

Memorandum

To: Missouri Department of Transportation
From: Bicycle/Pedestrian Commission
Date: March 15, 2017
Subject: Mo DOT Job Number J5S3155, Boone County - Route B (Paris Road) -
ADA & Roadway Pavement Improvements, Brown Station Road to Business Loop 70

Dear MoDOT,

~~REVISED 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 main arterial streets connecting the northeast portion of Columbia with the heart of the City. As such, it intersects with several neighborhood streets 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, dated December 6, 2016, it appears that the project 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. The remaining 3.9 miles are located between Brown Station Road and the northern intersection with Brown Station Road.

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

Comment 1. Bicycle Lanes:

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

The sidewalk on the northbound side of Paris Road is not a safe route for southbound cyclists as motorists entering Paris from the northbound side do not see them as they observe traffic in the northbound lanes. Cyclists are then forced to ride in traffic on the southbound shoulder without the protections of a striped bike lane. Where we recognize it is within the rights of a cyclist to use this space, both they, and motorists, are being exposed to greater risk due to the heavier traffic of this artery.

We request that this lower section of Route B be restriped to include 6 foot bike lanes in both the northbound and southbound directions. The commission would invite MoDOT engineers to join us in discussing the striping of this section of Route B before the resurfacing is complete to ensure this is a safe thoroughfare for all users. We believe the opportunity to stripe bicycle lanes on 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.

Comment 2. Driveway and Side Street Crossings:

There are numerous 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 request that the sidewalk is to be continued with dashed, solid or zebra striping, as appropriate, across all driveway entrances and side streets. At a very marginal cost, this should greatly increase the safety of all traffic participants.

Comment 3. Crosswalk at Heriford/Whitegate:

Paris Road is bound by Columbia's COLT Railroad on the west side. Therefore, there are only three locations that allow crossing Paris Road. These are Heriford Road/Whitegate Drive, Vandiver Drive and Brown Station Road. The latter two are already equipped with pushbutton activated signaled 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 at this time, it is a slow speed road that currently supports frequent pedestrian and bicycle traffic. However, there is no way for cyclists or pedestrians to trigger the existing traffic signal to safely cross Paris Road to reach the sidewalk on the eastern side. MoDOT's draft plans do not show a crosswalk at this location.

We therefore urge MoDOT to add a signaled crosswalk across Paris Road on the south side of Heriford Drive. This signal should be pushbutton activated from the existing traffic island on Heriford Drive. This island could easily be slightly enlarged, if required to meet ADA requirements. The existing infrastructure at this location means that this signaled crosswalk addition would greatly increase traffic safety at minimal cost.

Comment 4. Audible Crosswalk Signals:

In general, state maintained roads are among the busiest and fastest routes in many municipalities. We therefore request that MoDOT incorporates into its construction projects the conversion to, or addition of, ADA-compliant audible crosswalk signals at all of its signaled crosswalks, at this project and citywide. Audible signals are standard construction practice in many countries, states and cities, as it is recognized that the increased safety for sight-impaired individuals much outweighs the marginal cost of installing this simple enhancement.

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 518-534-2665.

Sincerely,

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JASON PATRIE, CHAIR
CITY OF COLUMBIA BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN COMMISSION