

**MINUTES
OF
THE OZARK FOOTHILLS TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**FEBRUARY 26, 2015
OZARK FOOTHILLS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

RIPLEY COUNTY CARING COMMUNITY BUILDING, DONIPHAN, MISSOURI

I. Call to Order

Chairman Brain Polk called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

II. Open for Public Discussion

No public discussion ensued.

III. Adoption of November 13, 2014 Minutes

Minutes of the November 13, 2014 Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting were reviewed. The minutes were adopted on a motion by Don Anderson, Butler County, and second by Donald Black, Carter County.

IV. Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) Reports

Joe Killian, MoDOT Southeast District, reviewed the *Missouri 325 System* and provided maps showing how the plan will affect the Southeast District and Missouri as a whole. Concern exists regarding maintenance of the state's existing transportation system given a shrinking budget. The plan approved by the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission is to focus on the primary system of approximately 8,000 miles of highway, while utilizing local maintenance forces on the remaining 26,000 miles of secondary roads. Missouri ranks 7th for miles of roadway in the United States, but is 46th in funding. This new system of maintaining roadways will allow for connectivity between cities of one thousand or more people.

The Missouri Department of Transportation estimates that \$485 million is needed to maintain the current system, but will experience a \$160 million shortfall starting in 2017. Tough choices must be made to keep the system functional for as long as possible. Possibilities in the future include seeing paved roads return to gravel and bridges closed or becoming weight restricted. In order to keep Missourians connected, MoDOT has made tough choices that will no longer see regular constructed maintenance to many highways within city limits. These highways include Lindbergh Ave. in St. Louis, Williams Street in Cape Girardeau, and Business 67 in Poplar Bluff. Within the near future, these roads and Missouri's secondary system will become a patchwork of repairs.

Matt Sieler, MoDOT Southeast District, mentioned that the primary system was developed in the late 1960s. This system allows for a connected Missouri. Mr. Sieler also mentioned happenings

in the Missouri Legislature. House Bill 995 would increase the gas and diesel tax by two cents per gallon each year for three years. An increase of six cents would give MoDOT the \$160 million needed to maintain the current system as it is today.

Other legislative bills include a proposal to remove the fuel tax at retail locations and place it on wholesale distributors while indexing the tax for inflation. A bill is in session that would see increase speed limits on interstates and freeways, while another could raise the weight limit for farm vehicles on highways. The legislature is also reviewing a primary seat belt ordinance. Lastly, Mike Pace has been appointed to the Missouri Highway and Transportation Commission. Mr. Pace is from West Plains and retired from the military and Missouri State Highway Patrol.

Mike Brandon, MoDOT Southeast District, encouraged all in attendance to review additional maps and information on the MoDOT website. There are currently 483 bridges in the Southeast District in serious or poor condition. That number is expected to rise to 1,500 in the next ten years. It is possible many of these bridges could face closures due to funding constraints.

Mr. Brandon reviewed current STIP projects that will be let over the next few months in the Ozark Foothills Region including pavement overlays on Highway 67 north of Poplar Bluff, Highway 34 in Wayne County, and M Highway in Carter County. Felicity Ray, Ozark Foothills Executive Director, asked why Highway 142 was on the Primary System of roads and not Highway 160 between Ripley and Oregon Counties. Mr. Brandon stated the answer had to do with traffic counts and more people using Highway 142. It was mentioned that passing lanes for Highway 160 East were programmed in the prior STIP and will proceed as planned.

V. Transportation Planning Coordinator Report

Andrew Murphy, Ozark Foothills Transportation Planning Coordinator, informed the TAC the City of Williamsville was awarded nearly \$240,000 to install a pedestrian bridge over Williams Creek. The project will tie into sidewalks constructed with Safe Routes to School funding.

Mr. Murphy also announced that Transportation Alternative grants had been awarded. Butler County received approximately \$250,000 for the Historic Grand Depot Staircase in Poplar Bluff; the City of Poplar Bluff received \$400,000 for sidewalks on W Highway to Shelby Road; and the City of Piedmont received just under \$100,000 for sidewalk repair and installation.

Carter County applied to the Federal Land Access Program, which was discussed at the previous TAC meeting. The county is looking to pave and widen 0.8 miles of County Road 151 that begins where state maintenance on M Highway ends and leads into a National Park Service campground and boat landing.

Lastly, Mr. Murphy informed the TAC that CDBG is taking their second round of General Infrastructure Proposals with a due date of April 1. Last July, the Ozark Foothills RPC prepared three proposals for a low water crossing in Doniphan, paving city streets in Bunker, and the Williamsville Pedestrian Bridge.

VI. Old Business

Andrew Murphy provided a copy of the Calendar Year 2015 meeting schedule for new members of the TAC.

Mr. Murphy next emphasized the importance of the TAC to transportation planning moving forward. There have been many questions about whether the TAC should continue to meet, or meet less, or if there is any need for the committee if MoDOT does not have enough funding to maintain the entire system. Mr. Murphy noted that both the City of Williamsville and City of Poplar Bluff grant awards mentioned earlier were, in part, due to the role of the TAC and their prioritization work for Constitutional Amendment 7. The TAC helped these communities receive funding from sources other than traditional highway and bridge dollars.

There may be changes in how the TAC prioritizes moving forward to be decided later this year. One option is for the TAC to prioritize maintenance projects on the primary system and the secondary system separately. Mr. Murphy emphasized that multi-modal projects will continue to be prioritized. Chairman Polk explained to the committee that the TAC is now more important than ever before as, with limited funds, MoDOT is going to need to know where to spend those funds and how to justify some projects as more important than others.

VII. New Business

Mr. Murphy presented changes to the Goals and Objectives of the TAC as stated in the Regional Transportation Plan. The goals have been streamlined from seven to six, and new language added to meet federal standards. The new goals and objectives will help to make transportation planning a more resilient and sustainable process in the Ozark Foothills region.

The draft version of the 2015 Regional Transportation Plan was then presented. The plan has had demographic data added, new charts, graphs, maps, tables, and information regarding the role of the TAC and MoDOT's relationship to the TAC and planning commission. Hard copies of the plan were offered and an electronic copy will be e-mailed to the TAC. At the May meeting, the plan will be voted on for adoption.

The Ag Expo Survey results were provided. The most common transportation need for the region from the survey was greater public transportation. Repair of the Highway 53 Bridge in Campbell, maintenance to highways, and the four laning of Highway 67 South followed.

Lastly, Mr. Murphy provided a texting and driving survey also conducted at the Ag Expo. The survey showed the majority of respondents do not text and drive and do wear their seatbelts.

VIII. General Discussion

Chairman Polk announced he and many of the other commissioners in the room have completed their LPA training update and suggested that the training be conducted every 4 years instead of every other year. Elquin Auala, MoDOT Southeast District, stated there has been internal discussion within MoDOT of extending the certification period.

IX. Adjournment

Bill Kennon, Ripley County, moved to adjourn. Chairman Brian Polk adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

TAC ATTENDANCE ROSTER

February 26, 2015

Ms. Felicity Ray	Ozark Foothills RPC
Mr. Andrew Murphy	Ozark Foothills RPC
Mr. Vince Lampe	Butler County
Mr. Don Anderson	Butler County
Mr. Donald Black	Carter County
Mr. Mike Gossett	Carter County
Mr. William Kennon	Ripley County
Mr. David Johnson	Ripley County
Mr. Jerry Halley	Ripley County
Mr. Brian Polk	Wayne County
Mr. Chad Henson	Wayne County
Mr. Matthew Seiler	MoDOT Southeast District
Mr. Joe Killian	MoDOT Southeast District
Mr. Mike Brandon	MoDOT Southeast District
Ms. Elquin Auala	MoDOT Southeast District

THOSE NOT IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. Jeff Darnell	Butler County
Mr. Bill Robison	Butler County
Mr. Steve Bubanovich	Butler County
Mr. David Reynolds	Carter County
Mr. Wayne Gibbs	Carter County
Mr. Joe Loyd	Reynolds County
Mr. Doug Warren	Reynolds County
Ms. Renee Horn	Reynolds County
Mr. Darrell Dement	Reynolds County
Mr. Ben Pickett	Reynolds County
Mr. Lonnie Hudson	Ripley County
Mr. Bill Kirkpatrick	Wayne County
Ms. Angela Smith	Wayne County
Mr. John Berger	Wayne County