

Topline Findings from Key Informant Interviews with Stakeholders from Livable/Complete Streets Communities in Missouri

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Health Communication Research Center
MU School of Journalism
130 Neff Annex
Columbia, MO 65211
hcrc@missouri.edu
<http://hcrc.missouri.edu>

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Section I: Executive Summary

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services contracted the University of Missouri, School of Journalism's Health Communication Research Center (HCRC) to determine the opportunities and challenges communities faced while developing livable streets/complete streets (LS/CS) policies. The HCRC conducted interviews in the spring of 2013 with 21 stakeholders from Missouri communities and regional organizations. Respondents were interviewed about the process of passing a LS/CS policy and progress made since passing the policy.

Key findings that emerged from the interviews:

- The most common reasons for passing a LS/CS policy were to make it a community-wide priority and to improve the community's economic vitality.
- Communities recognized that having stakeholder support and especially having a "champion" advocate were crucial for policy development and implementation. Other important factors cited were having flexibility within the policy and ongoing communication with key stakeholders.
- Funding was considered both a barrier and a catalyst in passing LS/CS policies. Responses about funding often uncovered other related challenges such as community infrastructure concerns and differing transportation priorities among stakeholders.
- Although organized opposition of LS/CS policies was uncommon, several respondents expressed the need to balance LS/CS ideas and standards with what is practical and works best for the community.
- Communities sometimes excluded implementation guidelines, evaluation measures or street design guidelines from the proposed policy because they believed these factors would make it hard to get community buy-in. Respondents also stated that their lack of knowledge about what and how to measure was a challenge.
- As a result of LS/CS policies, communities reported:
 1. a positive change in their relationship with the Missouri Department of Transportation (MODOT) and MODOT's willingness to incorporate LS/CS elements
 2. physical improvements within the community
 3. increases in biking, walking and the use of trail systems
 4. greater economic development
 5. a cultural shift among community and policy stakeholders from a car-oriented approach to a focus on making transportation accessible for all

Opportunities and Recommendations

The interviews offered several key recommendations for improving LS/CS policy development and implementation and identified Missouri's opportunities and needed resources.

Recommendations include:

- **Continue partnership building.** Many local, regional and state partners played an integral role in LS/CS policy adoption and on-going implementation efforts. Respondents recommended developing a framework to coordinate these various organizations and their agendas. This would help optimize limited resources and offer current and potential LS/CS communities a broader level of expertise.
- **Provide educational resources and/or technical assistance on evaluation.** Despite their uncertainty about evaluation, respondents recognized the importance of evaluation with some expressing a desire to do more evaluation. Identifying or developing an adaptable evaluation tool with prioritized benchmarks and milestones and accompanying tracking forms would be a helpful resource for communities.
- **Address implementation barriers.** Defining “best practices” or a clear actionable model for how to overcome common implementation barriers—such as funding or limited infrastructure—could help communities develop mechanisms for avoiding them or limiting their impact. Establishing “must have” policy elements could help guide policy development as well as head off some implementation barriers before they arise.
- **Assist with acquiring funding.** Marketing funding opportunities and providing support during the application process could help communities, particularly smaller ones, secure much-needed funds. Education and guidance on how to efficiently leverage current resources and ongoing transportation projects to move livable streets efforts forward might also help communities address funding gaps.
- **Expand communication efforts.** Continued communication and awareness efforts are needed to familiarize the public and key stakeholders with the LS/CS concept. Educational and marketing materials for promoting a Livable Streets policy well after it has been passed could help communities continue momentum into the implementation stage.

Section II: Introduction

With the goal of building on the success of current Livable or Complete Streets policies and advancing new ones, the Health Communication Research Center (HCRC) staff and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services partnered to conduct in-depth interviews with stakeholders involved in the development and implementation of their community's Livable Streets policy. These interviews were developed to examine the opportunities and challenges facing Missouri communities with Livable Streets policies and inform future efforts to raise awareness and support communities as they develop and adopt these policies.

This report summarizes key findings from these interviews with people across Missouri involved in the development and adoption of Livable Streets policies.

Section III: Methods

Interview questions were developed and adapted from previous surveys and interviews on the topic of Livable Streets conducted by the HCRC and other bicycle/pedestrian organizations such as the Alliance for Biking and Walking. Questions were further reviewed by experts in public health, bicycle/pedestrian advocacy and transportation planning. Discussions with the aforementioned experts informed the development of important themes to be covered in the interviews. A list of these prioritized themes is included in Table 1.

Table 1. Survey questions and corresponding themes	
Policy development	
<i>Facilitators</i>	Q4. How did the Livable Streets first come up in your community? Q5. What reasons did your town have for passing the policy?
<i>Policy Supporters</i>	Q6. What groups or individuals were the biggest supporters of your community's Livable/Complete Streets policy? Q6A. How did you reach or engage these people/organizations? (e.g., meetings, presentations, workshops, media campaign, community events) Q6b. Were there any barriers or issues with their participation?
<i>Barriers</i>	Q9. What obstacles did your community face when trying to pass the Livable/Complete Streets policy?
<i>Policy Opposition</i>	Q7. Were there any opponents of the Livable/Complete Streets policy? Why were they opposed? Q7A. How did you reach or engage these individuals/organizations? (e.g., meetings, presentations, workshops, media campaign, community events)
<i>Policy Provisions</i>	Q11. Were implementation guidelines included in the policy? Q12. Does your community have Street Design Guidelines? Q12A. If not, were Street Design Standards written into the CS/LS policy? Why or why not? Q12B. If so, were updates to the SDS included in the policy? Why or why not? Q12C. [IF HAVE SDS, ASK] Who is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the street design guidelines? Q13. What types of evaluation, if any, were included in the policy?
<i>Outreach Efforts</i>	Q8. What types of information most helped with your advocacy for a Livable/Complete Streets policy?
<i>Duration</i>	Q10. How long did the policy process take to pass LS/CS?
Implementation and outcomes	
<i>Actions Taken</i>	Q14. What actions have been taken to implement the LS/CS policy to date? IF NONE, ASK: Why do you think no actions have been taken?
<i>Facilitators</i>	Q14A. What steps have helped with the implementation of the policy?
<i>Barriers</i>	Q14B. What challenges has your community faced when implementing the policy? [probe for people: leadership issues, types of people or roles they have in the community/getting things done; probe for financing]
<i>Outcomes</i>	Q17. What outcomes did you hope your town's Livable/Complete Streets project would achieve? Q17A. What progress has been made on achieving these outcomes? Q18. What differences have been made in your community today because the LS/CS policy was passed/implemented? Q19. What outcomes would you like to see achieved in the future? Q21. Now that the law has passed, what kinds of feedback from the community have you heard?
<i>Safe Routes</i>	Q23. Have you heard of Safe Routes to School?

<i>to School</i>	Q23A. [If YES] How has this program affected your community?
<i>Measuring Progress</i>	Q17B. How is the progress of LS/CS policy being evaluated? In other words, what outcomes are being tracked? How will the policy be judged in terms of reaching “success”? Q17C. What people or organizations are responsible for tracking these outcomes? Q17D. How frequently is progress reviewed?
<i>Promotion of Livable Streets</i>	Q22. What activities have been done to communicate/promote LS/CS to the community? Q22A. In your opinion, what message(s) have been the most influential/persuasive?
<i>Lessons Learned/Best Practices</i>	Q20. In your opinion, what are the top 3 keys to the success of your community’s LS/CS policy? Q20A. In your opinion, what 3 things do you think could have been done differently while developing or implementing the LS/CS policy? Q24. If you could tell other policymakers looking to develop and implement a LS/CS policy in their community, what 2-3 pieces of advice would give them? What would you tell other communities looking to implement LS/CS policies?

Initial discussions with subject matter experts and project partners also provided a list of possible interviewees together with email addresses and phone numbers. During data collection, additional participants were identified by asking each interviewee for recommendations of other potential key informants and by reaching out to city departments and offices of potential informants. The final list consisted of approximately 38 individuals [see Table 2 for a complete community list]. Potential informants were first contacted via email explaining the purpose and format of the interview; requesting an interview or a recommendation for another informant; and including a copy of the interview questions for their review. Participants who did not respond to the initial contact received a follow-up call followed by an email. A small number of respondents (n = 8) did not respond at all. Nine respondents refused to participate due to time constraints, or they felt they were not involved enough to provide accurate information. Seven of these nine respondents provided a referral to another informant.

Twenty-one semi-structured interviews were conducted by phone between April 3 and June 6, 2013, for a response rate of 55%. All interviews were one-on-one except for one where participants from the same organization requested to be interviewed together. For the purposes of the analysis and coding, this interview was treated as two separate participants. Interviews included 26 open-ended questions and the length of time for interviews was approximately 30-90 minutes. Due to time constraints, three participants were unable to complete the interview in its entirety. Because these participants finished over half the interview, these findings were included in the analysis. Most themes and questions were pre-specified (see Table 1), but other themes were allowed to arise and clarifying questions were also asked during the interviews. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. A thematic analysis was completed by a single coder using the computer software program NVivo (QSR International, 2010). This analysis involved organizing, identifying and coding all interviews on the pre-specified themes and other themes raised by interviewees followed by identification

and coding of subthemes for these discussions. Responses for pre-specified were considered quantitatively where possible. Main themes will be detailed and described with supporting quotes when appropriate. Quotes are verbatim unless indicated by square brackets [xxx] to indicate edits or dots (. . .) to show text has been removed for the sake of brevity. To protect anonymity, names and identifying information have been removed from the quotes.

Section IV: Results

A total of 21 key informants participated in the semi-structured interviews representing 15 communities and two regional organizations. To assess differences in experiences based on community size, communities represented by interviewees were classified into five categories (i.e., small town, large town, small city, large metropolitan area, and major metropolitan area) based on 2012 Census estimates of population.² Thirty-three percent of the communities represented were large towns while twenty percent were from small towns. Communities and organizations represented by the interviewees also had different types of Livable Streets policies – three with long range plans; eight with ordinances and six with resolutions. *(Note: these do not equal the total sample size as there were multiple interviewees from some communities and organizations.)* The interviewees were representatives from several areas: public health and non-profit agencies; bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organizations and advocates; elected officials; public works and transportation planning; and public administration. See Table 2 for a summary of community characteristics.

Table 2 – Summary of community characteristics

Place	Size - 2012 est.	Town Size	Type of Policy	When LS Policy Enacted	Professional area(s) of key informant(s)
Belton	23,244	Large town	resolution	Jan. 2012	Bike/Ped Advocacy Public Works
Blue Springs	53,014	Small City	resolution	2011	Bike/Ped Advocacy
Clayton	15,910	Large town	ordinance	Jan. 2012	Elected Official
Columbia	113,225	Large metro are	ordinance	Jun. 2004	Bike/Ped Advocacy
Crystal City	4,830	Small town	ordinance	Aug. 2010	Elected Official
De Soto	6,447	Small town	ordinance	Aug. 2008	Public Administration
East-West Gateway Council of Govt, STL	n/a	Regional	Long range plan	2007	Public Works
Ferguson	21,135	Large town	ordinance	Nov. 2008	Public Works
Festus	11,740	Large town	resolution	Jun. 2010	Public Administration
Grandview	24,601	Large town	resolution	Nov. 2011	Public Works
Herculaneum	3,688	Small town	ordinance	2010	Elected official
Independence	117,270	Large metro are Major metro	resolution	Jun. 2011	Health Bike/Ped Advocacy
Kansas City	463,202	area	resolution	Jan. 2011	
Lee's Summit	92,468	Small City	ordinance	Nov. 2010	Bike/Ped Advocacy
Mid-America Regional Council,	n/a	Regional	long range plan & policy	Mar. 2012	Public Works

KC					
St. Joseph	77,176	Small City	Long range plan	2001	Public Works
		Major metro			Elected official
St. Louis City	318,172	area	ordinance	2010	

Livable Streets Policy Development

Reasons for Livable Streets policy

To understand how the Livable Streets policy process unfolded in each community or regional organization, interviewees were asked a series of questions regarding the policy process and related barriers and enablers in adopting its Livable Streets policy (refer to Table 1 above).

Catalysts for Livable Streets policies centered around seven main themes, which are summarized in Table 3 below.

Theme	# of key informants	Total # of references to theme among informants
Desire to formalize commitment to Livable Streets and make it a priority	13	20
Economic vitality and competition	10	12
Benefits for public health and safety	9	14
Increasing community accessibility and connectivity	8	15
The larger national trend toward Livable Streets	7	15
Greater awareness of Livable Streets among key decision-makers and stakeholders	5	7
Benefits for the environment	2	4

*Note: Themes are not mutually exclusive.

Among interviewees, the most frequently occurring reason for initiating the Livable Streets was that communities wanted a way to formalize what was already a priority for them – active living and the quality of life of their residents. One interviewee noted how a Livable Streets policy was a natural way of reinforcing the community’s commitment to accessibility, noting:

“It was just so natural. It’s a core value of ours. When I became aware of this program, I asked the public works program to look into it. We just educated the board and let our community know this is what we are doing and started formalizing that this is our commitment to accessibility. We didn’t really do much of anything. It just naturally flowed.”

Other interviewees discussed the desire for a formal policy to establish Livable Streets elements as a priority so they would be taken into account for future projects and take advantage of existing infrastructure.

“We are really adaptable for multimodal use but in the 1970s and 80s, we added new areas where they weren’t putting in sidewalks. A subdivision came in the late 90s and early 2000s; it didn’t have any sidewalks...At the end of the process, no one was happy with how it all turned out. The developer got away with some things – there was...no way of going back and fixing it so everybody said, ‘We don’t want that to happen again, and we would like to put sidewalks where haven’t before.’ We kind of kept with the [Livable Streets] policy and moved on it.”

Another informant stated,

“We were running from meeting to meeting of entirely volunteer group trying to make the case for non-mobile travel. We figured out after year that what we really needed to do was go to the heart of the problem and change the basic rules and policy design standards by which the streets were being built. To get the network built in a vast manner.”

Along with the often thought of environmental, public health and safety benefits of Livable Streets policies, interviewees also discussed the benefit of economic development and competition. A little less than half of the interviewees (47%) viewed a Livable Streets policy as a way to enhance the economic vitality of their community and make them more attractive to potential residents and businesses. A few interviewees highlighted the competitive advantage of a Livable Streets policy:

“It was one of the things they wanted to do to make Blue Springs more attractive and so they knew that several of cities were doing CS across metro areas – those are the kinds of things if you’re a city and have a citizen’s committee and you’re working on these things you look around at what other cities are doing.”

Almost half of interviewees saw a Livable Streets policy as a way to enhance economic vitality in their community.

“There was a little bit of a competitive spirit. The city saw one suburb did it first, and the city likes to think of itself as being pretty progressive and forward thinking...so there was some good natured competition going on within the region.”

“We don’t want Belton to be at a competitive disadvantage with the other cities in the metro area...We want to have a level playing field for everyone and all to have the same general standards for Complete Streets.”

“The main reason...is a revitalization of Grandview. In the past 30 years, we’ve been in a slump. In 2008 or 2009, we made *Forbes* [list of] 10 fastest dying cities in the country...Since then we’ve been trying to make *Forbes* eat their words.”

Overall, most respondents recalled the policy process being relatively quick. Over half of interviewees (57%) recalled the policy process taking less than a year while 19 percent said it took over a year. Estimates of the length of the policy process ranged from as little as two months to as long as 4 years. See Table 4 below.

For most interviewees, the policy process was relatively quick – 57% said it took less than a year.

Estimated length	# of key informants
Less than 1 year	4
1 year or more	12
Not sure/unanswered	5

Facilitators and barriers

Facilitators and barriers were also discussed with interviewees. Perspectives on enablers centered around four main themes: policy flexibility, funding, supportive plans and policies, and individual or group champions (see Table 5 below).

Theme	# of key informants	Total # of references to theme among informants
Champion groups or people	12	19
Other supportive plans or policies	11	18
Funding	9	13
Policy flexibility	4	5

Most interviewees mentioned the importance of champions – either individuals or groups - in facilitating the passing a Livable Streets policy in their community. While interviewees identified external groups like Trailnet, PedNet or local health organizations (e.g., LiveWell Ferguson, KC Healthy Kids) as important enablers, informants also spoke to the importance of having “right people at the table to lead these discussions” and internal support among local government officials and city staff. (See Table 6 below for a summary of supporters mentioned by informants.) A few interviewees also reflected on how champion support was not only helpful in getting initiating and passing the policy but also in developing the language and the policy itself, saying:

“[Trailnet] was able to help in writing the policy and providing examples of other Complete Street policies.”

“Some of the city staff members from planning and public works were also helpful in reviewing the language and the policy.”

Table 6: Supporters of Livable Streets policies

Supporter	# of key informants	Total # of references among informants
Businesses	3	3
City staff	2	3
Elected Officials (e.g., councilman, alderman, mayors)	9	14
Health orgs./groups (e.g., local health dept., KC Healthy Kids, Live Well Ferguson)	9	10
MODOT	2	2
Other	4	9
Parks Dept.	4	4
Public Works, planning development	6	7
Schools	5	5
Social service groups/orgs.	2	6
Trailnet	6	6
Other Bicycle/Pedestrian advocacy orgs./groups	6	11

Another important facilitator identified by informants concerned the policy environment and the presence of other policies and plans that were supportive of Livable Streets principles such as master plans (e.g., transportation, trails, bicycle, pedestrian); development and redevelopment codes; city strategic plans; and other street improvement projects. With a policy and regulatory environment already moving toward supporting livable, accessible communities, a Livable Streets policy seemed to be a logical way to bring these policies and plans together. One interviewee explained:

“It was more, to some extent, an aggregation of a lot of different policy foundations in place so the city took it [Livable Streets policy] as an opportunity to wrap all existing policy frameworks into one packet, create synergy...and pull all paths together into one...sort of one overall statement of intent.”

Another important policy element that facilitated Livable Streets policy adoption was incorporating some flexibility into the policy. According to informants, elected officials, developers and other important groups for policy adoption tended to be more receptive if they felt like they were not “locked in.” **Interviewees indicated policies that encouraged but did not require Livable Streets elements made it much easier to get buy-in** with one interviewee saying:

“In 2008 or 2009, we made *Forbes* [list of] 10 fastest dying cities in the country... Since then we’ve been trying to make *Forbes* eat their words.”

“The way our policy is written up it says the city will review policies for CS initiatives. We will not require but encourage. We have a site review committee who looks at projects...but it’s completely voluntary. This made it much easier to get buy-in so there were no major obstacles.”

The availability of funding either through grants, stimulus funds or other source was also an impetus for communities to pursue a Livable Streets policy with nine informants mentioning it as a facilitator to policy development. Interviewees were not asked about their specific funding sources, but some did mention their sources of grants and funding. These included:

- Federal sources of funding such as grants (e.g., Surface Transportation Program grants), stimulus money and transportation funds;
- State grants and transportation funds;
- City funding, e.g., from transportation budget, passing a local sales tax;
- Grants from regional transportation planning organizations such as Mid-America Regional Council and East-West Gateway Council of Governments; and non-profit organizations such as Missouri Foundation for Health, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Trailnet.

Top 4 Facilitators to advancing a Livable Streets policy:

- Champions
- Supporting policies and plans
- Funding
- Policy flexibility

Interestingly, themes emerging about facilitators were also quite similar to those that were identified as barriers during the policy process. These included resource constraints such as finances and time, policy language, resistant groups, and trying to institute a new way of doing things. (See Table 7 below for a summary of barriers identified by informants.)

Barriers	# of key informants	Total # of references among informants
Financial concerns	9	12
Lack of acceptance for change	7	12
No obstacles	6	7
Policy language	3	6
Time	2	3

While funding was a catalyst for some communities to take up the issue of Livable Streets, interviewees also discussed costs and the allocation of funding to Livable Streets projects as a barrier. Though most informants didn’t identify any organized or major opponents to a Livable Streets policy, they did mention some resistance and concerns among decision-makers and developers regarding the costs and long-term financial impact. (See Table 8 for a summary of the opponents identified by informants.) Resistance to a Livable Streets policy among the aforementioned groups and community residents was also identified as a barrier by several informants, largely because it was a new and progressive idea. Difficulties arising from trying to

Flexible Livable Streets policies have tradeoffs – flexibility can help increase buy-in but can also give policies less “teeth.”

adopt a “new way of doing things” were frequently discussed among informants representing large towns with an ordinance. These informants explained:

“Our folks in Raytown are set in doing things a certain way. Too much change from the current status quo makes people kind of afraid about how it’s going to be done differently.”

“[Developers and the Public Works departments] are sort of used to doing things their own way, and these projects are usually a very different approach than how they are used to doing things. If they didn’t participate in the planning process, they may not know why decisions were made it might not make sense to them so you need to control for that sort of pushback.”

Table 8 – Groups resistant to Livable Streets policy

Resistant groups	# of key informants	Total # of references among informants
City Staff	3	3
Community	4	4
Developers, business owners	4	8
MODOT	1	2
No opponents	12	14
Other*	5	6
School	1	3

*These responses were too general or too few to categorize. There was one mention of someone in the media.

Surprisingly, over a quarter (29%) of informants said that there weren’t any obstacles while developing the policy, which may explain the quick adoption of Livable Streets policies in some communities mentioned earlier. This may also be reflective of the type of policy passed (ordinance vs. resolution vs. long range plan). Five out of the six informants who said there were no obstacles were from communities that passed resolutions, which could be reflective of the importance of policy flexibility and language. While incorporating flexibility into a policy was identified as an enabler, a few respondents also considered this flexibility a barrier as one interviewee described:

“We ended up writing a resolution – and a lot of city council said it ended up sounding like an ordinance- because it said the city do this which means it’s kind of a law. We had to soften those things in order to placate the city council to make it something they would pass...[the policy] doesn’t have as much teeth but does make a fairly strong statement. We had to go back and forth with city council.”

Clarity of policy language was also a component of this theme with informants commenting on difficulties reaching consensus on and disagreement over the definitions of words such as roadways, street and complete. Informants described some stakeholders (e.g., developers, MODOT, transportation engineers) as viewing streets as a way to *cars* from one point to another. Proponents of Livable Streets (including informants) were said to view streets as serving more than automobiles but every form of transit from biking to walking to buses. Differences were also noted on the reasons for making changes or improvements to roads with

some stakeholders described as viewing road improvements to alleviate car traffic and others viewing them as a way to improve accessibility and connectivity.

Media outreach through social media, press releases, websites and newspaper articles played a key role in advocacy strategies.

Informants also noted general confusion around language and terminology of Complete/Livable Streets as well as differing views of transportation. These issues were categorized as separate themes as they came up quite frequently during interviews in general not solely when participants were asked about policy elements. Eleven informants brought up issues with terminology 27 times.

These informants mentioned the terminology associated with Complete or Livable Streets was confusing and interpretations of the language tended to vary among different stakeholders and communities as illustrated by the following examples:

“People like the connectivity. That’s what the general public likes...not so much that it’s complete streets. We hear about that quite a bit. They don’t know so much about complete streets or what it is but like that everything is connected by sidewalks or walking trails.”

“[The] only sticking point was terminology - some folks really wanted to use the term Livable Streets term instead of complete streets. It has a different connotation...that engineers are building incomplete streets or insufficient streets. They wanted to emphasize the livability instead of the completeness.”

Informants noted confusion among the public regarding Livable versus Complete Streets; however, most disagreements and misunderstandings regarding terminology tended to be referenced in the context of discussions with decision-makers such as elected officials and city staff. To overcome this issue, address other concerns that arose, and gain policy support, informants discussed a number of outreach efforts and helpful

Top barriers to passing a Livable Streets policy:

- Financial concerns
- Lack of acceptance for change
- No obstacles
- Policy language
- Time

information. Though asked about separate efforts for opponents and supporters, informants did not identify any differing strategies between the groups. These results are summarized in Table 9 below.

Table 9 – Outreach methods and types of information		
Outreach methods	# of key informants	# of references among informants
Meeting w. key stakeholders	10	16
Presentations, workshops	9	15
Educational materials	8	11
Media (e.g., social networks, websites, press releases, newspaper articles)	7	18
Other (i.e., non-specific community engagement)	7	7
Demos, samples (e.g., streetscapes, Better Block)	6	8
Community programs, events (e.g., Walk In, Bike In, community tours, block parties, walk to school days)	6	11
Public meetings	4	6
Surveys	2	2
Types of info		
Health, Safety	13	23
Livable Streets policy - what is, how works	12	18
Economic	8	11
Community changes	7	10
Models, how it's worked in other places	7	10
Other (e.g., testimonies, walkability checklist)	4	5
Environment	2	2

While interviewees were not asked about the specific sources of information and outreach conducted, some participants did mention where they obtained helpful resources. Some informants specifically identified the resources from the Missouri Livable Streets website and workshops as helpful sources of information for their outreach efforts. Another frequently mentioned source of information was the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) with a few informants mentioning the MARC handbook and trainings as useful outreach resources.

Specific provisions included in Livable Streets policy
 Informants were also asked questions about more specific policy provisions such as implementation and streets design guidelines and evaluation requirements.

Terms “livable” or “complete streets” were sometimes confusing and misinterpreted both in policy development and outreach efforts.

Implementation guidelines were discussed with 17 respondents and a little more than half (ten total) said their community's Livable Streets policy included implementation guidelines. Five informants said they were not included and two were not sure. When asked about the reasons for not including these guidelines, informants once again brought up wanting to "leave the policy open" to gain buy-in. Among informants who said implementation guidelines were included, the level of detail given about them, however, was mixed. For example, a few respondents knew they were included but couldn't speak to their scope or the specific strategies they entailed. Other respondents were able to provide a little more detail on implementation guidelines as far as what Livable Streets elements and other policies should be taken into account as illustrated by one interviewee's description:

"There are some [implementation guidelines]...They talk about how you take into account the balance and mode and context of the community, environmental sensitivity, costs, budget...They mentioned the unified development ordinance, the public works manual, the city's comprehensive plan; the traffic code, relative ordinances and...it should all be incorporated as applicable and appropriate."

In general, about half of respondents (ten) mentioned their Livable Streets policy includes some language that requires or encourages consideration of livable/complete streets and the needs of all potential users on development and/or redevelopment projects. Several interviewees mentioned how their policies also included a review process such as checklist or advisory committees to help facilitate and ensure the inclusion of Livable Streets elements in the planning and design process. A few interviews talked about how their policies took this review process a step further by requiring submission of a report outlining the costs, benefits, feasibility of including Livable Streets elements and a justification for their exclusion. For one interviewee, the inclusion of such a provision helped give the community's resolution "some teeth."

Defining a review process like checklists or an advisory committee can help ensure policy compliance and strengthen elective policies.

When asked about Street Design Standards, twelve of 21 respondents said that their communities have them but only five informants said these were updated or included in their Livable Streets policy. Interviewees who said they were not updated were asked to elaborate on reasons for not doing so. Specific reasons discussed included:

- Updates had been recently made through other plans or ordinances (e.g., transportation master plans or zoning ordinances);
- To keep the policy flexible in order to foster buy-in among decision-makers; and
- Confusion about what street design guidelines entail.

According to most respondents, the responsibility for overseeing Street Design Standards generally involved a team of individuals mostly from areas of public works, city administration, transportation, and planning and development. (See summary table 10 below.) Related to

Street Design Standards, informants were asked about their familiarity with resources from National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) and American Association of State Highway and Transportation Offices (AASHTO). Most interviewees were familiar with these resources (14 informants), but some found them more useful than others, which tended to vary by the interviewees’ professional position. For example, those more closely involved in planning, transportation and public works mentioned using or referring to resources from NACTO and AASHTO frequently in their work with Livable Streets. Some informants – who tended to be elected officials, in health fields, or bicycle/pedestrian advocacy – seemed to find them less useful, too jargon laden, or beyond their expertise. A few respondents also commented on the importance of Street Design Standards and mentioned them as an element they are working toward incorporating in their Livable Streets policies.

Who oversees	# of key informants	Total # of references among informants
City Administrator or Manager	3	3
Planning and development	4	4
Public Works	6	8

Another specific policy element asked about in interviews concerned the incorporation of evaluation or performance standards. Of the 21 informants, 14 said there was no evaluation included in their community’s Livable Streets policy while four informants said there was and three were unsure. Of the 14 respondents, most seemed to recognize the importance of and need for evaluation. When probed further about reasons for not including any evaluation provisions, informants discussed issues such as not knowing what to evaluate; not having the resources for evaluation; and a desire to not make the policy over burdensome. Optimistically, most of these informants expressed a desire to incorporate it in the future, and a few indicated they are in the process of developing evaluation measures.

Implementation and outcomes

Implementation so far

All informants described actions taken to implement the Livable Streets policies in their communities. Specific examples ranged from completing pre-project reviews to trails and sidewalk improvements, to adopting other supportive policies and plans. Among respondents, sidewalk improvements were the most frequently mentioned followed by policy integration and additional policy adoption. This latter theme included informants’ comments regarding how the Livable Streets policy has been incorporated into community

<u>Top Implementation Actions To</u>
<u>Date</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sidewalk improvements ● Policy integration ● Adoption of supportive policies.

operations along with references to the adoption of other supportive plans and policies (e.g., form based code or bicycle transportation plan) as demonstrated by the following comments:

“The city in the process of rewriting and updating all of the neighborhood area plans. They have divided city into chunks...Five, six neighborhoods at a time...and they do the area plan for that sector. All components of the Livable Streets plan (walk, bike, climate protection) are included at...a neighborhood level. Those plans are looking for a way to support the Livable Streets policy.”

“We continue to make this a priority in our budget. It’s planned into our daily operation. It’s not an afterthought.”

Actions taken so far are summarized in Table 11.

Actions taken	# of key informants	Total # of references among informants
Sidewalk Improvements	9	15
Policy integration or additional policy, plan adoption	8	13
Road redesign (e.g., road diets, changes to lanes, add connectors)	8	12
Bike-friendly measures (e.g., bike lanes, bike racks, intersection redesign)	7	10
Other (e.g., created map, rain gardens, angle parking, green developments)	5	6
Completed Pre- project Reviews	5	9
Signs and/or lighting	4	7
Sought additional grant funding	3	3
Trail additions or improvements	3	4
Addition of trees or shrubbery	3	3
Crosswalks	2	3
Total actions taken so far	20	85

Actions taken so far to implement the Livable Streets policies were compared by policy type and town size. Interestingly, informants representing large towns had more mentions of actions taken to implement overall (32 mentions of improvements total versus six mentioned in small

“Implementation means very different things for very different projects.”

cities) with most occurring in the domains of policy integration and road redesign. Conversely, informants from small towns reported more actions taken in the areas of sidewalk improvements and additions of signs and lighting compared to larger towns and places of different sizes. Further, informants representing towns from

communities with ordinances had considerably more references to implementation actions. Informants from areas with an ordinance mentioned implementation actions 58 times compared to 17 among those representing areas with a resolution and ten for those with a long-range plan.

Implementation facilitators and barriers

Continued support and buy-in from key stakeholders was surprisingly mentioned more frequently than funding – the second most frequently mentioned enabler. This facilitator was similarly important across policy types and town sizes with three out of four informants identified key stakeholder support as invaluable for continued momentum for implementation, saying:

“If [we] didn’t have buy-in from public works, community development, and the health department and [they] didn’t want to do it, our hands would be tied.”

“What has been very helpful in our city is the strong support of the city staff and several city council members. [They’re] involved on a day to day basis, and city council members are very familiar with the policy and very supportive of it...so they will point out at council level meetings things that we need to do to be consistent with the policy.”

After key stakeholder support and funding, informants further talked about how having a review process or advisory committee has helped along implementation. This was found to be particularly important among towns with resolutions rather than an ordinance as one interviewee from a community with a resolution noted:

“The primary vehicle [has been] the advisory committee – both citizens and technical committee. They review projects as they come through the development process and the annual capital improvements plan. It’s a continual process of looking for opportunities to include bike and ped facilities. They assure that and check for compliance.”

Continued key stakeholder support and funding were considered top enablers of implementation. Surprisingly, funding was talked about half as much as stakeholder support.

Another theme worthy of note is a small number of informants discussed how their Livable Streets policy itself has been helpful in facilitating implementation, particularly if an issue arises among decision-makers within the community or when working with external partners such as MODOT. It was stated that the policy was helpful guidance to refer back to and a source of “leverage for negotiating good plans and solutions.” A community’s Livable Streets policy itself is not only an important enabler of implementation but also making sure it is aligned with other supportive plans and policies as one informant said:

“[For] a larger city like ours...it's the city government, county government, and the metropolitan organization...decisions are made at all of these levels. If you

have policy in place at each of those levels, [then] you’re much more likely to see progress...It's really important that all of the city and suburbs all have some alignment in terms of policy...Having that kind of alignment all up and down the funding chain really helps...Each of those levels have own standards and criteria for how that money is spent so having a vertically integrated policy is a big help.”

Implementation facilitators are summarized in Table 12.

Facilitators Implementation	# of key informants	Total # of references among informants
Continued key stakeholder support	15	23
Funding	8	11
Review process or committee	7	10
Having a good plan or design	5	6
Continued communication	4	5
Other (e.g., publicity, knowledgeable traffic engineer, unused land)	4	4
The policy itself as leverage	4	6
Integration in community operations	3	4
Support, guidance from other communities	2	2
Other supportive plans and policies	2	3

While some themes were viewed as enablers of implementation, they were also identified as barriers by others. The primary barrier to implementation identified among participants is finding funding for Livable Streets projects either within their own community’s budgets or from external sources. Several informants felt that this difficulty stemmed from the allocation of transportation funding and the definition of “transportation,” raising the issue that most “transportation dollars [are] exclusively geared toward interstates and highways.” These discussions also brought up issues with a lack of support from key stakeholders, particularly at state and county levels and when jurisdictional issues arise. Another significant barrier brought up by informants that intensifies funding issues was infrastructure constraints. Because some areas are older and don’t have much room for development, some informants stated it can be “physically difficult to put in sidewalks or bike lanes” and “meet all these different standards, federal guidelines and beautification standards that people would want.” As one interviewee aptly said, **“Implementation means very different things for very different projects.”** Because of these varying infrastructures not just between but also within communities, informants reiterated the importance and need for a flexible policy. Table 13 below summarizes the implementation barriers identified by informants.

Barriers	# of key informants	# of references among informants
Funding (allocation, lack of)	10	16
Lack of support from key stakeholders	9	11
Limited Infrastructure	8	11
Differing view on transportation, purpose of road	7	9
Overlapping or no jurisdiction	5	7
Meeting standards	4	4
Other (e.g., not knowing what to do next, little redevelopment, bike rider antagonism)	3	3
Time	3	4

During discussions about implementation, informants were also asked to identify who was responsible for its oversight. While most mentioned multiple positions or departments responsible, public works departments were most frequently identified as being involved in overseeing implementation. Table 14 below summarizes these findings.

Position responsible	# of key informants	# of references among informants
Public Works staff	13	16
Other (e.g., parks and rec staff, building officials, consultants)	8	12
Planning and Development staff	7	8
City Administrator or manager	6	8
Engineers	5	6
Board Alderman or City Council	4	4

Overcoming challenges

When asked about how challenges and barriers were overcome, informants identified several solutions – most of which were also identified as enablers (e.g., policy flexibility, using the Livable Streets policy as leverage) during policy development and implementation. Of the solutions identified, communication and education were mentioned most frequently among informants. Many noted that continuous, open communication and education was not only invaluable in overcoming barriers, such as the confusion over Livable Streets terminology, but also in “identify[ing] these problems ahead of time.” Some indicated that communicating openly and frequently about “what’s happening and why it’s happening” with stakeholders was a main reason why they did not experience any organized or powerful opposition or any major obstacles during the policy process. This strategy was also likely a critical element in

establishing the partnerships informants discussed as an important factor in overcoming obstacles. For example, one interviewee described:

“Community development and the health dept. have been going to meetings together so we are all hearing the same message [and] can convey [it] back to developers and city council to make sure they understand how important it is to not let little things slip by.”

The partnerships that helped overcome challenges were similar to those discussed in Table 6. Aside from partnerships with elected officials and city staff in planning, community development or public health, the partners also identified as helping overcome obstacles included: bicycle/pedestrian advocacy organizations such as Trailnet, the Missouri Bicycle and Pedestrian Federation, and PedNet; county government and staff; local churches and schools; and health organizations and advocacy groups.

Open, frequent communication with stakeholders about “what’s happening and why it’s happening” was credited for the lack of organized opposition or other major obstacles during the policy process.

Only one key informant mentioned that there hadn’t been a solution to overcoming the infrastructure limitations because “there’s just not a lot of room to improve the situation.”

Table 15 summarizes the different ways informants overcame challenges.

Table 15 Overcoming challenges		
How challenges were overcome	# of informants	# of references among informants
Communication or Education	9	15
Partnerships	5	7
Flexibility in Policy	4	4
Using Livable Streets policy as leverage to negotiate a solution	4	5
Other (e.g., new staff, pilot program, road diet plan)	3	4
Conducted analysis to counter claims	2	3
Funding	2	2
No solutions yet	1	1

Outcomes: present and future

At the start of their journeys toward becoming Livable Streets communities, informants hoped to bring a number of the benefits associated with multi-modal, livable design. Some specific examples included improvements in bicycle and pedestrian safety; more and better sidewalks; increased connectivity and accessibility and revitalization of their community. All interviewees spoke of some progress being made toward these desired outcomes. Most informants reported making progress through sidewalks, which included adding new and repairing old sidewalks; improved maintenance; creating a network of sidewalks; widening; and incorporating sidewalk projects into the budget. Other major areas of progress identified by informants included increases in multi-modal transportation; increased connectivity and accessibility (e.g., greater emphasis on accommodating persons with disabilities); improved connection between parks and different areas within the community; and enhanced economic activity (e.g., more development, increased sales tax revenues; increased occupancy in business districts). Table 16 summarizes the outcome areas where informants have observed progress.

Table 16 – Outcome areas where informants have seen progress		
Outcome areas	# of key informants	# of references among informants
Sidewalk additions, improvements	9	13
Increased connectivity, accessibility	8	9
More people using active transportation (i.e., biking and walking)	8	10
Enhanced economic activity/development	7	9
Bicycle accommodations	6	10
Increased pedestrian safety	6	7
Signs, lighting added or improved	5	6
Trail additions, improvements	4	6
Increased awareness of Livable Streets	3	4
Environment (e.g., reduced impervious pavement, less noise pollution)	3	5
Other (e.g., increased awareness, improved transit facilities, successful grant applications)	3	5
Street beautification elements added	3	3
Sense of community	3	5
Changes to roads (e.g., narrower lanes, geometric changes, new or expanded streets)	2	3

Most informants stated their community’s response has been positive and supportive of Livable Streets efforts and outcomes. One informant highlighted results from a web survey of community residents reporting that “92% are in favor; only 8% don’t care for it.” A few respondents who had experienced largely positive feedback noted that if there is unfavorable feedback that the comment is usually “why aren’t you building them faster?” Other

respondents experienced some negative feedback. Specific examples included complaints regarding increased bicycle/foot traffic, slower speeds, and disruption of car traffic, as well as views expressing little desire or need for change.

Overall, most informants were optimistic and about half noted an encouraging culture and attitude change not only among community residents but also among key policy stakeholders (e.g., city staff, developers, elected officials). Interviewees gave a variety of examples of this “good mindset shift”:

“[Livable Streets] has now become a standard. There’s a shift in culture and priority in the street department. Their priority has been in moving cars through...not looking at other ways we use the street...to connect neighborhoods and parks. It expands your thinking about the street’s purpose and those who use it.”

“The expectation that we’re going to have complete streets [is a] big difference. That has already been accepted by the populace. We are just automatically considering Complete Streets.”

“The meeting we had today with MODOT is probably much different than it would have been 10-15 years ago. They were really much more open to talking to us about adding bicycle lanes or dedicated bicycle lanes or share the road and putting up signage. [The Livable Streets policy] is helping to change the conversation which...is a really awesome thing.”

“In the past...planners would be looking for ways to get out of it [Complete Streets] – to cut the bike lane or not build the trail. Now...those folks are looking for ways to include [Complete Streets]. We are starting to see projects...asking for bike lanes in places where the city has never intended to have [them]...People have embraced it and are trying to find ways to include it.”

Informants also discussed outcomes they’d like to see achieved in the future. Many said they’d like to see “a continuation of the improvements that have been made” with most also stating they’d like to see faster progress and even more projects with complete streets elements. Informants also mentioned how they’d like to see more connectivity and accessibility with some discussing specific ways they’d like to or are planning to achieve that, for example:

“We are going to enhance the bike lanes...further defining bike lanes with color concrete. I would like to see dedicated bike lane separated by actual curbs.”

“A bigger commitment to sidewalks [and] where they fill in sidewalks...I want to see more multiuse paths on both sides of the streets; I want to see more of an emphasis on sidewalk repairs.”

“We’re working on trails hoping this will help get people to the trails; the streets will become part of the trails.”

A few respondents stated they'd like to see other policies and plans implemented such as a form-based code; Livable Streets policy adoption by county level or other local governments; and adoption of design standards. Some respondents also recognized the need to continually revise and update their Livable Streets policy. There was also intent expressed to correct some of the issues raised in the interviews (e.g., lack of street design standards, better tracking/evaluation, clarifying the terms livable/complete streets). In a similar vein, informants also mentioned that they'd like to see greater integration of Livable Streets into budgets and the community.

Another aspect some informants said they would like to see achieved in the future is the implementation (or in some cases, re-implementation) of Safe Routes to School programs. All 15 respondents who were asked about Safe Routes to School had heard of the program. However, a little less than half of the informants lived in communities with a Safe Routes to School program, but this is not for lack of trying. Some of the informants elaborated on their views for why Safe Routes to School wasn't present in their communities. The two main reasons brought up were: (1) a lack of buy-in from schools, school districts and parents; and (2) difficulty obtaining or keeping funding for the program. A few discussed how they are actively continuing to pursue funding for it because they believe it's an important to their Livable Streets efforts. Informants who did have Safe Route programs in their community talked quite favorably about the impact it has had in their community bringing improved or new sidewalks, crosswalk, and more kids who bike and walk to and from school.

Measuring progress

In the discussions about outcomes, most informants spoke of progress generally but some were able to give quantitative figures on their community's progress. For example:

"We've seen trail usage go up by 700%. We've seen in one section over 400,000 users a year."

"Fifteen miles of sidewalks [have been] constructed. Thirty-three at my last check for new pedestrian crosswalks constructed. We've re-painted over 200 crosswalks right before school."

"We are watching occupancy along Main Street. We [have] nearly 100% occupancy."

Aside from the two regional organizations represented Mid-America Regional Council and East/West Gateway, there seemed to be an imprecise vision of performance indicators and evaluation plans. Many informants gave indications of some type of evaluation or progress measurement happening in their community but how formalized this process was tended to vary. Some informants mentioned using checklists to assess compliance while others mentioned informal updates as necessary at internal meetings. Table 17 summarizes indicators informant's communities currently track.

Current Indicators	# of informants	# of references by informants
Community feedback (e.g., perceptions of barriers, satisfaction)	3	3
Economic activity (e.g., occupancy, economic impact)	2	2
Health, safety indicators (e.g., BMI, traffic accidents)	2	2
Other (e.g., meeting attendance, better care for property)	3	3
General policy, plan compliance	4	11
Bike lanes, Biking and walking activity	5	5
Crosswalks	1	2
Number projects initiated or completed	4	4
Multimodal lane miles	1	1
Sidewalk (e.g., miles of, constructed, repairs)	6	6
Trail (e.g., use, miles of, constructed)	4	4

Current measures

Overall, there seemed to be a general sense that there was no formalized, coordinated system or plan guiding a policy’s degree of implementation or success. **Two separate views regarding evaluation seemed to emerge: (1) to measure the success of the policy; and (2) to fulfill grant requirements. Many informants didn’t seem to view these as one in the same.** For example, when asked about evaluation early in the interview, some informants would say there wasn’t any but then later when asked about how progress is being tracked, they would reveal evaluation was being implemented for grant purposes. Examples included:

“There is some tracking but it’s more for purpose of grant reporting not so much tracking for the work of the city.”

“There’s evaluation included for our grant but there was nothing written into the policy.”

“The policy itself didn’t require evaluation of traffic counts or [the] like. Those things have been done as part of other grants...we have good numbers on how ...walking and biking have increased but it was not built into for this policy.”

Informants’ responses didn’t clearly point to a reason why evaluation done for the purpose of grant reporting seemed to be viewed differently than evaluation tracking the success of the policy. Rather, this observation emerged during coding and warrants further exploration in order to understand the factors influencing these views. One potential explanation could be that evaluation for the grant was likely required whereas those measuring the success of a

Livable Streets policy were more often not. Few communities required evaluation or tracking in their Livable Streets policies, and informants explained this was to avoid creating an overly burdensome policy. Perhaps, the mere presence of a mandate influenced the differing views around evaluation. Informants also referred to an uncertainty about what or how to measure policy success. It is possible this lack of knowledge may have contributed to participants' different views of evaluation for grant-funded projects and the policy itself because they were simply unaware of the similarities and differences.

Though not written into the policy or a formalized process outside of grant funding procedures, commentary did suggest many saw the value and need for evaluation, especially as they get further into the implementation process. Some interviewees also discussed future plans for developing formal tracking measures and incorporating evaluation components into their policies. Most of these plans included more rigorous evaluation of incorporation of Livable Streets and compliance with standards. Some specific examples of future evaluation plans and measures included pedestrian traffic measures; creating a scoring system/checklist for Livable Streets projects; process assessment of developing project scope; baseline infrastructure assessments; storm water run-off; number of Livable Streets projects in progress or completed; and compliance with design standards.

“We’ve seen trail usage go up by 700%. We’ve seen in one section over 400,000 users a year.”

Keys to success

Finally, informants were asked to summarize the ‘keys to success’ for their community and provide some advice to communities who might be interested in adopting a Livable Streets policy.

These keys to policy success are summarized in Table 18. Most informants said support from and engagement with key stakeholders was crucial factors to successfully developing and implementing a Livable Streets policy. Interviewees touched on the “importance of cast[ing] a wide net cast” when gaining support as illustrated by one informant’s comment:

“The larger the voice or the bigger the group you have working toward or advancing this thing, the more durable or [easy to implement] it will be.”

The significance of public support was also discussed among informants with a few respondents describing that gaining public buy-in was often a key first step to getting the support of decision-makers and other internal stakeholders. For example:

“Citizen involvement is key...City Council doesn’t just want to be one group or person coming and wanting this. It needs to be a community wide deal.”

“And they have a broad buy-in from their communities. It’s really important. You’re never going to get everybody on board but that you have a large group of people who are. “

“I think elected officials should know this isn’t necessarily something people bring up spontaneously - people really like [Livable Streets policies]. Use it as a way to drive the long-term policy. These plans have been very popular with people.”

Public buy-in for a Livable Streets policy is a key first step to getting of decision-maker and other internal stakeholder support.

Table 18 – Keys to Success		
Keys to Success	# of key informants	# of mentions among informants
Key stakeholder support	15	31
Engagement with stakeholders, public	12	15
Funding	8	8
Public support	8	10
Policies and plans that support	8	9
Valued among key stakeholders, public	8	14
Flexibility in policy	5	7
Review committee	4	4
Follow good models of Livable Streets	4	4
Other (e.g., good designer/engineer; timing; desire for different approach)	4	4
Incremental implementation	2	3

Important to this process of gaining public and key stakeholder support, according to informants, is having a cohesive, coordinated engagement that clearly outlines what it means for a street to be complete or livable and why it’s of value to the community and to internal stakeholders. One way to achieve this mentioned by informants is to have a “knowledgeable,” “well-connected” champion who is “willing to listen to both sides but be able to think fast and on their feet to help guide comments that are sometimes aren’t accurate [constructively]. Informants described a number of other important qualities for a Livable Streets leader or advocate to possess, which is summarized in Tables 19 below.

Leadership Qualities	# of key informants	# of mentions among informants
Connected in the community	6	6
Credible	4	4
Flexible, open to compromise	5	7
Good communicator	6	6
Knowledgeable (e.g., about Livable Streets, how government works)	6	6
Other (e.g., eligible grant recipient, has sources of revenue, charisma)	2	3
Passionate	4	4
Sees benefits, value in Livable Streets	5	6
Tenacity	5	5

Section V: Discussion

The in-depth interviews with Missouri stakeholders involved with Livable Streets policies provide a rich description and exploration of the factors and context influencing their development and implementation. Many of the facilitators and barriers identified among informants in Missouri communities were consistent with other research and case studies on the enablers and challenges in developing and implementing active transit policies³⁻⁷. For example, the 2011 Missouri Livable Streets Advocacy Manual emphasizes the importance of champions and stakeholder engagement when working toward a Livable Streets policy.⁴ The interview findings confirmed the significance of champion groups and individuals not only during policy development but also during implementation. Many informants identified the continued communication and buy-in facilitated by champions and multi-disciplinary partnerships as crucial factor for keeping momentum up for implementation.

A 2011 study by Evenson and colleagues identified several barriers to the implementation of walking and bicycling projects in North Carolina. These issues in the areas of funding and staffing; infrastructure priorities; community, regional, and state support; land use and development; and policies (e.g., supported by other regional, state, or local plans).⁷ Informants in our evaluation identified barriers in each of these areas. Funding and economic issues emerged a number of times on different points of discussion (e.g., policy development, opponents, implementation, outcomes) during the interviews. Demonstrating the intersecting and complex nature of the barriers identified, discussions about funding raised issues about limited infrastructure, varying priorities for transportation improvements, and struggles over differing views of traffic and streets. Several informants expressed frustration over the allocation of transportation funding and the precedence automobile-friendly transportation seems to take over multi-modal transit. Consistent with Evenson et al.’s findings, this seemed to evoke feelings of a lack of support from county and state level stakeholders among

informants.⁷ However, this seemed markedly decreased compared to a previous round of key informant interviews completed by the HCRC in 2010 as part of the initial Livable Streets contract. While there were some negative comments in the current study about the relationship with MODOT, there were also quite a few more positive ones with interviewees noting a greater willingness and attitude change.

The importance of the interplay between different levels of government and policies also emerged in discussions about facilitators and keys to success. Commitments to active transportation through different types of master plans (e.g., transportation, trails, bicycle, pedestrian); development and redevelopment codes; city strategic plans; and other street improvement projects were identified by informants as both an important catalyst and enabler of implementation.

Another important barrier identified by respondents were issues over the language and terminology used to engage and inform stakeholders about Livable Streets and draft related policy. About half of the informants described confusion or misunderstandings around the terms “livable” or “complete” because people didn’t know or weren’t used to the concepts. Some interviewees noted helpful ways to overcome this issue, which included not using the terms livable or complete; familiarizing stakeholders with the terms through educational communications; and talking about the concepts in terms of designing streets to meet the needs of all users. This latter type of message was described by one participant:

At different points, even within a single day, sometimes we’re cyclists, pedestrians, drivers, transit users but....it’s just as a person you are [one of these]...we are these different [users] at different times.

Despite these issues with defining terms, over half of the informants noted changes in attitude toward active transportation concepts and efforts not only among community residents but also key stakeholders such as elected officials and city staff. This could be an encouraging sign of more favorable community climates around Livable Streets in Missouri.⁸ However, when considered with funding issues discussed by informants; it appears this attitude change only goes so far. As demonstrated by Clark and colleagues’ interviews of stakeholders involved in the development of walkable neighborhoods, this could suggest a reluctance to fund active transportation initiatives even though they are becoming more widely accepted.⁵ **Further qualitative or quantitative research could explore this and other elements of community readiness (e.g., community climate) in communities that have not adopted a Livable Streets policy.**

Regarding Livable Streets policy elements, the interview findings do point to a few areas where Missouri’s Livable Streets communities could improve and use some guidance. Smart Growth America makes several recommendations for writing a strong Complete Streets policy, which includes a setting a vision; including all modes and users; applies to new and retrofit projects; emphasizes connectivity; applies to all phases of applicable projects; specifies and limits exceptions; uses latest and best design criteria and guidelines; is context-sensitive; sets

performance standards; and includes implementation steps.⁹ In discussions about specific policy elements, many informants made some mention about the need for a clear vision; the importance of context-sensitivity; limiting exemptions; applications to new and retrofit projects; and connectivity naturally merged and respondents discussed them confidently.

However, more pointed questions about implementation guidelines, evaluation and street design standards revealed a little more uncertainty about their inclusion and scope.

Most informants said implementation guidelines were included in their policy but some said they were not included in order to “leave the policy open” and flexible in order to gain buy-in from key stakeholders. A similar response was given when asked about the inclusion of Street Design Standards. Twelve of 21 respondents said that their communities have them but only five informants said these were updated or included in their Livable Streets policy. Informants explained inclusion of design guidelines or an update of them was not added to the Livable Streets policy because an update had recently been made; to again maintain a flexible policy and foster buy-in and confusion about what street design guidelines entail.

Evaluation was also another policy element many informants reported was not written into their community’s Livable Streets policy. Again, a desire to avoid a burdensome policy and gain buy-in was cited as a reason for excluding evaluation language from the policy. Yet for this element, most informants pointed to a lack of knowledge about what to measure and how to measure or indicated that evaluation was just not considered at the time of policy development. However, most informants did mention some type of evaluation or progress measurement happening in their community either through checklists, informal updates or review committees. For these measures, there did not seem to be a formalized, coordinated system or plan for tracking in place. Also, evaluation seemed to be categorized by participants for two different purposes: (1) to measure the success of the policy; and (2) to fulfill grant requirements with most progress measurement seeming to take place for the latter purpose. Information or assistance on how to integrate these evaluation processes and make the most of time and resources might be useful for communities. Further, informants did express an eagerness to improve in the areas of implementation guidelines, street design standards and evaluation. Taken together, these findings suggest potential areas where greater emphasis is not only needed but also wanted. Outreach and training efforts might consider including more resources or technical assistance on these policy elements. Future research could also quantitatively assess the inclusion of all ten policy elements recommended by Smart Growth America in Missouri’s Livable Streets policies and the factors that influence their inclusion.⁹

Overall, informants seemed satisfied with the progress of the Livable Streets policies in their communities, describing a number of implementation actions including new or improved sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting and signs, trees and other greenery, bike lanes, trail improvements or additions, and road redesigns to name a few. These actions have helped communities achieve increased connectivity; more people using active transportation; economic vitality; increased awareness; and a greater sense of community. Interestingly, comparisons of implementation by policy type and town size yielded some differences.

Informants representing large towns mentioned more actions taken to implement their Livable Streets policy overall and also were more likely to have taken action in the areas of policy integration and road redesign. Informants for small towns were more likely to have taken action in the areas of sidewalk improvements and adding signs and lighting. **Informants from areas with an ordinance also mentioned more implementation actions compared to areas with a resolution or a long range plan.** While these differences may be due to a greater representation of large towns, the findings are worth noting as they could speak to how different contextual factors (e.g., infrastructure, government set up, resources) influence and potentially advance Livable Streets policy implementation. Further exploration into these differences could be helpful in understanding what policy elements or types might be most beneficial in different community contexts.

As with most qualitative research, this study is limited in its generalizability. Because data was collected from interviewees from very specific contexts using a convenience sample, it is likely some perspectives were not heard. For example, greater representation of small towns and cities or people working in public administration may have further developed our findings. Many interviewees were also champions or supporters of Livable Streets policies themselves and were asked to speak about processes and issues they are personally invested in and are most passionate. Therefore, it is possible participants were not completely candid in their responses, particularly on questions that may have yielded a negative response. Additionally, interviews with participants who were less “on board” might have yielded a different perspective. Further research could include assessment of non-supporting or neutral stakeholders to understand differing viewpoints of Livable Streets and the factors influencing their development. Some interview questions were very specific such as those specific policy elements and implementation measures, which not all interviewees were involved in. Questions that were tailored more to individuals’ specific professional areas might have yielded a richer description of experiences. Finally, reliance on a single coder to analyze responses and no coding comparisons or calculation of inter-rater reliability could have biased results. However, to improve internal reliability, a systematic process for coding was developed before the analysis began and followed closely throughout.

Despite these limitations, this report provides an in-depth look at the experiences of those involved in the development and implementation of Livable Streets policies. These findings offer valuable insights on the facilitators and barriers encountered by stakeholders and potential areas where communities with Livable Streets policies could use some guidance and assistance. Additionally, these findings provide Missouri communities looking to adopt a Livable Streets policy with an opportunity to learn best practices and prepare for obstacles encountered in communities and by stakeholders from contexts that are likely more similar to their own.

Section VI: References

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Section VII: Appendix

Missouri communities participating in the interviews

- Belton
- Blue Springs
- Clayton
- Columbia
- Crystal City
- De Soto
- East-West Gateway Council of Govt, STL
- Ferguson
- Festus
- Grandview
- Herculaneum
- Independence
- Kansas City
- Lee's Summit
- Mid-America Regional Council, KC
- St. Joseph
- St. Louis City

Missouri communities with Livable Streets policies who were unable to participate

- Springfield
- Elsberry
- Pevely

Section VIII: Livable Streets | | Key Informant Interview Question Protocol

Intro:

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services and the Health Communication Research Center at the Missouri School of Journalism are collecting information issues and perspectives from key stakeholders who have adopted Livable or Complete Streets policies. This information will be used to help guide the development and implementation of future Livable/Complete Streets initiatives. You have been identified as someone who would have valuable insight and perspective on this issue. Your participation in the interview is voluntary, and you may stop the interview at any time or refuse to answer questions with which you do not feel comfortable. There is no more risk than experienced during everyday conversation about this topic. All your responses will be kept confidential. The interview should take about 30 minutes. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Jon Stemmler, primary investigator, at (573) 882-6225, or the University of Missouri's Campus Institutional Review Board at (573) 882-9585.

LS/CS Definition [if needed for clarification]: Livable Streets policies and approaches work to create a safe and accessible transportation network for all members of a community. For example, community leaders can work to ensure that all roads are designed, built and maintained in ways that are safe and easy to use for all. Livable Streets address the transportation needs of the disabled, children, seniors, bicyclists, transit systems and motorists.

INTERVIEWEE INFORMATION (Fill in as many of #1-3 as possible beforehand)

Q1. Title/position:

Q2. City:

Q3. Month and year Livable/Complete Streets policy was passed:

Policy development

Q4. How did the issue of Livable Streets first come up in your community? (e.g., specific event, crash, intersection, grant requirement, training etc.)

Q5. What reasons did your town or community have for passing the policy? [probe for why, what precipitated the LS/CS policy]

Q6. What groups or individuals were the biggest supporters of your community's Livable/Complete Streets policy?

Q6a. How did you reach or engage these people/organizations? (e.g., meetings, presentations, workshops, media campaign, community events)

Q6b. Were there any barriers or issues with their participation?

Q7. Were there any opponents of the Livable/Complete Streets policy? Why were they opposed?

Q7a. How did you reach or engage these individuals/organizations? (e.g., meetings, presentations, workshops, media campaign, community events)

Q8. What types of information most helped with your advocacy for a Livable/Complete Streets policy (e.g., fiscal arguments, technical information, public health stats)?

Q9. What obstacles did your community face when trying to pass the Livable/Complete Streets policy?

Q10. How long did the policy process take to pass LS/CS?

Q11. Were implementation guidelines included in the policy?

You may already know that many cities and towns have street design guidelines for the width of the road and its lanes, sidewalk design and right-of-way width. Often, these standards do not include elements of Livable Streets such as crosswalks, bicycle lanes, pedestrian corridors and paved shoulders.

Q12. Does your community have Street Design Guidelines?

Q12a. If not, were Street Design Standards written into the CS/LS policy? Why or why not?

Q12b. If so, were updates to the SDS included in the policy? Why or why not?

Q12c. [IF HAVE SDS, ASK] Who is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the street design guidelines?

Q12D. Are you familiar with resources on Street Design Standards like NACTO, AASHTO?

Q13. What types of evaluation, if any, were included in the policy (i.e. the Public Works department will issue an annual report outlining LS/CS actions)?

Implementation and outcomes

Q14. What actions have been taken to implement the LS/CS policy to date?

IF NONE, ASK: Why do you think no actions have been taken?

IF ACTIONS TAKEN, ASK: 14A through 14C

Q14a. What steps have helped with the implementation of the policy?

Q14b. What challenges has your community faced when implementing the policy?

[probe for people: leadership issues, types of people or roles they have in the community/getting things done; probe for financing]

Q14c. How did you overcome these challenges? [or How will you overcome any existing challenges?]

Q15. Who is responsible for implementing the LS/CS policy?

Q15a. Who else is involved with implementing the policy?

Q16. What characteristics or qualities do you think make for a successful LS/CS leader?

Q17. What outcomes did you hope your town's Livable/Complete Streets project would achieve?

Q17a. What progress has been made on achieving these outcomes?

Q17b. How is the progress of LS/CS policy being evaluated? In other words, what outcomes are being tracked? How will the policy be judged in terms of reaching “success”?

Q17c. What people or organizations are responsible for tracking these outcomes?

Q17d. How frequently is progress reviewed?

Q18. What differences have been made in your community today because the LS/CS policy was passed/implemented?

Q19. What outcomes would you like to see achieved in the future?

Q20. In your opinion, what are the top 3 keys to the success of your community’s LS/CS policy?

Q20a. In your opinion, what 3 things do you think could have been done differently while developing or implementing the LS/CS policy?

Other questions

Q21. Now that the law has passed, what kinds of feedback from the community have you heard?

Q22. What activities have been done to communicate/promote LS/CS to the community?

Q19a. In your opinion, what message(s) have been the most influential/persuasive?

Q23. Have you heard of Safe Routes to School?

Q23a. [If YES] How has this program affected your community?

[If no provide with info]: Safe Routes to School works to improve the health and well-being of children by making it safer and easier for them to walk and bicycle to school. Some examples of Safe Routes to School projects include sidewalk and crosswalk improvements, bicycle facilities, safety education, and walk to school programs like the walking school bus.

Q24. If you could tell other policymakers looking to develop and implement a LS/CS policy in their community, what 2-3 pieces of advice would give them? What would you tell other communities looking to implement LS/CS policies?

Q25. Is there anyone else that you recommend we talk to about the LS/CS policy in your community?

Q26. Do you have any other comments or suggestions for us?

Thank you so much for your time!