

ST. JOSEPH AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Technical Committee

November 10, 2011

Voting Members Present:

Ty Nagle	City of St. Joseph
Andrew Clements	City of St. Joseph
Scott DesPlanques	City of St. Joseph
Dustin Smith	City of St. Joseph
Julia Elder	Village of Country Club
Lawrence Mays	Doniphan County
Dan Hausman	Buchanan County
Shannon Kusilek	MoDOT

Other:

Tom Worker-Braddock	Olsson Associates
Mark Swope	Olsson Associates
Michael Rinehart	MoDOT
Bill Robinett	MoDOT – Missouri
Davonna Moore	K-DOT
Jill Cornett	
Elaine Buckner	City of St. Joseph

OPENING REPORTS

Roll Call of Voting Members. Chairman Smith called the meeting to order and asked for the roll call of voting members. A quorum was present.

Approval of September 8, 2011 Minutes. **Ms. Elder moved to approve the minutes of the September 8, 2011 meeting. Mr. DesPlanques seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.**

Opportunity for Public Comment. No comments were offered.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business was brought before the committee.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Kuselik introduced Mr. Mike Rhinehart, the new MoDOT Area Engineer for the Western District. He is formerly from Nevada, Missouri and has been splitting his time between Maryville and St. Joseph.

Transit Study – Olsson Associates progress and presentation. Mr. Nagle introduced Olsson staff who have been meeting with stakeholders and the city council.

Mr. Mark Swope, Olsson Associates, outlined the goal of the study as making the existing service more efficient through recommendations for route changes to reduce the overall cost of operating the system. Public involvement and data collection are wrapping up. The next step is to look at how routes are being used to develop a final concept with the most support and which makes sense; then develop an implementation strategy. In early February, Olsson will present their final findings to city council, the MPO and major stakeholders. Olsson conducted 15 different stakeholder group meetings, including Missouri Western College and neighborhood associations. Surveys were completed by 450 current system users. The survey simply asked where the rider was going to and from, and where they want to go that they can't get to now. They will also look at ridership and performance in order to make a recommendation to reduce transit's overall trip cost, then develop concepts by looking at changes in land use that have occurred. They are also examining employer timetables to match transit service, as well as the community's socio-economic environment. Once settling on a concept for modifying the service, a financial analysis and implementation strategy is developed. Wrap up occurs in February/March. Mr. Robinett asked if both fares and routes might be modified. Mr. Swope said that is conceivable. Mr. Robinett asked if the consultant will be available if the city goes through the public hearing process. Mr. Swope replied no, that is beyond the scope of work and is not required as the FTA does not prescribe a specific process. Mr. Robinett asked if the system operates only in the city limits. Mr. Clements responded that it includes Elwood, Kansas also. Mr. Swope said Elwood service will be considered to see what opportunities exist to make it better.

Non-Motorized counts for fall – update. Mr. Nagle reported that annual bike and pedestrian counts were taken in October and will be sent to the National Bike & Pedestrian Association for analysis. In 2012, counts will be taken before cold weather. The analysis should be ready by the next MPO meeting. Trends will become apparent over a period of years.

UPWP – completed FY 2012. Mr. Nagle noted that the plan has been completed and ready for Coordinating Committee approval this month. He described the work elements in more detail and noted that the format will be changing to a “calendar year”. Work elements include the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan update and work on the Safe Routes to School Program. The Rideshare funding has ended. Non-motorized pedestrian counts were completed. TIP amendments were completed at the last meeting, with administrative changes ready to be made. Title VI-EJ was just updated and the 2035 LRTP adjusted. Mr. Robinett commented that FTA now has proposed guidance out on Title VI-EJ. He urged those present to take advantage of the comment period which is open until December 2nd. If the regulation goes through, it will impose burdens on MPOs.

Mr. Clements explained that about a year ago, nationwide, FTA weighed in and told several transit operators in the country that their applications were all rejected. Although there were no new regulations, legal opinions from Washington DC threw everything out without providing guidance about what was wrong. Grants were locked down. In the end, each agency came into compliance. This MPO re-submitted their application in a different package and it seemed to be accepted. The new regulations referenced by Mr. Robinett are even more interesting. Mr. Robinett said that any time the MPO accepts FTA funds, it comes under these regulations. Ms.

Moore said KDOT asked Kansas MPOs to submit concerns and comments. No one is too happy with more requirements and no more funds. Mr. Robinett said it has gone from one extreme to another. Mr. Clements is working on a draft comment letter now.

Mr. Nagle reported he is working on a draft land use plan and freight plan (both to be completed in 2012). The GIS data base is constantly being updated. More work will happen with Title VI EJ. The Annual DBE report was recently sent out for the last six months, with two more reports due this year. He is now recalibrating 2000 to 2011 model to include all of Buchanan County. Safety is a new element when working more closely with DOT's plans regarding sidewalks and pedestrian safety. He is working to be sure the TIP and LRTP focus on the same goals. Public participation for the LRTP will take up a good amount of time. The rail to trail inventory will be completed in 2012. Patti Banks is the firm selected for the work.

Safe Routes to School is an ongoing process with the St. Joseph School District putting a plan together. Pedestrian counts will be taken in April 2012. Phase 2 of the Transit Operational Study starts in January 2012 and they hope to have recommendations ready March 1st.

Transit Ridership Advisory Group. Mr. Clements noted that an action step recommended in the LRTP is a requirement for a community oriented transportation plan. It could involve OATS or other providers, private or public, to talk about the advantages of working together.

Mr. Hausman moved to approve the FY12 UPWP as submitted. Mr. Mays seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

Rails to Trails Study – Update and Scheduling. Mr. Nagle explained that the professional planning firm of Patti Banks is set to begin the study in early 2012. A scope of services is being finalized for examining abandoned rail lines between Wathena and Elwood, as well as St. Joseph and Savannah, for use as walking, biking, pedestrian and equine trails. There will be physical challenges, as well as property ownership and related issues. Mr. Clements said the MPO appointed a steering committee of communities potentially affected by the trails. It has been suggested that the steering committee identify two individuals from each community to work with the community to get feedback on key issues. The study should take approximately six months. Savannah has asked about equestrian uses. Mr. Robinett pointed out that Greenways has a separate trail because of maintenance issues with horses. Mr. Clements said rural trails in Nebraska are shared with horses. Each local community must make those decisions. Mr. Robinett suggested he speak with staff in Springfield about equestrian issues.

TIP Administrative Changes. Mr. Nagle described the changes on TIP pages 22, 25 and 26 which he e-mailed to members to be inserted in the full document. Mr. Clements suggested that the title for the bridge project on Alabama be consistent with the earmark language, which would be "US 59/Alabama Grade Separation".

MISCELLANEOUS – Mr. Robinett reported that the Senate, on November 7th, came out with a proposed 2-year authorization for the highway side. It would give MPO's and state DOTs more discretion about how they use the money. The 600 page document includes a new freight

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network program and lots of changes for MPOs. Tier I and II MPOs and those less than 200,000 population can opt out of the MPO process.

ADJOURN – The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 12, 2012 at 10:30 a.m. in the 4th Floor Conference Room, City Hall, 1100 Frederick Avenue, St. Joseph, Missouri.