



## **Poplar Street Bridge Ramp Reconstruction project**

### **What is the problem?**

The Poplar Street Bridge is exceptionally congested during morning and evening rush hour. In addition, the bridge is nearly 50 years old and the ramps to and from the bridge need to be replaced as part of on-going roadway maintenance. The existing ramps, especially those between the bridge and I-55, are very tight and require traffic to slow to below interstate speeds. Often, the ramps need to be closed due to overturned tractor trailers. Since the ramps need to be replaced, the Missouri Department of Transportation wants to use this opportunity to improve the safety and flow of traffic coming across the PSB.

### **How did the region develop the solution?**

The solution for this project has been complex and developed over many years. Part of the solution was determined during a regional study in the 1990s to improve the flow of traffic regionally. That solution included building a new river bridge between St. Clair County, Ill., and St. Louis City. After the new bridge was constructed, MoDOT was to make improvements to the ramps between the Poplar Street Bridge and I-55.

As MoDOT started initial design for the plans to update the PSB ramps after the new river bridge opening, regional leaders expressed concerns about access to cities in Illinois between the PSB and the new I-70 ramps in East St. Louis. A design review, sponsored by East-West Gateway, proposed several updates to the plan in both Missouri and Illinois to address those concerns. Those planned updates are designed to complement the work being completed around the Arch as part of the CityArchRiver 2015 project.

Because of the cost of property in the city, all work was designed to fit into the existing right of way lines for both MoDOT and the Illinois Department of Transportation.

### **What is the solution?**

MoDOT is replacing three of the four ramps between the Poplar Street Bridge and interstates in downtown St. Louis. The fourth ramp – from existing eastbound I-70 to the PSB – must be removed to make room for the safety improvements to the PSB ramp to southbound I-55.

Construction includes:

- A two-lane ramp from PSB to existing westbound I-70 (which will become eastbound I-44 after I-70 moves to the new bridge). One lane will lead to Walnut Street, which is being rebuilt in early 2014 as part of the CityArchRiver2015 project. One lane leads to eastbound I-44.
- A two lane ramp from the PSB to southbound I-55.

- A two-lane ramp from northbound I-55 to the PSB. Construction of this ramp will include work to add another eastbound lane on the PSB and to extend the ramp from 6<sup>th</sup> Street across the bridge to Illinois Route 3.
- A connecting ramp, built by IDOT, from the Martin Luther King Bridge to westbound I-64 in East St. Louis. This will give a direct connection to Illinois Route 3.

### What is the timeline for this project?

The timeline for work has been determined to minimize the overall impact to traffic and to ensure that drivers have multiple options as construction detours. In several instances, one project must be complete before another one starts.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Traffic impact</b>
Walnut Bridge removal and replacement (CAR2015)	January – April 2014	Southbound Memorial Drive, access to I-55/I-44
Mississippi River Bridge completed	March 2014	Reduction of traffic on PSB, McKinley and MLK bridges
Ramp to eastbound I-44 closed	June 2014- March 2015	No access from Illinois to eastbound I-44 on PSB
IDOT project to resurface MLK	Fall 2014-Spring 2015	No access to or from Illinois on MLK
Construction of ramp to eastbound I-44 and most of the ramp to southbound I-55	July 2014-March 2015	No access from Illinois to eastbound I-44 on PSB
IDOT project to construct ramp from MLK to westbound I-64	January – December 2015	Lane closures around MLK, I-64
Ramp from westbound I-44 to PSB and ramp from PSB to southbound I-55 closed	April 2015	Access restored from PSB to eastbound I-44 No more access from westbound I-44 to PSB No access from PSB to southbound I-55
Remainder of ramp to southbound I-55 built	April-June 2015	No access from PSB to southbound I-55 during construction
Ramp from northbound I-55 to PSB construction, fifth lane added across PSB	March 2016-summer 2017	One lane access to the PSB from northbound I-55 during construction. Weekend ramp and lane closures on the bridge.