



Purpose & Need Study News

PLANNING FOR PROGRESS

FALL 2008

I-44 Purpose & Need Study Now Available

The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) initiated the I-44 Purpose & Need Study as the first step toward improving Interstate 44. The intent of this study is to identify the transportation issues that affect I-44 today and into the future. The study area stretches from the Oklahoma/Missouri State line to the Franklin/St. Louis County line. The Purpose and Need Study is available online at www.modot.org/I-44planningforprogress

To get more information about this study:

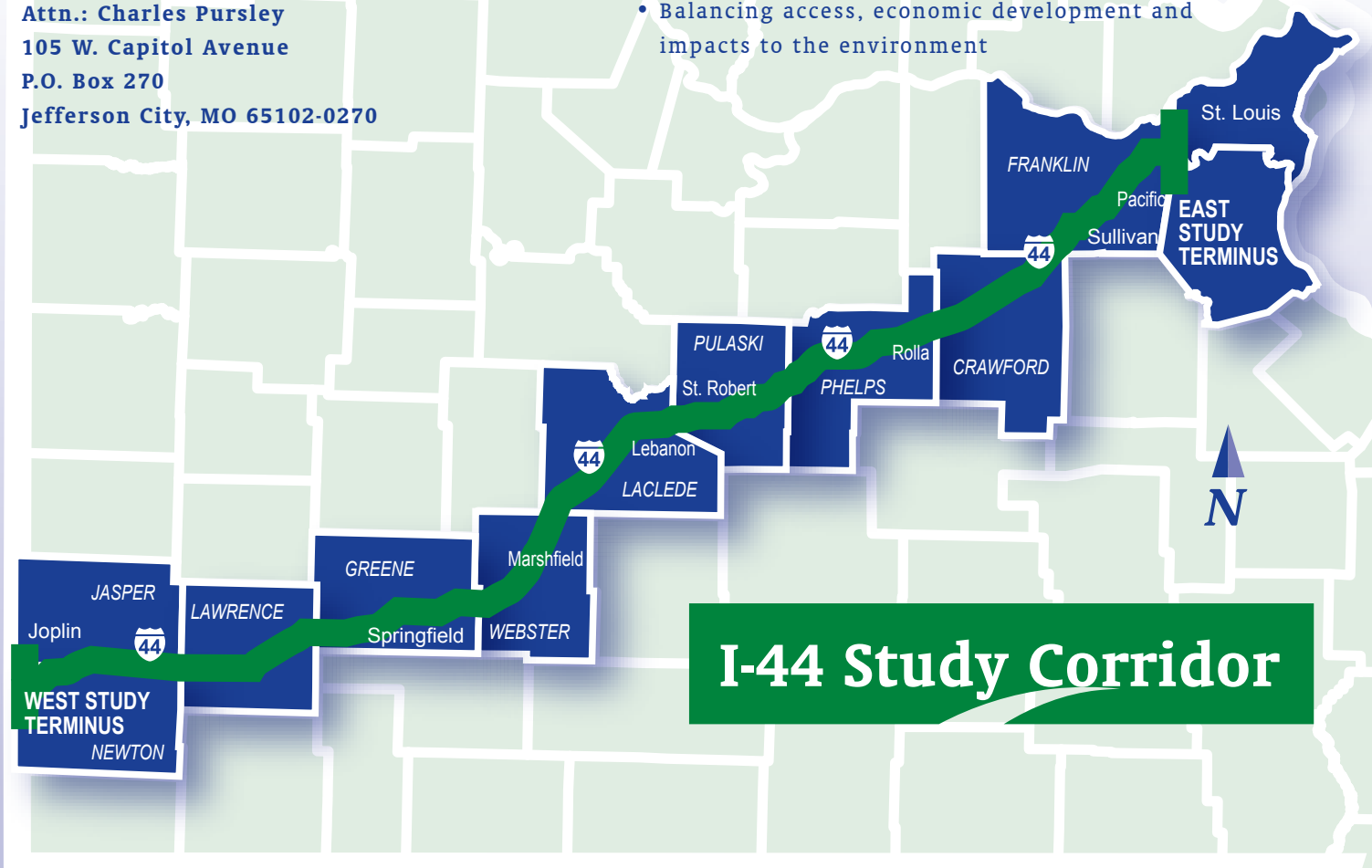
Visit the Study Web site:
www.modot.org/i44planningforprogress

Call MoDOT:
1-888-ASK MODOT

Write MoDOT:
I-44 Planning for Progress
Attn.: Charles Pursley
105 W. Capitol Avenue
P.O. Box 270
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0270

Transportation issues associated with the I-44 Purpose and Need Study can be summarized as:

- Roadway capacity
- Safety concerns
- Interchange operations, design and safety
- Accommodating increased truck traffic
- Consistency with current design standards
- Balancing access, economic development and impacts to the environment



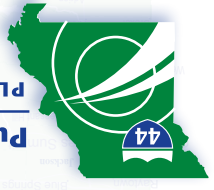
I-44 Study Corridor



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Final Newsletter

Next Steps: What Will MoDOT Do With the Results of the Study?

The I-44 Purpose & Need Study provides MoDOT valuable information about the issues that affect I-44 today and into the future. This information will be used to identify potential improvement efforts along with a time frame for when those improvements would be required.

The I-44 Purpose and Need Study is available at:
www.modot.org/i44planningforprogress.



I-44 Purpose & Need Study Findings:

The transportation issues associated with I-44 can be summarized as:

1. Roadway capacity is becoming inadequate for expected demand.

Traffic on I-44 has experienced substantial growth. Public input consistently raised the issue of congestion and travel delays. Between 2005 and 2035, nearly every portion of I-44 is expected to experience a doubling of the number of vehicles it handles. In some instances, the increases are expected to be as high as 45,000 vehicles per day.

2. A degrading safety environment exists on I-44.

Safety is an essential measure of performance for any transportation facility. Relative to safety, the important trends that define this transportation issue include:

- The crash environment has intensified in conjunction with the urbanization of the areas adjacent to I-44.
- While total crashes involving trucks are less frequent on I-44 than comparable interstates, such as I-70, the number of severe crashes on I-44 is comparable to that of I-70.

3. Interchanges along I-44 have safety & operational issues and are inconsistent with current design standards.

The operation and condition of each of the 78 interchanges along this portion of I-44 is unique. However, it is expected that they will all exhibit deficiencies as traffic increases. I-44's interchanges were evaluated based on safety, traffic operations and geometric design. The study found that the majority of the interchanges exceed statewide average crash rates and that by 2035, most interchanges are expected to have operational issues. In addition, a significant number of interchanges are not in compliance with current design standards.

4. Increases in freight are altering operations on I-44.

Freight trucking is a vital element of Missouri's economy and a key component of the I-44 traffic stream. Based on current trends, the freight-related demands on I-44 are expected to continue to increase. As such, future I-44 studies should investigate solutions that best accommodate the anticipated truck volumes.

Key Facts about I-44 Truck Traffic:

- Freight moved by trucks in Missouri is expected to reach 542 million tons per year, with a value of 730 billion dollars, by 2020.
- In Missouri, approximately 70 percent of all freight, by tons and value, is moved by trucks.
- Currently, the I-44 traffic stream is comprised of approximately 27 percent trucks.
- Along some sections of I-44, truck volumes in 2035 are expected to approach 23,000 trucks per day; (a 162 percent increase).
- Due to their physical and operational characteristics, trucks disproportionately affect traffic congestion, safety and the travel experience of non-truck drivers.
- The percentage of disabling injury crashes and fatal crashes approximately doubles when trucks are involved.

5. Evolving engineering standards result in a roadway that is inconsistent with current design standards.

As a highway built more than 40 years ago, there are design elements of I-44 that no longer meet *current* design standards. These standards apply to the "geometry" of the road, that is, dimensions such as lane and shoulder widths, median width, vertical clearances, and horizontal curvature. The original design standards assumed lower traffic and fewer heavy trucks than are currently typical for I-44. One of the purposes for any project associated with the I-44 corridor will be to address those geometric elements that affect the ability for safe and efficient movement of people, goods and services.

6. Balancing access, economic development and human/natural resources is important.

During the evaluation of the I-44 corridor, it became clear that I-44 has a close relationship with some of the State's most valuable economic and natural resources. First, I-44 provides the best access to many important natural and recreational destinations in southern Missouri. Second, the availability of high-speed travel made these destinations attractive and profitable. Finally, it became clear that improvements to I-44 could have both a positive and negative impact on these resources.

Public Involvement Process



The public involvement process included eight open house public meetings along the corridor. In addition to the public, attendees included local elected officials, representatives from the Route 66 Association, and members of the press. The public meeting events were covered by radio stations and newspapers in each of the cities where a meeting was held. Special attention was made to ensure that all the technical information was presented in understandable terms, and questions were answered in a timely manner.

In addition to public meetings, a variety of outreach initiatives were implemented to ensure that the public had several avenues to offer their input and comments. Some of these elements included a project web site, mailing database, newspaper advertisements of public meetings and press advisories.

Summary of Public Comments, October 2007

A common theme at all eight public meetings was the issue of **increased truck traffic** and the need for **additional capacity**. Additionally, comments surrounding present and future needs for truck travel were common. The desire to have truck speed limits reduced for safety was another common suggestion as was expanding truck parking areas as needed and adding more guard and safety rails.

Route 66 is a historic state byway that closely parallels the current I-44. Concerns were raised from the Historic Route 66 Association of Missouri as well as from the local community to preserve and protect the integrity of Route 66. The comments involved the preservation of many landmarks associated with Route 66, especially around the Springfield and Lebanon areas. The comments reflected an understanding that improvements to I-44 will be necessary but hoped that when alternatives are developed, they avoid negatively affecting portions of Historic Route 66 that are close to I-44.



Several comments were supportive of **recent improvements to I-44**, making it a 6-lane interstate east of Pacific. Comments also emphasized the effectiveness of the guard cable installed in the median. Questions were posed whether these recent improvements to I-44 would be extended westward in the future.

Comments also expressed concerns about not enough law enforcement in the corridor. It was suggested that increased enforcement could limit speeding and improve safety.