

**MINUTES
OF
THE OZARK FOOTHILLS TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

JANUARY 8, 2026
OZARK FOOTHILLS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

OZARK FOOTHILLS RPC, POPLAR BLUFF, MISSOURI**

I. Call to Order

Chairman Brian Polk called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

II. Open for Public Discussion

No public discussion ensued.

III. Adoption of September 25, 2025 Minutes

The minutes of the September 25, 2025 TAC meeting were reviewed. The minutes were adopted on a motion by Michael Williams, Ripley County, and second by Jesse Roy, Ripley County.

IV. Guest Presentation

Missourians for Responsible Transportation (MRT) is a partnership that includes organizations such as Bike Walk KC, Ozark Greenways, Local Motion, and Trailnet. The organization focuses on advancing connected communities and active transportation throughout Missouri. Cindy DeBlauw has been involved with Active Transportation Planning since 2011 and previously worked for the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. Jackson Hotaling is the Director of Policy & Programs for MRT.

Current Status of Active Transportation in Missouri is concerning, as Missouri recorded its highest-ever pedestrian fatalities in 2025, with a 120% increase in bike/pedestrian crashes since 2014. Missouri ranks 51st out of 51 (including DC) for Safe Routes to School (SRTS) and 49th out of 50 in the Bike League's 2024 report cards. The state-level SRTS program has ended, and there is currently no dedicated state-level funding for bike/pedestrian projects.

Key resources for rural road safety include the Ozark Foothills Regional Planning Commission, the National Center for Rural Road Safety, and AASHTO's Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities (5th Edition, 2024).

MoDOT is currently updating its Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and State Freight & Rail Plan (SFRP) to guide the state's network through 2050. Rick Prosser serves as the Non-Motorized Transportation Coordinator for MoDOT and is a good contact.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) identifies 28 Proven Safety Countermeasures, eight of which are specifically focused on pedestrians and bicyclists. Examples from Missouri communities include Striped Bike Lanes, Buffered Bike Lanes, Protected Bike Lanes/Cycletracks, Shared-Use Paths, Crosswalk Visibility Enhancements, Medians & Refuges, Beacons (RRFBs), Walkways & Paved Shoulders, and Road Diets. Public Input at Community events and Walk/Road Safety Audits are vital for identifying infrastructure needs and empowering local residents.

V. Missouri Department of Transportation Reports

Katy Bower, MoDOT Southeast District, announced several projects were awarded in the final months of 2025. Two bridge replacements in Butler County on RT AA over Blue Spring Slough (\$1,878,592.60) and a bridge replacement in Wayne County on US 67 over Otter Creek (\$2,833,659.89) were awarded. A package of four bridge replacements in Ripley County was awarded for \$3,768,396.50. Additionally, a \$5,135,000.00 project for pavement resurfacing and bridge rehabilitation on US 160 in Ripley County was awarded. A bridge deck replacement on MO 34 in Wayne County was awarded for \$1,041,263.30.

Work zone updates included information that bridge replacements and ADA improvements on RT A in Carter County has not yet started. US 67 in Butler County is being upgraded to a freeway, including three bridges and culvert extensions; most lanes are open with no delays. Projects on RT M, HWY 67, and BU 67 in Butler County are in various stages, ranging from guardrail work to projects that have not yet begun. Slide repairs on US 60 in Carter County are complete. ITS maintenance is occurring at various locations along several major routes.

Vince Lampe, Butler County, asked if the project to cut down the hill on M Highway is moving forward. Mike Brandon, MoDOT Southeast District, stated he believed it would begin in September 2026.

Larry Wells, Butler County, asked about the overlay of Business Highway 60. Elquin Auala, MoDOT Southeast District, stated contractors have been given two seasons to finish construction work. MoDOT has been doing this to help keep costs down.

Joe Killian, MoDOT Southeast District, has been working with Carter County on the county road inventory. He has completed 24 of the 25 Southeast District counties, but some of the inventory didn't capture new 911 addresses, so they are going back over certain counties.

Elquin Auala reported that RT B in Reynolds County is reduced to one lane for a bridge replacement. The project was delayed due to flooding, but will be re-opened in May 2026.

Chairman Polk stated Highway KK in Wayne County was opened ahead of schedule and residents in the area are happy with the project. MoDOT is working with FEMA for funding and a future bridge project will occur at the location at some point.

Mike Brandon said it is currently STIP season, so a busy time for the next 3 months in the planning office. The Financial Forecast for the next five years was released today. It contains deficit spending and leadership is looking into bond issuance for larger jobs. Expected fuel tax revenue has continued to decline, even with the tax increase now fully phased in.

VI. Transportation Planning Coordinator Report

Ozark Foothills Transportation Planning Coordinator Andrew Murphy announced two paving projects were awarded under the FY25 CDBG General Infrastructure category. The City of Williamsville for \$622,449 for critical paving and drainage improvements and the City of Ellington for \$612,249 for a major community paving project.

From the Delta Regional Authority, the Carter County Low Water Crossing CR327 was awarded \$1,093,662 under the special disaster recovery funding. The City of Ellington received \$509,000 for their wastewater project.

The week after the previous TAC Meeting, three Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) grants were submitted. These include a \$607,641.54 paving project for Butler County leading to Beaver Lake Recreation Area and two projects for Carter County, one seeking \$662,685 to pave and widen CR151 and another for a multi-use trail from Van Buren to the Big Spring Campground in the National Park Service's Ozark National Scenic Riverways with a total cost of \$1,571,000. Based on some early comments, it will be July 2026 before awards are announced.

The MoDOT Traffic and Highway Safety Grant Program supports projects that reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes occurring on Missouri roadways thereby preventing fatalities and injuries. Areas of emphasis include alcohol- and/or drug-impaired driving, speeding, safety belt and child safety seat use, inattention or distracted driving, young drivers, mature drivers, and traffic crash data collection and analysis. The grant funding cycle corresponds with the federal fiscal year. The FY27 Highway Safety Grant application is open and is due by March 1, 2026.

The Department of Natural Resource's Recreational Trails Program (RTP) applications are open with a February 20, 2026 deadline. In Missouri, RTP grants are open to local and state governments, school districts, non-profit and for-profit organizations. Missouri receives between \$1 and \$1.5 million per fiscal year. The maximum amount awarded is \$250,000 for trail projects and \$25,000 for educational projects. Sponsors must have a minimum 20 percent match, which can be cash or in-kind. Projects must be open to the public for 25 years.

The BUILD Application cycle is open. This is the same program that began as TIGER under President Obama, was changed to BUILD under President Trump, then to RAISE under President Biden, and has now been changed back to BUILD. We've submitted RAISE applications the past 2-3 years for Butler County Road 321. We will be reaching out to Butler County to see if they want to submit the project to BUILD this year. Applications are due February 24, 2026.

Mr. Murphy announced joint TAC/County Commission meetings will be occurring in March. These meetings allow an opportunity for members of the public to meet with their local TAC members and provide feedback regarding the prioritization process. During the April meeting, each county will prioritize their lists of projects before the regional prioritization in July.

Mr. Murphy mentioned the annual statewide planning partnership meeting will be held on Thursday February 19, 2026 in Jefferson City. At the meeting, all RPCs and MPOs in the state meet with all MoDOT districts and central leadership to review goals for the upcoming year and receive various updates.

VII. Safe Streets for All Comprehensive Safety Action Plan

The project experienced a transition in leadership during December, but a new Project Officer is assigned, and the project remains aligned with the overarching goals of the SS4A and FHWA. In late November 2025, the lead staff member for this project departed the RPC. To ensure project continuity and high-quality plan development, Rachel Coleman has been appointed as the Project Officer. Ms. Coleman brings valuable experience from her successful work on the City of Piedmont's Comprehensive Plan and will lead the SS4A project moving forward.

Ms. Coleman further introduced herself and stated she has been reviewing other SS4A plans, especially those conducted in rural areas, has finished several trainings, reviewed crash data, and held 2 County-wide Task Force meetings. Butler and Ripley County Task Forces met in November. Carter and Reynolds County met in December and Wayne County should be meeting in January. The 2nd of the four meetings will most likely occur in March. She has also developed a traffic survey for the public over the last month that will be available on SurveyMonkey. Included in the TAC meeting packet are the survey results from the July 2025 meeting. The purpose of the SS4A plan is to work on zero serious injuries/deaths over the next 10-20 years.

VIII. Old Business

For the City of Doniphan's Active Transportation Plan, An Active Living Community of Practice kick off planning meeting was held at the OFRPC office for all recipients of the MoDHSS grant in November. Following the completion of the Active Communities Assessment modules in October little was done in the last part of the year due to staff turnover. Amber Hornbeck, who completed the Qulin ATP has been appointed as the Project Officer for Doniphan's plan development and attended the City Council meeting this past Tuesday. On January 20th the first monthly web meeting is scheduled, and Doniphan is to name their Community Champion over the next couple of months as we create physical and online surveys and plan a Walk Audit for the spring.

IX. New Business

No new business was discussed.

X. General Discussion

Gary Pride, Butler County, asked if he could speak with those involved with the trail at Big Spring after the meeting.

Jesse Roy, stated that next month the Presiding Commissioners will have their LPA training. It is pretty much a day long event as it is scheduled to last 6 hours from 8am-2pm with a lunch break.

XI. Adjournment

Darrell Dement, Reynolds County, moved to adjourn. Chairman Polk adjourned the meeting at 7:12 p.m.

TAC ATTENDANCE ROSTER

January 8, 2026

Mr. Andrew Murphy	Ozark Foothills RPC
Ms. Rachel Coleman	Ozark Foothills RPC
Mr. Vince Lampe	Butler County
Mr. Ralph Stucker	Butler County
Mr. Larry Wells	Butler County
Mr. Jeff Darnell	Butler County
Mr. Gary Pride	Butler County
Mr. Bill Robison	Butler County
Mr. Ron Keeney	Carter County
Mr. Tom Wilder	Carter County
Mr. Eric McSpadden	Carter County
Mr. Jordan Collins	Carter County
Mr. Randal Jenkins	Carter County
Ms. Ashley Newson	Carter County
Mr. Steve Chitwood	Reynolds County
Mr. Eddie Williams	Reynolds County
Mr. Darrell Dement	Reynolds County
Mr. Jesse Roy	Ripley County
Mr. Gary Emmons	Ripley County
Mr. Michael Williams	Ripley County
Mr. Dennis Cox	Ripley County
Mr. Jarret Ficke	Ripley County
Mr. Brian Polk	Wayne County
Mr. Chad Henson	Wayne County
Mr. Steve Foster	Wayne County (alternate)
Ms. Barb Potter	Wayne County (alternate)
Ms. Elquin Auala	MoDOT Southeast District
Ms. Katy Bower	MoDOT Southeast District
Mr. Joe Killian	MoDOT Southeast District
Mr. Mike Brandon	MoDOT Southeast District
Ms. Gloria Dement	Guest
Mr. Randy Potter	Guest

THOSE NOT IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. Jordan Collins	Carter County		
Mr. Larry Pogue	Reynolds County		
Ms. Alicia Baker	Reynolds County		
Mr. Craig Foster	Reynolds County		
Mr. Freddie Leroux	Ripley County		
Mr. Doug Wood	Wayne County	Mr. Bill Kirkpatrick	Wayne County
Mr. Lee Hillis	Wayne County	Mr. Tylar Pinkley	Wayne County