



Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission,
Missouri Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 270
Jefferson City, MO 65102

September 22, 2023

Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission,

Missourians for Responsible Transportation—a partnership between Trailnet in St. Louis, BikeWalkKC in Kansas City, Ozark Greenways in Springfield, Local Motion in Columbia, and rural communities across the state—is writing you to consider several multimodal and safety considerations for the 'Improve I-70' project.

Given the nearly \$3 billion allocated for this project, MRT requests that you consider the following elements:

- **Declare safety as the primary goal for the 'Improve I-70' project, and develop clear guidance for the inclusion of accessible and separated paths on updated bridges and crossings:** A common challenge we currently face, especially when working with our partners in rural communities, is that it is exceedingly difficult to deploy safety improvements for pedestrians and other vulnerable road users across state roads. The work being done to improve I-70 is not only an opportunity to improve the pavement, but to include the policies which guide those efforts as well. Clearer guidance on this front will not only help to make I-70 work for more people and communities along the corridor, but will help with similar efforts across the state.
- **Preserve and improve access for bus and rail corridors:** Lawmakers moved forward with the current plan despite concerns from some that it would not help to ease congestion. This is partly due to limited consideration for transit improvements. This concern is reflected in the 2018 Long Range Transportation Plan community survey of 7,716 residents across the state. Taking steps now to make it easier for transit to operate along this corridor, and parallel rail to support the movement of freight, will help those who can't drive while easing congestion for those who can.
- **Work to preserve land for individual property owners and existing housing stock:** One of the primary goals of the project is to "Minimize construction impacts with a focus on work zone safety, communications, and construction staging." It is important that MoDOT work with local stakeholders to ensure that plans for expansion mitigate potential displacement of existing businesses and residents to the greatest extent possible.
- **Develop a statewide active transportation plan:** Finally, multimodal elements such as the ones we push for on behalf of the 35,000 members we represent across the state will continue to be an afterthought in projects like this without a more comprehensive vision. To address this shortcoming, we ask the commission to initiate a process for developing a statewide active transportation plan. Doing this will not only better inform individual components of the 'Improve I-70' project, it will also bring us in alignment with nearly every other state in the country which has already developed such a document or is in the process of doing so.

The plans for highway expansion, as-is, focuses on driving expansion alone and risk increasing our maintenance costs significantly. Yet there are implications for walking, biking, accessibility, transit, and even land use. Ultimately, the

expansion of I-70 should be understood as an opportunity to build Missouri's transportation system in a way that allows for the freedom of movement for everyone, regardless of their preferred mode.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Taylor March". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "T" and "M".

Taylor March - Executive Director, Missourians for Responsible Transportation