

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

**AUGUST 8, 2013  
OZARK FOOTHILLS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

**OZARK FOOTHILLS RPC CONFERENCE ROOM, POPLAR BLUFF, MISSOURI**

**I. Call to Order**

Andrew Murphy, Ozark Foothills Transportation Planning Coordinator, called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m.

**II. Open for Public Discussion**

No public discussion ensued.

**III. Adoption of May 9, 2013 Minutes**

Minutes from the May 9, 2013 Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting were reviewed. The minutes were adopted with a motion by Frank Carroll, Butler County, and second by Darrell Dement, Reynolds County.

**IV. Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) Reports**

Michelle Teel, Director of MoDOT Multi-Modal Division, stated that it was a pleasure to return to Poplar Bluff, her hometown. Ms. Teel thanked the planning commission for the opportunity to speak to the TAC, and stated she was excited to present after looking over the core goals of the RPC and realizing how well they matched with the Multi-Modal Division.

Ms. Teel briefly listed the areas that fall under multi-modal. These include aviation, railroad, transit, bicycle and pedestrian, waterways, and freight. Twenty-eight workers in the multimodal office oversee this diverse division. Results are very important and the department creates an annual business plan to show the year's goals as well as a quarterly MoDOT Tracker, which provides information on completed projects.

Missouri is a block grant state, which means that MoDOT acts as the Federal Aviation Administration for the state. The primary responsibility is to administer funds, similar in respect to the Local Public Agency program. Multi-Modal also has a regulatory role and conducts inspections for railroad tracks and operating practices of railroads.

Ms. Teel indicated little general revenue is dedicated to the division. However, many services are provided with those funds. Aeronautical charts are created; freight moved by aviation is tracked, and training is provided for firefighters through the Mobile Aircraft Firefighting Trainer. This

device simulates fires and allows training of local firefighters through a partnership with the University of Missouri.

Transit is a huge asset in Missouri. Over 70 million trips are taken each year within the state. Many trips are conducted in the urban areas of St. Louis and Kansas City, but SMTS and OATS are the largest rural providers of public transit in the entire country. Public transit is used for a variety of needs, including taking people to jobs, the doctor, or just picking up groceries.

Ms. Teel mentioned the Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan that each RPC conducts and thanked the Ozark Foothills RPC for producing a great plan. Missouri ranks 45<sup>th</sup> in the nation in transit funding at the state level. Almost all transit funding in Missouri comes from federal or local sources. Currently, there is hope to see increased funding as the state legislature provided an additional \$500,000, however, those funds are currently placed in the Governor's withholdings.

Missouri is a huge railroad state. The state has regulatory authority and passenger rail service. Most of the efforts for state funds are placed on routes between St. Louis and Kansas City. The numbers of passengers are increasing with Amtrak in the state. Other railroad efforts include a \$250 million federal grant shared with four other states to buy new locomotive cars. Upgrading railroad crossings is another important feature and there are many crossings in the Ozark Foothills area. The Multi-Modal division is working more with the districts to decide where to allocate funds.

There are no waterways in the region, but the region is close to some of the most successful ports in the country. It is a very exciting time at MoDOT in relation to waterways as the Missouri General Assembly has a Legislative Port Committee and the last legislative session awarded \$3 million to waterways. Ms. Teel used the example of the New Madrid Port. A \$1 million public investment generated \$70 million in private investment in the area.

Andrew Murphy asked if there was a possibility that the TAC could help to prioritize local Multi-Modal projects in the future. The answer is MoDOT wants to work with the TAC to deliver projects and prioritize at the local level. There is an expectation that communities will want to see more investment in this area and the TACs are the best way to find out what is needed at the local level.

Frank Carroll asked about an inland port on the Mississippi River that could receive ships from the Panama Canal. This new inland port could be used as a crossroads for distribution due to heavy rail use and easy access to interstates and 4-lane roads in Missouri. Ms. Teel stated that right now, the New Orleans port has limits on ship size and large cargo ships that come from Panama and are not allowed to pass into the upper Mississippi River. Moving goods more efficiently is a top priority and this is something that should be considered for the Long-Range Transportation Plan.

David Wyman, MoDOT Southeast District, discussed a variety of local projects and happenings in the surrounding areas. A meeting was recently held at the Poplar Bluff Chamber of Commerce

to discuss the intersections of Township Line and PP Highway and Township Line and Highway 67. Feedback was received for both projects and the planning phase is moving forward.

The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) was finalized and approved by the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission in July. The 19 projects from the Ozark Foothills region all made the final version. The new MoDOT Director, Dave Nicholas, was in Poplar Bluff on August 1 and met with many in the community. He appreciated meeting everyone. Lastly, the Missouri/Kansas Concrete Paving Association will have a bus tour pass through Poplar Bluff on August 28.

The improvements at Cherry and Ninth Streets in Poplar Bluff are finished. The Poplar Bluff Chamber of Commerce has also started a “Curb Appeal” program that is going well. Area businesses have volunteered to do extra mowing on MoDOT right of way.

Highway 160 from Doniphan to Highway JJ is currently seeing shoulder work performed. After completion an overlay will occur. Purchase of right of way from Highway JJ to Highway 67 will take place over the next few months.

Several jobs have let in the region, including placing shoulders on Highway 21 and Highway 106. This combined project has a total contact of \$11.3 million.

Mr. Wyman next provided an update on MoDOT’s “On the Move” campaign. MoDOT visited every county in the state and received over 7,400 suggestions based on 2,500 completed surveys. Those surveys show that Missourians want to maintain the existing roads, keep travelers safe, invest in transportation infrastructure for economic development, and to integrate the entire transportation system and highlight alternatives. The “On the Move” campaign is not finished. The draft long-range plan will be generated, reviewed, and made available to the public.

Mr. Wyman also mentioned a cost share agreement with the City of Poplar Bluff in regards to the planned Shelby Road extension to Highway 53. \$234,000 has been brought into the district due to the agreement.

David Reynolds, Carter County, asked about M Highway in Carter County and its placement in the STIP. The project has been placed into the final STIP and will be completed.

## **V. Report from Transportation Planning Coordinator**

Andrew Murphy provided updates on a variety of projects in the area. The Poplar Bluff Industrial Park Bypass opened in August 2012. All aspects of the project are complete except for the installation of streetlights. The City of Poplar Bluff is currently installing lighting on the portion of the road that is within the city limits. Ozark Border Electric Coop. has agreed to install lighting for the remainder of the road.

The Doniphan Sidewalk Project has been bid and is currently in the process of awarding the project.

The Doniphan Quick Creek Trail Project should be completed within the next couple of weeks depending on the weather.

The Doniphan Quick Creek Park LWCF/RTP projects are moving along. The LWCF portion received proposals for the construction of baseball dugouts and has been awarded to the low bidder. The RTP project also has accepted its low bid.

The Carter County Paving Project is complete. Paving was conducted on July 3 and July 5.

RL Persons Construction will begin work for the Carter County Courthouse Sidewalk Project in mid-September.

The City of Piedmont's Sidewalk Improvement Project has been delayed by rain. The city is currently reviewing the location of sewer lines close to the project and the pre-fabricated bridges are constructed and ready to ship.

The Old Greenville Trail Project has also been delayed due to rain. Construction is at least six weeks behind schedule, as the area cannot dry out due to the unseasonably cool temperatures. The project has had a couple change orders submitted and expects to see an additional one or two submitted.

Mr. Murphy explained that the RPC is working on increasing awareness of Missouri's Transportation Planning Framework. He has set up speaking engagements with many clubs and committees in the area including the Poplar Bluff Kiwanis, Poplar Bluff Lions Club, Butler County Community Resource Council, Doniphan Kiwanis, Ripley County Economic Development Group, the Williamsville Lions Club, and the Piedmont Rotary Club.

Mr. Murphy stated he is working on establishing further engagements and asked if anyone knew of any groups that might be interested to please contact him.

Finally, Mr. Murphy mentioned the new Facebook page for the Ozark Foothills Regional Planning Commission. The page has 250 likes and is receiving about 1,000-1,300 unique viewers each week. Information from all departments within the RPC is posted and any local events, public meetings, and community information is shared.

## **VI. Old Business**

Andrew Murphy informed the TAC that both the Regional Transportation Plan and the Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan have been approved by the RPC's Board of Directors and were submitted to MoDOT in June. Both plans are available on the commission's website at [www.ofrpc.org](http://www.ofrpc.org).

## **VII. New Business**

Mr. Murphy spoke briefly about a potential safety issue on Highway 67 near State Highway N. The area was mentioned as an area of concern at the previous TAC meeting and Mr. Murphy stated the area has been brought to his attention in further conversations. Mark Shelton, MoDOT Southeast District, asked if there have been any fatalities or injuries in this area. Mr. Murphy stated there was none that he was made aware. Bill Kennon, Ripley County, stated he believed

the issue was addressed at the previous meeting and asked MoDOT to verify that the area is within a safe grade. David Wyman stated that from an engineering perspective, it is safe. If the TAC feels this is an area of concern, he encouraged them to place it on their priority listings.

A video was shown explaining a possible transportation funding system that is being explored in Oregon. Oregon is looking into a usage-based charge to replace the gas tax for highly fuel-efficient vehicles. Oregon began studying the issue in 2001. It was determined that a system charging drivers for miles actually driven, instead of the state gas tax, merited further study. ODOT has completed two pilot projects to test how this new system could be implemented. ODOT completed the second pilot in March 2013, which tested a replacement of the state gas tax for drivers of highly fuel-efficient vehicles. Rather than pay the state gas tax, about 40 volunteers paid a charge for each mile they drove during the three-month pilot. The pilot was designed to be “revenue neutral”- that is, drivers pay about the same, as they would have in gas tax on a vehicle that gets approximately 19 miles per gallon of gas. The road usage charge would replace the state gas tax for drivers of highly fuel-efficient vehicles (those vehicles that get 55 MPG, model date 2015 or later).

Jerry Halley, Ripley County, drew concern to the cost of administration for the program. David Johnson, Ripley County, said he did not think there were enough highly fuel-efficient vehicles in the region to make a difference. Mr. Murphy further explained three options on recording the miles a vehicle accumulates. One option was to pay a flat rate. With this scenario if an individual drives more than paid, they are charged no more, however, if an individual drives less, you’ve paid for those miles whether you drive them or not. Another option was to have the vehicle’s odometer read and the individual is charged for every mile driven, including miles driven on private and out of state roads. Finally, a GPS device could be installed that tracked the vehicle’s location and only record mileage driven on state roads.

Mark Shelton explained that as vehicles become more fuel-efficient and the amount of miles people drive each year levels off a better funding system is required. The ageing interstate system is currently funded with a dying source of revenue, and is a challenge to maintain. All construction materials cost more today than when the fuel tax was implemented. What is the right way to keep up and expand the system? That is a difficult question to answer.

Michelle Teel stated that Oregon had a unique and interesting approach. A sales tax is what most states are using and that would seem to be easier to administer. In addition, raising the fuel tax seems to have many detractors and sales taxes are generally more favorable.

David Reynolds inquired what would have happened to the fuel tax had the proposed transportation sales tax made it out of the Senate and passed by the voters. Shelton explained there would have been a sunset on the sales tax and the fuel tax would have remained unchanged.

Andrew Murphy drew attention to another option that Oregon already uses in a weight-usage tax. Large vehicles and trucks create close to 8,000 times more road damage than standard passenger cars. Oregon has truckers pay a weight-mile tax instead of a fuel tax. This generates about \$611 million annually. Mr. Murphy asked Michelle Teel’s thoughts since she works heavily with freight. Ms. Teel stated that large trucks are important and she knows that many of them are

barely surviving. While it is true that most of the wear and tear is from large trucks, those fees are eventually passed down to consumers. She stated she believes a sales tax would be the most successful way of funding infrastructure.

Mr. Murphy led the group in the development of county-specific project priorities. Similar to past years, MoDOT will run data sheets and provide traffic counts, fatalities, injury rates, etc. for TAC member consideration prior to the regional project prioritization to be conducted during the November meeting. Mr. Murphy also asked each county to consider putting a “dream” project on their list, one that will probably not be funded over the next few years, but a large project that could be pointed if someone inquired about long-term projects.

Members separated by county and formulated the attached project lists.

### **VIII. General Discussion**

No general discussion ensued.

### **IX. Adjournment**

In the absence of Chairman Brian Polk, Andrew Murphy adjourned the meeting at 8:32 p.m.

Project Priority List

Butler County

1. **Four Lane Highway 67 south to Arkansas State Line**
2. **Modify Highway PP to Township Line up to & thru the intersection and continue west to the US Forest Service to increase capacity**
3. **Exit Ramp off Highway 60 East**

**Dream Project: Full access interchange at Township Line and Highway 67**

Carter County

1. **Route N: Widen and Eliminate one-lane bridge over Middle Brushy Creek**
2. **Route A: Eliminate Narrow Bridge in Ellsinore**
3. **Route M: Widen to the End of Pavement**

**Dream Project: Route A: Widen Curve & Box Culvert in Ellsinore (about 200')**

Reynolds County

1. **Replace Highway F Bridge**
2. **Highway 21: Centerville to Glover, add shoulders**
3. **Highway K: Ellington to Annapolis, add shoulders**

Ripley County

1. **State Route K: Straighten "S" curve**
2. **Between Naylor and Doniphan: Eliminate two one-lane bridges**
3. **Turn Lanes on Highway 160, East of Current River Bridge & Traffic Lights**

**Dream Project: 4-lane Highway 160 from Doniphan to Highway 67**

Wayne County

1. **Highway 49: Replace bridge over McKenzie Creek north of Piedmont**
2. **Highway 49: Straighten Highway A and widen from Highway 67 to 60.**
3. **Raise Route C where it Crosses Bear Creek**

**Dream Project: Raise Highway 67 North Lane at North City Limits of Greenville and Raise Highway 67 North Lane at Taskee.**

Project Maintenance List

Butler County

1. **VV Highway: Resurface**
2. **TT Highway: Resurface**
3. **Sight Distance on Highway M & CR 459 Intersection**

Carter County

1. **Remove Dead Hazardous Trees from Lettered Routes**
2. **Z Highway: Overlay**
3. **Caution Lights at Highway 60 and the intersections of A Highway and V Highway**

Reynolds County

1. **B Highway: Overlay**
2. **O Highway: Overlay**
3. **Highway 21: Overlay from Centerville to Ellington**

Ripley County

1. **BB Highway: Overlay**
2. **EE Highway: Overlay**
3. **C Highway: Overlay**

Wayne County

1. **Highway 49: Resurface and add shoulders from Piedmont to Iron County Line**
2. **Add 2 ft. shoulders to Highway P to Bollinger County Line.**
3. **T Highway: Resurface**



## TAC ATTENDANCE ROSTER

August 8, 2013

Mr. Andrew Murphy	Ozark Foothills RPC
Mr. Ed Strenfel	Butler County
Mr. Don Anderson	Butler County
Mr. Jeff Darnell	Butler County
Mr. Frank Carroll	Butler County
Mr. Bill Robison	Butler County
Mr. Mike Gossett	Carter County
Mr. Wayne Gibbs	Carter County
Mr. David Reynolds	Carter County
Ms. Elizabeth Reynolds	Carter County (Alternate)
Mr. Darrell Dement	Reynolds County
Mr. William Kennon	Ripley County
Mr. David Johnson	Ripley County
Mr. Jerry Halley	Ripley County
Mr. Steve Burke	Ripley County
Mr. Bill Kirkpatrick	Wayne County
Mr. Don Scowden	Wayne County
Ms. Lynn Schultz	Wayne County (Alternate)
Mr. Mark Shelton	MoDOT Southeast
Mr. David Wyman	MoDOT Southeast
Mr. Jay Lancaster	MoDOT Southeast
Ms. Elquin Auala	MoDOT Southeast
Ms. Michelle Teel	MoDOT Multi-Modal
Mr. David Silverberg	Daily American Republic

## THOSE NOT IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. John Bailiff	Carter County
Mr. David Bowman	Carter County
Mr. Joe Loyd	Reynolds County
Mr. Doug Warren	Reynolds County
Ms. Renee Horn	Reynolds County
Mr. Ben Pickett	Reynolds County
Mr. Nick Ederer	Ripley County
Mr. Brian Polk	Wayne County
Ms. Angela Smith	Wayne County
Mr. Harold Ellinghouse	Wayne County