

ST. JOSEPH AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
COORDINATING COMMITTEE
December 14, 2006

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 December 14th, 2006.

Voting members present:

Janice Hatcher, Chairperson	Savannah
Gary Roach, Vice Chairman	City of St. Joseph
Vincent Capell	City of St. Joseph
Bill Falkner	City of St. Joseph
Mary Montgomery	Country Club Village

Staff members present:

Andrew Clements	MPO
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Others present:

Tony McGaughy	MoDOT
Shannon Kuselik	MoDOT
Bob Cummings	Disability Services Board Member, City of St. Joseph
Adam Watson	MoDOT

OPENING REPORTS - Chairperson Hatcher called the meeting to order and asked for roll call. A quorum was present. **Ms. Montgomery moved to approve the minutes of the October 12th, 2006 meeting. Mr. Falkner seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.**

Opportunity for public comment. Mr. Bob Cummings addressed the Committee concerning the need for a sidewalk on both sides of the Mitchell Avenue bridge. He has seen many close calls. He asked if state guidelines require that the bridge be made a bit wider. He noted that when the Faraon bridge was re-done that sidewalks were placed on both sides and the sidewalks are being used. More and more people are walking for their health. He asked what MoDOT's plans were for sidewalks along the Mitchell bridge.

Mr. Wichern responded there are plans for one sidewalk. A public meeting in July showed one sidewalk on the north side of Mitchell. By MPO written policy, it is only rehabbing a bridge deck, so no sidewalks are required. The rehab will extend the life of the bridge about 20 years. Enhancement funds will pay for a sidewalk on the Missouri Western side. Federal and State guidelines require sidewalks on both sides when a bridge is reconstructed. In 20 years, there will be sidewalks on both sides. On Frederick, MoDOT invested a lot of money to widen the bridge and included sidewalks. The Mitchell bridge can be widened 2' on each side to allow for one sidewalk. Mr. Capell asked if a second sidewalk would require widening the bridge further. Mr. Wichern said no, it is possible to cantilever off the sides. Mr. Capell asked if the money can be secured, can there be sidewalks on both sides? Mr. Wichern said guidelines prohibit MoDOT from doing it. It is an

irresponsible use of taxpayer money. MoDOT can't see the need. If there is none there today, why a second one? Missouri is always last or second to last in bridge conditions. We have to spread our money as far as humanly possible. We don't have to do one. If we put in one sidewalk for 20 years we will come back and build two. Mr. Capell asked how much discretion Mr. Wichern has. Mr. Wichern answered "some".

Mr. Clements summarized past actions. At the Technical Committee meeting last month there was discussion on this item. The bridge deck is a substantial taxpayer investment by MoDOT. Sometimes the MPO requires sidewalks because the investment will last so long and they want to make connections. At best, the Pickett Road bridge is exactly the same thing. It was originally designed by MoDOT to have sidewalks on both sides. The re-deck project came to the MPO and they decided a re-deck, with a design life of 20-25 years, is a substantial rehab. It is the MPO's call. If they want sidewalks, they will have them. A compromise would be to sub-allocate MPO funds. However, the Technical Committee was strongly opposed. The project is comprised of two parts. The thing that brought it to the agenda was the MPO's receipt of an enhancement application where MoDOT had applied to add a sidewalk onto the bridge. This brought it to the MPO's attention that there were no sidewalks, initially. The Technical Committee then voted 13-3 not to support the enhancement fund application. They also voted (9-6) not to use \$90,000 of MPO funds to do the second sidewalk. Their response was they were opposed to using MPO funds when STP funds by MoDOT should have spent. The Technical Committee felt pretty strongly that the bridge should have had sidewalks on both sides. Buchanan County and Doniphan County took a stand for sidewalks; it is more than the City of St. Joseph or Andrew County. Concerning federal guidelines, Mr. Clements said that they can't make MoDOT install sidewalks, but it is put out by Federal Highway as a suggestion. The Feds are not saying MoDOT can't do sidewalks. It is a local decision. It is not against federal guidelines. There are other similar projects and past decisions which have been consistent with actions taken by the Technical Committee.

Mr. Sparks said the City is working with American Family through a TIF. They are doing capacity improvements on Mitchell Avenue with sidewalks on both sides. The bridge sidewalks would tie into that. Mr. Capell asked if there is a match for federal funds for a second sidewalk. Mr. Clements said the MPO has proposed in-kind funds by MoDOT for a match. The MPO could fund 100% and MoDOT could capture the match with inspection forces. (\$90,000 in-kind) with no cash outlay for MoDOT. Ms. Montgomery said 20 years from now sidewalks will be even more expensive and development in the corridor will have expanded. Why not do it now and get it done? Why not spend \$90,000 to do the other sidewalk? Mr. Wichern said as a state agency, MoDOT looks at statewide needs in the 12 county region. Missouri has the 7th largest highway system in the country, but ranks 45th in revenue. They must use good engineering practices. This district has 270 deficient bridges.

The Pickett Road bridge is not the exact same circumstance. The City has plans to widen Pickett to three lanes in the near future. MoDOT didn't want to put on a new deck and then the City widen Pickett and have a bottleneck for 20 years. He would rather rebuild it and put sidewalks on it. Pickett has a lot less traffic. Both bridges are horrible. MoDOT could back off Pickett. It is on the LRTP, but he doesn't know if they can get it funded. Building a bottleneck would make MoDOT look bad. On the other hand, there were plans to widen, but none currently to widen Mitchell. If

the City took over Mitchell then the City could put sidewalks on both sides to Riverside. That is an option for MoDOT to fund. Mr. Clements said that is a City of St. Joseph issue and not the MPO. Mr. Capell asked if it is an option. Mr. Clements said usually the MPO doesn't get into operational issues. Mr. Capell asked if it could be incorporated into the American Family TIF. Mr. Sparks said everything is already designed to finish the improvements that TIF funding is providing. Mr. Clements reminded everyone that MoDOT led a corridor study some time back on Mitchell and MoDOT and the MPO recognized it as needing additional lanes. If the City were to accept Mitchell Avenue for maintenance and ownership, they would need to do it with their eyes open. Mr. Capell stated that \$90,000 doesn't seem overwhelming. Mr. Clements outlined the options: 1) allocate MPO funds to pay for the second sidewalk, or 2) remove it from the TIP as suggested by the MPO Technical Committee.

Mr. Capell asked if using \$90,000 of MPO funds would have a negative impact on other projects. Mr. Clements said, no, not with projects currently funded.

Mr. Wichern said the state needs additional funding. It can barely keep its head above water and only by using practical design. He worries about rural county roads they have inherited. MoDOT's focus is on high speed trafficways carrying 80% of the traffic.

Mr. Sparks asked about advance construction funding, if MoDOT could apply for a second round of enhancement funds for a second sidewalk. MPO money could pay for the sidewalk up front, but try to get reimbursement for 80% of the cost. Mr. Wichern said with the timing of the letting and federal/state guidelines, he can't go after a second sidewalk and justify applying for a second enhancement grant. He asked about advance construction. Mr. Clements said Springfield has done it in the past by getting Federal Highway permission in advance and use funding up to two years in the future and be reimbursed when funds come through. **Mr. Capell moved to: 1) authorize \$90,000 in MPO funds for sidewalks on the second side of the Mitchell Avenue bridge; and 2) MoDOT submits an application in an attempt to get reimbursed. If the application is not successful, the MPO absorbs it. Mr. Wichern agreed to make application. Mr. Roach seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Clements asked to postpone various items to the February meeting. Chairperson Hatcher agreed.

NEW BUSINESS – Public Involvement Program (PIP). Mr. Clements said this MPO does a very good job with public involvement. New planning regulations actually require a public involvement plan. It provides a commitment to the public concerning how the MPO will interact with the public; notices in the newspaper, gathering comments and being available for answers at a public hearing. The processes will be merged so there will not be two different public involvement processes going on, something the MPO was encouraged to do as a result of the program review last September. **Ms. Montgomery moved to support the PIP plan. Mr. Falkner seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.**

FY07-09 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment. Mr. Clements explained the final part of the TIP amendment would approve the City of St. Joseph's application for streetscape improvements for the Felix Street corridor from 8th to 10th Street. The City Council

supported applying for grants for the project and MoDOT reviewed and approved it. It is consistent with the MPO's LRTP and complies with all MPO requirements. The City CIP tax has funds for improvements to Felix Street to widen sidewalks, add pavers, and construct new curbs. It is funded up to 7th Street. The City wants to move forward from 7th to 10th Street. The City will finish out that project. Federal funds applied for won't pay for nearly what it will cost. The hope is to finish out the corridor with the assistance of federal funds. **Mr. Capell moved to approve the City of St. Joseph's application for streetscape improvements for Felix Street and Ms. Montgomery seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.**

OLD BUSINESS - MPO By-law amendment. In the current Technical Committee by-laws, representatives for each unit of government are listed by position title. With position titles frequently changing, it is impossible to keep the by-laws current. It is proposed to simplify the process by assigning each unit of government a certain number of people and leave it up to them to decide who it will be. A second proposed by-law change relates to representation by Wathena and Elwood. Currently, those towns alternate voting seats. It is proposed to give Wathena and Elwood permanent seats and reduce the number of St. Joseph's seats by two and MoDOT by one. The Technical Committee approved this in November. It will be a very effective and meaningful change. **Mr. Capell moved to reduce St. Joseph's representation by two, MoDOT's by one, and to allow Wathena and Elwood full time representatives. Ms. Montgomery seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.**

Nominating Committee Appointments. Ms. Montgomery moved to retain in their offices the current Chair, Janice Hatcher, and Vice-Chair, Gary Roach, for another year. Mr. Capell seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

OTHER/ADJOURN - Mr. Roach noted that Mr. Jerry Russell has been appointed to a three-year term as citizen representative.

The meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 12th, 2007, at 12:00 noon.