

ST. JOSEPH AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
COORDINATING COMMITTEE
October 9, 2008

A meeting of the Coordinating Committee for the St. Joseph Area Transportation Study was held at 12:00 noon in the 4th Floor Conference Room, City Hall, St. Joseph, Missouri, on October 9th, 2008.

Voting members present:

Billy Kretzer	City of Savannah
Mike Bozarth	City of St. Joseph
Vincent Capell	City of St. Joseph
Julia Levinn	Village of Country Club
Dan Hausman	Buchanan County
Bill Falkner	City of St. Joseph

Staff members present:

Bruce Woody	City of St. Joseph
Andy Clements	City of St. Joseph
Kelsy Marr	City of St. Joseph
Elaine Buckner	City of St. Joseph

Others present:

Don Wichern	MoDOT
Tony McGaughy	MoDOT
Mike Fisher	City of Savannah
Ken Reeder	Citizen
Kurt Janicek	City of St. Joseph

OPENING REPORTS

In the absence of the chair and vice-chair, Billy Kretzer, proxy to the chair, directed the meeting.

Roll Call. A quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes. **Mr. Hausman moved to approve the minutes of the August 14th meeting. Mr. Falkner seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Kretzer introduced Savannah's new city administrator, Michael Fisher.

Opportunity for public comment. No member of the public appeared to comment.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Marr reported that Federal Highway is considering nationally reducing or rescinding MPO planning funds. She distributed a draft resolution stating the MPO's opposition to a reduction in planning funds. **Mr. Falkner moved to approve the resolution. Ms. Lavinn seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.**

Functional Classification Changes. Ms. Marr stated that she and Mr. Kuselik from MoDOT reviewed the latest traffic counts and recommended that several local streets be upgraded to collector. In St. Joseph, those streets are: Village Drive by North Shoppes; Woodbine, Cook to County Line; Leonard, Frederick to Faraon; and Heartland Drive. In Savannah, those streets are: Main Street, 6th to 10th Street; and 10th Street to 71 Highway.

Mr. Capell asked about the practical impact of re-designating roads. Ms. Marr replied that roads are usually reclassified for development purposes to ensure that infrastructure is in place prior to development. Mr. Hausman noted that Woodbine from Cook to County Line is a city road, not county. Is that a problem? Ms. Marr said no, the re-designation doesn't address maintenance. Mr. Hausman asked if a road in the county is upgraded, who will be responsible for its maintenance? Mr. Clements responded the county would maintain it. The designation deals with the use, not maintenance. Mr. Hausman said the county doesn't maintain asphalt roads. Mr. Clements said the upgrade is based on traffic volume, but it is still up to the local jurisdictions as to who will maintain it. Mr. Hausman said, by agreement, County Line is maintained by Buchanan County. Would it make sense to annex it into the City? Mr. Woody said as development occurs, it might make sense.

Mr. Falkner asked if this will cost Greystone more money. Mr. Clements said Greystone developers have already been informed that the city has designated Cook as a collector. Mr. Hausman asked if Greystone will make any improvements on Woodbine. Mr. Woody answered yes, but only 100' north and 100' south of Cook. **Mr. Capell moved to approve the aforementioned functional classifications. Mr. Bozarth seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.**

Transit/pedestrian connectivity. Ms. Marr said she has had requests from businesses along the Belt next to Wal-Mart for more bus stops along the Belt. They complain about difficult and unsafe situations for transit users. Mr. Janicek stated that bus stops are not allowed on state routes such as the Belt and 759 Highway. Stopping in 35-40 MPH traffic makes the buses susceptible to rear end collisions. If they get all the way off the roadway, they can stop. At some points on 759 Highway they can do that, but it is very difficult. Mr. Wichern asked if his staff told the City they could not stop a transit bus on the Belt. Mr. Janicek said yes, in 2002. Mr. Wichern said in 24 years with the state, he was unaware there was a state law to that effect. They stop on state routes in St. Louis and Kansas City. Mr. Hausman noted there is no place for people to safely wait for the bus along the Belt.

Mr. Clements said the initial communication with MoDOT was with Koelle Barbour. Mr. Janicek said Belt businesses are indirectly served by transit stations at the North and South Walmarts, Ace Hardware, North K-Mart and Hy-Vee. The Belt is only used to position buses and only some sections of it are used. Sidewalks are non-existent except for new areas.

Mr. Clements said City Councilmember Labass asked about the buses accessing the South Belt Plaza. It still looks like it is not a good access. Mr. Janicek said there is no connection to the intersection or the sidewalks yet. Mr. Woody remarked that it was an existing pre-developed site where they "shoe-horned" sidewalks after the developer had already bought his building. The city accommodated him to do what he needed to do. Some sidewalks were built, but it is not ideal. Mr. Janicek said even in locations where there is a hard shoulder, the close proximity of driveways, combined with the physical size of the bus, the bus becomes a sight obstruction. Mr. Janicek said transit is not given permission to pull into most parking lots. 38% of passengers use transit for shopping and medical service. One of their main concerns is

getting to shop on the Belt. Most businesses are along the Belt and walking to them is not an option because of no sidewalks. He has been asked to start a "Belt Loop" from South K-Mart to the North Shoppes, but it can't be done without safe turnouts and sidewalks. There are only three places along the Belt where a bus can hook into a sidewalk. North Belt and Karnes would be a logical place to have a stop. Ideal spots are at a major intersection where crosswalks are available. In depth discussion followed concerning challenges at various locations along the Belt Highway. A Belt Loop could run 30-40 minute loops and use the existing route structure. Lesser used routes could have some of their hours and equipment used on the Belt.

Mr. Bozarth asked how the Elwood service is going. Mr. Janicek responded they make three trips a day, three days a week. At present they provide a total of 15-20 trips a week. Mr. Clements remarked that trips are usually 1% of a population (700 people in Elwood). Mr. Janicek reported that Nite Ride is doing well. The service made 32 trips last night.

Mr. Wichern said MoDOT would love to work with the City to allow bus stops on the Belt, although MoDOT doesn't have land to provide turnouts or spend highway state road taxes on transit. Mr. Janicek said on 759 Highway there is a place where a bus can stop out of the lane of traffic by Albaugh. He would like permission from MoDOT to do that.

Mr. Capell asked if it would be preferable to use parking lots rather than stop on the Belt. Mr. Janicek answered no. In a parking lot, every lane is an intersection with cars backing out. On the Belt, "Bus Stop 100' Ahead" signs would have to be posted. It is pretty safe under those conditions. Mr. Capell asked if eminent domain has been used for bus turnouts. Mr. Clements said yes, but not in St. Joseph. Mr. Janicek said cars on the Belt don't expect a bus to slow to 5 MPH to turn into the parking lot and then stop in the lot. Mr. Capell said the city should find out its options regarding stopping buses on the state highway system.

OTHER

TIP amendments. Ms. Marr said amendments are forthcoming concerning MoDOT bridge projects. They have four bridges in the TIP under the Safe & Sound program. These were originally federally funded but will be changed to state funding. The bridge on 169 Highway/I-29 is one of them. The MPO understood that sidewalks would be included when the bridge was reconstructed. However, that may not be the case.

Mr. Wichern explained that MoDOT's design-build law was signed into effect over a year ago. The market went crazy last year. Bids only allowed MoDOT to design-build 248 bridges and design the remaining 550 bridges. Some of the 248 bridges will see work begin this fall. He is not sure if a TIP amendment is needed for the 169 Highway/I-29 bridge. He said the 169 Highway bridge at I-29 is extremely wide. The one at 169 Highway is 60' wide. Under the Safe and Sound program, if sidewalks are added, it must be paid for by the local community. The bill the governor signed approving the bridge program won't allow sidewalks. The 169 Highway bridge could be redecked as it stands with a 14' center left turn lane and two 10' shoulders. He asked if a 10' shoulder would satisfy bike/pedestrian needs for a sidewalk. Mr. Clements said both traffic studies for The Shoppes and Tuscany developments suggested that lanes be added to the 169 Highway bridge. He wondered why a bridge that needs to be widened would only be redecked. Now is the time to add lanes for demonstrated capacity needs. Ms. Marr said the bridge would have a service level of "E" with the Shoppes and Tuscany Village at full buildout.

Those two developments alone would make it over capacity. Mr. Clements noted that, in addition, those studies did not anticipate a county expo center.

Mr. Wichern said the 169 Highway bridge has always been on MoDOT's list as a great candidate for redecking. He hasn't heard anything about the need for more capacity. Mr. Clements said at a worksession, MoDOT staff (Jason Shafer and Koelle Barbour) were adamant that private developers would be responsible for adding more lanes.

Mr. Hausman asked if adding lanes was part of the TIF. Mr. Woody said ramp improvements and widening of the roadways are on the TIF. Mr. Capell asked if additional lanes mean adding more width to the existing bridge. Mr. Wichern said columns and footings can be added without tearing down the bridge. Mr. Clements said the 169 Highway corridor will look like the Belt Highway in ten years. Mr. Wichern said the 169 Highway bridge could be re-striped for four through lanes and one left turn lane and add sidewalks later when development pops. Sidewalks could still be linked to the development process. Mr. Wichern mentioned that the cost of adding sidewalks later would be higher, but MoDOT needs to spread their limited resources. He did not think he would be successful if he tried to stop and widen it now. If a shoulder satisfies bike/pedestrian needs for now, sidewalks could be added ten years from now by cantilevering off the sides. Mr. Clements said if federal money is involved and plans demonstrate a need, then sidewalks must be done now. If only state money is used, sidewalks are not required and the MPO will have no assurance that MoDOT will add sidewalks ten years from now.

Mr. Wichern explained that today's practical design is to build for what they can do today. It enables them to do more with limited resources. State road funds are falling in the last 4-6 months. Revenues, likewise, have decreased in the last 6 months. Mr. Woody said he will go back to the traffic studies to see the recommended cross sections.

Mr. Clements said the process is when new development comes in, someone from MoDOT sets down with the engineer and city and runs through the models and 20-year projections and develops a micro model around that. MoDOT and the City then jointly review the draft comments. During discussions on funding on the 169 Highway bridge, it was discussed who would pay for what. Mr. Wichern said he remembers road construction funding discussions, but not bridge. Mr. Clements said a 10' shoulder would not comply with AASHTO. They want a separation, but a shoulder would not offer 5' sidewalks. They could, though, use a shoulder with a guard rail for protection. Mr. Wichern said the bridge deck is wide enough. They could move the bridge barrier in and put a fence on the outside and provide for three lanes of traffic. Mr. Clements said that would meet the requirement of a protected, pedestrian way on both sides by converting both shoulders. He asked if it would be like the Frederick bridge and Mr. Wichern said yes, it would look just like Frederick. It would be a simple solution. Mr. Woody said you could have 11 ½ foot lanes and 5 foot sidewalks packed into 60'.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for December 11, 2008, at 12:00 noon.