

To: Barbara Buffaloe, Mayor
From: City of Columbia Bicycle and Pedestrian (Bike/Ped) Commission
Date: September 19, 2024
Subject: **Improve I-70, Future Phase - Rocheport to Columbia**

Dear Mayor Buffaloe,

As you are aware the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) has been mandated to widen Interstate 70. Phase 1, from Kingdom City to Highway 63, is currently under construction. A subsequent phase will cover the portion from Highway 63 to Rocheport. While this portion was originally scheduled to start in 2027, it is now likely to start significantly sooner. Therefore, it is important to continuously stay engaged with the design-build team selection criteria and design process.

Only those items included in MoDOT's Project Goals during the contractor/engineer selection must be provided. For Columbia to Kingdom City, Goal 3 included "better traffic flow **and movement of freight**". Goal 3 for Warrenton to Wentzville includes "better traffic flow **and safety**". We strongly encourage the City to instill on MoDOT that one of the Project Goals for the next Columbia phase must include "**better safety for all users**."

The City submitted preliminary comments to MoDOT on September 23, 2022. We recommend updated comments to the current MoDOT project managers. To this end, I would like to supply comments by members of the Bike/Ped Commission, which are based on the Preferred Alternatives from MoDOT's presentation at the Public Involvement Meeting on November 2, 2022 in Columbia and the referenced City letter. Our comments are focused to non-motorized transportation issues located between the Highway 63 Connector and our western city limits.

1. **General Comment:** The City of Columbia is committed to a complete streets design model. We request that MoDOT follow both the Federal Highway Administration's "Moving to a Complete Streets Design Model" and MoDOT's own Safer Assessment for Every Roadway (SAFER) document. This approach is crucial to the City's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP), the City's Strategic Plan, the City's Vision, Mission, and Values, and the City's Vision Zero initiative. We do not support additional risk to safety for improved "average delays."
2. **Continuous Outer Road on North Side of I-70:** This road currently has no room to walk or cycle, except in the driving lanes. Sight distances are short and there is no good way for drivers to avoid a slow-moving traveler. Due to the lack of other choices, non-motorized users are compelled to travel this route despite a fatal crash history in the area. Once the outer road has been extended, we can expect traffic speeds and volumes to increase.

We request a shared-use path for bicycles and pedestrians along the northern edge of the outer road.

3. **Stadium Boulevard:** Alternative A includes widening the westbound off-ramp to a dual right turn lane, which crosses the crosswalk from the center walk towards Business Loop 70 W and Cosmo Park. This would make it even more dangerous to cross the ramp. We request audible signal lights at all crosswalks throughout the intersection. Also, walkways need to be widened to accommodate large wheelchairs, doublewide strollers or two passing bicycles.

Additionally, the Preferred Alternative connects I-70 Dr SW to Bernadette Drive. One can expect large trucks on this road between the mall and hotels, where traffic is currently dominated by hotel guests, shoppers and employees - in cars, on bicycles and on foot. This will create hazardous conflicts between two very different traffic streams. We request maintaining the outer road in its current location.

4. **Business Loop 70 W:** Crossing the Business Loop near the roundabout is dangerous due to driver speed and a lack of attention to crosswalks. The Preferred Alternative recommends constructing a slip lane and dual eastbound I-70 on-ramp. This would greatly increase vehicle speeds in front of both driveways to a very busy store and add an additional lane width to crosswalks across the Loop and the on-ramp.

We request to refrain from making any additional changes to increase vehicle speeds at this roundabout and instead increasing safety by installing audible crossing signal lights at all crosswalks south of the interstate and painting crosswalks solid green to attract driver attention.

5. **Providence/Rangeline:** All alternatives add lanes to the ramps at Providence and Rangeline. Vehicle speeds will increase, while visibility for and of bikes/peds using the crosswalks will decrease. Complexity at the Rangeline dogbone will increase, preventing adequate driver attention to crosswalks. More traffic will be pushed onto Vandiver Road and the Business Loop.

We request installation of audible crossing signal lights at all pedestrian crossings at all on- and off-ramps at Providence Road and Rangeline, and safety upgrades for all users of Vandiver Road and the Business Loop. This is also an opportunity to address the existing safety concerns at Rangeline.

6. **Noise Pollution:** While not directly a bike/ped issue, there are many residential areas bordering the interstate. Additional noise and light pollution will reduce property values and reduce the tax base for many beneficiaries, including transportation projects. The evaluation of noise levels must include all those affected by the increase, not just those residents living directly adjacent to the MoDOT right-of-way. We request noise retaining walls along both sides of I-70.

In Summary: We appreciate the opportunity to comment and hope that the City will coordinate with MoDOT to address these concerns as part of its mandate to serve all types of transportation participants, whether in a motor vehicle, on a bicycle, in a wheelchair, or on foot.

Most importantly, we urge you to ensure that the MoDOT selection criteria for short-listing the design-build team for the next Columbia project includes “**improved safety for all users.**”

Sincerely,

ELKE BOYD, CHAIR

CITY OF COLUMBIA BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN COMMISSION

C: City Council, Members
De’Carlon Seewood, City Manager
Richard Stone, Engineering & Operations Manager
Allison Anderson, Engineering Manager
Disabilities Commission

Link to Warrenton to Wentzville Project Goals: <https://www.modot.org/node/51042>

Link to MoDOT’s presentation at the Public Involvement Meeting #2 on November 2, 2022 at the ARC in Columbia: https://www.modot.org/sites/default/files/documents/2022.11.02_J5S3411_PIM_2_Presentation_All_Final.pdf