

September 25, 2023

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As a cooperative partner, the City of Columbia wants to pass along feedback it has received from some of the City's traffic safety partnership teams and citizen commissions on the planned redesign and reconstruction of the Interstate 70 and the I-70/US 63 Connector area.

The Columbia Area Transportation Study Organization (CATSO) which is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the area considers the metropolitan area as generally bounded by Route Z to the east and US 40 to the west.

Columbia values I-70 as an important transportation facility from a local, regional and national transportation perspective. However, I-70 has contributed to significant historical impacts in disconnecting portions of Columbia.

The City provided feedback to the MoDOT Community Advisory Group via a letter on September 23, 2022. We would now like to stress and reaffirm the City's recommendation to MoDOT and the Improve I-70 team on the importance of prioritizing connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists in this project.

The I-70/US Highway 63 Connector area has a history of serious injury and fatality crashes involving vulnerable road users. Additionally, it is important to note that the Connector abuts areas that have been defined as disadvantaged by the US Department of Transportation. These factors highlight the urgent need to prioritize pedestrian and bicycle connectivity in this project, as it directly impacts the safety and accessibility of vulnerable road users in our community.

According to MoDOT's Engineering Policy Guide, Section 642.2, it is crucial to address pedestrian issues during the development of a conceptual study report or project scoping memo.

The following key points should be emphasized:

- Existing pedestrian facilities and signal indications within the project limits that do not meet current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) standards should be identified and addressed.
- Identifying existing gaps in pedestrian facilities within the public right of way and determine how the project will address these gaps to enhance accessibility for pedestrians.

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Our vision: Columbia is the best place for everyone to live, work, learn and play.

- Consider access to pedestrian traffic generators near the project area, such as residential neighborhoods, employment, shopping centers, restaurants, medical facilities, etc.
- Identify areas with evidence of regular pedestrian activity and determine how pedestrian facilities will be included in the project to meet user demands.
- Address access across barriers, such as bridges over roadways. Explain how the project will provide additional pedestrian accessibility on bridge structures.
- Take into account the Complete Streets Policy implemented by the City of Columbia, in which the project area is located.

Furthermore, we feel it is crucial for MoDOT to consider the SAFER (Safety Assessment for Every Roadway) document developed by MoDOT to help reduce and eliminate transportation related crashes. The guide emphasizes incorporating safety measures in all projects and conducting a safety analysis. The following factors should be considered:

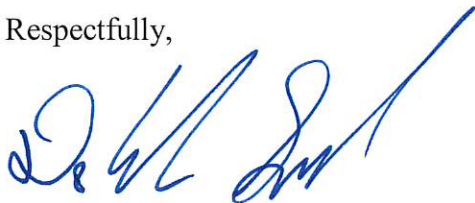
- Vulnerable roadway users: Evaluate infrastructure for pedestrians and bicyclists, identify gaps, improve crossings, and consider overall bike/ped plans for the community.
- Intersection/interchange design: Consider alternative designs, minimize conflict points, and accommodate vulnerable roadway users like bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Roadway visibility: Address lighting, signing, pavement markings, and other factors that may affect driver visibility and comprehension.

Given the history of serious crashes involving vulnerable road users and the disadvantaged nature of the surrounding areas and specifically related to attempted crossings of I-70, the City of Columbia feels it is imperative that pedestrian and bicycle connectivity be prioritized as a part of the redesign and reconstruction of the I-70/US Highway 63 Connector. Other opportunities for improving pedestrian and bicycle crossings at interchange and other locations need to be examined as well.

Improvements along I-70 within the general metropolitan boundaries should consider all modes of transportation and help to address the issues for all users through, to and over/under I-70 for all those modes of transportation. By emphasizing these priorities, MoDOT, can support the creation of safer streets that serve the needs of all road users.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to continuing to work with the I-70 team to help develop a plan for improvements that will address local, regional and national needs.

Respectfully,



De'Carlon Seewood, ICMA-CM
City Manager
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Cc: Shane Creech, P.E., Director of Public Works