



ACROSS THE WIDE MISSOURI

For Centuries, the Missouri River has proven to be a daunting barrier to transportation. Pioneers overcame the “wide Missouri” with boats and ferries, and after the Civil War, Missourians built the Hannibal Bridge to carry railroads across the broad river currents. More than a century ago, the first bridges to carry vehicular traffic spanned the Missouri River in the Kansas City area.

COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION

From August to October 2005, MoDOT conducted a bike/ped feasibility study as part of the Interstate 29/35 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The study team included representatives from Kansas City, North Kansas City, Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA), Missouri Bicycle Federation, Bridging the Gap, Federal Highway Administration, Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) and MoDOT.

The study team identified the Heart of America Bridge (Route 9) as the preferred river crossing for bicycle and pedestrians based on several factors to include safety, environmental impact, construction cost, maintenance, and land use. As a result, MoDOT committed to providing a barrier-separated bike/ped facility on Route 9 extending from 10th Avenue in North Kansas City to 3rd Street in Kansas City. This facility is scheduled to be let for construction later this year. Plans are also in the works to upgrade the Chouteau Bridge to better accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians — these upgrades are scheduled to start next year.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS OVER MISSOURI RIVER

MoDOT will improve access for non-motorized transportation through two retrofitting projects: The Route 9 Heart of America Bridge and the Route 269 Chouteau Bridge. MoDOT plans to provide non-motorized access across the Missouri River in the heart of Kansas City.

Safety and connectivity are primary concerns when adding slower and more vulnerable travelers to a transportation corridor. MoDOT understands that there are needs related to each type of bridge user. The pedestrian needs protection from vehicles that will be crossing the bridge at high rates of speed. General cyclists are not always comfortable with riding in motorist lanes that travel at a higher speed. Advanced cyclists will continue to ride in lanes following the rules of the road but with greater exposure to traffic. Lastly, there is a large volume of motorized traffic that crosses this bridge, as it is a major thoroughfare for commerce and commuting.

To improve bicycle and pedestrian access over the Missouri River, MoDOT will use two existing bridges that can be reconfigured to provide enough room for cars, trucks, avid cyclists and more casual bicyclists and pedestrians. It must be done safely, conforming to federal transportation standards, and tie in conveniently to pedestrian and bicycle corridors in local communities on each side of Missouri’s longest, widest river.

Special feature considerations:

- ✓ **Share the Road** signage for advanced cyclists
- ✓ Railing and barrier protections for safety
- ✓ Designed to connect north and south trail access
- ✓ Bridge design for multi-use applications

ARRA FUNDS SPEED PROJECT

Thanks to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, funds are available to speed up the schedule and retrofit the Route 9 Heart of America Bridge to include a multi-use path and wider right lanes in each direction for bicycle traffic. The bicycle/pedestrian accommodation retrofit will be done in conjunction with scheduled bridge work in 2010. The cities of Kansas City and North Kansas City are working with MoDOT to ensure the crossing connects with each city's bicycle routes and walkways, and meets community needs.

PUBLIC MEETING WILL EXPLAIN PLANS

MoDOT's plans to add bicycle and pedestrian accommodation to the Heart of America Bridge over the Missouri River will be explained at an informational public meeting from 4 to 6 p.m. Monday, June 22. The Heart of America Bridge, which connects Downtown Kansas City with North Kansas City via Route 9, will be reconfigured to provide a barrier-protected multi-use path for bicycles and pedestrians, plus include signage for bicyclists to share the road with motorized vehicles. MoDOT will retrofit the 25-year-old bridge to accommodate bicycle/pedestrian use within existing dimensions. See what MoDOT and its consulting engineers are planning, look at the displays and talk with engineers and designers during this important public meeting.

MoDOT is finalizing the design selection process and are looking for feedback from the public. These designs have been created with input from the study team with considerations for motorists, pedestrians, casual riders and the advanced cyclist. At this time, we are requesting comments that may provide us with additional assistance and direction in completing the design process.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions or want to learn more about the Route 9 Heart of America Bridge Bike/Ped project, e-mail Steve Porter at Stephen.porter@modot.mo.gov or Joab Ortiz at joabortiz@burnsmcd.com.

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