related to the future of Kansas City?

McGinnis: The first thing that strikes me is that we don't spend enough time talking about the historical inequities in our city, such as affordable housing for everyone, the creation of generational wealth, access to jobs, and safe and healthy spaces. If this isn't a city where everyone can succeed, it will be hard for us to reach our full potential as a community.

Also, here's a great need for public-private partnerships as we look at the future of cities. In the series, we have talked about a lot of these issues: How do we ensure the right combination of public-private partnerships and investment that targets some of the most highly prioritized issues — the issues that we need to address?

Maybe I'm an idealist. But after doing the series, I've come to realize that our cities are our best chance for us to come together and drop some of the divisiveness because local issues are really where the decisions are made that impact people on a daily basis.

And what we've seen through this series is that dialogue between people who don't typically get the opportunity to be heard has been productive. You can't be pro-citizen and not pro-business. And you can't be pro-business and not pro-citizen. You have to be both when



KEYSTONE COMMUNITY CORPORATION
Kevin McGinnis, Keystone Community Corporation

it comes to how we're thinking about the future of our cities. It's an ecosystem and this balance is critical.

For me, those have been the big takeaways, and I'm encouraged to think that this might continue. If I were to say the one thing that has stood out throughout the entire series, whether it's talking about housing or development patterns or mobility issues, is that we have to continue to address the equity issues of the entire region. And there needs to be more dialogue about that.

Dunbar: A healthy community considers all aspects of quality of place and efforts to bolster community attributes, such as housing availability, community services, employment options, education and infrastructure readiness, that are important for community growth.

Prosser: Let's talk a little bit about one of the biggest things to come out of the pandemic: work from home. How does the remote work environment affect companies in Kansas City moving forward?

DeBacker: At Burns & McDonnell, we were fortunate because our technology leaders had the foresight to move our company to laptops and cloud-based design tools during the past few years. Obviously, they couldn't have predicted this pandemic, but they knew that more virtual work would be important.

Nobody could have anticipated that we would become 100% virtual in March 2020. But that transition went much better than a lot of people could have anticipated, particularly for those working in the office environment.

However, at Burns & McDonnell, we do believe that our opti-

mum environment is more collaborative. It's very much a part of our culture. So while we remain productive and continue to deliver for our clients with a hybrid model in which some people are working from the office and a large contingency is still working from home, our optimum environment is being back together.

We're a 100% employee-owned company and that is the key ingredient that's helped us foster a culture of trust, respect and entrepreneurship and that continues to produce success for both our clients and employee-owners. Our culture thrives on being together. And we're hopeful that we will be able to do that later this year as things progress.

But culture is important for every company, and it certainly is for Burns & McDonnell.

Prosser: Tim, how will the pandemic affect the future of office space?

Schaffer: The answer is that no one really knows yet because we're dealing with different personal mindsets. Several of my clients are surveying their employees to find out how their people want to work so they can design and size their offices for the future. Do they want to work from home 100% of the time or from the office 100% of the time or some derivation of both?

Some intend to go back to what they had before the pandemic, but others are rethinking how their workers want to work and designing to that end. It depends on what you do, what type of company you are.

Culture is certainly a huge piece of it as is a distributed workforce. Certain companies who were previously anchored to only hiring in Kansas City have actually added people during the pandemic. They have found great talent outside of their regional headquarter locations. The pandemic has shown that a distributed workforce can benefit companies in very advantageous ways. It gives employers access to talent unbounded by an HQ address.

We've also seen companies move to higher quality buildings that are better managed. Building owners who are thoughtful about the environment they are creating for their tenants have a competitive advantage. Because of the pandemic, the mechanical systems and cleaning crews are more important moving forward. To some companies, that means buying their own building, so they are more isolated. But others, it means moving to larger buildings that have the budget to have cleaning crews cleaning

and sanitizing eight hours a day. Again, there is not one perspective on this.

The footprint or the amount of space for many companies will get smaller. We are seeing this talked about mostly in the financial services sector and companies with a large focus on sales force.

In other cases, the footprint is going to get bigger. The amount of square feet per employee is projected to go up so employees can spread out.

The answer is there's no one answer.

Prosser: What changes are likely to survive post-pandemic?

McGinnis: Mike referenced earlier in the conversation that people moved off the roads and the rails and moved on to the digital highways. There's been a tremendous burden placed on some of those companies who made that transition.

We should think about what changes and what stays the same. What do we have to adapt to in the new normal and what goes back to the old normal?

In the new normal bucket, things like design and use of public realm — streetscapes and sidewalks and how we use those spaces — will be tremendously important. While companies will be making decisions about whether they need smaller or larger spaces, they will also be thinking about how their company benefits from these new uses. People will have a new and higher expectation of the environment in which they work, like square foot per employee and the health of the space that Tim mentioned. I don't think that goes away.

Flexibility will also be extremely important. When we talk about work from home, you're going to see the need for mixed-use residences. Do people have places in their homes or apartments where they can actually separate their life and work comfortably? You'll start to see different design elements in residences, not just on the office or commercial sides.

The things that will go back to the old normal involve density and proximity. Mike, you nailed it. People want to be together. We undervalue the extemporaneous nature of conversations before and after meetings, the casual collisions where a lot of decisions and innovation take place. Creativity happens in the physical workplace, often when we least expect it. People miss those interactions.

When the pandemic hit, some people said coworking spaces were dead. I don't think that is the case. You may see some changes in the design of cowork-

ing spaces, like more multitenant collaborative spaces, but they will certainly become more important because you have a need for flexibility and dynamic size. And the need for dynamic space will increase for most companies, not just for tech companies.

Schaffer: I'd like to go back to Courtney's comment about cities and lifestyle. In our downtown and urban areas, we've really focused on lifestyle and quality of life. We don't have a specific strategy to attract new businesses to Downtown. It's been mostly about creating great places to live and lifestyle. Businesses want to move to those neighborhoods that have achieved that. So instead of focusing on the goal of having more businesses Downtown, we have focused on improving what attracts those businesses to Downtown. It's a strategy that's now paying dividends.

The same thing trickles down into the office sector. It all comes down to flexibility. Technology has been a godsend for the working parents in my office because they aren't anchored to the office. If they have a problem with daycare or a sick child, they don't have to be stressed out about being at work with a sick child at home or not being at work. It gives them a better quality of life. People are looking for flexibility and different types of workspaces. That means not being relegated to one environment over the other. People want choice. Those employers that have the flexibility to do that within their office space and through their policies will have a better chance of retaining their best talent.

Dunbar: The pandemic has allowed for an ability to assess dynamic changes in pedestrian and consumer purchasing patterns. As the world evolves and reacts, economic development entities like Kansas City Area Development Council and their partners are monitoring workforce demands, logistical advantages and infrastructure needs to accommodate emerging industrial and allied employers. This will lead to a change in facilities sizing, locational determinants and products produced.

The community can expect their employers to seek options for automation and increased physical spacing in their facilities. In addition, the need to accommodate explosive e-commerce opportunities will arise due to changes in consumer purchasing habits. Demands for the preservation and maintenance of open space and environmental protections are likely to remain.

Prosser: Kevin, what factors led

to your decision to base Keystone in Kansas City?

McGinnis: We are three years into this initiative. We spent the first year deciding how we should do it and whether we could do it in Kansas City. And a lot of that had to do with location. We were very specific about the siting analysis and where an initiative like this would be successful.

Accessibility of the neighborhood as well as the region were key. Is the neighborhood walkable? Is public transportation readily available? Is it accessible to anchor institutions and to a creative class? Access to that creative class is vital. I would argue that in the most vibrant and innovative communities across the country, a certain element of creativity exists — food, music, art, entertainment — right alongside their innovation sectors.

We've learned over the past couple of years that the ability to develop a community or neighborhood is what you make of it. There are a lot of fixed assets and long-term trends that will go into that decision-making process.

For example, in Downtown's revitalization, the focus on lifestyle of the residents of Downtown had to happen first. Now we need to shift that to talent pools: Do we have the right source of talent in those communities?

This is a focus for us at Keystone. How do you bring our regional universities into the urban core? How do you successfully blend those regional opportunities for that talent generation into a neighborhood or a community? How do you drive that kind of proximity and density that will help in that decision-making process for others to want to be there, too? Being adjacent or next to some of these other opportunities will attract more businesses to the area.

Prosser: What other parts of the region are ripe for growth?

Schaffer: The most significant change will be our city moving east and healing those areas that have been under stress for so many years where institutions and wealth moved out over many years.

How we move east is really important. We need to do it in a smart and respectful way for the neighbors who stuck around. Many times, you see people in these communities very concerned about new development and rightfully so.

In the past, developers had this attitude of "I'm spending millions of dollars so they're going to love me." Traditionally, developers have not communicated in



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a meaningful way with the community. They didn't give neighbors a voice in what happens in their community and then found it very difficult to get their vision accepted.

As we begin to develop, we also need to address property taxes. People who are in these neighborhoods are concerned that new development and reinvestment in their neighborhood will increase their taxes, making it too expensive for them to live there anymore.

So, as we move farther east into these neighborhoods, those are big issues that we need to get our hands around.

But it's exciting, because this is a wholesale reversal from something that started 70 years ago when those that could moved out to the suburbs.

Prosser: Will the downtown economy bounce back after the pandemic? Or do you think this has provided an opportunity for development to move elsewhere?

McGinnis: I think the long-term migration into urban centers and the focus on density and proximity will not cool in a post-pandemic world. There will be a certain bounce back, and I would even look at how urbanity is impacting some of the communities outside of Downtown, such as downtown Overland Park and Lenexa. They're creating smaller, walkable places. That's the livability that people are looking for.

So I don't think Downtown is at risk of going back to where it was 20 years ago. I'm encouraged by what I see in the planning process right now and the focus on not just the core of Downtown but also the mosaic neighborhoods surrounding the core of Downtown.

Tim's point about the connectivity of these neighborhoods and

the support of the issues in those communities is very important. Ensuring that those voices are not only heard, but that there is benefit that accrues to the people who are currently in those neighborhoods is vital. Are we truly creating a more equitable place that will create the vibrancy any urban center needs to survive?

DeBacker: I worked Downtown in the '90s. It was a ghost town at 5 p.m. We then moved out of state and returned to the Kansas City area in about 2008 when momentum was building in Downtown. And it has been so gratifying to see the incredible development throughout the downtown area during the past decade.

But I do have some longer-term concerns. It's premature to say that things will bounce back completely. And it's also premature to say that there's going to be a continued exodus out of the downtown areas. I don't think we know yet.

If people for a variety of reasons are finding that livability quality in downtown Overland Park or Lee's Summit or other bedroom communities, there is a risk of losing the population for which we have fought hard to attract to Downtown, Crossroads and Midtown.

We have to watch carefully and do the right things from a planning perspective.

Prosser: What does Kansas City need to do to continue its growth for a resilient future?

DeBacker: It's a lot of what we've talked about already. Continued infrastructure investment is going to be important.

It looks very different than it has historically. It looks very different from the interstate era, for example. But investment in all modes will be really impactful for the larger Kansas City region.

A skilled workforce also is very important. There is more and more focus on partnerships with our local universities, such as UMKC. We've been working with student groups and with the university directly to encourage students to consider STEM careers.

In addition, philanthropic programs that we do with UMKC and Battle of the Brains at Union Station provide a great long-term benefit to the city and region.

We need to continue to make progress on the entrepreneurial piece that Kevin and Tim talked about. There's still a lot to be done in this entrepreneurial space. We would love to see many more initiatives like the KCRise Fund and an increased level of investment from companies that are based here. Those opportunities will continue to emerge.