

# ROADWAY PLANNING AND DESIGN PROCESS



In order to advocate for Livable Streets, understanding how roads are planned and designed is essential. It can be a complicated process with several different organizations and groups involved. This page explains the groups involved in road design, common routes for road design and opportunities for public input.

## Planning organizations

### Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

A MPO is a federally mandated and funded planning organization made up of representatives of local government and transportation authorities. MPOs are mandated for urban areas with 50,000 or more residents. MPO websites can be found at: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/modiv/programs/mpo.cfm>.

*MPOs have five core functions:*

**Establish a Setting:** Establish and manage a fair and impartial setting for effective regional decision-making in the metropolitan area.

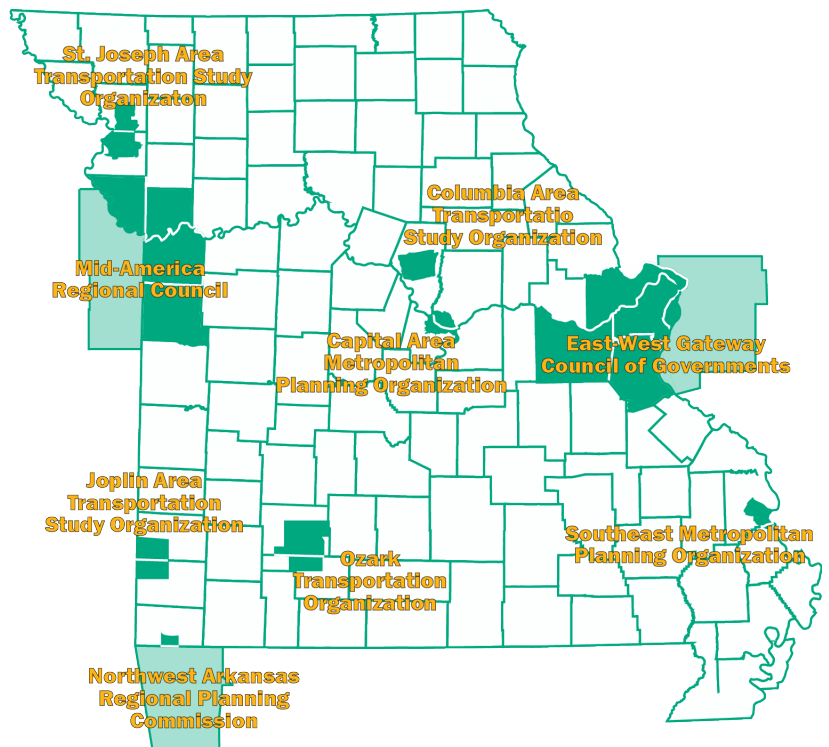
**Evaluate Alternatives:** Evaluate transportation alternatives, scaled to the size and complexity of the region; to the nature of its transportation issues; and within the realistically achievable options.

**Maintain a Long Range Transportation Plan:** Develop and update a long-range transportation plan for the metropolitan area with a planning horizon of at least 20 years. The plan should foster mobility and access for people and goods, promote efficient system performance and preservation, and enhance the area's quality of life.

**Develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):** Develop a short-range capital improvement program based on the long-range transportation plan.

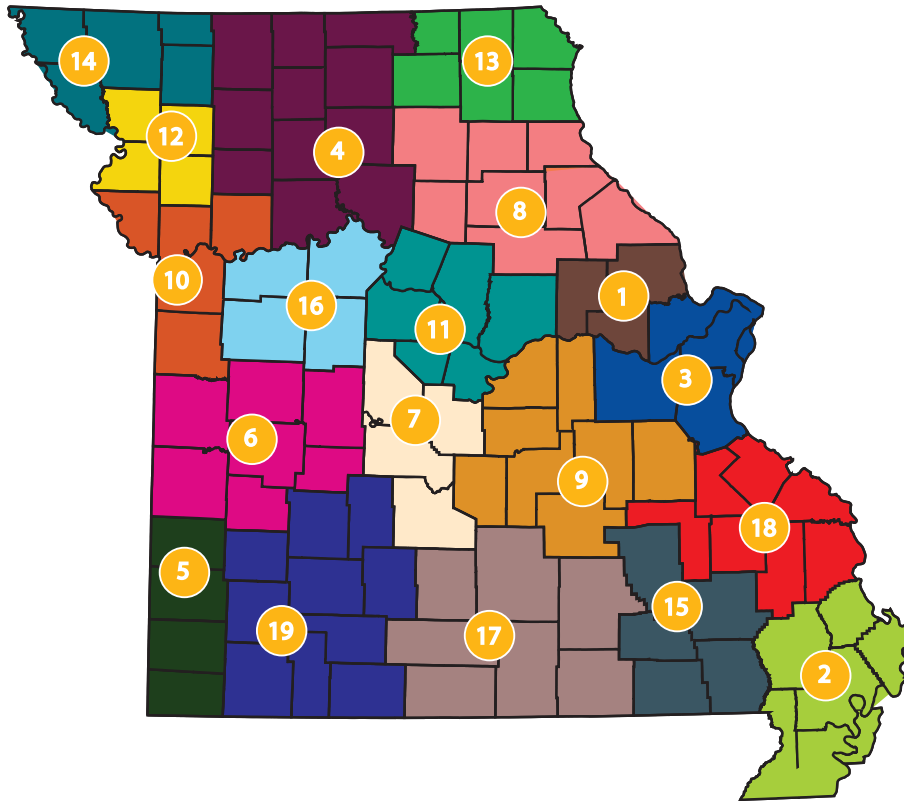
**Involve the Public:** Involve the general public and the affected special-interest groups in the four essential functions listed above.

## Missouri's Nine MPOs



## Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs)

In 1965, the Missouri Legislature passed the State and Regional Planning and Community development Act. This act allowed the governor to create regional planning commissions (RPCs). Today, all of Missouri's 114 counties and the City of St. Louis are divided into 19 RPCs. Every area of Missouri is included in an RPC, including areas covered by a MPO. Outside of metropolitan areas, RPCs serve in a similar role as MPOs. The map on this page shows the coverage area for RPCs in Missouri.



### Missouri's RPCs and their websites are:

1. Boonslick Regional Planning Commission  
[www.boonslick.org/](http://www.boonslick.org/)
2. Bootheel Regional Planning and Economic Development Council  
[www.bootrpc.com](http://www.bootrpc.com)
3. East-West Gateway Coordination Council  
[www.ewgateway.org](http://www.ewgateway.org)
4. Green Hills Regional Planning Commission  
[www.ghrpc.org](http://www.ghrpc.org)
5. Harry S. Truman Coordinating Council  
[www.hstcc.org](http://www.hstcc.org)
6. Kaysinger Basin Regional Planning Commission  
[www.kaysinger.com](http://www.kaysinger.com)
7. Lake of the Ozarks Council of Local Governments  
[www.loclg.org](http://www.loclg.org)
8. Mark Twain Regional Council of Governments  
[www.marktwaincog.com](http://www.marktwaincog.com)
9. Meramec Regional Planning Commission  
[www.meramecregion.org](http://www.meramecregion.org)
10. Mid-America Regional Council  
[www.marc.org](http://www.marc.org)
11. Mid-Missouri Council of Governments  
[www.mmrpc.org](http://www.mmrpc.org)
12. Mo-Kan Regional Council  
[www.mo-kan.org/Northeast](http://www.mo-kan.org/Northeast)
13. Northeast Regional Planning Commission  
[www.nemorpc.org](http://www.nemorpc.org)
14. Northwest Missouri Regional Council of Governments  
[www.nwmorcog.org](http://www.nwmorcog.org)
15. Ozark Foothills Regional Planning  
[www.ofrpc.org](http://www.ofrpc.org)
16. Pioneer Trails Regional Planning  
[www.trailsrpc.org](http://www.trailsrpc.org)
17. South Central Ozark Council of Government  
[www.scocog.org](http://www.scocog.org)
18. Southeast Missouri Regional Planning and Economic Commission  
[www.semorpc.org](http://www.semorpc.org)
19. Southwest Missouri Local Government Advisory Council  
[www.smcog.missouristate.edu](http://www.smcog.missouristate.edu)

## Improvement plans

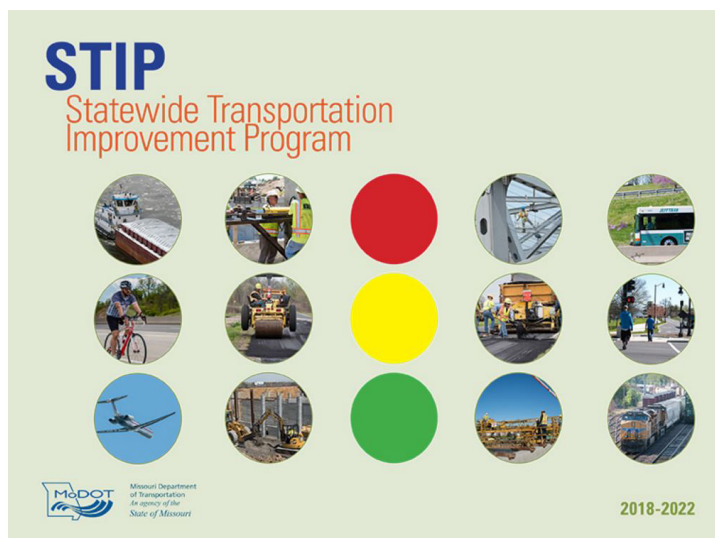
### Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)

A TIP is a four-to-five year priority list of transportation projects to be built in a MPO. Once a TIP is approved by the MPO, the governor, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), it is included without change in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP), directly or by reference.<sup>17</sup>

### Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan

The Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) is a rolling, five-year construction plan for the state of Missouri. As one year is completed, another year is added. Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) districts, MPOs and RPCs determine which projects are added to the STIP.

A STIP is developed by MoDOT's planning partners which are MPOs and RPCs, public officials, special interest groups and citizens.<sup>18</sup> After the plan has been created it is subject to a 30-day public comment period, during which time the document is publicized and distributed to locations where citizens can review it and offer comments. Changes are made in response to comments before a final draft is developed and presented to the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission for approval.



MoDOT's STIP for 2018-2022 via <http://www.modot.org/plansandprojects/>

## Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission (MHTC)

The Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission (MHTC) is a six-member bipartisan board that governs MoDOT. Commission members are appointed for a six-year term by the governor and no more than three commission members may be of the same political party.<sup>19</sup>

## Road jurisdiction

Roads in Missouri can be classified by their ownership or jurisdiction:

- Federal (such as an interstate highway)
- State (such as Missouri Route 13)
- County
- City

Many state highways that enter cities serve as city streets. These highways often change names when they enter the community. These roadways can sometimes be under city jurisdiction and sometimes state jurisdiction. Not every road inside a city is under city control and not every state highway in a city is under state control. Asking a transportation official is the only way to know for sure which entity owns a road. Thorough Livable Streets advocates research road jurisdiction before beginning the advocacy process.

## Public Input at the TIP and STIP Level

Road plans are designed at the TIP and STIP level through public input meetings held by the MPO or RPC. These organizations, through public input, determine and prioritize road construction projects according to community needs. Public input opportunities are available at each step of the planning process. These are good opportunities for advocates to get involved and champion Livable Streets principles.

Many advocates find it difficult to attend all public input meetings and may find themselves raising the same argument in favor of livability on every road project. However, when a local public agency – city, county, MPO or RPC – adopts a Livable Streets policy, livability would automatically be included.

## From plan to reality

When each one of these projects is ready to move from plan to reality, the project will go through the following phases:

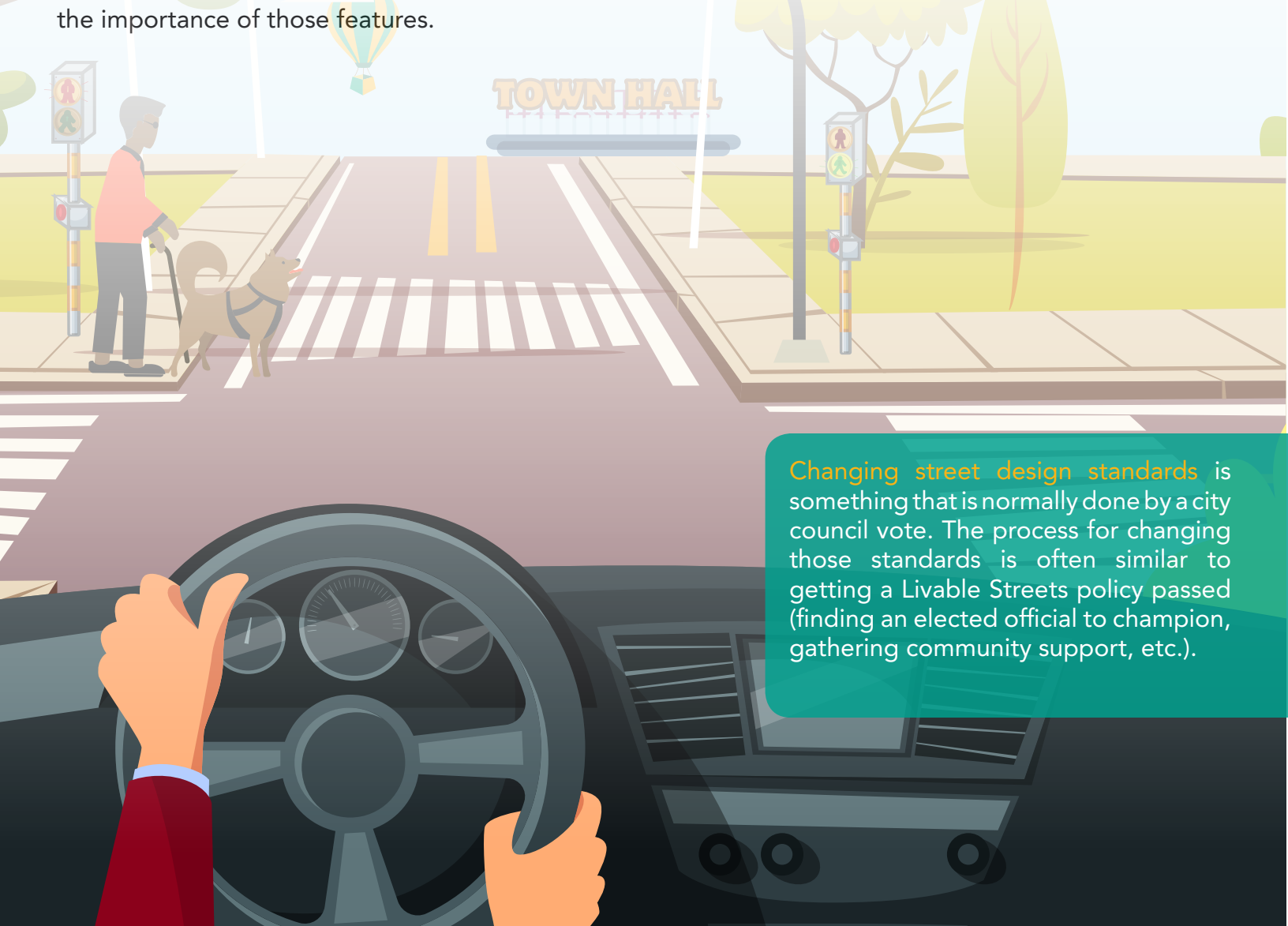
- Design
- Public input
- Right-of-way acquisition (if needed)
- Impact study (if needed)
- Construction phase

Each community, jurisdiction and funding source have different processes for this phase. At this stage, an advocate should watch for and be involved in the public input opportunities. These are often announced on a city's website or in the local media. Be prepared for the possibility of Livable Streets attributes being cut from street designs to reduce final design costs. When this happens, advocates need to mount a large and robust display of support for a more livable design in order to ensure that elected officials understand the importance of those features.

## City streets

Street design standards are an agency's starting point in all roadway design. Standards often dictate things like right-of-way width, road width, lane width and sidewalk design. They often do not include the features of a Livable Streets. **Changing these design standards is usually seen as the second step after passing a Livable Streets ordinance or policy.** It establishes Livable Streets as a norm and not an exception.

It is also important to understand the process by which local transportation projects are planned, designed and implemented. Transportation planning agencies maintain mailing and e-mail lists that anyone can join. These agencies use these lists to provide information about projects to the public and solicit feedback. Becoming acquainted with these planners and engineers is also an opportunity to engage them in discussions about Livable Streets.



**Changing street design standards** is something that is normally done by a city council vote. The process for changing those standards is often similar to getting a Livable Streets policy passed (finding an elected official to champion, gathering community support, etc.).