



Missouri's Approach to Transportation Safety Planning

Project Background

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Offices of Safety and Planning, in coordination with FHWA Division Offices and a number of Departments of Transportation (DOT), conducted a series of workshops to assist state DOTs, regional planning organizations, and local representatives in integrating safety into the transportation planning process. The purpose of these events was to discuss the basic elements of transportation planning and strategies to integrate safety into this process; learn about national and state-specific tools and resources; share practices and identify challenges; and identify key takeaways (strategies) that organizations could use to make improvements and help achieve a zero deaths goal. The effort involved a pre-workshop webinar to identify each state's safety planning priorities, workshops, follow-up technical assistance webinars, and finally a peer exchange with all the participating states to share successful practices among the states and broaden collaboration.

In Missouri, the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) was joined by nearly 60 safety stakeholders from the State Highway Safety Office, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), Council of Governments (COG), and other regional planning organizations, at a virtual workshop in October 2020 to learn how to improve safety integration into Missouri's transportation planning process. The effort, sponsored by FHWA through its Missouri Division Office, involved a pre-workshop webinar, a workshop, and a follow up technical assistance webinar. Due to the pandemic, all events were held virtually.

Missouri's Transportation Safety Planning Highlights

The Transportation Safety Planning Workshops helped identify ways to improve safety integration and to foster a safety-focused community of practice among MoDOT, MPOs, Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs), COGs, and FHWA. This community will continue working together in the future, as they have in the past two decades, to grow Missouri's safety expertise at the state, regional, and local levels. Some of the transportation safety planning strengths in Missouri include the following:



Source: Missouri Department of Transportation

- A multidisciplinary approach through the state's Strategic Highway Safety Plan *Show Me Zero*, which brings together many disciplines and a streamlined plan that anyone can understand and get involved.
- Increased awareness of bicycle and pedestrian safety through Missouri's implementation of FHWA's Every Day Counts ([EDC-4 Safe Transportation for Every Pedestrian](#)) initiative, which enables the state to enhance awareness of pedestrian issues and share knowledge of how to address the problem. The Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission (NWARPC), which includes areas in southern Missouri, developed a comprehensive regional [bicycle/pedestrian comprehensive plan](#) that includes 6Es for becoming a bike/walk friendly region (engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement, evaluation and equity). A transportation alternatives program was also established which allowed jurisdictions to compete for state DOT grants. The Natural Bridge Safety project, which also focused on pedestrian safety, gave the community voice through surveys, and focus groups.
- A robust communications plan that aims to reach all Missourians with key safety messages from the state's Strategic Highway Safety Plan, *Show-Me Zero*. This plan includes paid media efforts, including traditional media such as broadcast and cable TV and radio. However, more efforts are made in the digital world, including connected TV, digital radio, social media, and several out-of-home platforms (gas stations, movie theatres, sporting venues, bars, etc.). The primary demographic for most efforts is young males, ages 18-34.

Missouri's Notable Practices in Transportation Safety Planning

Regional Coalition

Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) has a coalition, [Destination Safe](#), whose sole purpose is to look at safety for the region. It is a multidisciplinary approach managed by MARC and is primarily focused on non-engineering priorities. Since MARC is a bi-state MPO, it is supported by both the Kansas and Missouri Departments of Transportation (DOTs). There is an annual call for projects where funding applications can be made under the 4Es of safety. Most of the applications are education focused. Even if an area does not have a project, MARC assists them with finding champions across discipline, and non-profit stakeholders. The coalition has several multidisciplinary action groups that meet regularly to accomplish tasks it identified.

Selling Safety Countermeasures

Before providing information to the public on upcoming infrastructure improvements, MoDOT conducts outreach and identifies key stakeholders such as businesses, churches, etc. in advance. MoDOT also develops strategies and talking points on where crashes are occurring and tying it back to stakeholders. MoDOT recommends obtaining input on the talking points from someone in communications. At the meetings, they make sure to have experts in the room to clearly convey the anticipated benefits of safety improvements as well as help address any potential concerns from customers.

Safety Data Collection and Accessibility Improvements

The state is developing a new crash report, which is an opportunity to ask for additional information such as work zone information, event clearance time, and automated vehicles. MoDOT's Transportation Management System is also helping to get a fuller picture and making sure all Model Inventory of Roadway Elements are collected, which will allow state and local transportation agencies to link safety data to non-safety data. MoDOT is using data for the development of local road safety plans and is sharing data with partners through the [MoDOT Datazone](#). In addition, MARC developed a [Regional Safety Blueprint](#), that includes strategies to improve safety and a data dashboard that provides information on what is happening with the safety trends.

Next Steps for Transportation Safety Planning in Missouri

Participants in the Missouri workshop identified several concrete opportunities to pursue in the future. Following is a list of high-level next steps the state is planning on conducting as they work toward greater safety integration into the transportation planning process.

- **Silos** - Eliminate silos which seem to cause an inefficient use of limited resources. Enforcement, education, and engineering need to work together.
 - **Law enforcement** - Engage law enforcement in meaningful discussions about prioritizing traffic education and enforcement.
 - **Funding** - Explore dedicated funds for safety countermeasures.
 - **Data** - Improve access to crash data; increase the percentage of electronically submitted crash reports (currently at 93%).
 - **Low-cost improvements** - Promote the use of low-cost safety improvements to local governments.
 - **Champions** - Find local champions who make roadway safety a priority for their political subdivision.
 - **Elected officials** - Involve elected officials in roadway safety issues.
- All modes** - Consider all modes of transportation and design for people of all ages and abilities, not just cars.

