



OZARKS
TRANSPORTATION
ORGANIZATION
A METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

PRESS RELEASE
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OTO Top Priority, I-44, Receives Historic Investment!

The Ozarks Transportation Organization (OTO) is pleased to announce I-44 will be improved with historic investment from the State of Missouri due to hard work, thoughtful planning, collaboration, and partnership. The addition of \$165 million in work planned for the corridor will allow the region to address current needs and prepare for continued growth of the region.

The OTO Board of Directors voted yesterday to concur with the addition of I-44 as described in the 2025-2029 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and to indicate intent to add the project to the OTO Transportation Improvement Program after taking public comment.

The I-44 corridor was identified as a top regional priority by the OTO Board of Directors in 2022, 2023, and 2024. Efforts at all levels brought I-44 to the forefront for the Missouri State Legislature and Governor Parson's Office:

- OTO staff, MoDOT staff, and consultants worked quickly to estimate the costs of needed improvements.
- OTO Board members championed the need for I-44 from a regional perspective.
- Senator Lincoln Hough, along with Representatives Cody Smith and Bill Owen identified funding for the corridor in the State budget, building on multiple years of advocacy.
- Governor Parson recognized the statewide impact for freight movement that I-44 provides.
- The Missouri Highway and Transportation included the budgeted funds in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program.

The OTO is grateful for support, advocacy, and tireless efforts of all those involved and getting this funding to the finish line and to Governor Parson for preserving this funding in the State Budget. The Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission approved the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program on July 10, 2024, and incorporated an additional \$165 million into the already planned improvements of \$114 million to widen I-44 and improve the Route 13 interchange at I-44. This much needed infusion of additional funding will see the project completed as truly needed. Work is set to begin in FY 2025 and could begin as soon as Spring of 2025.

In addition to the much-needed work on I-44, the new funding allows for all four phases of interchange improvements at Kansas Expressway/Route 13 and I-44. This interchange experiences documented backups during rush hour on both 13 and I-44. Southbound 13 delays can be as much as 20 minutes. These improvements will benefit not only the residents of southwest Missouri, but also tourists and visitors to our amazing region.

“We are ecstatic at the level of investment from the State of Missouri for I-44,” said Sara Fields, OTO Executive Director. “This is a generational investment that would not have been possible without action by the Legislature and Governor Parson.” Ms. Fields described expected improvements as six lanes and rebuilt pavement from US 160/West Bypass to Route 125 in Strafford, interchange improvements at Route 13/Kansas Expressway, a trail connection under I-44, and new bridges that include aesthetic improvements. She continued, “This project is a true partnership with funding from OTO, MoDOT, the City of Springfield, Greene County, and Missouri’s General Revenue budget. We would like to thank Governor Parson, Senator Lincoln Hough, and Representatives Bill Owen and Cody Smith for their work on the 2025 Missouri budget as well as our entire legislative delegation for their support. We would also like to recognize Patrick McKenna, the Director of the Missouri Department of Transportation and the Missouri Highway and Transportation Commission for innovative approaches to funding and financing to maximize transportation investment in Missouri. We hope this is the first of many such monumental partnerships, as we can do anything when we work together.”

About I-44

I-44 carries 1.3 billion tons of freight annually in Missouri with a value of \$3.7 Billion. Over 15,000 semi-trucks and 65,000 total vehicles per day travel on I-44 from Glenstone to Kansas Expressway.

Over the last 5-years, (2019 – 2023) there have been 970 crashes on I-44 in the OTO area, 10 of which resulted in fatalities. There were over 48 crashes per mile along I-44 from Glenstone to Kansas Expwy, the highest crash per mile segment in the OTO area.

I-44 starts in St. Louis and terminates in Wichita Falls, TX. Part of the US Interstate System, I-44 connects Los Angeles via I-40 to Washington, D.C. via I-70.

About Springfield, MO

Located in the beautiful Ozarks, in southwestern Missouri, the Springfield region is rapidly growing at an annual rate of 1.8%, exceeding both Missouri’s growth rate of .2% and the nation’s growth rate of .5% over the last ten years.

Si usted necesita la ayuda de un traductor, por favor comuníquese con David Knaut al 417-865-3042, al menos 48 horas antes del plazo.

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