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
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# Trailnet Issues With South County Connector

July 16, 2013 9:47 PM

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- **The design of the road in the Deer Creek Center Parking Lot**  
 County representatives have [Sponsored Links](#) on KMOX and on CBS Local saying the road will be a flyover through the Deer Creek Center parking. KMOV has also quoted the County saying there will be a flyover ([http://www.kmov.com/news/editors\\_pick/South-county-connector-causing-friction-between-Maple-have-in-balance-211094561.html](http://www.kmov.com/news/editors_pick/South-county-connector-causing-friction-between-Maple-have-in-balance-211094561.html)).



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However, the DEIS, and the information presented to the public at the May 30 Public Meeting, imply the DEIS considers the option of a flyover or an elevation of about 2 to 4 ft to put the road in the 10 year flood plain. In the DEIS, the lower elevation is chosen as the reasonable alternative, and the cost estimates, along with environmental impacts and noise analysis are based on this option. (Pages 3-22 and 3-36 of the DEIS: <http://www.southcountyconnector.com/Exhibits/SCC%20Potential%20Profiles%20130530.pdf>) The boards displayed at the Public Meeting reflect this

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design: <http://www.southcountyconnector.com/Exhibits/SCC%20Potential%20Profiles%20130530.pdf>

If the County has decided to change the design, this raises several questions:

- How does the change impact cost estimates? An elevated structure typically raises costs
- What will the noise impacts be? [Vehicles](#), especially larger vehicles, will be much noisier as they climbing the flyover
- Will the road dip back down at the Big Bend intersection before climbing back up to go over the Laclede Gas Property and onto the interchange?

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**- Multimodal access to the project**

On June 18, a County representative stated that the County has worked closely with the bicycle and pedestrian advocacy groups throughout the SCC process and that the project is multimodal (<http://live.stltoday.com/Event/Thread.aspx?id=126985>- look for David Wrone's comments).

Both Trailnet and Great Rivers Greenway (GRG) have sent over a dozen letters requesting information on the project over the course of the project, and their requests have not been satisfied. I have hard copies of the letters at my office if you are interested. Both Trailnet and GRG have also issued letters to the County expressing serious concerns with the project.

Several of our concerns are based on lack of the lack of multimodal aspects in the project. In the DEIS, the conceptual drawings show sidewalks on only one side of the road, if at all (Pages 4-28 and 4-29 of the DEIS). Sidewalks on only side of a road severely limit pedestrian access, especially when a road has infrequent signalized crossings. The DEIS does not contain details on the design or funding of the multimodal aspects of the road, but we do know that it will not contain the following, as County policy disallows them:

- Bike lanes, or any bicycle infrastructure recommended in the most current AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities (the policy is

here: [http://www.stlouisco.com/Portals/8/docs/Document%20Library/highways/Standard\\_Drawings/C90220.pdf](http://www.stlouisco.com/Portals/8/docs/Document%20Library/highways/Standard_Drawings/C90220.pdf))

- Benches or bus shelters for people wishing to take the bus (General Note 7 in this

document:[http://www.stlouisco.com/Portals/8/docs/Document%20Library/highways/Standard\\_Drawings/C90220.pdf](http://www.stlouisco.com/Portals/8/docs/Document%20Library/highways/Standard_Drawings/C90220.pdf))

- Pedestrian beacons, medians, and traffic calming where trails cross streets to protect people using the trails (the policy is

here: [http://www.stlouisco.com/Portals/8/docs/Document%20Library/highways/Publications/AGuideToBicyclePath-Roadway\\_Crossing\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.stlouisco.com/Portals/8/docs/Document%20Library/highways/Publications/AGuideToBicyclePath-Roadway_Crossing_Guidelines.pdf))

The Saint Louis Traffic and Highways Department has policies proscribing most design features that make a road multimodal. At the same time, the DEIS has no positive statements on how the road will be multimodal. At the May 30 Public Meeting, a board showed possible bicycle and pedestrian routes, but does not provide any information on the design of the facilities, or how they will cross major barriers such as I-44 (<http://www.southcountyconnector.com/Exhibits/SCC%20Multimodal%20Connectivity%20130530.pdf>).

**- Bike lanes on Shrewsbury Avenue**

The DEIS does show cross sections of Shrewsbury Avenue and an unidentified local road with bicycle lanes (Pages 4-31 and 4-32). These bicycle lanes are not mentioned in the DEIS, nor are they included in the cost estimates. The drawings are projections of what might happen after the County returns control of Shrewsbury Avenue and local roads to municipalities. The County will have no control over them, and there are not part of the project being evaluated in the DEIS.

**- Benefits of the project**

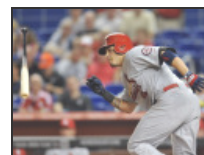
The County presents the SCC as necessary and beneficial, however the DEIS does not include key analysis for the public and decision makers to be able to make an informed decision. The DEIS does not include a Cost Benefit Analysis, a Return on Investment analysis, or even how many seconds the proposed road will save the average commuter. The document does not contain an analysis of how the \$110 million spent on the roadway will benefit local businesses, residents, or commuters.

The traffic studies do point to a reduced level of traffic compared to projected traffic for 2040 if the road were not built. However, the initial traffic studies were performed in 2003 (traffic studies are here: [http://www.southcountyconnector.com/previous\\_docs.html](http://www.southcountyconnector.com/previous_docs.html)).

Since then, there are have been several changes in the project area and region that could impact traffic in the future but are not included in the projections:

- Metrolink Blue Line was built to relieve traffic congestion in the area

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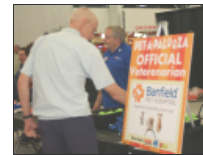
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- GRG's trail network in the area has expanded, and they have plans to connect two of the trails in the area in the near future
- Population slightly declined in St. Louis County, while the DEIS projected it to grow .5% per year (Page 2-5)
- Vehicle Miles Traveled declined in 4.5% in St. Louis County between 2007 and 2011. This is faster than the national 2.8% decline during the same period. Baby boomers are driving less as they retire, and the younger generation is also driving less. East West Gateway's blog has the information, and analysis on why driving is declining: <http://blog.ewgateway.org/the-roads-less-traveled-county-by-county-vehicle-miles-traveled-are-on-the-decline-in-the-st-louis-region/>

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the account, yet they are not included in the SCC analysis. The County has performed newer traffic counts, but they do not seem to include traffic models, nor is there any indication of transit use, bicycling, or walking included in the traffic models. Without more accurate projections, the public cannot reach an informed conclusion about the proposed road and its benefits.

This pattern of inconsistent and incomplete information underlines how the planning process in the County and the region needs to change. Stakeholders, including residents, the business community and elected officials need to be included from the beginning to avoid confusion, and to ensure that the project addresses the community's needs. Trailnet believes that any transportation project should be an economic benefit to the area. The DEIS does include analysis demonstrating that the \$110 million investment will pay off for the region.

We do know that the project will jeopardize the leases of the newly redeveloped Deer Creek Center, force local businesses to move, reduce business opportunities in the corridor, and lower home values, due to the noise and increased traffic. As a region we can do better than this.



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