

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

**OCTOBER 14, 2021
OZARK FOOTHILLS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

OZARK FOOTHILLS RPC, POPLAR BLUFF, MISSOURI/WebEx CONFERENCE

I. Call to Order

Ozark Foothills Transportation Planning Coordinator Andrew Murphy called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

II. Open for Public Discussion

No Public Discussion ensued.

III. Adoption of July 8, 2021 Minutes

The minutes of the July 8, 2021 TAC meeting were reviewed. The minutes were adopted on a motion by Dennis Cox, Ripley County, and second by Jesse Roy, Ripley County.

IV. Missouri Department of Transportation Reports

Mark Croarkin, MoDOT Southeast District, announced the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission have approved preliminary plans for the 4-lane completion of US Highway 67. This allows MoDOT to purchase needed Right-of-Way (ROW) for the project. March 2022 and September 2022 will see lettings for the next two miles of US Highway 67.

Mr. Croarkin mentioned people may notice some roadway locations not getting striping this year. There is a nation-wide shortage and supply chain issue with paint and MoDOT will not be able to strip every road this year. Additionally, littering is a major issue along roadways. Another issue has been hiring for vacant positions. MoDOT has been able to provide 50 cents an hour raise to all 2,700 maintenance employees across the state to stay competitive.

Chris Crocker, MoDOT Southeast District, provided hand-outs and information on changes to the BRO program along with a list of current BRO balances. Current bridges listed for BRO funding will be eligible until 2024, however, starting with the next release of funds for BRO to the counties; they will only receive funding for bridges on updated list with follows the federal standards for functionally obsolete and structurally deficient. The program will not move to a regional approach as had been discussed, but will stay similar to the current program. The Southeast District will receive approximately \$1.5 million less in funding.

Chad Henson, Wayne County, asked if bridges will still be inspected every two years. Mr. Crocker stated they would be, and if a county thinks a bridge that has been removed should

still be on the list, they can contact him, and he can review the bridge in question.

Mr. Crocker also announced that the federal long-term transportation bill has been funded until the end of October. An ADA Transition Plan webinar will be available on October 20, 2021 free of charge. The LPA Advisory Committee applications were due October 1, 2021 and five positions will be filled. Lastly, The TEAP program funded 3 projects in the Southeast District. The TEAP program can be used to assist with paying for ADA transition plans and can pay 100% of costs up to \$12,000.

Mike Brandon, MoDOT Southeast District, mentioned the Southeast District has submitted their Unfunded Needs List to MoDOT Central Office. The list is a powerful tool that allows MoDOT to act quickly with a list of projects that have been developed at the local level. The updated Asset Management plan is due to Central Office by October 15, 2021. The Chester Bridge design/build has been approved and Brian Okenfuss will lead the project. David Wyman is filling the Area Engineer responsibilities for his region until the position is filled.

Lettings from September 2021 were reviewed, with Route D in Wayne County being awarded for grading, pavement and culvert extension from East Fork Lost Creek to County Road 524. In November, lettings will occur for US Highway 67 in Wayne County and Route T in Butler and Wayne Counties. Contractors are performing shoulder improvements on Route M in Butler County. Lastly, the next due date for the Cost Share Program is April 18, 2022. MoDOT can match up to 50% of the project costs that occur on the state system.

V. Transportation Planning Coordinator Report

Andrew Murphy reported The FY 2021 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) round is opening late again this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and changes made to the application. The round opened October 12, 2021 with a due date of January 31, 2022. If a city or community is interested in applying, now is the time. We are currently looking at six paving projects to submit this year, with two requiring door-to-door surveys.

The FY23-26 Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) round is opening November 1, 2021 with a February 1, 2022 due date. Early discussions have occurred with Butler County and Carter County for possible projects.

Mr. Murphy informed the TAC that the Ozark Foothills RPC did not receive funding from the MoDOT Traffic and Highway Safety Grant Program to provide technical assistance and educational opportunities for our school districts, cities, and counties to assist with seat belt ordinances and presentations.

The Department of Natural Resources held a pre-award site inspection on October 6, 2021 with the Poplar Bluff Park Department and Ozark Foothills RPC. The planning commission submitted a grant application in February 2021 requesting \$250,000 to help with trail construction along PP Highway in Poplar Bluff from Lurlyn Drive to US Highway 67.

The next LPA Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 21, 2021. The meeting will be the last meeting for Mr. Murphy as his three-year term ends this year. Mr. Murphy forwarded the application to apply to all TAC members in August 2021.

Mr. Murphy was appointed to the new Statewide MoDOT Recovery Committee. The committee is meeting monthly until the end of the year and has had two meetings so far, one in August and one in September. The meetings are virtual for the foreseeable future. This group is being tasked with making sure MoDOT works with LPAs, FEMA, and SEMA, to capture all federal dollars available after a disaster situation. The committee will work on developing policies, procedures, possibly electronic applications, etc. to make sure timelines are followed and the state receives full federal reimbursement. Mr. Murphy is representing LPAs on the committee.

VI. Old Business

No old business to discuss.

VII. New Business

A form looking at attendance for TAC members from 2019-2021 was provided. The TAC has developed an issue with reduced attendance and lack of RSVPs. A large part of the issue is the COVID-19 pandemic, however, there are at least four current members that are consistently absent from meetings. There is also a long-term vacancy, essentially turning a 25-person committee into a 20-person committee. Mr. Murphy encouraged the Presiding Commissioners of each county to consider their membership, and make sure everyone representing their county, still has an interest in being a representative on the TAC.

In regards to RSVPs, the pandemic is part of the issue, but it has become difficult to get people to respond, whether they plan to attend or not. Mr. Murphy asked all TAC members to respond, whether if they will be attending the meeting in-person, virtual, or if they cannot be at the meeting. Not having an approximate head count makes ordering food difficult.

The attendance and response issue is what led to the Survey Monkey that was sent out regarding meeting times, dates, locations, styles, etc. in August. The Survey had about a 47% response rate. In regards to moving meetings around the region or having all meetings at the OFRPC office with a virtual option, votes were split equally. While a lunch meeting received votes, the majority wanted to keep a dinner meeting. The majority wanted to keep the January-April-July-October meeting schedule, with an overwhelming majority voting to keep meetings on Thursday.

Based on the responses, and that less than 50% responded, we are keeping the schedule the same for Calendar Year 2022. Meetings will continue on the second Thursdays of January, April, July, and October at 6:00 pm. With long-term planning unstable and dependent in part on MoDOT's meeting procedures, meeting locations will be decided as each date draws closer.

VIII. General Discussion

Doug Wood, Wayne County, asked why vehicles that followed mowers along lettered routes don't have a brush to sweep rocks off the roadway. Mr. Croarkin stated this was something he could pass on, but wasn't sure if there was room on the safety vehicles for the brushes.

IX. Adjournment

Jesse Roy moved to adjourn. Andrew Murphy adjourned the meeting at 7:12 p.m.

TAC ATTENDANCE ROSTER

October 14, 2021

Mr. Andrew Murphy	Ozark Foothills RPC
Mr. Don Anderson	Butler County
Mr. Bill Robison	Butler County
Mr. Tom Wilder	Carter County
Mr. Jordan Collins	Carter County
Mr. Joe Loyd	Reynolds County
Mr. Jesse Roy	Ripley County
Mr. Gary Emmons	Ripley County
Mr. Dennis Cox	Ripley County
Ms. Angela Smith	Wayne County
Mr. Chad Henson	Wayne County
Mr. Doug Wood	Wayne County
Mr. Mark Croarkin	MoDOT Southeast District
Mr. Mike Brandon	MoDOT Southeast District
Ms. Elquin Auala	MoDOT Southeast District
Mr. Chris Crocker	MoDOT Southeast District
Mr. Steve Foster	Guest/Wayne Co. Assoc. Comm

THOSE NOT IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. Vince Lampe	Butler County
Mr. Dennis LeGrand	Butler County
Mr. Jeff Darnell	Butler County
Mr. Ron Keeney	Carter County
Mr. Wayne Gibbs	Carter County
Mr. Eddie Williams	Reynolds County
Ms. Denise Smith	Reynolds County
Ms. Renee Horn	Reynolds County
Mr. Darrell Dement	Reynolds County
Ms. Rickie Maples	Ripley County
Ms. Tami Hale	Ripley County
Mr. Brian Polk	Wayne County
Mr. Bill Kirkpatrick	Wayne County