

Our Commitment to Public Participation

Missouri Department of Transportation

Your Voice in Transportation Planning and Decision-Making



The Missouri Department of Transportation will work side-by-side with local officials to make transportation decisions. Missourians will have opportunities to influence decisions before they are made.

Missouri has more transportation needs than money to address them.

The Missouri constitution says MoDOT is the caretaker of the state's transportation system. With this responsibility, MoDOT must select the most critical transportation projects and focus on the state's highest-priority transportation needs. MoDOT must use effective planning and decision-making to make sure Missouri's limited transportation dollars are spent in the most responsible way.

MoDOT's Goal: Develop a Better Process for Missouri

Missourians needed a new process reflecting a shared transportation vision to identify the state's highest-priority transportation needs. A vision describes how the transportation system should look in the future. MoDOT set out to develop a process in which local officials and the general public could understand how decisions are made, could participate in the process and could influence the decisions.

The new process is flexible, so local officials, with input from their constituents, can determine what's appropriate for their communities. The new planning process also has a system of checks and balances to make sure it's working.

What is Public Involvement?

Through public involvement, Missourians have a say in how transportation dollars are spent. There are many ways to get involved. The most common is the public meeting. MoDOT holds public meetings throughout the planning and project-development processes. These meetings are held in communities around the state specifically to gather input from the general public. MoDOT employees attend to explain what's going on, answer questions and seek comments. Another example is an advisory team. MoDOT sometimes establishes citizens' groups that can help guide a project's development.

MoDOT's new planning process offers other ways for Missourians to have a say. We will work closely with local officials to meet community needs. Citizens have access locally to

planning organizations, city and county officials and elected officials. By working with them or by participating in public meetings, you have a say in MoDOT's planning process.

Merging Public Involvement and Decision-Making

Local officials' involvement is MoDOT's focus of the new planning processes. These officials, who are elected by the general public, join together regionally to form boards of directors of Missouri's metropolitan planning organizations and regional planning commissions. MPOs represent urbanized areas with populations of more than 50,000. They are responsible for transportation planning within their areas. RPCs represent multi-county rural regions and coordinate local governments on a regional scale in efforts that include transportation planning.



The general public is involved in two ways:

- by electing the local officials who comprise the RPC and MPO boards of directors; or
- through direct contact with MoDOT, MPOs, RPCs or local officials.

The planning process primarily addresses roadway and bridge needs. The prioritization processes provide the structure for decision-making and are based primarily on the funding categories in MoDOT's funding-distribution method. Flexibility is included for each region to address its needs and goals.

Each step in the planning and decision-making process includes opportunities for public involvement. Each MoDOT district statewide will follow the same decision-making timetable for developing the construction program and are committed to involving the public in this process.

The Planning Process and How the Public is Involved

MoDOT's planning process includes a series of decisions with each one narrowing the list of projects considered for construction. Before each decision is made, local officials and the



general public have opportunities to influence these decisions. MoDOT's planning process includes the following steps.

1. Develop the state's transportation vision and a plan to accomplish it.

MoDOT's long-range transportation plan identifies the vision and how to reach it. The plan also identifies what the public expects of the state transportation system, including high-priority statewide corridors and goals for taking care of the system. It identifies the values that guide needs and project prioritization for the next several years.

MoDOT will involve you through surveys, public meetings and other forums to help determine the public's expectations of the transportation system and the relative priority of each expectation.

2. Identify and prioritize needs.

There are varied transportation problems, often called needs, on Missouri's transportation system. For example, one need might be redesigning a high-accident location, such as an intersection; another might be a location improvement that helps a new business move products more efficiently.

In this step, the needs are prioritized based on a consistent process guided by the transportation vision.

You can take part by providing input to local officials, to MoDOT staff and to RPC/MPO staff members or by attending the RPC/MPO meetings.

3. Develop solutions and design projects.

When the high-priority needs have been identified, they are evaluated to find the best solution to the problem based on engineering expertise, public input and financial considerations. After a solution is agreed upon, design plans are

started and a transportation need becomes a transportation project. You can participate by voicing your concerns to local officials or MoDOT staff or by attending advertised public-involvement activities for the specific projects.

4. Prioritize and select projects for construction.

Projects are prioritized using processes based on Missouri's transportation vision. The projects selected are put in the state's rolling five-year construction program, called the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. You can get involved by providing input to local officials, to MoDOT staff or to RPC/MPO staff or by attending the RPC/MPO meetings.

Note: During spring 2004, each MoDOT district, along with the MPOs and RPCs, will develop specific methods and timelines for the involvement that best serves their region. These new processes will be used to develop the next construction program, which is the 2006-2010 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program.

Why is This Process Better?

The new planning process improves the way MoDOT makes decisions about which transportation problems to address first. The prioritization processes ensure consistent evaluation of similar problems around the state. For instance, repairing rough pavement in one part of the state is prioritized using the same information and methods as in another part of the state.

Local communities have more influence in this new process because local officials now have a guaranteed seat at the decision-making table. This doesn't mean local officials will always get what they want; it means their opinions and issues

will be considered. It also means they will understand the situation, and why in some cases, the answer must be no.

Our planning process is more open than ever before. Even though the overall steps in the planning process haven't really changed, the opportunities for your involvement at the local level have grown. The new process identifies the steps where individual decisions are made and how local officials and you can most easily affect these decisions. Involving the right people throughout the process just makes sense and improves the results.



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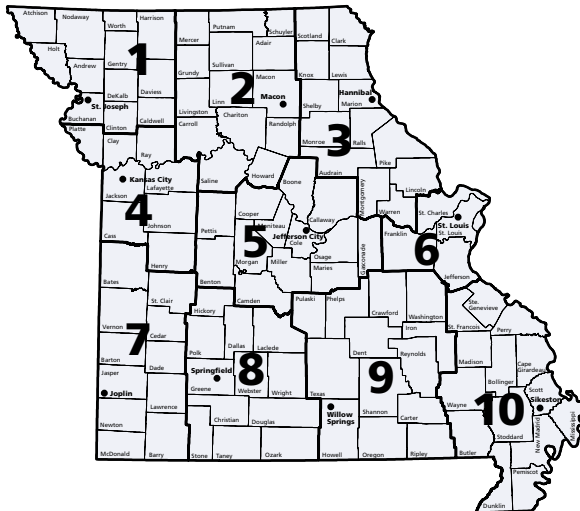
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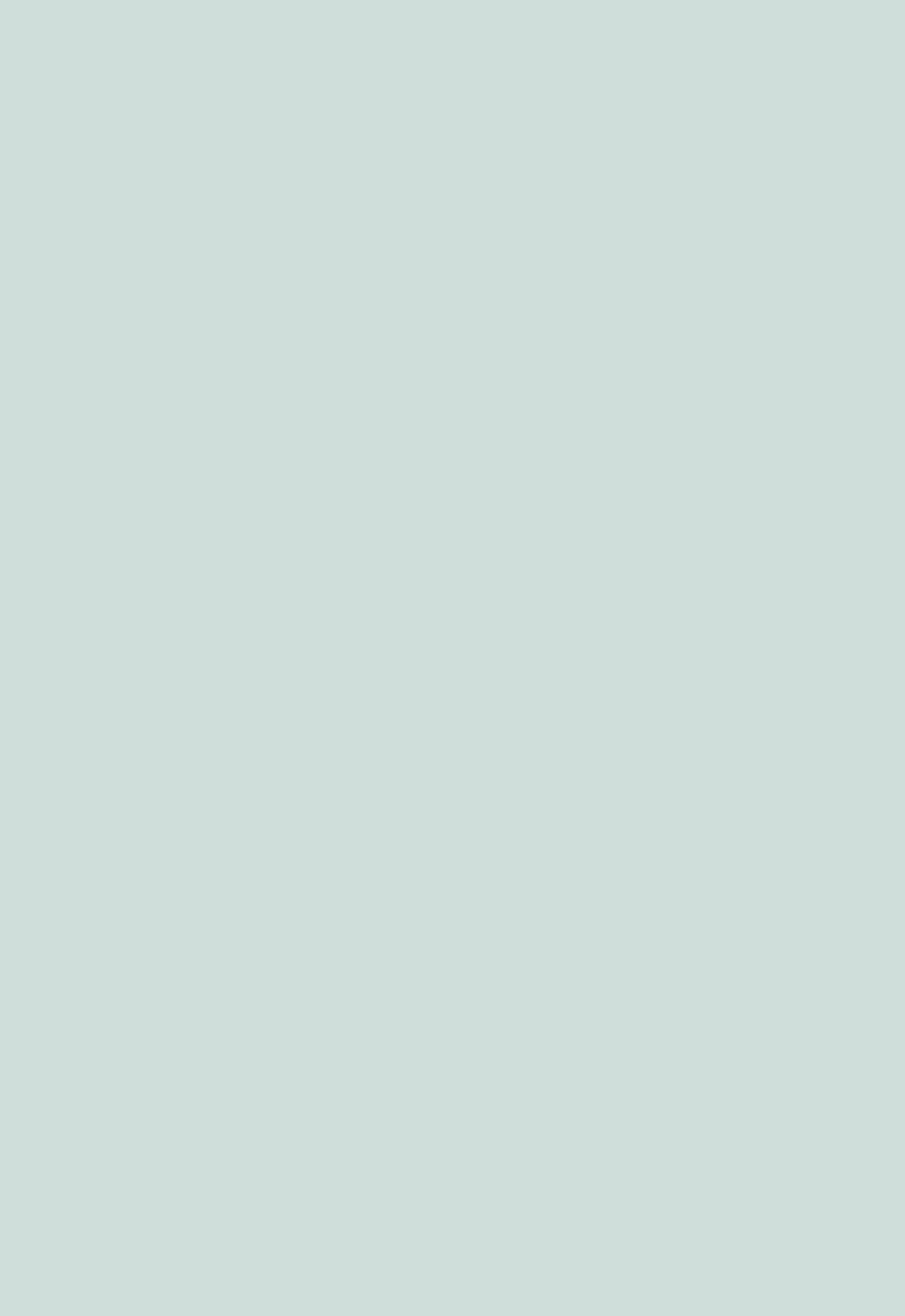
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