

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

**FEBRUARY 4, 2016
OZARK FOOTHILLS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

OZARK FOOTHILLS RPC, POPLAR BLUFF, MISSOURI

I. Call to Order

Chairman Brain Polk called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m.

II. Open for Public Discussion

No discussion ensued.

III. Adoption of November 5, 2015 Minutes

Minutes of the November 5, 2015 Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting were reviewed. The minutes were adopted on a motion by Bill Kirkpatrick, Wayne County, and second by Butch Anderson, Butler County.

IV. Guest Speaker

State Senator Doug Libla, Missouri Senate District 25, and Chairman of the Senate Transportation, Infrastructure, and Public Safety Committee, spoke regarding the need for a long-term transportation funding policy at the state level. He began by thanking the TAC for the important role the committee plays in transportation planning. Many people do not know about, or understand the process, but as a former member, Senator Libla knows the importance and tries to educate people on the process. He also mentioned the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission consists of volunteers, much like the TAC; they are not paid for their service to the state.

Last year the Senate Transportation Committee unanimously passed a transportation funding bill, but because of filibusters during the final week of session, the bill was not able to be voted on. This year, the committee has once again unanimously passed a transportation funding increase via a motor fuel user tax. The increase would include 1.5 cents on gasoline and 3.5 cents on diesel.

All money collected at the gas pump through the motor fuel user tax is dedicated to highways and bridges, and by state law cannot be used for any other purpose. Missouri now ranks 47th in the nation in funding per mile of highways. Nationwide, the average state motor fuel user tax average is approximately 30 cents per gallon, but only 17 cents per gallon in Missouri. Missouri maintains the 7th largest roadway system in the United States with over \$50 billion invested in the highway system.

Investing in highways and bridges is an important investment. There are benefits to economic development, jobs, and the safety of our families. Emergency responders require quick access to any tragic event. Detours because of lowered weight limits, or closed bridges, could be the difference between life and death.

Missouri's motor fuel user tax has remained at 17 cents since 1996. Historically, this rate has been adjusted 4 times, and signed into law by two democratic governors and two republican governors. The most recent increase occurred in 1992 under Governor John Ashcroft. The motor fuel user tax also helps to fund the roads of cities and counties who receive 30% of the collected revenue for their road and bridge fund.

In 1996, the cost of asphalt to overlay our major highways was \$50,000 per mile, now the cost is approximately \$157,000 per mile and closer to \$180,000 per mile on interstates. Seventeen cents simply does not stretch as far as it did 20 years ago.

Senate Bill 623, if passed, would add 22 cents to the overall purchase for a vehicle with a 15-gallon tank. The average motorist, driving 15,000 miles per year and getting 20 miles per gallon, would invest an additional \$11.25 for gasoline each year for better and safer highways. This would be much less than the cost of vehicle repair resulting from damaged roads or bridges.

The fairest part of the motor fuel user tax is that those who use the roads help pay for the roads. It is estimated that almost 50 percent of the fuel sold in Missouri is purchased by out of state motorists. Highways and bridges are too important not to maintain and preserve. In 1924, the voters of Missouri determined they wanted to fund their highway and bridge investments through a motor fuel user tax. For 92 years, this had been the primary revenue source for predictable and fair funding of our highways. Those who drive more pay a little more, and those who drive less, pay less.

David Reynolds, Carter County, asked if ten percent of fuel tax revenue are designated for non-highway projects. Mark Shelton, MoDOT Southeast District, explained that ten percent of federal highway funds are set aside for non-highway projects as required by federal regulations. Mr. Reynolds stated he thinks more people would support the tax, if there were not so many taxes already. Senator Libla explained that the cost of repair will only increase with time. Funds invested in transportation, unlike other areas, allow citizens to see the investment. The investment is repaired roadways and new bridges.

Doug Warren, Reynolds County, asked if there was opposition to increasing the motor fuel tax. Senator Libla explained there is, but there is support as well. Many elected officials oppose the increase because they signed a "no new tax" pledge. The Senator does not view this as a new tax, but an adjustment to current tax that Missourians have used to fund transportation infrastructure for more than 90 years.

Wayne Gibbs, Carter County, asked what the feeling is in the Senate from those supporting the adjustment versus those that are opposed to the adjustment. Senator Libla said the Transportation Committee passed the bill unanimously. He encouraged everyone to travel to Jefferson City and

testify regarding the bill. More than thirty organizations testified in favor of the motor fuel user tax adjustment and only one was in opposition.

V. Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) Reports

Mark Shelton explained there is an all drivers texting ban that is expected to appear before the Missouri General Assembly this session. He encouraged everyone to avoid texting and driving and said that distracted driving, due to texting while driving, is now more dangerous than drunk driving. Senator Libla stated this bill would be before the transportation committee next week.

In addition, legislation has been filed to create a primary seat belt law. Mr. Shelton stated that seat belts save lives. Statistics show individuals are much more likely to survive a vehicle accident if wearing their seatbelt.

Elquin Auala, MoDOT Southeast District, stated counties have not received their 2016 BRO funds due to central office re-working formulas for the distribution of those funds. Funds are distributed based on the linear feet of deficient bridges in a county.

Joe Killian, MoDOT Southeast District, provided updates on various projects in the region including resurfacing in Wayne County and Highway M in Carter County. Once the weather is better, work will resume on Route 34 in Reynolds and Wayne Counties as well as Route 160 in Butler and Ripley Counties. Guardrail and guard cable work will be installed as needed on Highway 67 from the Arkansas line to Highway 172, as well as along Highway 60 in Carter and Butler Counties.

VI. Transportation Planning Coordinator Report

Andrew Murphy, Ozark Foothills Transportation Planning Coordinator, explained the United States House and Senate approved, and President Obama signed into law, a 5-year, and \$305 billion highway and transit reauthorization bill. The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act is the first long-term transportation bill passed since 2004. Key provisions of the FAST Act include:

- a new formula program for highway freight projects;
- a new grant program for large-scale projects, the Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects (NSFHP) program;
- modification of the National Highway Freight Network created by MAP-21, and a requirement that the network be re-designated every 5 years;
- expanded funding eligibility for on-system bridges located off the National Highway System;
- an increase in the Surface Transportation Program (STP) suballocation to local governments from 50 to 55 percent;
- the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is rolled into STP; 50 percent of certain TAP funding suballocated to local areas can be used on any STP-eligible project; and,
- A competitive grant program for bus and bus facilities funds is reinstated, including a 10 percent set-aside for rural areas

Mr. Murphy informed the TAC of the annual Statewide Planning Partners' Meeting to be held on Thursday, February 18 in Jefferson City. This annual meeting will see all the RPCs and MPOs in the state meet with all districts of MoDOT and central leadership to review goals for the upcoming year. In addition, updates on funding, bridges, freight, blueprint for safety, LPA programs, transit programs, and data sharing will be provided.

Mr. Murphy provided handouts and information regarding the Primary Safety Belt and All-Driver Texting Ban legislation previously discussed by Mark Shelton. Missouri could expect an eight percent increase in safety belt usage with the passage of a primary law. St. Louis County, and 49 cities, have passed primary safety belt ordinances in their communities.

Applications to the Highway Safety Grant program through MoDOT are due March 1, 2016. Applications must be submitted online with a signed copy mailed to central office. The grants are typically obtained by local law enforcement and can help fund DWI enforcement, sobriety checkpoints, data projects, training, and other project activities.

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program is taking Proposals for their General Infrastructure category once again. The Proposals are due in the CDBG office by April 1, 2016 and require a full Preliminary Engineering Report. Mr. Murphy encouraged any community interested to contact an engineer immediately. He has announced he was working on eight general infrastructure proposals, one for the City of Bunker, one for the City of Doniphan, one for the City of Neelyville, one for the City of Piedmont, and four for Butler County.

Mr. Murphy explained the application process is long and very competitive. This particular application requires a proposal for each project. Of those proposals submitted, only a select few will be invited back to submit full applications.

VII. Old Business

Mr. Murphy reminded the TAC that the meeting schedule for 2016 is the second Thursday of May, August, and October. The traditional November meeting has been moved to October at MoDOT's request. Mr. Murphy also mentioned that February has become an increasingly busy month creating difficulty in planning the TAC meeting during the month. Including this meeting, the last 4 February TAC meetings have been moved from the second Thursday of the month. Mr. Murphy asked if anyone present had any conflicts if the schedule next year moved to a January, April, July, October schedule. This would put the meetings back on a true quarterly schedule and move the meeting date out of February. There was no conflict stated.

Chairman Polk asked if anyone would rather meet on a Thursday other than the second Thursday of the month. There was no request to change dates. Chairman Polk suggested making this an agenda item for the next meeting and having the TAC officially amend the meeting schedule.

VIII. New Business

Mr. Murphy presented the results of the Ag Expo Survey that was conducted on January 15th and 16th at the Black River Coliseum in Poplar Bluff. This was the first survey since 2012 that

produced over 100 comments. The issues that drew the most comments, in order, included adding shoulders, fixing potholes, increased public transportation, the 4-laneing of Highway 67 in Butler County to the Arkansas State Line, more guardrails needed, and discussion of a dangerous intersection at PP Highway and Maud Street in Poplar Bluff.

IX. General Discussion

No general discussion ensued.

X. Adjournment

Bill Kirkpatrick moved to adjourn. Chairman Brian Polk adjourned the meeting at 7:48 p.m.

TAC ATTENDANCE ROSTER

February 4, 2016

Mr. Andrew Murphy	Ozark Foothills RPC
Mr. Vince Lampe	Butler County
Mr. Don Anderson	Butler County
Mr. Jeff Darnell	Butler County
Mr. Bill Robison	Butler County
Mr. Donald Black	Carter County
Mr. David Reynolds	Carter County
Mr. Wayne Gibbs	Carter County
Mr. Jordan Collins	Carter County
Mr. Joe Loyd	Reynolds County
Mr. Doug Warren	Reynolds County
Mr. Eddie Williams	Reynolds County
Ms. Renee Horn	Reynolds County
Mr. Darrell Dement	Reynolds County
Mr. Jerry Halley	Ripley County
Mr. Lonnie Hudson	Ripley County
Mr. Brian Polk	Wayne County
Mr. Chad Henson	Wayne County
Mr. Bill Kirkpatrick	Wayne County
Mr. Mark Shelton	MoDOT Southeast District
Mr. Joe Killian	MoDOT Southeast District
Mr. Mike Brandon	MoDOT Southeast District
Ms. Elquin Auala	MoDOT Southeast District
Ms. Tracee Stotts	MoDOT Southeast District
Mr. Doug Libla	Missouri State Senate
Ms. Elizabeth Reynolds	
Ms. Becky Gibbs	
Ms. Gloria Dement	

THOSE NOT IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. Steve Bubanovich	Butler County
Mr. Mike Gossett	Carter County
Mr. William Kennon	Ripley County
Mr. David Johnson	Ripley County
Ms. Angela Smith	Wayne County
Mr. John Berger	Wayne County