

Transportation

“Quality transportation equates to business success. There is a direct, cause to effect relationship between business success and quality transportation. Successful communities invest in transportation.”

—Jim Anderson, President, Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce and Missouri Highways and Transportation Commissioner (2001-2009)

The City of Springfield and Greene County continue to place a priority on transportation. Traffic volumes and congestion persist despite the current state of the national economy. However, improvements in many different areas of transportation keep providing a more balanced multi-modal transportation network.

BLUE RIBBONS (2004 – 2007)

- Roadways
- Commute Time
- Road Safety
- Pedestrian-Friendly Changes
- Bicycles as Transportation
- Airport Improvements

SPRINGFIELD-BRANSON NATIONAL AIRPORT YEARLY TOTAL PASSENGERS

Year	Total Passengers
2000	710,961
2001	657,224
2002	652,283
2003	653,253
2004	721,958
2005	888,738
2006	864,999
2007	882,904
2008	779,995

Public Transportation

CITY UTILITIES BUS SYSTEM PASSENGER RIDERSHIP RATES

Year	CU Total Passengers
2001	1,515,611
2002	1,509,686
2003	1,539,264
2004	1,545,267
2005	1,659,279
2006	1,903,926
2007	2,047,496
2008	1,599,278*

* Note: In 2008, CU enacted a new price structure to discourage riding for recreation.

CURRENT STATUS OF 2004 – 2007 RED FLAGS

Paratransit Service

Paratransit service provides transportation to those who, due to disability, cannot access the fixed routes. Currently, City Utilities and OATS have programs that provide curb to curb and transportation assistance to the disabled both inside and outside Springfield city limits. In addition, not-for-profit agencies provide services for their clients. However, the 2007 *Community Focus* report identified the shortage of door-to-door transportation services for the disabled and elderly due to liability insurance and lack of funding. Therefore, City Utilities and other Missouri transit systems continue to seek increased funding from the state of Missouri.

During the current economic downturn many transit systems are being forced to reduce transportation services, which in turn makes it difficult for customers to meet their employment, education, medical, and shopping transportation needs. A sales tax could produce an additional local revenue source to create a regional transit system to serve Springfield and its surrounding communities.

Paratransit Coordination

Coordination among more than 20 not-for-profit transportation providers offering transportation services was identified in previous *Community Focus* reports. The Ozarks Transportation Organization (OTO) completed a Transportation Coordination Plan in August



2007 to enhance transportation access, minimize duplication of services, and facilitate the most appropriate cost-effective transportation possible with available resources. Since then, the Local Coordinating Board (LCB) for Transit, comprised of both human service agencies and human service transportation providers, has been created with the function of implementing the Transit Coordination Plan. Tasks have resulted in the award of \$530,115 in federal funding through applications, the development of a transportation provider brochure and discussion on shared insurance and training/driver standards. However, additional funding is needed to fund a 511 call system that would provide coordinated dispatching among the various providers.



Public School Bus System

The 2005 *Community Focus* report identified that the Springfield R-12 public school system no longer provided bus service to students living within 1½ miles of school. In 2007 the school system revised this policy so buses can transport students living within the restricted area if they are required to cross a barrier street. The needs of students walking to school have been addressed by serving each high school with public transit, providing greenway connections, building additional sidewalks, and providing Walking Route Maps for every Springfield elementary student indicating the safest route for pedestrians. The City of Springfield has constructed 41 miles of sidewalk within ½ mile of a public school since 1989 and has identified another 100 miles of needed school sidewalks. Additionally, Greene County continues to place a priority on school sidewalks and has constructed 4.3 miles of sidewalks near schools in the past two years with another 2.4 miles planned in the next year.

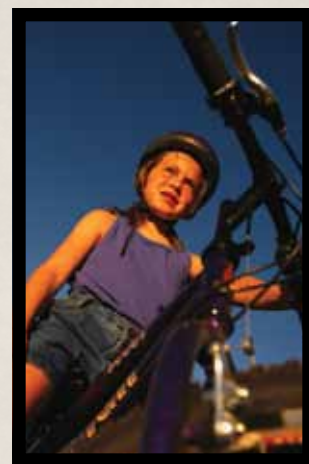
EMERGING ISSUES

Transportation Funding Shortfalls

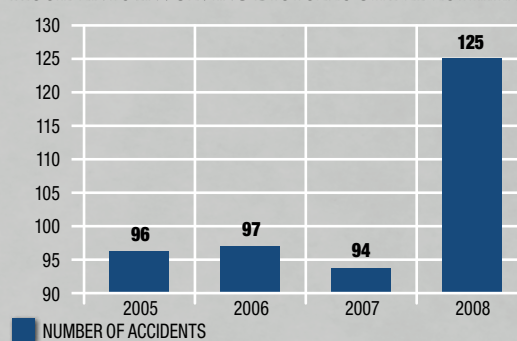
The national and state transportation funding crisis has led to an inability to sustain current ongoing investment levels affecting both the maintenance of existing roadways and ability to build additional roadway capacity. Flat 17¢ federal and state fuel taxes have not been indexed with inflation. For example, the State of Missouri has not increased the motor fuel sales tax since 1996. Within the City of Springfield, funding to maintain roadways is decreasing although there are over 1 billion dollars in identified transportation needs. In addition, Springfield funds roadways with ¼ cent and ⅓ cent sales taxes based on gross receipts within the city but sales tax receipts are decreasing.

Increasing Bicycle and Pedestrian Accidents

A need exists to raise driver awareness of the presence of pedestrians and bicycles on or crossing roads. While usage of alternative transportation modes is increasing, drivers need to be educated about the need to yield to pedestrian traffic and to share the road with bicyclists. Appropriate education may reduce the increasing number of accidents involving bicycles and pedestrians.



ACCIDENTS INVOLVING BICYCLES OR PEDESTRIANS



Lack of Transit Capacity

City Utilities Transit is experiencing ridership that exceeds capacity during peak hours. As a result, riders are often required to wait for the next bus. In addition, the bus fleet is aging and needs replacement. City Utilities is in need of funding for new larger buses that can accommodate a greater passenger load.

Need for a Regional Transit System

Currently, the public transit system operates only within the city limits of Springfield. As the region continues to grow outside of Springfield (see Business and Economic Conditions report), a need exists to provide transit service both to commuters and an aging population that is no longer able to drive safely.

Sustainable Transportation Network

The number of people who are unable to drive safely will increase as the average age of the area population increases. This coupled with the rising price of fuel is making the standard single occupancy vehicle more impractical and costly.



Therefore, additional sustainable transportation networks are needed to address these needs. Local efforts are underway to promote carpooling through regional commuter resources such as OzarksCommute.com. In addition, further development of the current City Utilities Transit system is being examined to increase service.