

Memorandum

To: Missouri Department of Transportation
From: Bicycle/Pedestrian Commission
Date: February 15, 2017
Subject: Boone County - Route B (Paris Road) - ADA & Roadway Pavement Improvements

Dear MoDOT,

~~DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION ONLY~~

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission of the City of Columbia would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the planned pavement improvements to the Route B corridor. As you know, Route B/Paris Road is one of the major arterial streets connecting the northeast portion of Columbia with the heart of the City. As such, it intersects with many neighborhood collectors and also represents one of the few places that allow crossing Interstate 70 using non-motorized transportation.

From the draft plans posted on the website of MoDOT's Central District, it appears that the entire project area encompasses roughly 5.4 miles. The project could be described in two separate sections. The southern 1.5-mile portion encompasses the most populated stretch, which is bound by the Business Loop 70 bridge in the south and the first intersection with Brown Station Road near Dollar General, south of Highway 63. The remaining 3.9 miles are located between Brown Station Road (near Dollar General) and the northern intersection with Brown Station Road, near Broad Building Supply and P&D Pub & Grub.

Our comments are focused on bicycle and pedestrian related issues in the southern portion of the project.

Comment 1. Southbound Bicycle Lane:

The City of Columbia has few locations that allow crossing Interstate 70 without the use of a motor vehicles. Not counting the very dangerous 63 Connector, Route B is the most easterly of these crossings. For anyone using a bicycle to travel from the businesses and neighborhoods around Paris Road to the city center, Route B is the only viable connection. Due to the layout of the roads in this area, Paris Road also provides the only practical choice for travel within this region of the city.

It is true that there is a sidewalk on the northbound side of Paris Road. However, this sidewalk is crossed by many busy driveways and crossroads. The fact is that drivers do not look for southbound bicycles as they pull into this busy road. Using the sidewalk to travel south is thus a very dangerous undertaking, full of guesses of when a car will pull out in front of you and when a car will wait. Thus most cyclist find it less dangerous to travel in the outer southbound driving lane. Less dangerous, however, does not mean save. Paris is a busy road and movement conflicts slow motorized traffic in the least and are dangerous to drivers and cyclist alike.

It is hard to precisely scale the roadway width off the draft plans on MoDOT's website. However, it appears that pavement width is about 66.5 feet. Using rough scaling off aerial images, it appears that the outer northbound lane measures 15 feet, the outer southbound lane measures 14 feet, and the three inner lanes (one northbound, one double-turn and one southbound) measure 12.5 feet each. After the repaving work has been completed, MoDOT could easily restripe these lanes to fit a southbound bicycle lane.

Simply narrowing the driving lanes would allow the addition of a 6-foot bicycle lane, thus making travel safer for motorized and non-motorized traffic alike. Under the above scenario, one possible lane configuration could consist of a 2-foot northbound gutter allowance, 11-foot outer travel lanes, 12-foot inner travel lanes, and a 12.5-foot double-turn lane. In order to avoid conflict near the westbound Business Loop 70 on-ramps, dashed bike lane striping should be continued along the turn lane to the shoulder on the bridge over the Business Loop.

We recognize the fact that part of this restriping would be done on new pavement and part on existing concrete pavement. This would require removal of the existing striping on the concrete surface to remain. However, the

recent Paris Road bridge replacement over Business Loop 70 has demonstrated that restriping concrete roads is a very doable undertaking.

We believe the cost to add a southbound bicycle lane to Paris Road between I-70 and the first intersection with Brown Station Road to be a very cost-effective way to greatly improve safety and connectivity for all traffic participants and thus request the addition of a southbound bicycle lane as part of this project.

2. Driveway and Side Street Crossings:

There are numerous very busy driveways and side streets that enter Paris Road on the east side. Since Paris Road has high traffic volumes, drivers trying to enter Paris Road are naturally focused on motor vehicle traffic. This presents a danger to users of the northbound sidewalk since drivers tend to overlook these traffic participants. Many driveways are already scheduled to be repaved. We therefore recommend using this pavement project to integrate striping that will raise driver awareness of non-motorized traffic on the sidewalk.

We recommend that the sidewalk is to be continued with dashed or solid striping, as appropriate, across all driveway entrances and side street. At a very marginal cost, this should greatly increase the safety of all traffic participants.

3. Crosswalk at Heriford/Whitegate:

Paris Road is bound by Columbia's COLT Railroad on the east side. Therefore, there are only three location that allow crossing Paris Road. These are Heriford Road/Whitegate Drive, Vandivar Drive and Brown Station Road. The latter two are already equipped with pushbutton activated lighted crosswalks and we trust these are to remain in place.

Heriford Road connects two neighborhoods and provides one of these neighborhoods with the shortest route to the east side of Paris Road and the city center. While Heriford Road does not have a sidewalk, this is a slow speed road that currently supports frequent pedestrian and bicycle traffic. MoDOT's draft plans do not show a crosswalk at this location. There is also no way for cyclists or pedestrians to set off the existing traffic light.

We therefore urge MoDOT to add a lighted crosswalk across Paris Road on the south side of Heriford Drive. This light could be pushbutton activated from the existing traffic island. The existing infrastructure at this location means that this lighted crosswalk addition would greatly increase traffic safety at minimal cost.

MoDOT's own website states that "MoDOT works with planning partners to create transportation facilities that work for all users because we value bicycle and pedestrian travel." and that MoDOT strives "to integrate nonmotorized travel into the existing system". We applaud MoDOT for these efforts and appreciate this opportunity to be your planning partner.

Should you have any questions or information for us, please do not hesitate to contact the Chair of the Commission at

Sincerely,

~~DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION ONLY~~

JASON PATRIE, CHAIR
CITY OF COLUMBIA BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN COMMISSION