

TRANSPORTATION

“You and I come by road or rail, but economists travel on infrastructure.”

Margaret Thatcher, former British Prime Minister

Transportation is more than planes, trains and automobiles. It's essential to the health of a community, both in terms of the success of its economy and in access to essential services.

While residents continue to rank “traffic” as one of their number one concerns, the City of Springfield and Greene County have been successful in planning and completing several transportation improvements.

As far as bicyclists and pedestrians, much progress has been made to make the community more friendly and accessible but continued work is necessary.

The public transit system is serving more riders but additional routes and shorter travel times are needed to make the transit system more practical for more commuters, including those who are disabled.

Springfield-Branson National Airport continues to experience increased passenger loads and service to additional destinations. A new midfield terminal is under construction and scheduled for completion in 2008.

ROADWAYS. The City of Springfield's capital improvement program funds high-priority transportation needs through a quarter-cent sales tax. More than \$425 million in capital improvement projects have been completed in the past six years. Renewed by voters in February 2007, the sales tax will raise an estimated \$25 million for transportation improvements.

The City of Springfield partners with the Missouri Department of Transportation to use an eighth-cent sales tax for improvements on state roads within the city. This renewable sales tax allows city government to move more quickly on projects while state funding is pending.

Greene County does not have a sales tax in place to fund transportation improvements outside the Springfield city limits. With the majority of population growth occurring outside the city limits, a funding source is needed to finance improvements on the urban fringe.

Springfield's average commute time is comparatively low. In 1990, the commute time was 15.7 minutes compared to 17 minutes in 2000. The national average commute time is 26.5 minutes. The upward trend is expected to continue as population and traffic volume increase.

Several important roadway improvement projects are either underway or beginning soon. Essential funding has resulted from passage by Missouri voters of Amendment 3 in 2004 as well as from assistance on specific projects from our local congressional delegation. Among the most recent transportation projects are:

- Interstate 44/U.S. 65 interchange improvements (*underway*)
- U.S. 60/ U.S. 65 interchange improvements (*begins 2009*)
- Improved access to the airport's new midfield terminal (*begins 2009*)
- Weaver and Campbell Streets intersection improvements (*begins 2007*)
- U.S. 60/Glenstone Avenue/Republic Road interchange improvements (*begins 2007*)

ROAD SAFETY. Because safety is a top priority, Springfield and Greene County are making intersection improvements to decrease accident rates.

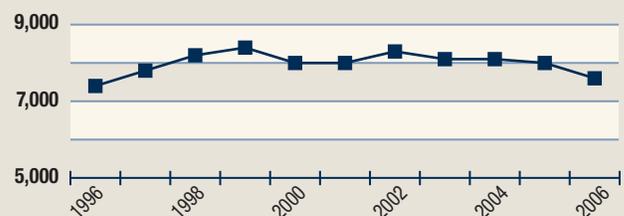
Traffic crashes in the City of Springfield in 2006 were the lowest reported in nine years. The City's “Drive Responsibly” campaign focuses on the top four contributors to crashes: following too closely, inattention, speeding and failure to yield.

City Council has approved installation over the next two years of photo red light enforcement cameras at up to 16 intersection approaches. The first camera was operational in June 2007 at National Avenue and Battlefield Road.

City Utilities provided a grant in 2004 to assist in the conversion of traffic signal lamps from incandescent lamps to LED-type, resulting in better motorist visibility.

In partnership with MODOT, Springfield has developed a state-of-the-art Intelligent Transportation System that uses technology to improve the flow of traffic. Springfield's system was highlighted in USA Today on April 20, 2005.

SPRINGFIELD TRAFFIC CRASH HISTORY



Pedestrian-Friendly Changes. Capital improvement plans have included funding for pedestrian concerns. Since 2003, 16 miles of new sidewalks have been constructed by Springfield and Greene County, primarily near public schools.

Ozark Greenways continues to work on the Vision 20/20 plan to create more than 130 miles of interconnecting trails.

The organization is promoting the Safe Routes to School program, creating safe infrastructure for a pedestrian-friendly community, and provides trail connections to six area public schools with additional connections planned.

City Utilities provides public transit service to each high school, six middle schools and many elementary schools. Ongoing discussion between stakeholders continues, as the Springfield Public School system works to find ways to address student transportation. Although improved, there is still much work to be done to make the community truly pedestrian-friendly.

Bicycles as Transportation. Active bicyclists in the Springfield area use an extensive on-street signed bicycle network with additional improvements planned. While great strides have been made, many more miles of on-street bicycle improvements are needed.

More than four miles of bicycle lanes have been constructed in Springfield and Greene County and more than 60 miles of “Share the Road” routes exist within the city and Greene County.

Approximately 60 miles of Ozark Greenways trails are available to bicyclists, including 17 miles of trail extending to Bolivar.

All City Utilities buses have bike racks; the Park Central bus transfer station offers free secured bicycle storage; bike racks are required on new commercial construction. City Utilities partners with Ozark Greenways to promote alternative transportation through their annual Bike, Bus, Walk Week in May.

AIRPORT IMPROVEMENTS. Springfield-Branson National Airport serves as the region’s primary airport. The total number of airport passengers is increasing and the airport is growing. When compared with similar markets, Springfield has more destinations.

The current terminal is operating at capacity; a new mid-field terminal, scheduled for completion by late 2008, will accommodate increasing demand for many years.

- Between 2000 and 2006, passengers flying in and out of the airport increased by 25%.
- Non-stop service to 12 cities is available from SGF, up from six in 2000.
- The number of available daily seats is 1,941, up from 1,217 in 2000.
- Departure studies consistently find about 60% of passengers traveling for business and 40% for leisure.



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION. City Utilities operates a fixed route bus system as well as a paratransit system for disabled passengers. The fixed route system operates on a set schedule seven days a week. As of spring, 2005 all CU buses use bio-diesel as their fuel source.

Ridership in 2006 was the highest recorded in recent history: 1.9 million rides. A survey showed 72% of riders either have no driver’s license or no access to an automobile. Service to additional locations and reduced travel times would attract a wider variety of riders. These improvements will require additional funding.

CITY UTILITIES BUS SYSTEM		
	CU Total Passengers	CU Bus Miles
2001	1,515,611	1,127,665
2002	1,509,686	1,215,805
2003	1,539,264	1,229,100
2004	1,545,267	1,191,807
2005	1,659,279	1,188,991
2006	1,903,926	1,201,815

Security cameras have been installed in each bus, adding an element of safety to the system. Security cameras installed at the Park Central transfer facility send a live feed to the transit office.



For those who are disabled, City Utilities’ Access Express provides curb-to-curb service by reservation within the city limits. Older Adults Transportation System (OATS) provides limited service both inside and outside the city limits and several not-for-profit agencies provide paratransit services to clients.

However, there is a growing need for door-through-door service for the many elderly and disabled individuals without transportation. The high cost of liability insurance for this type of service contributes to this shortage. Additional funding is needed to meet increasing paratransit demands.

Coordination is needed among the more than 20 not-for-profit transportation providers. The Ozarks Transportation Organization is developing a coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan that will enhance transportation access, minimize duplication of services and facilitate the most appropriate cost-effective transportation possible with available resources.