

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

**APRIL 13, 2017  
OZARK FOOTHILLS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

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

**I. Call to Order**

Chairman Brian Polk called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m.

**II. Open for Public Discussion**

Chairman Polk introduced Mr. Doug Wood as the newest member of the Ozark Foothills Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). Mr. Wood will represent Wayne County.

**III. Adoption of January 12, 2017 Minutes**

Minutes of the January 12, 2017 TAC meeting were reviewed. The minutes were adopted on a motion by Donald Black, Carter County, and second by Darrell Dement, Reynolds County.

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

David Wyman, MoDOT Southeast District, stated fuel tax revenues are in good condition. Because of these stable funds and the long-range transportation funding bill passed by Congress, MoDOT is reintroducing the Cost-Share Program. The Cost-Share Program is a 50/50 match program whereby a participating local entity contributes 50% of the cost of the project. The project has to be located on the state highway system and is a way for cities and counties to complete projects they would like to see happen. One caveat is the project cannot increase costs to the state system. Examples of projects that increase cost include installing a bridge or interchange where one did not previously exist. The four-lane expansion of US Highway 67 is a great example for what the Cost-Share Program can be utilized to do.

MoDOT is also placing greater emphasis on asset management. The hope is to maintain the existing system, thereby preventing roadway deterioration.

Wayne Gibbs, Carter County, asked if the asphalt on M Highway was going to be widened. Mr. Wyman stated it was. The current project was bid as two separate projects and the asphalt work will move forward now that the bridge is complete. Donald Black stated the new bridge on M Highway is not in line with the road and asked if MoDOT was aware. Mr. Wyman stated he would visit the project site to examine the bridge next week.

Angela Smith, Wayne County, asked about any progress on the solar road system proposed for Missouri's portion of Historic US Route 66. Mr. Wyman stated MoDOT is currently

conducting a test project.

Felicity Ray, Ozark Foothills Executive Director, asked about language in the Cost-Share Program that allows for 100% of the funds used on a proposed project to be state or federal funds. Mr. Wyman stated this can happen when certain conditions are met. For instance, if a business is moving into a community and creating jobs, the Missouri Department of Economic Development can confirm the “job creation “ component allowing the percentage of local funds to be lowered to zero. Mr. Wyman stated the program is very competitive and projects compete at the state level.

Mike Brandon, MoDOT Southeast District, provided updates on a number of projects in the area as well as recently let projects. Bridge work on Route U in Butler County, Route M in Carter County, and over Hubble and McKenzie Creek in Wayne County are all nearing completion. Route 60 in Carter County is getting the addition of rumble strips in locations where none currently exist.

Upcoming projects include sealing the pavement on Route 34 in Reynolds County, replacing the Highway 53 bridge in Butler County, and the Route A corridor from US Highway 60 to US Highway 67. Darrell Dement asked if the Highway 21 project had been let in Reynolds County. Mr. Brandon stated it was let in March.

Mr. Brandon provided an update on current STIP development. Replacing bridges over Harris Creek and Ditch Number 2 in Ripley County, shoulders on K Highway in Reynolds County, and safety improvements to M Highway in Butler County are all in scoping. Scoping does not mean these will happen; the feasibility of the projects is being studied to determine future placement within the STIP.

With some changes occurring within MoDOT, it was announced that the TAC’s annual project prioritization would need to occur in July or August, as opposed to the October/November timeline of the past several years. Chairman Polk asked if those in attendance would be in agreement to use the list prioritized during October 2016 as the list of regional prioritization options for 2017. Those in attendance were in agreement.

Mr. Brandon also announced that he is planning to work with the transportation planners from each regional planning commission in the Southeast District to create a standardized list of what is needed to identify projects.

Joe Killian, MoDOT Southeast District, reiterated the need to be specific during the prioritization process. For example, overlaying a roadway between two named county roads rather than simply identifying the roadway, which may be much longer than the intended project.

Mr. Killian had on hand a copy of each county’s BRO balances. Additionally, Mr. Killian announced he is working on county road inventories. The total miles of roadway in each county helps to determine the amount of CART funding a county receives. Lastly, new state highway maps will be available in May.

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

Andrew Murphy, Ozark Foothills Transportation Planning Coordinator, stated that the Poplar Bluff Industrial Park Road Overpass Project will move to bid as soon as the final piece of property is acquired.

Mr. Murphy announced he submitted a grant application for the City of Poplar Bluff's Parks and Recreation Department to construct a sidewalk/trail along PP Highway from Sunset Drive to Lurlyn Road. The requested amount was \$128,889 with the Park Department supplying a \$55,000 cash match to the project.

Applications for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program were submitted on the behalf of Butler County, the City of Bunker, and the City of Ellington. Butler County requested approximately \$171,081 for paving and drainage work in the unincorporated community of Rombauer. The City of Bunker requested approximately \$210,343 for paving on Lincoln Avenue, Wilkins Avenue, and Tom's Creek Road. The City of Ellington requested approximately \$323,888 for paving on Main, Second, Tubbs, and College Avenues. Both the Butler County and Ellington applications required door-to-door surveys as neither entity met the 51% low to moderate income (LMI) objective to qualify for the funding. Once the surveys were completed, both entities met those guidelines. For example, the City of Ellington based on HUD Census Data is 34% LMI. The random door-to-door survey show the community's LMI percentage as closer to 79%.

An application was also submitted to the MoDOT Traffic and Highway Safety Division to fund a part-time position within the Ozark Foothills Regional Planning Commission to assist local communities with navigating and passing primary seat belt ordinances. In addition, the position would work with local schools to encourage seat belt usage among students. The requested grant amount was \$24,075.

Mr. Murphy announced the Delta Regional Authority's (DRA) 2017 State's Economic Development Assistance Program (SEDAP) is open. The DRA will accept applications until their funds have been depleted. Applications must meet a federal priority criterion such as innovation and small business development focusing on job creation and/or retention, regional approach, or the inclusion of multiple funding partners. In addition, applications should meet at least one regional development plan goal including the creation of a competitive, productive workforce, physical and digital connections, and/or reinforcing the concept of "sustainable communities."

**VI. Old Business**

Mr. Murphy asked the TAC to vote to accept the updated version of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), the draft of which was submitted for review in January. The RTP was adopted on a motion by Mike Gossett, Carter County, and second by Darrell Dement.

**VII. New Business**

Bill Robison, Butler County, spoke in regards to a proposed future Interstate 57 (I-57). Mr. Robison presented multiple maps and mentioned that the Highway 67 Coalition has been involved with the project not only in Missouri, but also throughout northeast Arkansas. The future I-57 corridor would include US Highway 60 from Sikeston, MO west to US Highway 67

just north of Poplar Bluff. At this point, it would head south on US Highway 67 through Arkansas and create an interstate corridor with the existing I-57 that leads to Chicago through Illinois from Sikeston, MO. This is projected to become an important shipping route linking Dallas to Chicago via 4-lane interstate, with the missing parts currently in Arkansas and Missouri. Missouri has been progressive and US Highway 60 is already four lanes, as is all of US Highway 67 minus eleven miles from the US Highway 160 intersection to the Arkansas/Missouri state line.

Arkansas would have the biggest part of the project, as US Highway 67 South will need to be brought to grade. Mr. Robison stated Little Rock, AR to Walnut Ridge, AR has been built to interstate standards. Arkansas is beginning to focus on this project and US Senator Bozeman has included language in proposed legislation to designate the corridor "Future Interstate 57." There is concern from communities such as Pocahontas or Corning about the path the expansion would take, but most entities in both Arkansas and Missouri seem to be supportive of the idea.

Congressman Jason Smith's office is involved in the project and Eric Bohl, Chief of Staff for the Congressman in Missouri, stated that US Highway 67 is congressionally designated as an important corridor. Representative Smith is soliciting feedback from his constituents about the project.

Mr. Robison stated this would be a large and expensive project and the designation of the corridor as "Future I-57" is an important next step in the process. The projection for travel in the year 2040 shows a lot of traffic, especially freight traffic, moving from Texas to Chicago. Along with Missouri's existing port and rail structure, the interstate would be an important economic benefit to the region.

David Wyman stated MoDOT's position is "let's complete the corridor." Missouri has been building its section of the corridor for many years with the expansion of US Highways 60 and 67. Interstates carry the majority of traffic in Missouri and there is a lot of work that needs to be completed. Crossovers that currently exist would be removed through grade separation or overpasses. An outer road system would also be needed.

Jordan Collins, Carter County, stated the project would benefit the area economically. Traffic that is currently not coming through Missouri would bring in revenue. Mr. Robison stated communities in Arkansas between Little Rock and Walnut Ridge are already seeing an economic boost from the section of roadway that is already built to Interstate standards.

Mr. Collins asked if those in the Bootheel of Missouri have pushed back against this project as it could decrease traffic along US Highway 412. He also inquired of the reaction from the City of Jonesboro, Arkansas. Mr. Robison stated Highway 412 is complete in Arkansas, but is not built to interstate standards. Jonesboro would still be close to I-57 and could eventually tie into it as well.

Mr. Bohl asked if this is something people want to see. Poplar Bluff, as the midpoint between Dallas and Chicago, could realistically see a big economic boost to the region. The potential for job creation could make both Poplar Bluff and Sikeston major distribution centers.

Butch Anderson, Butler County, stated that trucking companies want this project. It will be

good for companies and will be good for the area because additional revenue will be brought into the region.

Jordan Collins asked if the City of Poplar Bluff could pass another tax to help fund Missouri's portion. Mr. Robison stated the current sales tax that helped to build Highway 67 will be paid off in a couple of years and another tax would have to be passed by the voters. David Wyman mentioned that earmarks helped to fund the Highway 67 project, and earmarks no longer exist.

Doug Wood, Wayne County, asked how this would affect farmers. The project would be a big inconvenience for many unless there were many crossovers. Mr. Robison stated there are ways to navigate for farmers and the outer roads would come into play.

Director Ray asked Mr. Bohl who first contacted Congressman Smith's office about the project. Mr. Bohl said the language in Senator Bozeman's bill last year is what first caught their attention. Congressman Crawford from Arkansas is also on board with the project and reached out to Congressman Smith's office. Director Ray stated it bodes well for our region when a Congressman from another state views our region as a potential partner. Mr. Bohl stated Missouri is known as a progressive state when it comes to transportation infrastructure and the US Highway 60 and 67 expansions are the primary reasons this conversation is currently happening.

Joe Killian stated he has heard people in the Farmington/Park Hills areas inquire about the project and speak favorably towards it.

Mr. Murphy presented the results of the Ag Expo Survey that was conducted on January 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> at the Black River Coliseum in Poplar Bluff. The issues that drew the most comments, included adding shoulders/widening roadways, fixing potholes, increased public transportation, and the 4-laning of Highway 67 in Butler County to the Arkansas State Line.

Mr. Murphy announced he would once again be attending the annual Merchant's Showcase on April 29, 2017, at Three Rivers College in Poplar Bluff. He will have a transportation survey present and will hand out *Arrive Alive* and other promotional items.

Mr. Murphy introduced proposed bylaw language which would permit electronic voting among the TAC. Mr. Murphy read aloud the following proposal:

Electronic Voting/Action Without Meeting: For purposes of taking action without meeting, solicitation via electronic means and voting shall be permitted. Such procedure shall be initiated by the electronic distribution of all related materials for consideration by the TAC at the time of such distribution. Thereafter, members shall be permitted to cast their votes electronically in response to the distributed material. The deadline for receipt of such electronic votes cast by the members shall be no less than one (1) week from the date of electronic mailing of the voting materials, as set forth therein. Once the deadline has passed, any member that has not returned their votes electronically will forfeit their ability to take action on the item.

Mr. Murphy asked for feedback and stated the TAC would vote upon the proposed language at the following TAC meeting. Mike Gossett proposed an addition of language stating voting procedure is to occur in the same manner as if the vote was in person. Chairman Polk proposed

language to make electronic voting an option only in emergency situations between meetings so as to not affect attendance at in-person meetings. Both suggestions will be incorporated into the proposed language for the vote at the following meeting.

### **VIII. General Discussion**

Mr. Eric Bohl stated that Congressman Smith's office is waiting to learn about the new presidential administration's transportation infrastructure program. In addition, rural broadband initiatives are being studied and are awaiting action from the White House.

Director Ray asked if the Congressman has been fielding many questions about President Trump's proposed cuts to a number of programs, including the Delta Regional Authority and the CDBG program. Mr. Bohl stated there have been many questions, especially with regards to the Delta Regional Authority. He stated the President's budget is a suggestion and is not final. There will be many hard decisions made. Currently, the Congressman's office is hoping to get funding for rural schools restored.

Director Ray stated that Andrew Murphy made a post on the Ozark Foothills Facebook page that is one of the most seen posts in the page's history. She asked Mr. Murphy to elaborate. The post included information on Missouri being a finalist of the Hyperloop One Initiative from SpaceX founder Elon Musk. Currently several "loops" are proposed, with the Missouri Loop connecting St. Louis to Kansas City. The loop would allow passengers to travel on a train car inside a vacuum-sealed tube and accelerate to near 800 miles per hour. This would render travel from St. Louis to Kansas City at just over 20 minutes. Other proposed loops are located in California, Colorado, Florida, Texas, etc.

Chairman Polk inquired if those in attendance would be in agreement to move the July TAC meeting to July 27, 2017 due to scheduling. All in attendance were in agreement. Since the next meeting will serve as the prioritization meeting, Ellsinore is the likely location.

### **IX. Adjournment**

Chad Henson, Wayne County, moved to adjourn. Chairman Brian Polk adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

**TAC ATTENDANCE ROSTER**

**April 13, 2017**

|                           |                                  |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Ms. Felicity Ray</b>   | <b>Ozark Foothills RPC</b>       |
| <b>Mr. Andrew Murphy</b>  | <b>Ozark Foothills RPC</b>       |
| <b>Mr. Don Anderson</b>   | <b>Butler County</b>             |
| <b>Mr. Jeff Darnell</b>   | <b>Butler County</b>             |
| <b>Mr. Bill Robison</b>   | <b>Butler County</b>             |
| <b>Mr. Donald Black</b>   | <b>Carter County</b>             |
| <b>Mr. Mike Gossett</b>   | <b>Carter County</b>             |
| <b>Mr. David Reynolds</b> | <b>Carter County</b>             |
| <b>Mr. Wayne Gibbs</b>    | <b>Carter County</b>             |
| <b>Mr. Jordan Collins</b> | <b>Carter County</b>             |
| <b>Mr. Darrell Dement</b> | <b>Reynolds County</b>           |
| <b>Mr. Jerry Halley</b>   | <b>Ripley County</b>             |
| <b>Ms. Tami Hale</b>      | <b>Ripley County</b>             |
| <b>Mr. Gary Emmons</b>    | <b>Ripley County (Alternate)</b> |
| <b>Mr. Andy Towell</b>    | <b>Ripley County (Alternate)</b> |
| <b>Mr. Brian Polk</b>     | <b>Wayne County</b>              |
| <b>Mr. Chad Henson</b>    | <b>Wayne County</b>              |
| <b>Ms. Angela Smith</b>   | <b>Wayne County</b>              |
| <b>Mr. Doug Wood</b>      | <b>Wayne County</b>              |
| <b>Mr. David Wyman</b>    | <b>MoDOT Southeast District</b>  |
| <b>Mr. Joe Killian</b>    | <b>MoDOT Southeast District</b>  |
| <b>Mr. Mike Brandon</b>   | <b>MoDOT Southeast District</b>  |
| <b>Ms. Becky Gibbs</b>    | <b>Guest</b>                     |
| <b>Ms. Gloria Dement</b>  | <b>Guest</b>                     |
| <b>Ms. Sandy Joy</b>      | <b>City of Williamsville</b>     |
| <b>Mr. Eric Bohl</b>      | <b>Congressman Jason Smith</b>   |

**THOSE NOT IN ATTENDANCE**

|                             |                        |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Mr. Vince Lampe</b>      | <b>Butler County</b>   |
| <b>Mr. Dennis LeGrand</b>   | <b>Butler County</b>   |
| <b>Mr. Joe Loyd</b>         | <b>Reynolds County</b> |
| <b>Mr. Eddie Williams</b>   | <b>Reynolds County</b> |
| <b>Mr. Doug Warren</b>      | <b>Reynolds County</b> |
| <b>Ms. Renee Horn</b>       | <b>Reynolds County</b> |
| <b>Mr. William Kennon</b>   | <b>Ripley County</b>   |
| <b>Mr. David Johnson</b>    | <b>Ripley County</b>   |
| <b>Mr. Lonnie Hudson</b>    | <b>Ripley County</b>   |
| <b>Mr. Bill Kirkpatrick</b> | <b>Wayne County</b>    |