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LOCAL

Residents Question Wisdom of Proposed South County Connector

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SHREWSBURY, Mo. (KMOX) – Some are [questioning](#) whether St. Louis County's [proposed](#) South County Connector highway is an overreaction to a predicted problem.

The St. Louis County Department of Highways and Traffic will hold a public hearing later this month, but Trailnet held a meeting Wednesday evening in Shrewsbury.

In the meeting, Trailnet had an expert testify that home values are rising at a much [faster](#) clip locally in urban [environments](#) like Webster Groves and Maplewood, as opposed to suburban Chesterfield. He also noted that young professionals prefer to live in more urban

A board shows a prospective route for the proposed South County Connector on display at a Trailnet meeting on May 8, 2013. (KMOX/Michael Calhoun)

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settings and are using cars less frequently.

“Why are we building a road to help people move farther out?” questioned one resident. “The road is not going to be ready for 10 or 15 years. If by then everybody is turning around and moving back in, then what did we build the road to?”

[CEO](#) of Trailnet Ann Mack calls the road designed for the 1950s not 2050. “We know from our demographic changes with the millennials

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and boomers that people want bikeable, walkable, and transit oriented [transportation](#),” Mack [earlier](#) told KMOV-TV.

Others questioned where the increased demand comes from, since St. Louis County lost population in the 2010 census.

Another resident, concerned about the dense neighborhoods in that area getting sliced by a major parkway, reminisced about the decades-old efforts to put a halt to a southern extension of I-170.

He urged St. Louis County to remember the “[Save](#) The Heart of Webster” campaign.

With St. Louis County [narrowing in on a more specific route](#), Shrewsbury Mayor Felicity Buckley tells KMOX that she’s relieved that it doesn’t appear, at least, to divide much of her city. In fact, she’s hopeful might relieve congestion on side streets by re-directing people driving to the Metro-Link commuter lot.

“We are just the focal point of all sorts of cross-traffic and cut-through traffic, so there are some benefits in that regard,” she said, adding, however, that she need [more information](#) before she can claim support of the project.

Others at the meeting wondered why the highway department is pushing for an major roadway rather than less invasive [measures](#).

“The corridor where this project is going parallels proposal lines that extends MetroLink into south county, so we are kind of making a choice right now with this project to favor more highway [construction](#) rather than public transportation,” Rick Bonasch said.

The proposed corridor would run close to the MetroLink blue line.

Trailnet wants to ensure all other options, from streamlining current arterial roads to adding more public transit, are exhausted before neighborhoods are ripped apart by a highway.

And should the South County Connector become reality, the organization wants to see current plans altered to be kinder to pedestrians, cyclists and the street grid.

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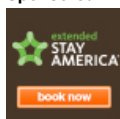
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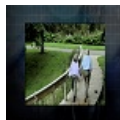
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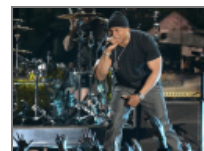
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