

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

**JULY 14, 2016
OZARK FOOTHILLS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
THE FISHIN' HOLE RESTAURANT, GREENVILLE, MISSOURI**

I. Call to Order

Chairman Brain Polk called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

II. Open for Public Discussion

No discussion ensued.

III. Adoption of May 12, 2016 Minutes

Minutes of the May 12, 2016 Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting were reviewed. The minutes were adopted on a motion by Butch Anderson, Butler County, and second by Joe Loyd, Reynolds County.

IV. Guest Speaker

Steve Bush, Regional Manager for Southeast Missouri Transportation Service (SMTS), was announced as the evening's guest speaker. Mr. Bush is in charge of the southern ten counties of the twenty county SMTS coverage area. Butler, Carter, Reynolds, and Wayne Counties are included within that region, while Ripley County has its own county-wide transit agency. Mr. Bush also oversees of the Bluff Area Transit Service (BATS), which is the City of Poplar Bluff's bus service.

Mr. Bush has a long history in transportation, starting out driving a school bus and working his way to becoming an area manager of OATS, before transitioning into his role at SMTS. SMTS is the second largest provider of rural public transportation in the United States. The organization began in the early 1970's as transportation for the elderly; but since the 1980's, ridership was opened to all. The majority of riders are elderly or medical patients, with many using the service to reach dialysis clinics. Riders can make trips to Cape Girardeau, Memphis, St. Louis, etc., as long as their trip begins in the SMTS coverage area. Trips to larger communities outside the coverage area typically occur once per month.

Funding is a major obstacle for transportation, including roads and bridges and public transit. The recently passed FAST Act increased federal funding for new vans, which was welcome due to the aging fleet of vans currently in operation. However, that funding was decreased drastically before implementation. The southern ten counties of the SMTS coverage area need 50 new vans, but funding can provide only four.

Mr. Bush has been working with dialysis and other medical clinics to extend their hours, as this will facilitate the ability of riders to reach their medical destinations using public transit. SMTS sees the need to provide extended hours; unfortunately, however, ridership falls significantly after clinics stop making appointments, typically at 3pm.

In the City of Poplar Bluff, the BATS system is a fixed route program that currently runs one route with two buses on a one hour and fifteen minute loop. The plan is to create two new routes running four buses on thirty-minute loops. Cost is currently one dollar per ride, with ideas to incorporate a family plan that will allow an entire family to ride for the same price. Mr. Bush is working with the City of Poplar Bluff and a private investor to install bus stops. The private investor will pay for the installation and maintenance of the bus stops, and sell advertising space at the stops. The possibility of selling advertising space on the exterior of the buses, as well as the interiors is also being explored. The installation of bus stops has been tougher than expected due to the lack of sidewalks in many locations and the number of stops on private property.

Tami Hale, Ripley County, asked if extending hours for non-medical needs was an option. Mr. Bush said surveys conducted by SMTS showed that extending hours into the evening and on Saturdays are the top comments. In October 2015, SMTS created a Saturday schedule and extended hours until 8pm; yet, few people use the service on Saturday or after 6pm. SMTS will be revising their schedule to stop at 6pm and decreasing their Saturday service. If the demand exists, they will extend the hours again. Ms. Hale asked if he had a theory as to why that was the case, Mr. Bush stated he did not.

Eddie Williams, Reynolds County, asked if SMTS has been advertising the expanded services. Mr. Bush said they are advertising in Butler County, and hope to expand beyond the area soon.

V. Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) Reports

Elquin Auala, MoDOT Southeast District, stated Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) applications will be available starting September 1, with a November 1 submission deadline. Only sidewalks and trails that lead somewhere are eligible projects this year. Funded projects can no longer go around a park or school, but must meet a transportation goal of traveling from "point A to point B." The grant will require a 20% match with a minimum request of \$80,000 and maximum request of \$400,000. The rating system will be different this year as well, with scoring sheets used to help rate and categorize the proposals.

David Wyman, MoDOT Southeast District, stated the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) was approved at this month's Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission meeting. The program is basically the same list of projects that was present in the draft, with a large focus on bridges. In the entire Southeast District, 90 bridges are programmed within the STIP. Bridge work is programmed on Highway 158, Highway 53, and Route B in Butler County. Carter County has two overlays on Highway 60 and Route A. Ripley County will see bridge work on Highway 142 over the Little Black River and an overlay on the same highway. Wayne County has a number of bridges programmed and an overlay on Highway 149.

Applications for Missouri Moves are due July 29. This is a 50/50 match program with \$20 million dollars targeted to facilitate economic development projects.

MoDOT is moving forward with a couple of projects from its *Road to Tomorrow* campaign. In looking at the role of technology, they will be exploring how Bluetooth technology can allow 18-wheelers to draft at a distance and travel the highway as units rather than individual trucks.

Solar Roadways are also being explored as part of the campaign. Lego-like panels can generate electricity, furnish LED lights as markers, and create heat to melt ice and snow. The panels will be tested on I-44/Historic Route 66.

Mr. Wyman also provided updates on various projects including Highway 160 in Ripley County, for which striping will start next week, the overlay of Highway 67 and bridge repair on Route W in Butler County, and the delay of the Route M project in Carter County. All of the concrete used in the Route M project must be replaced as the contractor used concrete that failed to meet safety standards.

Mark Shelton, MoDOT Southeast District informed the TAC that 422 fatalities have occurred on Missouri roadways this year. Sixty-one of those have been in the Southeast District. This represents a 4% and 5% increase respectively, over last year. At this time the statewide numbers were 377 in 2014 and 411 in 2015.

Chairman Polk, Wayne County, asked if there are more drivers traveling the roadways now that gas prices have decreased. Mr. Shelton said there were, but there are three main killers on Missouri roadways. The first and most dangerous is distracted driving, i.e., cellular devices. The Missouri General Assembly failed to pass a no texting and driving law this session. MoDOT has led by example, as of June 1, 2016, no MoDOT employee will text or talk on a cell phone when driving a MoDOT vehicle. Callers should leave a voicemail and calls will be returned when it can be done safely. The number two and three killers are impaired driving and not wearing a seat belt.

Chris Rutledge, MoDOT Southeast District, challenged everyone in the room to read their local police reports in the newspaper. The majority of fatalities on the roadway involve an unbuckled driver. Mr. Rutledge also provided an update for Reynolds County, announcing that more shoulder work will be completed on Route 21.

VI. Transportation Planning Coordinator Report

Andrew Murphy, Ozark Foothills Transportation Planning Coordinator, announced that Senate Bill 623 and the Primary Safety Belt and All-Driver Texting Ban legislation discussed at the prior TAC meeting both failed to pass the Missouri General Assembly.

The county is currently soliciting for appraisers and working upon the ROW acquisition for the Poplar Bluff Industrial Park Railroad Overpass.

Three applications were completed and submitted to the CDBG General Infrastructure category. The City of Piedmont is seeking \$385,945 for city street paving. The Village of Mill Spring is

seeking \$189,518 for the paving of Birch Street. Butler County is seeking \$286,345 for paving and drainage work on County Road 558. Grant awards should be announced in August.

Mr. Murphy announced he has arranged for the public, county specific joint county TAC/County Commission meetings to take place this month. It has been a couple of years since these meetings have been conducted. The meetings allow an opportunity for the general public in each county to speak with TAC members from their county. Carter County is meeting this Monday July 18th at 9:30 am; Wayne County will meet Tuesday July 19th at 10:00 am; Ripley County on Wednesday July 20th at 9:30am; Butler County on Friday July 22nd at 9:30 am; and Reynolds County on Monday July 25th at 9:00 am.

The next update for the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is due June 2017. Mr. Murphy expects to start updating the plan in August, with a draft completed in time for the TAC's January meeting. A final version will be submitted for the TAC's approval in April.

The Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) is issuing a call for projects in September with a submission deadline of December 1. The goal of the FLAP is to improve transportation facilities that provide access to, are adjacent to, or are located within Federal lands. The grant requires an 80/20 match with the state, county, and local government entities as eligible applicants.

Elquin Auala reminded the TAC that Local Program Agency (LPA) Person of Responsible charge training must be completed every two years. Many communities will need to make sure they have a certified person on staff in order to receive FLAP or TAP funding. The training can be completed online. Times, dates, and locations of in person trainings can be found on MoDOT's website.

VII. Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

VIII. New Business

Mr. Murphy reminded everyone that project prioritizations will take place at the next TAC meeting, which is scheduled for the second Thursday of October. The prioritization process will remain the same as the last couple of years, with each county selecting three projects, three maintenance projects, and three multi-modal projects. An emphasis on maintaining the existing system should be expected. MoDOT will most likely provide some key data for the TAC leading into the next meeting.

Mr. Murphy announced that terms of office for the existing TAC officers are ending this year. The TAC has positions of Chairman and Vice-Chairman; and, terms are for 4 years. Volunteers or nominations will be accepted for each position. Butch Anderson nominated to keep the existing officers with Brain Polk, Wayne County, as Chairman and Donald Black, Carter County, as Vice-Chairman. Darrell Dement, Reynolds County, seconded the motion. Chairman Polk and Vice-Chairman Black will maintain the seats through 2020.

It was announced that Vice-Chairman Black has been selected to serve on the statewide Local Public Agency (LPA) Advisory Committee. The Committee meets quarterly and advises MoDOT on their LPA program. Their next meeting will take place on July 28. Vice-Chairman Black stated that he would love to have feedback from other TAC members about what he can do to represent the area and what role he can play in helping to advise the LPA program.

IX. General Discussion

Tami Hale announced that the Ozark Foothills Regional Planning Commission (OFRPC) has been selected to participate in the Stronger Economies Together (SET) program. The program enables communities and counties in rural America to work together in developing and implementing an economic development blueprint for their multi-county region that strategically builds on the current and emerging economic strengths of that region. The Ozark Foothills SET Region includes the five counties of the OFRPC service area. The group will work with the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, and the University of Missouri Extension to create an economic development plan. Ms. Hale encouraged those in attendance to participate or to inform others of the plan's development. The Ozark Foothills region was the only region in Missouri selected to participate.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the need for the TAC to meet an additional time this year due to the TAP application deadline of November 1. The TAC meeting schedule was changed due to MoDOT needing the project prioritization process completed before November. If the TAC participates in the prioritization of TAP applications, they may need to meet after October and before January 2017.

Joe Killian, MoDOT Southeast District, suggested reviewing the applications and having the applicants speak at the October meeting to allow for feedback. Mike Gossett, Carter County, suggested reviewing a preliminary application. Mr. Murphy stated there would need to be more discussion and a known timeline from MoDOT, but some form of review at the October meeting or calling an additional TAC meeting this year are both possible options.

X. Adjournment

Darrell Dement moved to adjourn. Chairman Brian Polk adjourned the meeting at 7:38 p.m.

TAC ATTENDANCE ROSTER

July 14, 2016

Mr. Andrew Murphy	Ozark Foothills RPC
Mr. Vince Lampe	Butler County
Mr. Don Anderson	Butler County
Mr. Gary McDonald	Butler County
Mr. Bill Robison	Butler County
Mr. Donald Black	Carter County
Mr. Mike Gossett	Carter County
Mr. David Reynolds	Carter County
Mr. Wayne Gibbs	Carter County
Mr. Jordan Collins	Carter County
Mr. Joe Loyd	Reynolds County
Mr. Eddie Williams	Reynolds County
Ms. Renee Horn	Reynolds County
Mr. Darrell Dement	Reynolds County
Mr. William Kennon	Ripley County
Ms. Tami Hale	Ripley County
Mr. Brian Polk	Wayne County
Ms. Angela Smith	Wayne County
Ms. Georgia Woods	Wayne County (Alternate)
Mr. Mark Shelton	MoDOT Southeast District
Mr. Joe Killian	MoDOT Southeast District
Mr. David Wyman	MoDOT Southeast District
Mr. Mike Brandon	MoDOT Southeast District
Mr. Chris Rutledge	MoDOT Southeast District
Ms. Elquin Auala	MoDOT Southeast District
Ms. Gloria Dement	
Ms. Becky Gibbs	
Mr. Clifford Smith	
Mr. Steve Bush	SMTS

THOSE NOT IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. Jeff Darnell	Butler County
Mr. Doug Warren	Reynolds County
Mr. Jerry Halley	Ripley County
Mr. David Johnson	Ripley County
Mr. Lonnie Hudson	Ripley County
Mr. Chad Henson	Wayne County
Mr. Bill Kirkpatrick	Wayne County
Mr. John Berger	Wayne County