

**MINUTES
OF
THE OZARK FOOTHILLS TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

AUGUST 13, 2015
OZARK FOOTHILLS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

ZEPHYR CAFÉ, PIEDMONT, MISSOURI**

I. Call to Order

Chairman Brain Polk called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

II. Open for Public Discussion

No discussion ensued.

III. Adoption of May 14, 2015 Minutes

Minutes of the May 14, 2015 Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting were reviewed. The minutes were adopted on a motion by Angela Smith, Wayne County, and second by Mike Gossett, Carter County.

IV. Guest Speaker(s)

Jordan Collins and Rebecca Landewe with the Van Buren Chamber of Commerce Trails Committee provided a presentation covering their involvement with trail development and grassroots support for trail and sidewalk development in and around the Van Buren area. Trails and sidewalks provide both economic development opportunities and healthy living benefits for the area.

The Chamber has recently finished the construction of a 1.3-mile section of trail and mapped additional trails in the Ozark Heritage Trail system. A number of entities have been involved including the National Park Service (NPS), the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT), Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), the LAD Foundation, and others. The network of potential trails includes biking, ATV, Jeep tours, and sidewalks in the City of Van Buren, which lead to parks and trailheads.

The vision of the Chamber in developing the Ozark Heritage Trail has been to highlight resources the area already has to increase economic development. The outdoor recreation industry is a large industry and there is room for growth. Missouri currently ranks 22nd out of the fifty U.S. states in consumer spending for outdoor recreation. There is room for growth in the area by having people travel from places such as St. Louis to backpack across the Ozark Trail, mountain bike, or view the elk at Peck Ranch. The desire is to provide additional options to visitors beyond floating on the Current River.

In 2012 the trails committee created a draft plan for development of trails. Two early goals have been completed, including the aforementioned new 1.3-mile section of trail and a trailhead kiosk with weatherproof display cases located in Riverfront Park in Van Buren. The new trail leads to the old handle factory and was created with help from John 3:16 ministries and the Carter County Sheriff's Department, and is constructed on property owned by The Landing.

Angela Smith thanked Mr. Collins and Ms. Landewe for their presentation and remarked that sidewalk development has been important to the City of Williamsville. Sidewalk construction is currently ongoing near the school.

Steve Bubanovich, Butler County, said a trail exists which runs from West Virginia to Washington State and runs along Highway 106 near Ellington, where there is a bicycle hostel. David Wyman, MoDOT Southeast District, stated the trail is named the "Interstate of Bicycles."

V. Missouri Department of Transportation Reports

David Wyman provided project updates for the Ozark Foothills Region. Construction will begin along Highway 160 in Ripley County next week. Shoulders are being widened along Highway 34 near Piedmont; a pilot car is set up in the work zone. Construction has not yet begun upon the roundabout at PP Highway near Poplar Bluff. The contractor has been delayed due to work at Poplar Bluff R-I Schools. Route A in Wayne County is almost completed.

In Carter County, the Route M project has been changed. MoDOT let the contract, but the bids came in high and had to be rejected. MoDOT came up with other ideas to make the project less expensive. The project will let replacement of the bridge in September, and widening of the roadway in April. The road will be widened to the extent funds permit. It is possible the entire length of the roadway will not be widened.

David Reynolds, Carter County, asked how MoDOT developed their budget for the project. Mr. Wyman stated it was an engineer's estimate. Once the project is budgeted in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), the project cost can only deviate by three percent.

Although outside of the Ozark Foothills Region, the Highway 53 Bridge in Campbell will be completed on September 15. This project was delayed due to rain. Oak Grove Road in Poplar Bluff at the intersection of Business 67 is closed for two weeks. Highway 142 is closed west of Highway 67 and Highway 158 is closed approximately two miles east of Highway 67. Route Z in Wayne County has been reopened after bridgework.

Chairman Polk asked MoDOT how the new oil sealant that was used on Highway 34 last year is holding. Mr. Wyman stated it seems to be holding well, but if a snowplow has to be used frequently, it will shorten the life span.

Funding is still a large issue for MoDOT, but the good news is that the state economy was 8.8% better than forecasted and MoDOT will receive approximately \$47 million that was not budgeted. The shortfall to receive federal funding was \$42 million in 2017. MoDOT can now match federal funds in 2017; however, the agency will be short in 2018.

Wayne Gibbs, Carter County, asked how likely the Missouri General Assembly is to correct the funding gap. Mr. Wyman stated two influential state legislators represent the Ozark Foothills

Region: the Senate Transportation Committee Chairman Senator Doug Libla, and Speaker of the House Todd Richardson.

Butch Anderson, Butler County, asked if the PP Highway roundabout has a completion date. The completion date is scheduled for some time in 2015.

Mr. Wyman provided a seat belt ordinance presentation to the City of Williamsville last month. Mayor Angela Smith stated the Williamsville City Council is supportive of the ordinance.

Steve Bubanovich requested the opportunity to speak about Missouri's transportation funding problems. Mr. Bubanovich provided a brief history of the subject stating the issue began in 1992. At that time, MoDOT desired a ten-cent tax increase, but the Missouri General Assembly passed a six-cent increase and provided MoDOT with a list of projects for them to complete. This turned out to be a failure in providing all projects as the funding was not sufficient. Over the years, the tax increased to seventeen cents per gallon, where it stands today. However, MoDOT does not receive the entire seventeen cents. In 2004, voters passed an increase to state funding with motor fuel taxes, fees, etc. being divided between five entities. Those five include the cities of Missouri, the counties of Missouri, the Missouri Department of Revenue, the Missouri Highway Patrol, and the Missouri Department of Transportation. MoDOT is the last to receive funding. The Highway Patrol has seen their share of funding increase dramatically over the past decade. In 2014, MoDOT only received 5.8 cents of the 17 cents of each gallon of fuel sold. Mr. Bubanovich has met with elected officials, including Speaker of the House Todd Richardson, and hopes transportation funding will be a primary issue in the next legislative session.

Mike Brandon, MoDOT Southeast District, provide the 2016-2020 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program for review. The STIP contains few projects. There is resurfacing and replacement jobs, but very few safety improvement or expansion projects. Mr. Brandon mentioned that not only is Missouri having transportation funding issues, but also the country at the federal level. The U.S. Senate has passed a six-year transportation bill, but only 3 years are funded. The U.S. House of Representatives is currently reviewing the bill.

VI. Transportation Planning Coordinator Report

Andrew Murphy, Ozark Foothills Transportation Planning Coordinator, mentioned the May TAC meeting occurred before the close of session for the Missouri General Assembly. As previously mentioned the legislature did not move forward with any type of funding solution, but Mr. Murphy would expect some version of Senate Bill 540 to be re-introduced next year.

In addition, the federal transportation bill was set to expire on May 31. The U.S. Congress and the President passed and signed a two-month extension, which saw the bill expire again on July 31. At that time, a 3-year transportation bill had progressed out of the Senate, but the House of Representatives wanted more time to review the bill. Congress and the President again passed an extension to fund transportation projects through October 29, 2015. Mr. Murphy stated he has read articles indicating that the House and Senate are unified in wanting to pass a transportation bill before the end of the year. If a long-term bill is not passed, however, the likelihood decreases as we draw closer to the 2016 election cycle.

Mr. Murphy announced that Carter County had been awarded a Federal Lands Access Program

(FLAP) grant of approximately \$126,000 for FY17. This project will see the widening and paving of 0.8 miles of County Road 151 leading to campgrounds located in the national park.

The City of Bunker's application to the Missouri Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and Butler County's applications to the CDBG program and Delta Regional Authority (DRA) are still under review.

VII. Old Business

Mr. Murphy reviewed the TAC proposed process for prioritization of Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) funding proposals beginning in the next funding cycle. After discussion and changes to the proposed process, the following method was approved with a motion by Darrell Dement, Reynolds County, and second by Wayne Gibbs. David Reynolds opposed the motion.

Applications will be provided electronically to all TAC members before the prioritization meeting. Representatives from each applicant will be given the opportunity to speak before the TAC and present his or her project. Each applicant will be given five minutes to explain his or her project and its benefits. After all projects have been presented, the TAC will then have ten-fifteen minutes to ask questions. After questions, discussion will ensue among the TAC. Counties with multiple projects would be encouraged to rank their counties projects. Lastly, each individual TAC member would have five votes. One vote must go to a project outside of the TAC member's county of representation, while each of the remaining four votes may be cast however the individual sees fit.

VIII. New Business

Mr. Murphy presented letters from the Missouri Bicycle & Pedestrian Federation that were sent to the regional planning commissions, MoDOT, Governor Jay Nixon, Missouri Congressional Representatives, and the Missouri General Assembly. The letter is signed by forty-three organizations in the state, including some from the Ozark Foothills Region. The letters are asking that MoDOT focus efforts to render pedestrian and non-vehicular transportation a more vital feature of the overall transportation system.

Mr. Murphy provided handouts from last year's project prioritization meeting. He explained that the next TAC meeting would include project prioritizations for projects, maintenance, and multi-modal categories in the same manner as in 2014. Each county will decide on their top three projects in each of the three categories.

IX. General Discussion

Discussion ensued regarding the date of the next TAC meeting. With a motion by Bill Kirkpatrick, Wayne County, and second by Butch Anderson, the next TAC meeting was moved from November 12 to November 5, 2015.

X. Adjournment

Bill Kirkpatrick moved to adjourn. Chairman Brian Polk adjourned the meeting at 7:39 p.m.

TAC ATTENDANCE ROSTER

August 13, 2015

Mr. Andrew Murphy	Ozark Foothills RPC
Mr. Vince Lampe	Butler County
Mr. Don Anderson	Butler County
Mr. Bill Robison	Butler County
Mr. Steve Bubanovich	Butler County
Mr. Mike Gossett	Carter County
Mr. David Reynolds	Carter County
Ms. Elizabeth Reynolds	Carter County (Alternate)
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. Brian Polk	Wayne County
Mr. Chad Henson	Wayne County
Mr. John Berger	Wayne County
Mr. Bill Kirkpatrick	Wayne County
Ms. Angela Smith	Wayne County
Mr. David Wyman	MoDOT Southeast District
Mr. Joe Killian	MoDOT Southeast District
Mr. Mike Brandon	MoDOT Southeast District
Mr. Jordan Collins	Van Buren Chamber
Ms. Rebecca Landewe	Van Buren Chamber
Ms. Becky Gibbs	
Ms. Gloria Dement	

THOSE NOT IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. Jeff Darnell	Butler County
Mr. Donald Black	Carter County
Mr. Ben Pickett	Reynolds County
Mr. William Kennon	Ripley County
Mr. David Johnson	Ripley County
Mr. Lonnie Hudson	Ripley County
Mr. Jerry Halley	Ripley County