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Winter 2022

Transportation Advisory Committee prioritizes regional transportation needs, Hwy. 63 realignment projects



ST. JAMES — The Meramec Region’s Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) decided the expansions of Highways 63 and 50 to four-lane corridors remain the number one and two regional transportation priorities, respectively, at its Dec. 9 meeting. The proposed projects on Highway 63 and Highway 50 have topped the regional priority list for several years. Once it was decided these two projects should continue to be top priorities for the region, TAC members from each county shared the top three or four additional transportation needs from their counties. The TAC members then voted to prioritize these additional needs on a regional level. The prioritized list was approved later in evening by the Meramec Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) board and has been shared with the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) Central District office for consideration for inclusion in MoDOT’s Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The STIP is a five-year plan for design and construction projects.

In addition to the projects on Highways 63 and 50, other items topping the TAC’s priority list as high or medium priority, in order of priority, are:

- Replace bridge/low water crossing over Crooked Creek on Route TT in Dent County;
- Improvements to the Hwy. V Interchange on I-44 in Phelps County;
- Install southbound left turn lane on Hwy. 63 at Hwy. 28 near Vichy in Maries County;
- Replace bridge on MO 32 over the west fork of the Huzzah in Dent County;
- Install southbound left turn lane on MO 19 to turn onto Lindburg Road in Crawford County;
- Safety improvements and turn lane on US 63 through Westphalia;
- Add turn lanes from Hwy. 28 junction to north city limits on MO 19 near school in Owensville;

- Safety improvements at the Y intersection of Hwy. 63 and Hwy. 28 south of Vienna in Maries County;
- Safety improvements at Exit 159 on ramp at I-44 in St. Robert;
- Safety improvements north of Freeburg and at intersection of Hwy. 63 and Route E in Osage County;
- Address bridge concerns over Ashley Branch on Route W in Washington County;
- Safety improvements at the Y intersection of Hwy. 42 and Hwy. 133 in Maries County;
- Improvements to bridge over Cherry Valley Branch on MO 19 in Crawford County;
- Address bridge concerns over Roubidoux Creek on Route H in Pulaski County;
- Address safety and traffic control needs at I-44 interchange and off ramp and Route B intersection on MO 68 in Phelps County;
- Safety improvements at I-44 to University Drive on US 63 in Rolla;
- Address safety and flooding concerns on Route 89 near the Gasconade River through Osage County;
- Convert overpass to interchange for economic development and safety at junction of Route FF and I-44 in Crawford County; and
- Safety improvements at MO 19 and Roosevelt Street in Salem.

The priority list is an annual planning exercise for the TAC.

Additionally, the TAC prioritized realignment projects on Hwy. 63 that would be recommended to MoDOT, should funding become available. From the broader unfunded needs, MoDOT has developed Missouri's High Priority Unfunded Needs list to guide the development of projects into funded projects as state and federal transportation funds increase. Two projects are currently on MoDOT's Tier 2 list of high priority unfunded needs. They are a shared four-lane of Hwy. 63 from Route 50 to south of Westphalia and a shared four-lane of Hwy. 63 from south of Maries County Road 332 to south of Maries County Road 325 near Vienna. A third section of Hwy 63 has been approved for Tier 3, that being a shared four-lane from north of Route P in Osage County to north of Maries County Road 332. The remaining four sections of Highway 63 were prioritized by the TAC and are listed from highest to lowest priority.


- A seven-mile stretch from south of bridge over Maries River at Westphalia to south of Osage County Road 524;
- An eight-mile stretch from south of Maries County Road 325 to just north of Hwy. 68;
- An eight-mile stretch from south of Maries County Road 443 to Phelps County Super 2; and
- A two-mile stretch from north of Hwy. 68 to south of Maries County Road 443, through Vichy.

Persons needing more information on MRPC's Transportation Advisory Committee may contact MRPC at (573) 265-2993. For more information on Transportation needs in the region or other programs offered by MRPC, follow them on Facebook at www.facebook.com/meramecregion or visit www.meramecregion.org.

To learn more about what is in the STIP and about the High Priority Unfunded Needs: <https://www.modot.org/statewide-transportation-improvement-program-stip>.

Meramec Region Crash Fatalities (As of Feb. 22)		
County	2022	2021
Crawford	0	3
Dent	0	0
Gasconade	0	1
Maries	0	0
Osage	2	0
Phelps	2	0
Pulaski	1	1
Washington	1	1
Meramec Region Total	6	6
Missouri Total	100	100

Source: MO State Highway Patrol, MoDOT



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A VOLUNTARY CONSORTIUM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS SERVING THE MERAMEC AREA

MRPC works to update the region weekly on the growing number of fatalities within our counties and in the state compared to 2021. Right now the region is almost in line with the numbers from 2021 at 5 fatalities, but even one fatality is too many. Remember to always buckle up and put the phones down when behind the wheel.

Take the Pledge: #BUPD

The challenge is simple: When you get into any vehicle, buckle up your safety belt. If you are a driver, put the cellphone down. Turn it off if you have to.

www.modot.org/BuckleUpPhoneDown/

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law increases Missouri's Transportation funding

St. James — The passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law means a large increase in funding and improvements to Missouri's entire transportation system. Missouri is expected to see roughly \$9 billion dollars spread over five years in additional funding. Roads, bridges, highway safety programs, public transportation, electric vehicle infrastructure, passenger and freight railways and airports are slated to see an increase in funding under the new laws funding formula.

In Missouri, there are 2,190 bridges and over 7,576 miles of highway in poor condition. Each year, drivers pay approximately \$743 in costs associated with repairs for driving on poor condition roads and bridges. Roughly \$7 billion of the formula funds coming to Missouri are dedicated highways and bridges.

The new law also invests \$13 billion to improve roadway safety nationwide. Missouri will receive approximately \$40 million in formula funding for highway safety traffic programs, which help improve driver behavior and reduce deaths and injuries from motor vehicle related crashes. This represents a 29 percent increase over previous levels. This is welcome news as Missouri's roadway fatality rates have been on the



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rise the past two years. Missouri's commercial motor vehicle (CMV) safety efforts are expected to see approximately \$53.4 million to reduce CMV crashes.

In addition to trying to make roads safer and drivers safer, Missouri is looking at an investment in public transportation in the form of \$732 million. This funding is working to improve and create new public transportation options across the state and represents a 36 percent increase in funding. The state's airports are expected to have an increase of approximately \$247 million for infrastructure development. This will include improving runways, taxiways and airport-owned towers, terminal development projects and noise reduction projects. Missouri's passenger and freight railways would be able to apply for nearly \$15 billion in potential grants for rail improvement, safety upgrades or grade crossing safety improvements. Missouri is expected to receive about \$99 million to support the expansion of electric vehicle charging in the state.

"There are certainly more needs than what funding is bringing, but in many cases, and in many places, we're going to be able to exceed, I think what we've been able to for literally the last 20 years," MoDOT Director Patrick McKenna said in an article by KY3.

The new infrastructure law also sets forth several new transportation-related grants and the state, local governments and transportation organizations will be able to apply for some of those funds. For example, local governments in Missouri will be eligible to compete for an additional \$6 billion in funding for a new Safe Streets for All program which will provide funding directly to support efforts

to advance “vision zero” plans and other improvements to reduce crashes and fatalities, especially for cyclists and pedestrians.

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