



BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

July 17, 2019

Jackson Civic Center – Jackson, MO

Board Voting Members Present:

Mr. Drew Christian, Southeast Missouri Regional Planning & Economic
Development Commission (SEMO RPC)
Mr. Bob Fox, City of Cape Girardeau
Mr. Dwain Hahs, City of Jackson
Mr. Charlie Herbst, Cape Girardeau County
Mr. Scott Meyer, City of Cape Girardeau
Mr. Tom Mogelnicki, Cape Girardeau County Transit Authority (CTA)
Mr. Jim Roach, City of Jackson

Board Non-Voting Members Present:

Ms. Mandi Brink, Southeast Missouri Regional Port Authority (SEMO Port)
Mr. Mark Shelton, Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT)

Technical Planning Committee (TPC) Members Present:

Mr. Rodney Bollinger, City of Jackson
Mr. Mike Brandon, Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT)
Mr. Bruce Loy, Cape Girardeau Regional Airport (Cape Regional Airport)
Mr. Alex McElroy, City of Cape Girardeau
Mr. John Mehner, Cape Girardeau Area MAGNET
Mr. Brian Okenfuss, Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT)
Mr. Larry Payne, Cape Girardeau County

Staff Present:

Mr. Ryan Shrimplin, City of Cape Girardeau

Program Administration/Support Consultant Present:

Ms. Kelly Green, KLG Engineering

Others Present:

Mr. Matt Bain, U.S. Senator Josh Hawley's Office
Ms. Madison Baker, U.S. Senator Roy Blunt's Office
Ms. Terry Baker, Southeast Missouri Realtors
Mr. Clint Brown, City of Jackson
Mr. Shad Burner, Missouri Department of Economic Development
Mr. Robin Cole, The Rite Group
Ms. Jessica Farrar, SOTO Property Solutions/SEMO Realtors
Mr. Brian Gerau, Jackson Chamber of Commerce
Mr. Cary Harbison, Southeast Missouri Regional Port Authority (SEMO Port)
Mr. Barry Hovis, Missouri House Representative District 146
Mr. Paul Koeper, Cape Girardeau County
Mr. Kent Peetz, City of Jackson
Mr. Greg Pullum, The Cash-Book Journal
Mr. Ed Ross, Ross Furniture, Inc.
Mr. Rob Stephens, Heartland Custom Flooring
Mr. Kyle Thompson, Jackson Chamber of Commerce
Mr. Jeff Wachter, Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT)
Mr. Jason Williams, Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT)
Mr. Jay Wolz, Southeast Missourian Business Editor

Call to Order

Chairman Fox called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Introductions

The group went around the room, with each person giving a brief introduction.

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda of the July 17, 2019 Board of Directors Meeting was unanimously approved for adoption upon motion made by Mr. Herbst and seconded by Mr. Hahs.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the June 19, 2019 Board of Directors Meeting were unanimously approved upon motion made by Mr. Roach and seconded by Mr. Christian.

Communications from the Chairman

Chairman Fox stated that he will save his communications for Member Reports.

Public Comments

Chairman Fox asked if there are any comments from the public.

Mr. Stephens commented that the proposed closure of the US 61 underpass as part of the Center Junction Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI) Project will adversely affect emergency response times.

Mr. Gerau commented that the US 61 underpass at Center Junction is a critical transportation corridor connecting Jackson and Cape Girardeau, and closing the underpass for any significant amount of time will have an adverse effect on local businesses.

Mr. Ross commented that his business is heavily dependent on having access to IS 55 and specifically the Center Junction interchange. Closing access points at the interchange will have a major adverse effect on his business.

Mr. Cole commented that it is not clear to him what benefits will come from the Center Junction DDI Project. He noted that the cost to repair the existing bridges on IS 55 is approximately \$3.5 million, whereas the cost to construct the DDI is over \$18 million. He questioned the safety concerns about the existing interchange and stated that he has never had to wait through more than one traffic signal cycle. He stated that he feels the project would squander valuable resources.

New/Unfinished Business

- **Center Junction Diverging Diamond Interchange Project – Discussion**

Mr. Shelton explained that the reason MoDOT decided on a diverging diamond interchange (DDI) for Center Junction is because repairing the existing bridges would not address the substandard vertical clearance under the bridges. MoDOT has not been able to overlay the underpass because it would further reduce the clearance. Therefore, the decision was made to correct the substandard condition while also increasing safety by eliminating left turns in front of oncoming traffic. Studies have shown that replacing a conventional interchange with a DDI reduces crashes by as much as 80%. MoDOT's consultant conducted extensive research and traffic modeling in order to evaluate various interchange designs. The consultant found that the DDI performed the best over time. MoDOT then worked with both cities, SEMPO, and individual property owners to obtain input on the design. The project was let in May, and all of the bids were significantly higher than the programmed amount in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). The bids were ultimately rejected by the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission (MHTC). This is not the first time MHTC has rejected bids. For example, the original bids for the Exit 102 interchange project were rejected due to site conditions that caused the bidders to add in costs in case issues arose. After MHTC rejected the bids for the DDI, MoDOT sought to understand why the bids were significantly higher. MoDOT learned that the complexity of the staging plan was a major factor in the bids. Since that time, MoDOT Southeast District staff has met with representatives of both cities and SEMPO to look for ways to simplify the staging plan and reduce the project cost. It became apparent that doing so would

require portions of the interchange to be completely closed for periods of time. MoDOT developed a revised staging plan that would keep the ramps open but would close the US 61 underpass for 7 months. Due to the closure of the underpass, through and turning movements toward the underpass would be prohibited. The revised plan was presented to SEMPO, which prompted a number of questions and concerns. MoDOT Southeast District staff then held a value engineering session with representatives of both cities and SEMPO to identify alternatives. The session ended with one potentially feasible alternative being identified. The alternate plan would allow a portion of the underpass to remain open to traffic at all times but would require ramp closures.

Mr. Hahs stated that keeping the underpass open is not the only concern. Closure of the ramps is problematic. He asked how a driver on the northbound exit ramp would be able to get to Jackson. Mr. Shelton stated that the driver would need to turn right at the ramp, head south into Cape Girardeau, and then turn left in front of the cemetery entrance to get to the northbound lanes on US 61. If a southbound driver on IS 55 needed to get to US 61, they could take Exit 102 to East Main Street and then use Old Orchard Road or another north-south road to get there. He added that MoDOT has a communications team that will work with the local media to inform the public of the closures and the established detours.

Chairman Fox asked for clarification on the ramp closures. Mr. Williams explained that the alternate plan would require the northbound entrance ramp and the southbound exit ramp to be closed, along with the existing northbound lanes on US 61. This would allow the contractor to access the borrow area for fill and construct a substantial portion of the new lanes on US 61 and the southbound bridge. During this time, traffic on the existing southbound lanes on US 61 would run head-to-head, with no left turns allowed. Once this work is completed, traffic on US 61 would switch to the new lanes while the southbound bridge is completed. Upon opening the southbound bridge, the northbound bridge would be closed and replaced.

Mr. Mehner asked when the project will be let again. Mr. Shelton stated that MoDOT is planning on letting the project in November. He added that the project is estimated to cost \$16.3 million.

Mr. Hahs noted that the estimate is about \$2 million less than the low bid, but the cost to the communities is considerable in terms of the ramp closures. He asked if an economic impact study was conducted for the project. Mr. Williams replied that there is no such study, and MoDOT does not know the economic impact of the project.

Mr. Meyer asked if it would be feasible to break the project into two parts (bridges and underpass/US 61 lanes and signals). Mr. Shelton stated that doing so would increase the project cost because it would require two separate mobilizations.

Mr. Ross explained that his business serves a regional market, and closure of the ramps would reduce revenue, forcing him to lay off employees. He stated that he is not sure his business would even survive. He commented that the ramp closures affect Jackson more than Cape Girardeau.

Mr. Hahs asked how much savings will be realized by using an alternate staging plan, reducing the number of mix designs, and making other changes. Mr. Williams stated that it is difficult to quantify the savings at this point.

Mr. Mehner suggested that MoDOT present both staging plans at the next Board of Directors meeting to allow for additional input. Due to the schedule required to make the proposed November letting, the Board agreed to hold a special meeting on July 26.

Member Reports

City of Cape Girardeau – Chairman Fox reported that the renewal of the Capital Improvement Sales Tax will be on the August 6 ballot. If passed, the tax will have a 15-year sunset. \$500,000 per year will be devoted to street repairs. The Concrete Street Repair and Asphalt Overlay projects are underway. The Independence Street project is in the design phase. The Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) 6 Committee will soon begin evaluating projects as it works toward developing a list for the City Council.

City of Jackson – Mr. Hahs reported that the Asphalt Overlay project is underway. Acquisition continues for the East Main Street/Shawnee Boulevard Roundabout project; the timing of the project will depend on the DDI schedule.

Cape Girardeau County – Mr. Herbst reported that the County will pave 3 miles and overlay 20 miles of roads this year. The County was fortunate in that its roads were not damaged by the recent flooding. The County submitted the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) grant application for upgrading County Road 330 and Seabaugh Road; awards will be announced in late August or early September.

CTA – Mr. Mogelnicki reported that CTA added four vehicles to its fleet. Ridership continues to increase.

SEMO Port – Ms. Brink reported that the Port's Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant is moving forward. The Port has resumed operations now that the floodwaters have receded. The Port received funding from MoDOT for the Loop Tracks Terminal project.

SEMO RPC – Mr. Christian reported that FY 2020-2023 TIP Amendment No. 1 is being finalized and will be submitted soon for review. He noted that additional amendments are forthcoming.

Cape Regional Airport – Mr. Loy reported that the airport had 5,400 boardings at the mid-year mark. This is a major increase over the prior year, and it puts the airport on pace to finish with over 10,000 boardings for the year.

MoDOT – Mr. Okenfuss reported that the paving work on US 61 is completed; the contractor still has some striping and concrete work to do. Paving on RT K will begin soon. MoDOT will close one lane on the southbound bridge at Center Junction for repairs beginning on July 29 and ending on August 1.

Staff Report

Mr. Shrimplin reported that Governor Parson approved the FY 2020 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Work on the new activities will begin soon.

Other Business and Communications

Mr. Meyer asked how MoDOT plans on offsetting the additional cost for the Center Junction DDI project in the STIP. Mr. Shelton explained that MoDOT anticipates there will be some projects where the low bid is below the estimate, resulting in savings. He added that he does not expect any projects to be removed from the STIP due to the additional cost of the DDI project.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 3:07 p.m. upon motion made by Mr. Hahs and seconded by Mr. Meyer.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Green, P.E.