



NEWS RELEASE

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COUNTY COUNCIL APPROVES FUNDING AGREEMENT FOR FIFTH STREET INTERCHANGE PROJECT Public invited to view plans Sept. 10, construction to begin spring 2016

ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO - On Aug. 10, the St. Charles County Council passed an ordinance authorizing an intergovernmental agreement between the County, the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission (MHTC), and the City of St. Charles for funding of the Fifth Street Interchange Project. With nearly 50% of traffic crossing the Blanchette Bridge exiting at Fifth Street or First Capitol Drive, this project is designed to improve traffic flow and stimulate economic development.

"It is clear that this is an area of concern for residents and business owners in the community," said Mike Klinghammer, County Councilman for District 6, which includes the Fifth Street area. "I have been working with County Executive Ehlmann and his staff on this for the last year and a half. We developed a plan with the City of St. Charles and MoDOT's input that will benefit the entire area."

Growth in the area and traffic volume have worked together to create issues with the current configuration in the Fifth Street area. The existing partial cloverleaf interchange is outdated and results in poor lane utilization and aggressive lane changes, and with no direct access to I-70 the Fairgrounds Road overpass is underutilized, as well. In 2014, the County conducted a survey of residents and business owners within a half mile of the Fifth Street interchange, and 67% responded that traffic and congestion has gotten worse during the last five years. In addition, 85% responded that traffic and congestion would get worse during the next five years if nothing was done.

"When complete, this project will serve as another example of how planning and teamwork leads to tremendous infrastructure improvements in St. Charles County, and I would like to thank the Council for moving it forward," said County Executive Steve Ehlmann.

The Fifth Street Interchange Project plan involves converting the Fairgrounds Road overpass to an interchange in both directions on I-70, which will reduce congestion and make access to the St. Charles Convention Center and Mark Twain Village easier. The project also includes several additional improvements:

- Converting the existing partial cloverleaf configuration at Fifth Street to a Diverging Diamond Interchange.
- Constructing a new one-way outer road for westbound traffic between Fifth Street and Fairgrounds Road.
- Converting Veterans Memorial Parkway to one-way eastbound traffic between Fairgrounds Road and Fifth Street.
- Replacing the traffic signal at Fairgrounds Road and Veterans Memorial Parkway with a roundabout.
- Constructing new slip ramps on and off I-70 between Fifth Street and First Capitol Drive along Veterans Memorial Parkway and the new northern one-way outer road to provide additional access to I-70 and nearby businesses.
- Constructing a fourth lane on westbound I-70 under the Route 94/First Capitol Drive interchange to provide additional capacity on westbound I-70 and improve the weaving condition between the Fifth Street on-ramp and Route 94/First Capitol Drive off-ramp.

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- Constructing a fourth lane on eastbound I-70 under the Route 94/First Capitol Drive interchange to provide additional capacity on eastbound I-70 and improve the weaving condition between the Route 94/First Capitol Drive on-ramp and Fifth Street off-ramp.

“These improvements are going to make a dramatic difference,” said John Greifzu, Director of Transportation for St. Charles County. “In early 2014, we had an open house to show the public these improvements, which were in the proposed stage at the time, and 80% responded that the improvements would be ‘very beneficial’ or ‘beneficial.’ The community is going to be very pleased.”

The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) is coordinating construction on the \$18 million project, which will start in spring 2016. Temporary closures will occur periodically during the construction, which will be communicated along with detour routes. Construction is anticipated to be completed by Thanksgiving 2016 in time for the holiday shopping season; however, work will continue into spring and summer 2017 on striping, signage, planting, and other enhancements.

Those interested in learning more about the project are invited to attend an open house on Thursday, Sept. 10, from 4-6 p.m. at the St. Charles County Administration Building, 201 N. Second Street, St. Charles. For more information, please call the St. Charles County Transportation Department at 636-949-3074.

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