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Latest Cost Estimate for Four-Lane Highway 100 Project Is \$44.6 Million

By Ed Pruneau

The latest cost estimate to build a dual-lane Highway 100 from Interstate 44 to Washington is \$44.6 million, city officials were told Monday. Judy Wagner, area engineer with the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT), said the consultants working on the project have completed the "conceptual report" and are moving forward with the preliminary design plan.

Once the preliminary design is completed, possibly in a couple of months, MoDOT will hold public hearings to get input from citizens and property owners.

Wagner told members of the Washington Area Highways and Transportation Committee Monday that the \$44.6 million price tag is in line with earlier projections and noted that there should be areas where other costs can be cut.

The consultants, HNTB and Crawford, Murphy and Tilly Inc. (CMT), working with MoDOT engineers divided the project into three sections for design purposes, Wagner said.

Two are proposed to be five-lane urban sections (dual driving lanes with a center turning lane). Those would extend from Highway 47 east to the creek west of St. John's Road, and at the eastern end near Interstate 44.

The rest of the project would feature dual lanes separated by a grassy median strip with a cable barrier. At a couple of locations, the lanes may be separated by a concrete barrier.

The "concept" plan calls for new lanes to be constructed "primarily" on the north side of the existing highway, according to City Administrator Jim Briggs.

While the present plan does not extend beyond the Highway 100/Route 47 intersection, Briggs said MoDOT officials are "supportive" of continuing the four lane improvements to the west.

"They have asked us to submit that stretch as a separate cost-share project," Briggs told the committee. How far that separate project would extend has to be determined, Briggs said, "but it will be at least to Pottery Road."

Accelerated Portion

The tentative project schedule calls for seeking construction bids in April 2008, and completing the improvements in late 2009 or early 2010.

However, the city is working with MoDOT to accelerate construction of the section from Washington Heights Drive to just east of South Point Road in order to meet deadlines for opening of the proposed Phoenix Center II shopping center on the Geisert farm.

Briggs said MoDOT officials are "looking favorably" on speeding up construction of that section by July 2007, to coincide with opening of the new retail center.

"That is a tight time frame," Briggs conceded. "It will be pretty tough to do."

He said MoDOT has asked the city to "take the lead" on building that portion, including right of way acquisition, issuing bonds or certificates of participation, and awarding contracts. MoDOT then will deduct the cost of building that stretch from the balance of the project, Briggs said.

No Agreement Yet

The city and MoDOT still have not completed and signed a formal written agreement on the cost-sharing project, Briggs said. However, most of the work on the agreement is finished, he added.

"That probably is one of the next things we need to do," he told The Missourian.

Annexation Pending

In order to spend city funds on the highway project, the right of way must be inside the city limits.

The city is proposing to annex the highway right of way from Washington to I-44, but has not yet filed the proposal with MoDOT, Briggs said.

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