

## PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND COLLABORATE WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) stand at a complex and congested intersection: the junction between state government — where transportation funding and decision-making largely reside and local governments — where land-use decisions are generally made. At the same time, MPOs must comply with federal directives, even as they manage competing interests among member jurisdictions and stakeholders.

Land-use decisions and the resulting patterns of development they create are the largest external factor in determining transportation outcomes. For instance, zoning that leads to urban sprawl and the separation of jobs, housing and retail creates traffic congestion, makes it hard provide transit and reduces the accessibility of jobs. To achieve regional transportation goals, MPOs must work effectively with local governments, agencies and other local-level stakeholders to better coordinate transportation and land use. Additionally, local governments are often the primary builders or maintainers of local roads, and some operate their own transit systems. Even in areas where state governments control the majority of the road network, local governments play a role in funding and even constructing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

A key role for the innovative MPO, then, is to bring technical and financial resources in support of local communities, providing relatively low-cost services such as educational outreach and data analysis. Some MPOs are funding new programs and incentives to help local communities with planning, zoning updates and small-scale capital projects. Through this strategy, MPOs create a pipeline of transportation projects for future TIPs and MTPs that have community support and are consistent with regional goals.

In this section:

- **Assist localities in deploying new tools and policies**
- **Adopt and implement Complete Streets policies regionally**
- **Establish a livable communities program to fund targeted activities and projects**

### ASSIST LOCALITIES IN DEPLOYING NEW TOOLS AND POLICIES

The most comprehensive and visionary long-range metropolitan transportation plan is nothing more than rhetoric if it fails to be implemented locally. MPOs are responsible for advancing the regional vision and can support local communities with technical and funding resources they may control. Innovative MPOs use a range of incentives to help local partners succeed or to advance actions that are harder to do as an individual jurisdiction but which benefit the region as a whole.

## The opportunity

Many regional plans call for development to be focused along rail or high-frequency bus lines or in areas where multiple transportation modes converge. However, success in this regard requires local governments to zone for higher-density development in target areas — something they may find politically difficult. Residents often express concern about building height and neighborhood context, perceived impacts on congestion, property values and access to public services. For the sake of their tax base, localities may prefer to green-light commercial development and let neighboring jurisdictions worry about providing housing and services to those employees. Or they may allow low-density residential development and avoid the political challenges of promoting greater concentration. The result can be regional imbalances that exacerbate congestion, create infrastructure inefficiencies and diminish overall quality of life in the region.

MPOs can help or induce localities to “do the right thing” when it comes to development patterns and other decisions that, when aggregated with the other members of the metropolitan area, can make or break a region. In the case of development density, MPO actions can range from something as simple as conducting regional or localized public events that explain the benefits and dispel the myths about concentrated development. Or, with the MPO as a facilitator, member jurisdictions may agree to establish and follow criteria to use in prioritizing projects for funding.

A frequent source of conflict between MPOs and localities and a common hindrance to achieving regional goals, is a lack of integration between MPO plans and local planning documents. To more easily stitch together local policies, many MPOs provide guidance to localities in generating and updating land-use and transportation plans and strategies. In many instances, localities may be interested in trying something new but are frightened of going out on a limb with a new technique or initiative that might be seen as untested. Innovative MPOs propagate best practices and provide “regional cover” by making sure local governments have information about the latest planning innovations and practices. This can range from disseminating new approaches to street design to inviting outside experts or peer regions to share innovative practices and benefits they found. As another example, several MPOs in areas with expanding regional transit systems are working with member jurisdictions to conduct market assessments for mixed-use, walkable development.

## Putting it into practice

Few MPOs have specific authority to coordinate or engage in local land-use policies. Nonetheless, a number have developed programs to support localities in developing local plans and policies that are consistent with regional long-range goals. These range from providing guidance and best practices documents to providing access to technical experts and consultants who can work with local planners and engineers on specific projects. Many larger MPOs maintain special accounts for each member jurisdiction to provide on-demand technical assistance, and others help by modeling travel demand for a specific neighborhood or proposed development.

**Creating a planning guide for local staff.** Hillsborough County, FL, is home to the city of Tampa as well as more than 900,000 residents who live in unincorporated areas, making local implementation of regional planning goals a challenge. The [Hillsborough County MPO and City-County Planning Commission](#) in 2012 sought to address this challenge by creating a guide for township and county staff, called “Creating and Updating

Community Plans in Unincorporated Hillsborough County.” It outlines an “inclusive and deliberative planning process” designed to align local plans with the regional metropolitan transportation plan (MTP) goals. It explains the roles of various agencies and other stakeholders, provides a template for public participation and a process for creating or updating a community plan. In addition, the regional commission's website includes an easily navigable map of the unincorporated communities with information about their current plans and the status of any updates underway.<sup>1</sup>



Source: [www.planhillsborough.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Community-Plan-Guide.pdf](http://www.planhillsborough.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Community-Plan-Guide.pdf)

**Educating local jurisdictions on place-making techniques.** Innovative MPOs provide educational opportunities for local jurisdictions and across different sectors. Recently several MPOs have provided training on community place making. Place making integrates urban design with community-driven arts and cultural amenities to create neighborhoods and transportation infrastructure that are economically successful, physically attractive and safe. For transportation agencies like MPOs, place making can be an effective strategy to use in designing transit stations, transportation corridors or other public spaces.<sup>2</sup> The **Southeast Michigan COG (Detroit)** offered a 2014 “SEMCOG University” program for local elected officials, including a six-part place-making workshop for non-profit and private sector partners. Through foundation support, SEMCOG held workshops in low-income neighborhoods of Detroit.<sup>3</sup>



Some topics covered in the workshops included road safety and walkable/bikeable audits to improve key corridors; techniques for managing traffic flow; strategies for providing a well-rounded housing mix; creating eye-catching commercial areas; and using green infrastructure to preserve and restore water quality and the urban tree canopy.

1 [www.planhillsborough.org/community-based-planning/](http://www.planhillsborough.org/community-based-planning/)

2 Project for Public Spaces: [www.pps.org/reference/what\\_is\\_placemaking/](http://www.pps.org/reference/what_is_placemaking/)

3 [www.semco.org/placemaking.aspx](http://www.semco.org/placemaking.aspx)

**Conducting special training for the real estate development community.** In the Salt Lake City region, the **Wasatch Front Regional Council** and the regional transit agency in 2010 conducted sessions for real estate developers and local staff on “Placemaking with Transit”. The event attracted more than 250 elected officials, city staff, consultants, real estate developers and others.<sup>1</sup> The agency also maintains a visual library on its website to provide place-making examples from across the region to show how these concepts are being implemented in the community.<sup>2</sup> The site captures examples of public art, plazas and pocket parks, pedestrian malls and outdoor dining — among many other place-making techniques — to show how these strategies create vibrant places where people want to shop, live and recreate. More recently, WFRC has developed and implemented a Local Planning Resource Program that provides technical placemaking assistance to local communities to utilize the Wasatch Choice for 2040 toolbox, including the “Envision Tomorrow +” scenario planning tool, model form based code, and green infrastructure planning resources.

**Providing technical assistance to “right-size” transportation projects.** In **Portland, OR, Metro** established technical assistance accounts for each member jurisdiction in its Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Cities may tap these accounts for their routine modeling needs. Metro also hired a transportation engineer with city experience to help take project concepts through the full design process. The engineer helps smaller jurisdictions with limited capacity overcome the tendency to overbuild projects using off-the-shelf highway design standards in contexts where more urban design is appropriate.

In the last decade, many MPOs created programs to provide technical assistance for public engagement activities, multimodal analyses and feasibility studies that would otherwise be a strain for localities for lack of staff expertise and/or funding. Creating such a program using MPO discretionary money may not be feasible for smaller MPOs, but some have used consultants on contract or tapped into other funding sources, such as non-profit foundations, who wish to support activities clearly linked to regional economic and livability goals. These programs may or may not be linked to capital improvements, but a technical assistance program can still have a great impact even if no capital funds are involved. When focused on a particular set of transportation needs, a technical assistance program can morph into a program that directs a substantial percentage of a region's transportation capital dollars. The section on Livable Communities programs later in this chapter will describe some examples of that evolution.

The **Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC)**, which houses the multi-state MPO for the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, is in its eighth year of funding technical assistance projects through its Transportation/Land-Use Connections (TLC) Program and provides an instructive example of how a relatively small amount of money can have a big impact. The full case study can be found in the **Innovation in Action** section at the end of this chapter.

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1 [www.realestatenewsutah.com/events/placemaking-transit-form-based-code-approach-18399](http://www.realestatenewsutah.com/events/placemaking-transit-form-based-code-approach-18399)

2 [http://wfr.org/image\\_library/Pages/imagelibrary.html](http://wfr.org/image_library/Pages/imagelibrary.html)

## ADOPT AND IMPLEMENT COMPLETE STREETS POLICIES REGIONALLY

Complete Streets are those designed and operated to enable safe access by all users. They are designed to make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops or transit stations and bicycle to work. Creating Complete Streets for most transportation agencies means changing their approach to designing roads. While a number of local communities and states have adopted Complete Streets policies, the MPO plays a critical role in encouraging transportation planners and engineers to design and operate the regional system so that it works for all users, regardless of age, ability or mode of transportation.

### The opportunity

There is no uniform prescription for Complete Streets. Depending on the context, designers choose from a menu including sidewalks, bike lanes or wide paved shoulders, special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible public transportation stops, frequent and safe street crossing opportunities, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes, roundabouts and more. A “complete” street in a rural area will look quite different from a “complete” street in a highly urban area, but both are designed to balance safety and convenience for everyone using the road.

MPOs can play a critical role by incorporating Complete Streets concepts into the long-range plan and the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). They can offer technical assistance to promote best practices and the use of related performance measures. Nearly 50 MPOs have adopted regional Complete Streets policies and thereby encourage adoption of local policies and plans.<sup>1</sup>

MPOs can also assist with the difficult tasks of implementation. A Complete Streets approach can actually lead to cost savings and improved safety for all users, but requires changes to transportation planning, design, maintenance and funding decisions. MPOs can provide model ordinances to local jurisdictions along with design manuals, other references and related training for local planners.

MPOs can use the framework of Complete Streets to promote expanded transportation options and improved safety – particularly for pedestrians and bicyclists. These are among the federally required planning factors for MPOs to consider in developing their long-range plans.

### Putting it into practice

Hundreds of local jurisdictions nationwide, along with several state agencies, have formally adopted Complete Streets policies. At a minimum such policies should ensure that transportation projects are planned and designed to meet the needs of every community member regardless of their age, ability or how they travel.<sup>2</sup> MPOs, in turn, have also adopted policies and worked with their member jurisdictions to assist with implementation.

1 [www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets/changing-policy/complete-streets-atlas](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets/changing-policy/complete-streets-atlas)

2 [www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/cs/resources/cs-policyworkbook.pdf](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/cs/resources/cs-policyworkbook.pdf)

In March 2014, for example, the **Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization (Indy MPO)** adopted a policy requiring projects funded by the federal Surface Transportation Program and Transportation Alternatives Program to support Complete Streets principles. The policy includes minimum requirements for bicycle and pedestrian access, design guidance, a procedure for exceptions to the requirements and an evaluation process that establishes performance measures.<sup>1</sup>

**Using a Complete Streets screen to prioritize projects.** Even more constructive is for the MPO to prioritize Complete Streets projects in the development of regional long-range transportation plans and TIPs by developing standards for evaluating the conformity of transportation projects to the policy. Although this is a more ambitious undertaking, a few MPOs have risen to the challenge. The **Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)**, which serves the Columbus, OH region, developed a Regional Complete Streets policy for its member agencies, with a checklist to assist project sponsors in defining and designing their projects in adherence to the policy.<sup>2</sup> The checklist combines narrative and check-off items, with the applicant providing information on existing conditions and other factors.<sup>3</sup>

In Tennessee, the **Nashville Area MPO**<sup>4</sup> and the **Chattanooga-Hamilton County/North Georgia Transportation Planning Organization** both have demonstrated how to fully integrate Complete Streets into long-range transportation planning. The TPO adopted a policy in 2009-2010 as part of the 2035 Long-Range Transportation Plan and set aside a portion of MPO-controlled federal funds to support Complete Streets designs on various transportation corridors. As part of development of the 2040 plan, this approach evolved to integrate Complete Streets considerations more thoroughly into evaluating individual corridors and projects. In particular, the 2040 LRTP encouraged Complete Streets by using performance measures favoring projects that reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and “promote non-motorized access to community resources.” The LRTP also incorporates Complete Streets into special area plans for transit corridors.<sup>5</sup>

The **Mid-America Regional Council (MARC)** in Kansas City has also incorporated Complete Streets considerations into its process for project selection and funding, to ensure that prioritized projects are those that do the most to meet a comprehensive set of regional goals that include safety, public health and equity. For more on the MARC Complete Streets strategy, see the detailed case study in the **Innovation in Action** section at the end of this chapter. MPOs can also help local jurisdictions see progress that has resulted from Complete Streets policies through reporting and monitoring.

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1 [www.indympo.org/Plans/MultiModalPlanning/Pages/Complete-Streets.aspx](http://www.indympo.org/Plans/MultiModalPlanning/Pages/Complete-Streets.aspx)

2 [www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/cs/impl/oh-morpc-checklist.pdf](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/cs/impl/oh-morpc-checklist.pdf)

3 <http://morpc.org/transportation/complete-streets/index>

4 [www.nashvillempo.org/regional\\_plan/roadways/complete\\_streets.aspx](http://www.nashvillempo.org/regional_plan/roadways/complete_streets.aspx)

5 [www.chcrpa.org/2040RTP/CHCRPA\\_2040RTP\\_Vol-1.pdf](http://www.chcrpa.org/2040RTP/CHCRPA_2040RTP_Vol-1.pdf)

## ESTABLISH A LIVABLE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM TO FUND TARGETED ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS

In many cases, local jurisdictions would be doing more to improve livability of their neighborhoods, town centers and streets but lack the technical expertise, resources or implementation network to be effective. Proactive MPOs, even small ones, can offer meaningful assistance to localities and incentives to make land-use and transportation decisions that are good for the region as a whole.

### The opportunity

The Federal Highway Administration defines livability in transportation as the process of “integrating the quality, location and type of transportation facilities and services available with other more comprehensive community plans and programs to help achieve broader community goals.”<sup>1</sup> A growing number of innovative MPOs are committing regional transportation dollars to capital projects and planning efforts that address community-scale livability challenges. In several instances, MPOs have established funding to help local governments undertake “livable communities” activities such as station area planning, Complete Streets, intersection improvements or other localized planning work. Focus Area 3 discusses the use of regional set-aside programs in more detail. These programs go beyond ad-hoc technical assistance to target resources for both planning and projects, with strategies that reflect regional goals.

### Putting it into practice

**Create programs to support local planning.** The San Francisco Bay Area’s **Metropolitan Transportation Commission** and the **Atlanta Regional Commission** both operate long-established livable communities programs that have won national recognition. The Atlanta program is spotlighted at the end of this chapter in the **Innovation in Action** section.

The **Akron (OH) Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS)** created its Connecting Communities Planning Grant program in 2010 to provide communities with up to \$200,000 to develop plans that “enhance neighborhoods by improving transportation connections and promoting alternative modes of transportation like walking, biking and transit.”<sup>2</sup> Grant funds can be used to hire a consultant to develop plans to improve the selected study area. Recent grants have helped identify needed street and transit improvements to address storm water problems, improve transit access to retail and job centers and to improve parking management and signage.<sup>3</sup> Recommended projects that arise from the funded plans receive greater consideration for inclusion in the MTP and TIP.

1 The Role of FHWA Programs in Livability: State of the Practice Summary. (Updated January 2014.) [www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/state\\_of\\_the\\_practice\\_summary/research00.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/state_of_the_practice_summary/research00.cfm)

2 [www.amatsplanning.org/programs/amats-planning-grant/](http://www.amatsplanning.org/programs/amats-planning-grant/)

3 [www.amatsplanning.org/programs/amats-planning-grant/](http://www.amatsplanning.org/programs/amats-planning-grant/)

**Competitive planning grants for implementing regional goals at the local level.** Since 2000, **the Capital District Transportation Committee in Albany, NY**, has operated a program of competitive planning grants and assistance called Community and Transportation Linkage Planning. Communities may use the assistance to plan for transportation and development strategies in corridors, neighborhoods or entire jurisdictions. Applications are evaluated on how well the proposed project addresses seven objectives:

1. Support urban revitalization and redevelopment of existing commercial/residential areas.
2. Improve street connectivity and reduce driveway conflicts through access management.
3. Enhance and develop activity centers and town centers.
4. Enhance and develop transit corridors and transit supportive built environments.
5. Encourage a greater mix and intensity of land uses.
6. Develop bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly design standards.
7. Create an integrated multimodal transportation network.

Over its first decade, the program sponsored 66 planning studies in 39 urban, suburban and rural municipalities and counties. The program is an important pipeline for identifying and doing the early planning work to shape capital projects. Since its creation, roughly \$100 million in related capital projects has been included in the region's TIP for funding. The program has brought about significant changes in the region's planning culture as well, with local jurisdictions and developers reaching a better understanding of livability principles and working together to meet corresponding infrastructure needs.<sup>1</sup>

## Resources

- FHWA-FTA Peer Exchange Report, “Effective Practices in Planning for Livable Communities at Metropolitan Planning Organizations” (2010): [www.planning.dot.gov/Peer/Atlanta/atlanta\\_2010.pdf](http://www.planning.dot.gov/Peer/Atlanta/atlanta_2010.pdf)
- The Center for Transit-Oriented Development, “Transit-Oriented Development Tools for MPOs” (2010): [http://reconnectingamerica.org/assets/Uploads/ctod\\_mpotod\\_final.pdf](http://reconnectingamerica.org/assets/Uploads/ctod_mpotod_final.pdf)
- Strategic Economics (prepared for PSRC), “Incentivizing TOD: Case Studies of Regional Programs Throughout the United States” (2012): [www.psrc.org/assets/10673/IncentivizingTOD\\_CaseStudies\\_of\\_Regional\\_Programs.pdf](http://www.psrc.org/assets/10673/IncentivizingTOD_CaseStudies_of_Regional_Programs.pdf)
- FHWA Guidebook & Best Practices on Linking Land Use & Transportation Planning: [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/processes/land\\_use/land\\_use\\_tools/thetools.pdf](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/processes/land_use/land_use_tools/thetools.pdf)
- National Complete Streets Coalition, “Taking Action on Complete Streets: A Toolkit for Implementation” (2013): [www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/cs/impl/taking-action-on-cs.pdf](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/cs/impl/taking-action-on-cs.pdf)
- Project for Public Spaces, Resources on Placemaking: [www.pps.org/reference/reference-categories/placemaking-tools/](http://www.pps.org/reference/reference-categories/placemaking-tools/)

<sup>1</sup> [www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/processes/land\\_use/case\\_studies/archive/albany\\_ny/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/processes/land_use/case_studies/archive/albany_ny/)

## INNOVATION IN ACTION - CASE STUDIES (FOCUS AREA 5)

### ASSIST LOCALITIES IN DEPLOYING NEW TOOLS AND POLICIES

#### **The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments – TPB (Washington DC/MD/VA)**

*The Transportation Planning Board (TPB) found a way to get more bang for its limited resources and make an impact at the local level with its Transportation/Land-Use Connections (TLC) Program. The TLC program offers technical assistance grants to support coordinated planning for transportation and land use and for development projects that make the most of transit networks. It is designed to help local communities meet goals of the regional plan: to integrate transportation and land-use planning to build locations with a mix of jobs, housing and civic uses; develop housing for all incomes around transit; improve access and safety for people on foot, bicycle and transit; and improve public health and the environment, among others.<sup>1</sup>*



Source: T4America photo by Stephen Lee Davis

<sup>1</sup> [www.mwcog.org/transportation/activities/tlc/clearinghouse/strategies.asp](http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/activities/tlc/clearinghouse/strategies.asp)

TLC awards eight to twelve grants each year for local planning projects that last no more than a year. Technical assistance supports local jurisdictions in hiring consultants from a pre-qualified list. Recent projects include research on parking demand, development of healthy design standards for affordable housing, a multimodal access plan, guidance on bikeway classification and a corridor “pavement removal strategy” among others.<sup>1</sup> Recipients are eligible to receive between \$20,000 and \$60,000 in technical assistance for project planning, payable to the technical consultant. Beginning in FY2013, the program began funding projects to 30 percent design in addition to planning studies. This new category is intended to fund work on conceptual design and preliminary engineering that will move projects toward implementation.

The program is designed to help localities address some of the stickier challenges of livable development, such as allaying public fears of increased density, tackling the intricacies of a multimodal streetscape (particularly for bicycles and pedestrians), ensuring affordable housing in activity centers and getting the timing of infrastructure improvements right to ensure successful mixed-use development that does not adversely impact existing



The new civic plaza and mixed-use buildings surrounding the Columbia Heights metro station. Source Stephen Lee Davis, T4America.

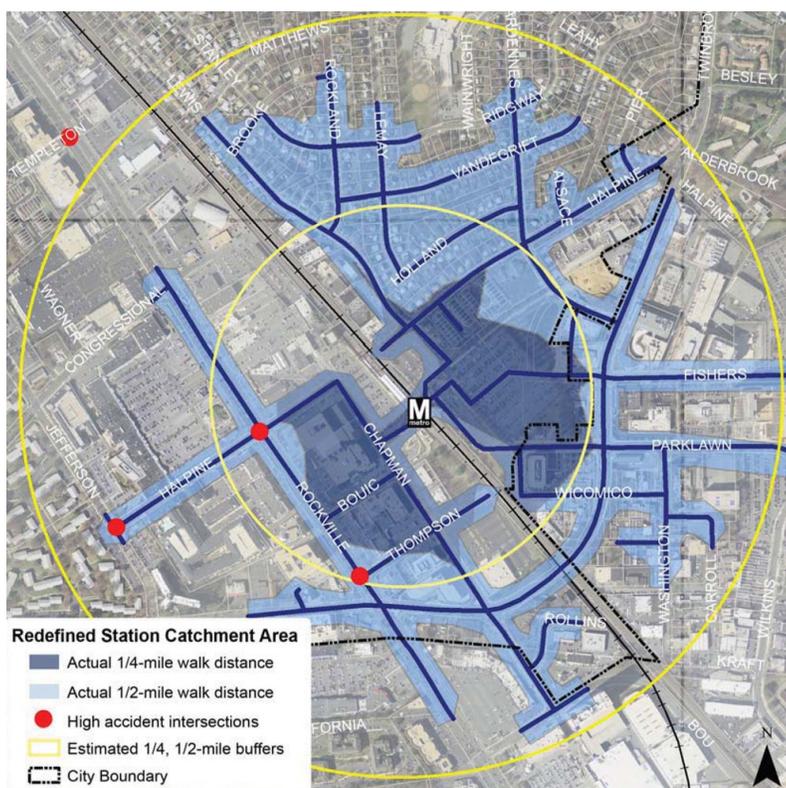
<sup>1</sup> [www.mwcog.org/transportation/activities/tlc/program/projects.asp](http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/activities/tlc/program/projects.asp)

surrounding areas. Since its inception with a six-month pilot program in 2007, the TLC program has funded and managed 72 technical assistance projects, using a total of more than \$2.3 million in its UPWP Planning funds. Local jurisdictions find the program's flexibility and streamlined application process very appealing in comparison with other potential sources of funding for such activities.<sup>1</sup>

At the time of the program's creation, the TPB looked into the ambitious livable communities programs operated by the **Atlanta Regional Commission** and the **Bay Area's Metropolitan Transportation Commission**, which could go beyond planning support to program capital funds for related projects. However, some MPO members, including state DOTs and local governments, were concerned about MPO involvement in land-use issues and project selection.

The program's success has spurred slow but steady progress and demonstrated the MPO's ability to catalyze action at the local level. As indication of its impact, the Maryland DOT twice contributed extra funds from its technical assistance account to support additional TPB technical assistance projects in Maryland.

Despite their small size, local communities see the TLC grants as a powerful tool to lend a sense of urgency to projects and bring stakeholders together to collaborate in unprecedented ways. The TPB created a TLC Regional Peer Exchange Network in 2011 so that practitioners and local planners could share lessons learned on TLC topics. The Network has hosted a half-dozen forums and webinars on various livability themes with presentations by recipients of TLC help.<sup>2</sup>



Accessibility and Rockville's TODs.

Source: [www.mwcog.org/transportation/activities/tlc/program/bikeped.asp](http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/activities/tlc/program/bikeped.asp)

1 [www.mwcog.org/transportation/activities/tlc/program/application.asp](http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/activities/tlc/program/application.asp)

2 [www.mwcog.org/transportation/activities/tlc/clearinghouse/rpen/](http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/activities/tlc/clearinghouse/rpen/)

## National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

Type	The Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is housed within the COG. The MPO staff is provided by the COG's Department of Transportation Planning.
Composition	The COG's Transportation Planning Board is comprised of 36 members with an additional 6 ex-officio members. The TPB is housed within the COG and the COG has its own elected officials and Board of Directors with separate functions from the MPO.
Voting	Any voting member may require that the vote on any matter brought before the TPB be decided on a proportional voting basis. For this purpose, five votes each are assigned to Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia. If the total weighted vote of those present and voting within any one of the Maryland, Virginia or District of Columbia portions of the Metropolitan Area is less than five, the weighted vote for each of the representatives present and voting for that portion of the Metropolitan Area is increased proportionally to insure a total of five votes.
MPOs within MSA	1 MPO within MSA
Annual budget and staffing size	\$26.5 million total for the COG, \$12.5 million for the TPB; 58 full-time staff at the TPB from MWCOG's transportation planning department.
Responsibilities beyond transportation	Scenario planning, land use coordination, air quality, climate change, green building, green infrastructure, homeland security
Independent revenue authority	The TPB does not have independent revenue authority besides accepting membership dues from local jurisdictions

References: [www.mwcog.org/about/](http://www.mwcog.org/about/)  
[www.mwcog.org/uploads/pub-documents/o15cWF420140129133156.pdf](http://www.mwcog.org/uploads/pub-documents/o15cWF420140129133156.pdf)  
[www.mwcog.org/uploads/committee-documents/sVIZVIY20060804153725.pdf](http://www.mwcog.org/uploads/committee-documents/sVIZVIY20060804153725.pdf)  
[www.mwcog.org/clrp/elements/scenarios.asp](http://www.mwcog.org/clrp/elements/scenarios.asp)

## ADOPT AND IMPLEMENT COMPLETE STREET POLICIES REGIONALLY

**Mid-America Regional Council (Kansas City KS/MO)**

*The Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) provides an excellent example of a comprehensive approach to Complete Streets, from adopting policies to assisting local jurisdictions with implementation and demonstration projects and incorporating the principles into regional planning and project selection.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> [www.marc.org/Transportation/Special-Projects/Regional-Initiatives/Complete-Streets](http://www.marc.org/Transportation/Special-Projects/Regional-Initiatives/Complete-Streets)

The process began in 2008, when the MARC Board of Directors adopted a regional vision document that emphasized sustainability. This served as the foundation for the region's next long-range transportation plan update, Transportation Outlook 2040, approved in 2010. The plan recommended adoption of a regional Complete Streets policy and included strategies to support implementation throughout the region. Months after the adoption of Transportation Outlook 2040, the City Council of Kansas City, MO – the region's core jurisdiction – adopted a Livable Streets Resolution consistent with the regional guidance.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://mobikfed.org/2011/01/kansas-city-adopts-complete-streets-resolution>



At least a dozen additional localities in the metropolitan area now have adopted similar policies, in part because of the next step taken by MARC: partnering with a national consultant in fall 2011 to develop a Complete Streets Policy Handbook as a resource for local jurisdictions. MARC also conducted two Complete Streets demonstration projects in the communities of Kansas City and Raytown, MO and helped the Kansas City chapter of the American Public Works Association update bicycle facility design guidelines. These activities were enabled by a grant from the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, MARC drafted its own formal Complete Streets policy, which the Board then adopted in March 2012.<sup>2</sup>

The MARC policy is emblematic in its reach and thoroughness. It **clearly states the region's interest** in creating a safe, balanced, multimodal and equitable transportation system and the crucial role of Complete Streets in achieving that goal. It **applies the policy broadly** to all MARC planning activities that involve public rights of way and any activities conducted by MARC to program federal funds for projects in the TIP. It **defines "Complete Streets,"** saying that, "Projects shall provide safe accommodations for all travelers who have legal access and who may reasonably be expected to use the facilities, while being sensitive to the current and future community context." It **provides for exceptions** and emphasizes that individual implementing agencies retain design authority over their projects, while making clear that exceptions should be rare. Finally, it describes **implementation** and the **performance measures** that will be used to evaluate the policy's effect.<sup>3</sup>

The MPO also integrates Complete Streets into its RTPs through a set of scoring criteria for project selection and by using that criteria to establish performance measures for the plan. Both the scoring criteria and performance measures include multimodal, bicycle and pedestrian accessibility factors.<sup>4</sup>

Key to MARC's motivation for implementing Complete Streets was a growing sense that other communities in the larger region — particularly the Missouri cities of Columbia and St. Louis — were ahead of Kansas City in creating progressive transportation policy. Businesses and residents were demanding more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly streets and communities did not want to cede their competitive edge to other regions of the country.

1 [www.marc.org/Transportation/Special-Projects/assets/CompleteStreetsReport.aspx](http://www.marc.org/Transportation/Special-Projects/assets/CompleteStreetsReport.aspx)

2 [www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/cs/policy/cs-mo-marc-policy.pdf](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/cs/policy/cs-mo-marc-policy.pdf)

3 [www.marc.org/Transportation/Special-Projects/assets/CompleteStreetsPolicy.aspx](http://www.marc.org/Transportation/Special-Projects/assets/CompleteStreetsPolicy.aspx)

4 [www.to2040.org/assets/plan/AppendixC\\_ProjectSolicitationEvaluation.pdf](http://www.to2040.org/assets/plan/AppendixC_ProjectSolicitationEvaluation.pdf); [www.to2040.org/Measuring\\_Progress/index.aspx](http://www.to2040.org/Measuring_Progress/index.aspx)

## Mid-America Regional Council (MARC)

Type	MARC is a non-profit association of city and county governments in the Greater Kansas City region.
Composition	Governed by a Board of Directors that consists of 33 local elected officials from the nine member counties and six largest cities in the region. The cities include Kansas City, MO; Kansas City, KS; Independence, MO; Lee's Summit, MO; Olathe, KS; and Overland Park, KS.
Voting	Each member has one vote.
MPOs within MSA	1 MPO within MSA
Annual budget and staffing size	\$59.4 million; 132 full-time staff
Responsibilities beyond transportation	Aging services, early learning, health care, community development, homeland security, emergency services, air and water quality, solid waste management, energy conservation
Independent revenue authority	MARC has no taxation or regulatory authority

References: [www.marc.org/Regional-Planning/MARC-s-Role](http://www.marc.org/Regional-Planning/MARC-s-Role)  
[www.marc.org/What-is-MARC/General-Information/Board-of-Directors](http://www.marc.org/What-is-MARC/General-Information/Board-of-Directors)  
[www.marc.org/What-is-MARC/pdf/marcbylaws.aspx](http://www.marc.org/What-is-MARC/pdf/marcbylaws.aspx)  
[www.marc.org/About-MARC/General-Information/Financial-Information](http://www.marc.org/About-MARC/General-Information/Financial-Information)

## ESTABLISH A LIVABLE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM TO FUND TARGETED ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS

### Atlanta Regional Commission – ARC (Atlanta, GA)

*When it comes to shepherding a region's varied communities into a new era of livability, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) provides a stellar example. It is also evidence of how MPO-led livable communities programs can evolve over time from small-scale planning grants to robust programs that provide both technical assistance and capital funds.*

ARC's Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) began in 1999 at a time when the region had failed to make a transportation plan that would keep emissions at levels acceptable under the federal Clean Air Act. With the prospect of future federal transportation funding hanging in the balance, the ARC moved to address the core underlying problem: a pattern of dispersed development that required excessive driving and a model for the future that anticipated more of the same. The ARC acted to take concrete steps to re-prioritize transportation spending and effect real change in land-use patterns in the region.

Over the past 15 years the LCI has demonstrated its value and regional popularity. Using federal Surface Transportation Program funds, the program provides roughly \$1 million annually in grants for existing town centers, activity centers and corridors to develop plans that enhance livability and mobility. In addition, the long-range transportation plan



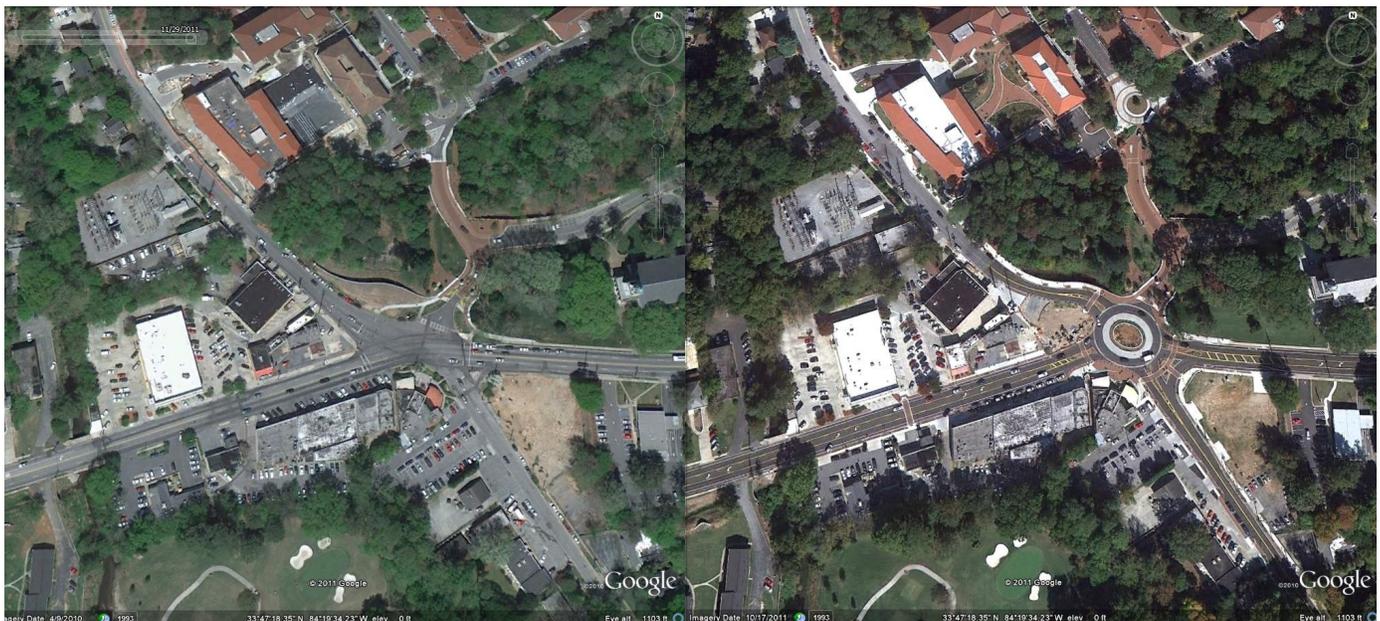
Source: ARC.

allocates about \$20 million annually to implement capital projects derived from these community-level planning efforts. While relatively small in scale, these projects can make a big difference in conditions for pedestrians, transit riders and motorists in neighborhood centers. Since the LCI's inception, more than 100 projects and almost \$200 million in LCI transportation funds have been programmed in the region's TIP.

LCI-funded plans must align with the program's goals for walkable, transit-accessible development by enhancing streetscapes and sidewalks, emphasizing pedestrian safety, improving transit access and expanding housing options. They also require extensive public participation and a local 20 percent match.

Eligible parties apply annually for LCI funding. LCI planning grant applications are screened by a panel representative of stakeholder groups such as the Georgia Conservancy, the Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership and the Livable Communities Coalition, among others. Once an LCI planning study is completed, recipients are eligible to apply for funds for follow-up studies, such as zoning code changes, design guidelines or market analyses. Perhaps most influential of all, LCI communities become eligible for earmarked transportation project funding. The ARC evaluates project proposals internally and only applicants who have demonstrated a commitment to implementing their LCI plans are awarded funding. Commitment is shown through such actions as adopting the LCI Plan into the local government's Comprehensive Development Plan, or creating a zoning overlay district for the LCI area. ARC conducts periodic follow-up with grantee communities to evaluate their implementation efforts and address any challenges.

In recent years, ARC also has integrated an element known as the Lifelong Communities initiative.<sup>1</sup> As the region prepares for the aging of the baby boomer generation, the Lifelong Communities initiative is helping communities focus on expanding housing and transportation options, and implementing community designs and programs that encourage healthy living and expanding access to services for older adults.<sup>2</sup> The LCI has



*Aerial images from before and after the implementation of a roundabout at the entrance to Emory University. Google Earth images provided by ARC.*

1 [www.atlantaregional.com/aging-resources](http://www.atlantaregional.com/aging-resources)

2 <http://newsmanager.atlantaregional.com/anmviewer.asp?a=40333&z=21>

emphasized providing a range of housing options; more than half of LCI communities now have affordable and/or senior housing policies. Extensive tracking and reporting includes a peer exchange and regular studies of indicators and benefits.<sup>1</sup>

LCI planning projects represent about one percent of funding in the region's long-range transportation plan, but LCI capital projects comprise 25-30 percent of the region's "STP Urban" funds.<sup>2</sup> ARC also took steps to streamline the process for moving LCI capital projects forward in 2007 by introducing a scoping phase, designed to better prepare project sponsors in developing project concept reports.<sup>3</sup> ARC also provides model resolutions and policies, along with best practices in zoning and design codes.<sup>4</sup> LCI study grants have proven to be innovative ways to generate private investment to develop creative solutions in support of regional visioning that links land use and transportation.

Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)	
Type	ARC is a regional planning and intergovernmental coordinating agency.
Composition	The Atlanta Regional Commission Board is made up of 39 members. This includes each County Commission Chairman in the region, one mayor from each county (selected by a caucus of mayors in that county – except for Fulton county, where 2 mayors are chosen, one from each northern and southern halves), a member of the Atlanta City Council chosen by the council, fifteen private citizens (one from each of the multi-jurisdictional districts elected by 23 public officials) and one member that is appointed by the Board of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. There are 10 counties and 70 municipalities represented by ARC
Voting	Each member has one vote
MPOs within MSA	1 MPO within MSA
Annual budget and staffing size	\$63.6 million; 190 full-time staff
Responsibilities beyond transportation	Economic competitiveness strategies, green and livable communities initiatives, land-use planning, housing, air quality, regional water issues, historic preservation
Independent revenue authority	None
State enabling legislation	The 39-member ARC Board membership is defined in state code and is required to be a combination of elected public officials and citizens (Georgia Code 50-8-84).
<p>References: <a href="http://www.atlantaregional.com/about-us/overview">www.atlantaregional.com/about-us/overview</a>  <a href="http://www.atlantaregional.com/transportation/resources">www.atlantaregional.com/transportation/resources</a>  <a href="http://law.justia.com/codes/georgia/2006/50/50-8-82.html">http://law.justia.com/codes/georgia/2006/50/50-8-82.html</a></p>	

1 [www.atlantaregional.com/land-use/livable-centers-initiative/evaluation](http://www.atlantaregional.com/land-use/livable-centers-initiative/evaluation)

2 <http://partnershipforsouthernequity.org/index.php/issue-areas/economic-recovery/33-promising-practices-in-equitable-recovery>

3 [www.atlantaregional.com/land-use/livable-centers-initiative/lci-transportation-program](http://www.atlantaregional.com/land-use/livable-centers-initiative/lci-transportation-program)

4 [www.atlantaregional.com/land-use/livable-centers-initiative/resources](http://www.atlantaregional.com/land-use/livable-centers-initiative/resources)