

# Transportation

Transportation in the Springfield area is multi-faceted. We are lucky to have a **superior roadway network** with good connectivity and relatively low congestion, a good public bus system with extensive coverage, a developing comprehensive trail system, and an emerging bicycle network. **Collaboration** among different entities and people is the reason for our successful transportation system.

Despite our advances, **shortcomings remain in the area of funding for transportation**. Reduced funding from state and federal sources has caused **difficulties in all areas of transportation** including roads, bicycle facilities, sidewalks, transit services, and school transportation.

## BLUE RIBBONS

### Collaboration

The Springfield area is held up throughout Missouri as an example of how collaboration in transportation gets results. The City of Springfield passed the fourth renewal of the ½-cent transportation sales tax in August 2012. This tax is used to partner with the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) and Greene County to fund needed transportation projects. The prior ½-cent sales tax advanced the construction of the diverging diamond interchanges at Kansas Expressway and I-44 and James River Freeway and National Avenue, as well as the expansion of U.S. 65 to six lanes. The 2012 renewal will fund a diverging diamond interchange at Battlefield and U.S. 65, the expansion of Republic Road, a rail-road bridge over Chestnut Expressway, as well as enhancing mobility through transit, sidewalks, and biking.



U.S. 65 after six-lane expansion completed in 2011.

### Reduced Congestion

The vehicle miles traveled per capita is decreasing for the urbanized area. In 2002, the average daily vehicle miles traveled per capita was 17 miles and in 2012 it was 15.8 miles per capita. While the population for the area has increased, total vehicle miles traveled for the area has remained constant. A new congestion management

report due out later this year will likely show congestion levels remaining constant or decreasing. The census is still reporting average commute times of less than 20 minutes for Greene County.

Reduced congestion levels can be attributed to two factors. The first factor is the long list of roadway improvements. Over the last five years, the Springfield area has seen many improvements including several sections of six-lane roadway and targeted interchange enhancements to improve traffic flow. The second factor is the increased use of Intelligent Transportation Systems. Significant changes have been made in traffic signal timings to improve traffic flow. In addition, multiple traffic cameras and dynamic message signs have been installed to allow for faster emergency response times and rerouting of traffic in the event of an accident. The Traffic Management Center of the Ozarks received the 2011 Institute of Transportation Engineers Transportation Achievement award for the innovations achieved through the collaboration of MoDOT and the City of Springfield in managing the transportation network in the Springfield area.

### Sustainable Transportation Network

The need for a sustainable transportation network was identified as an emerging issue in the 2009 Community Focus report and a blue ribbon in the 2011 Community Focus report. Many advances have been made in providing a sustainable transportation network through transit, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes.

The Let's Go Smart Springfield campaign was introduced to encourage healthy living by walking and bicycling. There have been 60 miles of designated bicycle routes completed in the City of Springfield; 19 miles were marked with bike lanes and shared lane signs in 2011 and 2012. An additional 2.4 miles of designated bicycle lanes were added in Greene County outside of the city limits. Springfield is designated as a bronze level bicycle-friendly community. The first segment of The Link, a planned bicycle and pedestrian route through Springfield's core that will connect



The South Dry Sac Greenway Trail.



Sidewalk construction at Benton Avenue and Calhoun Street.

existing and planned greenways, opened in 2011. Two additional miles of greenway trails have been constructed in the past two years with four grade-separated roadway crossings, as well as two important neighborhood trail connections to the Trail of Tears and Wilson's Creek Greenway. These additions bring the total mileage of greenways to 68 miles.

During 2011 and 2012, five miles of sidewalks were constructed on streets with bus routes and an additional four miles were constructed on streets without bus routes, mostly near elementary schools. Almost 10 miles of existing sidewalks were rehabilitated. Outside of the city limits, an additional 2.5 miles of sidewalks were completed with 1.9 miles near elementary schools. A person-powered mobility plan, a plan for transportation that does not use a motor, but the energy of the individual, is under development. Transit improvements include route modifications to improve on-time performance, the design of the downtown transfer station, and real-time technology to notify riders of bus locations. Work is ongoing to make enhancements to the sustainable transportation network.

### Airport

Springfield-Branson National Airport continues to be a booming front door to the community.

“It seems like as more markings have been put down, drivers are becoming more aware and courteous toward me as I’m traversing these streets. Hopefully, this anecdotal evidence is not just a figment of my imagination but the seeds of something better in Springfield.”

—Tracy Wilkins, avid cyclist and bicycle commuter

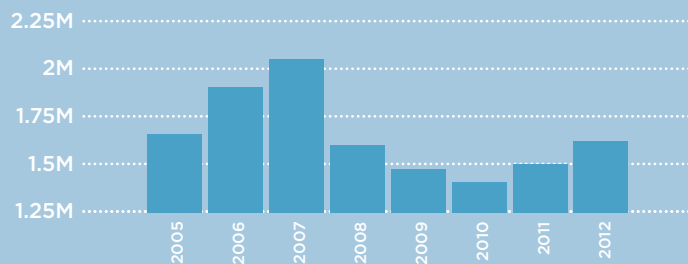
The airport has been identified as a blue ribbon in the previous four Community Focus reports. The number of passengers remains steady with non-stop service to nine cities. With a new terminal and repaved runways and taxiways, the airport is in excellent condition. In 2013, the airport passed its annual Federal Aviation Administration safety inspection without a discrepancy for the eighth consecutive year. Funding has been secured to develop existing airport property to build seven new private airplane hangars in 2014, bringing the total number of hangars up from 25 to 32, resulting in increasing business development opportunities.

## RED FLAGS

### Transportation Funding Shortfall

Transportation funding shortfalls for all modes have been persistently identified as red flags in previous Community Focus reports and continue to be a concern. MoDOT is currently only able to fund the maintenance of existing roadways. Prior initiatives, like Amendment 3 and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, were able to temporarily fend off the impending transportation funding shortfall to fund essential transportation projects. At a budget of half of that in previous years, the area will be largely limited only to projects that can be funded locally unless additional state funding can be secured. The Blue Ribbon Citizens Committee on Missouri’s Transportation Needs identified needs of up to \$1 billion annually for the State of Missouri. The Missouri Highway Commission is requesting a temporary one-cent sales tax to meet the identified need.

### TRANSIT RIDERSHIP, 2005-2012



Source: City Utilities



A City Utilities bus stop on Glenstone Avenue.

The City Utilities (CU) transit system has experienced increased ridership with little new capital investment. The current buses range from 13 to 16 years old. A federal grant was awarded to CU to replace 10 of the 25 existing buses in 2011. The 15 remaining bus replacements, a \$4.8 million expense, have no identified funding source. Buses are currently over capacity with the limited service provided. Dwindling fuel tax revenues, coupled with sequestration and a new federal transportation bill, have left transit capital funding severely inadequate. Where CU was once able to get grants for the purchase of buses, this option is no longer available as the grants are no longer funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation. Additional service frequency and service coverage is needed to address the growing transit needs both within the City of Springfield and the region.

There is a shortage of door-to-door transportation service for the elderly and disabled who cannot use regular public transportation. The shortage of service persists due to a lack of funding and liability insurance costs. Transit providers are unable to cover the costs to provide service through rider-ship fares alone. Medicaid and Medicare will provide a percentage of the costs, but additional funding is needed in order to provide services to all who need it. While additional coordination is occurring among the more than 20 non-profit transportation providers that offer

15.8

Average daily vehicle miles traveled per capita in 2012, down from 17 miles in 2002

60

Miles of designated bicycle routes in the City of Springfield

68

Total miles of greenways in and around Springfield

20%

Funding for public school transportation covered by the state in 2012, down from 80 percent in the early 2000s

services to the elderly and disabled, a need still exists for coordinated scheduling and dispatching. Funding is needed to provide a central calling system that would allow for clients to call a single number and have a ride scheduled with an available provider.

There continues to be a funding shortfall for public school transportation services. The Springfield Public Schools system transported approximately 7,600 school children daily in 2012, which is up from 6,700 in 2007. In the early 2000s, transportation service costs were covered at 80 percent by the state of Missouri; in 2012 that rate was 20 percent. There have been no service cuts even with the decrease in state aid; however, as the situation continues to worsen, the service might be in jeopardy.

### Vehicle Emissions/ Air Quality

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established minimum standards for air quality levels. The Springfield area has experienced a steady increase in levels for ozone and fine particulate matter since 2008. Much of this increase can be attributed to vehicular emissions. The Ozarks Clean Air Alliance has been working with the EPA to proactively address air quality issues in the Springfield area (see Natural Environment section). If trends continue, Springfield will be at non-attainment for air quality in the next few years resulting in challenges to using federal funding for expanding existing roads or building new ones. Projects would require justification and analysis to show how they affect the region’s air quality. Going non-attainment reduces the flexibility our area enjoys in selecting transportation projects, as well as hampers our ability to put a local focus on transportation planning.