

# U.S. 54 Corridor Cole County Intersection Improvements

## About Tonight's Public Hearing Format

- The hearing tonight includes small group informational workshops that start every 15 minutes, beginning at 3:30 p.m. The last workshop will begin at 6 p.m.
- Please sign in at the front table so you can be assigned to a workshop and get the hearing materials.
- Each workshop session will last about one hour. During the session, a formal presentation will be made by a member of the MoDOT project team about intersections along the corridor. Information presented will be the same during each session.
- MoDOT would like your input and comments about the proposed improvement plans. You will have an opportunity at the end of your workshop session to ask questions.
- Once each workshop session concludes, you'll have an opportunity to review some of the information on display in the cafeteria. MoDOT staff are on hand to answer any additional questions you might have.
- **If you are unable to stay for a workshop session tonight, we encourage you to visit [www.modot.org/central](http://www.modot.org/central) to view all workshop materials. You can also offer comments and input online.**



# U.S. 54 Corridor Cole County Intersection Improvements

## We Want to Hear From You!

There are several ways for you to submit your comments about the proposed safety improvements presented at tonight's public hearing.



1. Provide a prewritten comment.
2. Fill out the comment form provided during the small group session tonight and leave it with MoDOT staff.
3. Verbal comments can be recorded using the digital recording device provided at tonight's hearing.
4. You may send comments by mail to:  
MoDOT Central District  
Attn: Roger Schwartze, District Engineer  
PO Box 718  
Jefferson City, MO 65102
5. You may send comments via e-mail to [comments@modot.mo.gov](mailto:comments@modot.mo.gov).

**Comments must be received by Friday, Jan. 21, 2011.** All comments will be reviewed and become part of the project file.



## **Frequently Asked Questions**

U.S. 54 Intersection Improvements in Cole County  
Public Hearing – January 6, 2011

### **What is the purpose of tonight's hearing?**

MoDOT is proposing to make improvements to eleven intersections along the U.S. 54 corridor in Cole County between Route 17 and Route 179. Among similar highways, this section of roadway is ranked one of the highest in the state for the number of fatal intersection crashes. Serious injuries have also resulted from crashes at intersections across the corridor. Many of the crashes involve vehicles from the adjacent roadways pulling into the path of vehicles on U.S. 54. The project team has studied the 17-mile corridor and is proposing to implement a variety of engineering strategies to modify multiple intersections in an effort to improve safety. These adjustments will maintain traffic flow on U.S. 54, as well as to and from the highway. Five million dollars in safety funds will be used to implement the improvements. The project team will discuss the plans during small group sessions at tonight's hearing. Improvement plans can also be viewed online at [www.modot.org/central](http://www.modot.org/central).

### **What was the role of an advisory committee in evaluating this corridor?**

An advisory committee that included local business people, residents, local officials and emergency response personnel was organized to provide MoDOT with input about the intersections along the corridor and possible safety solutions. The committee convened in March 2010 and met four times. The local media was notified of each meeting and the public was welcome to attend and hear the discussions. Summaries of the meetings can be found on [www.modot.org/central](http://www.modot.org/central).

### **The speed limit along this stretch of highway was recently reduced to 65 mph.**

#### **Are there plans to reduce the speed limit further?**

The speed limit along the corridor was reduced from 70 mph to 65 mph in June 2010. Travel by motorists at uniform speeds is a desirable element when evaluating and setting speed limits. An evaluation of the area shows that 65 mph is a reasonable speed for the corridor as most motorists are driving near this posted limit. When speed limits are set too low for a roadway, the differences in speeds generally result in increased crashes due to tailgating, improper passing,

reckless driving, weaving from lane to lane and increased difficulty experienced by motorists trying to evaluate gaps in traffic. It is not likely that lowering the speed limit further will adequately address the types of crashes that are occurring and improve safety. Lowering the speed further, however, may likely lead to an increase in crashes.

### **Is the construction of interchanges planned?**

Interchanges control access along a major highway and can eliminate crossovers and other access points. To work properly, an outer roadway system must be available to funnel traffic to the access area. Interchanges are expensive to construct and generally require the movement of utilities and the purchase of right of way, including homes and businesses. A typical interchange costs about \$10 million to construct, and that does not include the price of moving utilities, buying needed right of way or building an outer roadway system. In this instance, more than one interchange would be needed to address the number of access locations currently experiencing safety concerns along the 17-mile corridor. Unfortunately, the funding for constructing interchanges is not available for this project. The proposed improvement plans do call for adjusting traffic movements at various intersections along the corridor to help reduce the number of decisions motorists must make at one location when attempting to access or exit U.S. 54. In some locations, acceleration and deceleration lanes are planned to aid in making merging and/or exiting movements. These improvements are designed to increase safety by reducing the type and severity of crashes occurring.

### **Would controlling traffic through the use of traffic signals be an option for U.S. 54 through Cole County?**

MoDOT's primary goal is to attain the safest and most efficient traffic flow feasible. Traffic signals are rarely considered as a first option for controlling traffic flow along a major highway. They are considered for use where lesser forms of control have proven ineffective, since signals almost always create more overall intersection delay. While the use of signals tend to reduce serious angle crashes, they also tend to increase rear-end crashes. The goal of the options presented during the hearing tonight is to allow for the efficient flow of traffic along U.S. 54 and for entering/exiting traffic from the side roads, while improving safety by reducing the number of decisions motorists must make at one location when entering or exiting the highway.

### **When will the improvements be made?**

The current plan is to begin work in mid 2011. The work will take approximately one year to complete.

### **Will additional right of way be needed for this project?**

The improvements can be made within the existing right of way. Some easements may be needed to complete the work.

### **How can I learn more?**

The public is encouraged to log onto [www.modot.org/central](http://www.modot.org/central) to learn more about the proposed improvements. A member of the project team can be reached by calling MoDOT's toll free phone number at 1-888-ASK-MoDOT (275-6636) during normal business hours.