

Missouri
Department
of Transportation



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April 5, 2007

Honorable Todd Akin
U.S. Congressman, District 2
301 Sovereign Court, Suite 201
St. Louis, MO 63011

Dear Congressman Akin:

Thank you for the very thoughtful letter explaining your concerns with the Interstate 64 reconstruction project. I appreciate your support for this project and I understand your concerns for your constituents regarding some of the details. The reputation of MoDOT is at stake with this project, and therefore, we are thoroughly working on many of the aspects of which you have requested clarification. We will successfully rebuild I-64 on schedule and within budget and keep St. Louis moving.

First, MoDOT is working very closely with St. Louis County to address traffic items in St. Louis County on both state and county roads. We have several meetings each month where these items are discussed. Specific to your questions, it is MoDOT's understanding that St. Louis County wants all the Clayton Road improvements done before January 1, 2008. They are putting projects out for bid and awarding contracts now. The County has designated Clayton Road as an emergency access route with preemption available for emergency vehicles. County engineers will be timing the signals and working to make these signals more self-automated and responsive to changing traffic patterns and queue lengths. They are also replacing stop signs along Clayton with signals at some locations.

St. Louis County has also identified 31 other locations along various other county roads where they plan to make spot signal and/or striping improvements. These locations can be found on the following stretches of County roads: Ladue Road from I-270 to I-170; Midland from Hanley to Delmar; Forest Park Parkway from I-270 to Skinker (County limit); McKnight from I-64 to Litzsinger; Elm from south of I-44 to Lockwood and other spots such as areas on Dorsett, Delmar, Manchester, and near interchanges with I-64. For more details on the status of these improvement ideas, I suggest you contact Garry Earls, Director of Public Works for St. Louis County.

Secondly, MoDOT is working with Metro to make sure they have the most current construction schedule so they can adjust affected bus schedules. There are currently 17 bus lines that will be affected at some point during the construction. We are also considering at least one temporary park and ride lot on I-44 at Antire. We are still working on this idea to see if we can make it work. This is an ongoing process and I will have the I-64 project staff keep your aide, Jim Mitas, informed of the progress.

Thirdly, you are right that communication is key to public awareness and helping the public know how to get around St. Louis during construction. MoDOT and our contractor are very active in communicating information through the website, media and giving speeches to an average of 200 people each week. Any information on regional road improvements is being communicated through these channels on a daily basis. As many of these improvements are in the planning stages, communication will occur as decisions are made and implemented. In the fall of 2007, as we approach the closure of the first section of I-64,

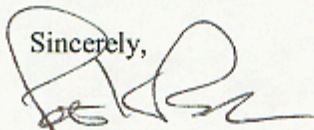
MoDOT will have a strong public relations push to get information to the public. The information on regional roadway improvements will be a major part of this communication.

Fourth, MoDOT receives emails, letters and phone calls on a daily basis regarding the I-64 project. Suggested roadway improvements are passed along to the appropriate agency and discussed in the monthly meetings held between MoDOT, the County and the City of St. Louis. As appropriate, ideas and concerns are passed along to MoDOT's contractor to be addressed. I believe the key is the relationships we have established with our partners at the County and City. It is a collaborative effort and that will and must continue throughout the duration of the project.

Lastly, you have proposed a test shut down of I-64. I understand your thought in wanting to try this, but a few days will not be a sufficient test and the pain would be unwarranted. Whenever there is a major change in traffic patterns, it takes three weeks to a month for motorists to adjust to it. When we close the western section of I-64, it will take the first month before traffic will balance itself into a set pattern. MoDOT's traffic engineers, the contractor's engineers and our partners at the County and City will be evaluating all regional roads and making adjustments to help the traffic patterns and optimize movement on all the roads, especially during the first month and throughout the duration of the closures.

The key to surviving this project is not just in the engineering. It is also the responsibility of every person in St. Louis. We need people to adjust their schedules, carpool to work or their kids to school, adjust the timing of their meetings and appointments, ride Metro and, in general, plan their trips. We have formed a great coalition with the County, City and other municipalities. Again, I appreciate your support and involvement in the project. I look forward to continue working with you and your staff on this and other MoDOT projects.

Sincerely,



Pete K. Rahn
Director

cc: Governor Matt Blunt
Honorable Charlie Dooley, County Executive, St. Louis County
Honorable Steve Ehlmann, County Executive, St. Charles County
Mayor Francis Slay, City of St. Louis
Lesley Hoffarth, I-64 Project Director
Jay Wunderlich-gr