



Forward 44: Southwest

October 2026 Newsletter



Forward 44 September 24 Public Hearing in Springfield

A Public Hearing was held on Thursday, September 24, in Springfield at the Wilson Logistics Arena at the Empire Fair Grounds to inform the public about the plans for the Forward 44: Southwest I-44 Improvements Project in Newton, Jasper, Lawrence, Greene, and Webster and Laclede Counties.

The room was organized into sections so that members of the public with questions about specific parts of the project could be directed to the appropriate MoDOT representative or to the contractor-consultant representative from Capital and CMT responsible for that topic. This setup allowed for one-on-one interactions between the public and the engineers, providing an opportunity to answer detailed questions and gather feedback.

Attendees had the opportunity to review the project displays, ask questions, and leave comments. There was a steady stream of people coming and going throughout the hearing. By the end of the event, approximately 113 people had attended.

The public comment period ended on October 8, with a total of 36 comments submitted during the in-person hearing and 200 additional comments submitted online.

A second public meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 17, 2026, from 4:30–6 p.m. at Victory Christian Center, 13996 Burr Oak Road, Carthage. A separate news release will be issued as the date approaches.

For the latest project information, meeting announcements, and construction updates, visit <https://www.modot.org/projects/forward-44-southwest-i-44-improvements-project>.



Forward 44 Update

Forward 44: Joplin Improvements

The Forward 44: Joplin Improvements Project is set to begin construction in spring 2027 and wrap up by winter 2028. Covering the stretch of I-44 between Missouri Route 43 (Main Street) and Loop 49 (Range Line Road), this \$25.1 million initiative will expand the highway from four to six lanes by adding traffic lanes in the center median, rebuilding mainline I-44 pavement and resurfacing I-44 ramps and interchanges.

As part of the project, the City of Joplin plans to install a new bridge on I-44 over Spring Creek to benefit both drainage and future pedestrian access. During construction, motorists can expect two lanes of traffic in each direction to remain open, although narrowed lanes, traffic shifts, ramp closures, and occasional short-duration nighttime full lane closures may occur.

A public meeting was held on March 26, 2026, at the Joplin Public Library to present project details and gather community feedback—demonstrating MoDOT’s commitment to local transparency and involvement.

MoDOT representatives, City of Joplin representatives, and their consultants will be available during the public meeting in Fidelity on Tuesday, November 17, 2026, to share public information about the improvements in Joplin.

For detailed project updates, traffic alerts, and public input opportunities, visit the MoDOT project page: <https://www.modot.org/projects/forward-44-joplin-improvements>.

Forward 44: Springfield Improvements

Work continues to advance on the Springfield Improvements Project, part of MoDOT’s Forward 44 initiative. With major summer construction behind us, crews are now focused on transitioning several areas into their next phases and preparing for upcoming traffic shifts.

On the east side of the project, the eastbound lanes between U.S. Route 65 and Glenstone Avenue have moved into Phase 4. Recent efforts include installing new traffic signs and completing final seeding and mulching along the slopes. These activities move the project closer to opening the new eastbound lanes between Glenstone and Route 65.



Farther west, the eastbound lanes between Kansas Expressway and Glenstone Avenue remain in Phase 2. Crews are continuing storm sewer installation in the median and removing the remaining sections of original pavement. Earthwork and rock-fill base placement are also underway as contractors prepare the corridor for new lane construction. At the same time, mechanically stabilized earth (MSE) wall installation and work on the final portions of the eastbound bridges at National, Broadway, and Grant Avenues remain active.

Across the full project area, these improvements represent steady progress toward enhancing safety, capacity, and reliability along this critical stretch of I-44. As work zones evolve, MoDOT encourages travelers to stay attentive to shifting traffic patterns and posted signage.

For ongoing updates, detailed phase maps, and additional project resources, visit the Forward 44: Springfield Improvements Project page at: <https://www.modot.org/projects/forward-44-springfield-improvements>.

Webster & Laclede Ramp and Pavement Improvements

Drivers traveling I-44 between Route B and Conway will see improvements aimed at making everyday trips safer and smoother. Several interchange ramps will be lengthened or adjusted, giving motorists additional room to get up to interstate speed before merging or to slow down before exiting. The improvements extend across the corridor, including ramps at Route B, Route 38, Route CC, Sampson Road, the Conway Rest Area and Route Y. In addition, the roadway will be resurfaced and restriped for a smoother ride.

The project will also improve visibility and roadside safety. Lighting will be added or adjusted at selected ramp locations to help drivers better see merge, exit and terminal areas after dark. Existing guardrail that meets the project’s needs will largely remain, while targeted locations and older guardrail components will be upgraded where necessary. The result is a practical set of improvements focused on safer merging, better nighttime visibility and a more consistent roadway from Route B toward Conway. Motorists will see some of these improvements yet this fall like lighting relocation and some of the guardrail upgrades. The remainder will kick off in 2027 when weather allows and last for approximately 6 months.