

HIGHWAY MM: *CORRIDOR OF OPPORTUNITY*

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Highway MM: *Corridor of Opportunity* project aims to enhance **safety**, provide for **alternative modes of transportation**, and add **capacity** to a rural route that is rapidly becoming a regional economic hub. Missouri Highway MM connects Interstate 44 with MO 360 and US 60. Hwy MM is a developing corridor with companies that provide above average wages with manufacturing, construction, and warehouse employers.

Project Description at a Glance

- Widening of Route MM to 4-lanes from 2-lanes
- Widening of bridge over MO 360 to accommodate 4-lanes and pedestrian facilities
- Close through access to Highway MM at current US 60 Intersection at Farm Road 103
- Two-lane roundabout on Route MM at Farm Road 160
- Build overpass over BNSF railroad track
- Close 3 BNSF railroad at-grade crossings
- Pedestrian Shared Use Path east of railroad tracks to US 60
- Add ADA sidewalks along corridor

The proposed project will provide for **safe community connectivity** by **closing three at-grade railroad crossings**, building a **new road alignment** with an **overpass over the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad**, **shared use path for bicycles and pedestrians**, and turning a two-lane arterial into a **divided four-lane with raised median facility**. The improvement will deliver the ability to manage the truck and commuter traffic along the corridor.

Originally built in 1921, Hwy MM is a 3.95-mile north/south minor arterial with two 12' wide lanes with no existing sidewalks that connects to US 60 at its south end and to I-44 at its north end. The 2022 AADT was approximately 12,957 vehicles per day based on data provided on MoDOT's Datazone website. The project location between I-44 and US 60, as well as the access it provides to existing and future traffic generators, make it subject to **elevated levels of future freight congestion**. Construction has accelerated along the corridor with new residential properties and commercial facilities such as Cox Health Center (medical center), Amazon STL3 Fulfillment Center (major warehouse employer), and Convoy of Hope World Headquarters (humanitarian aid distribution center). Additional commercial, retail, housing developments, a Greene County Library, and a 78-acre Republic School District campus with two new schools are currently being constructed along the corridor.

The City of Republic is one of the fastest growing regions in the state of Missouri and projects population growth from 19,832 in 2023 to approximately 33,000 people by the year 2040 (City of Republic). Hwy MM serves as a primary route to the Springfield-Branson National Airport as well as the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield. It is a major north/south connection for the region connecting Christian County and the west side of the City of Springfield to I-44. The Republic area serves several of the regional outlying communities as both a commercial and employment center. Because of its unique logistical advantages, the project corridor has experienced rapid and sustained economic development that continues to generate traffic, especially freight traffic, along the corridor.



The project has two planned phases. Phase I consists of Hwy MM from I-44 through the US 60 Intersection. Phase II is for Hwy M (Republic Road) from the US 60 Intersection through Hwy ZZ. This RAISE application is only for Phase I of the Highway MM Corridor project. A continuous four-lane corridor of opportunity and multimodal safe connectivity cannot be completed without **RAISE Grant Discretionary funding**.



STATEMENT OF WORK

MoDOT completed a location and corridor study in February 2022. The studies provide necessary information to identify needed improvements and ensure that those improvements are adequate in the future. MoDOT has started the NEPA process. Preliminary engineering and right-of-way began in FY 2022 and FY 2023. Those costs are not included in the project scope.

The proposed facility has a functional classification of Primary Arterial with a design volume of 31,600. The design criteria that will be used for the corridor: Design AADT 31,600; Operational (Posted) Speed - 45 miles per hour; 4-lanes, 82-ft Roadbed Width; 130-ft Right-of-Way width, curb and gutter, storm water facilities, 5-ft ADA wide sidewalk facilities, 10-ft wide pedestrian shared use path from US 60 to east of railroad tracks. Preliminary Engineering Bid Sheets are included in the Supporting Documents Index and at <http://tinyurl.com/2024RAISEMM>.

I-44 to MO 360 (Grading, Drainage, and Paving) 1.66 miles

Project adds lane capacity (two-lanes to four-lanes with raised median). Project adds ADA sidewalk accommodation along the corridor. EV Charging Station construction and installation near Interstate 44 is included.

MO 360 to Haile Street (Grading, Drainage, Bridge, and Paving) .87 miles

Project adds lane capacity (three-lanes to four-lanes, currently three-lanes due to Amazon's safety investment). Project adds ADA sidewalk accommodation along the corridor. There is currently a diamond interchange with MO 360. This bridge will be widened to accommodate four-lanes and pedestrian accommodations. Pedestrian signal and crossing.

Haile Street to US 60 (Grading, Drainage, Bridge, Paving-New Construction) 1.08 miles

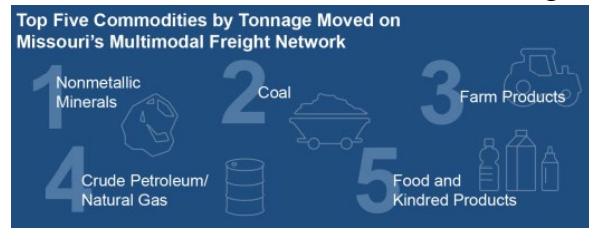
Part of the project will realign Hwy MM from the current US 60/MM Intersection, constructing a four-lane cross-section between US 60 and Farm Road 160 and a new signalized intersection at US 60 and Hwy MM. It also permanently closes and removes three at-grade railroad crossings. It closes through access to Hwy MM at current US 60 Intersection and Farm Road 103. Project adds new ADA sidewalk accommodation along the corridor. A new overpass over the BNSF railroad is included with bicycle and pedestrian access. A 10-foot shared use path is proposed along the new alignment for community connectivity and multimodal travel options. It includes a two-lane roundabout intersection at Farm Road 160 to accommodate the anticipated development growth and pedestrian safety.





TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES

Hwy MM connects two major corridors. Interstate 44 has been identified as a critical Tier I high priority freight corridor in the State of Missouri. See *2022 Missouri State Freight and Rail Plan* here: <http://tinyurl.com/2024RAISEMM>. Hwy MM also connects to US 60, a 2,655-mile (in total) east/west route which runs the entire length of Missouri connecting Oklahoma to Kentucky. It is also a major east-west route connecting



Southwestern Arizona to the Atlantic Ocean in Virginia. These key corridors transport vital products to the whole nation. Missouri is a national crossroads of highway, rail, and pipeline networks. With the logistic challenges faced by the nation during the COVID pandemic, a strong freight infrastructure has become even more important for transporting necessary supplies.

The project boundaries of Hwy MM contain two at-grade railroad crossings. This segment is a busy rail corridor and is maintained by BNSF Railroad. Trains that move to, from, and through Missouri carry 43% of all freight, when compared to other travel modes. Hwy MM is also a primary route to the Springfield-Branson National Airport.



Due to the proximity of the rail crossing at Hwy MM to US 60, traffic frequently backs onto US 60, when a train is occupying the crossing. This causes reliability issues along the US 60 corridor. Delays of up to 20 minutes are experienced at the MM/US 60 intersection (US 60 Study). There are also safety concerns from having an at-grade railroad crossing located so closely to the US 60 intersection. BNSF, the owners of the railway, support the closure of the crossings. BNSF has provided a letter of support of the project and is ready to partner to close the crossings.

Hwy MM is already experiencing poor levels of service and when current and future development is modeled, the route will quickly be unable to manage the growing demand. Sections of the corridor are already performing at a level of service (LOS) D or F (*Greene County Route MM/ZZ Study*). Most of the corridor is a two-lane facility. There is one three-lane section on Hwy MM that is expected to exceed capacity after 2027.

The intersection of US 60 and Hwy MM is currently performing at a LOS D during the AM peak hour and a LOS F during the PM peak hour. This existing intersection will be closed to through Hwy MM traffic past the local access, and a new intersection will be constructed as part of the road relocation. The relocation is necessary to provide adequate spacing and grades to provide for the needed rail grade separation.



Most of the corridor lacks adequate shoulders, turn lanes, and pedestrian connections. Frequent conflicts with large trucks and passenger vehicles cause serious crashes as shown by the documented crash history. There was a collision between a train and agricultural truck in 2022.



ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES

This project will address the following challenges that will be explained further in the Merit Criteria sections:

- Adding capacity to the roadway to manage the freight transports and commuters.
- Removing three at-grade rail crossings and creating a new railroad overpass.
- Adding ADA sidewalk and pedestrian shared use path to allow pedestrian access to the corridor that previously did not exist.
- Removing at-grade crossing of MM six hundred feet from US 60 resulting in reduced backups on US 60.
- Reducing truck-passenger car conflicts by adding center turn lanes.
- The planned project addresses both existing and future concerns due to growing traffic volumes within the corridor. The project has been designed to accommodate freight and commuter traffic through 2045.



PROJECT HISTORY

In 2005, the City of Republic, Missouri made an innovative decision to consolidate the Village of Brookline into Republic, approximately 2,560 acres, to facilitate the development of the Brookline Business Park. The City of Republic has made historic infrastructure investments in water, sewer, and fire protection totaling over \$169.5 million. The Springfield, MO utility, City Utilities, also believed in the vision to bring quality jobs to the region and invested in electric and natural gas infrastructure. What once was open land with great connections to essential road freight corridors, rail, and the airport has become a booming freight corridor with businesses moving in rapidly.

The City of Republic previously applied for a TIGER Discretionary Grant in 2009 and 2017 (Republic Regional Business Corridor) for this corridor in anticipation of this growth. The Ozarks Transportation applied in partnership with the City of Republic and MoDOT for a RAISE Discretionary Grant in 2022 and 2023.

The project became a high priority in 2020 when the Convoy of Hope World Headquarters and Amazon STL3 Fulfillment Center were built. In 2021, Amazon constructed over \$4 million in transportation improvements to the Hwy MM corridor by upgrading a three-lane roadway from MO 360 to Farm Road 160. Two public roadway intersections were improved including Farm Road 156, which serves commercial development, and Haile Street, which serves residences. Finally, traffic signals were added to the northern interchange ramp of MO 360, Farm Road 156, and Haile Street. While Amazon made the improvements needed to facilitate the demands of traffic they caused, the remainder of the corridor is still experiencing congestion.





PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed project is located on the **rural** segment (per the 2020 census) of Hwy MM between Interstate 44 and US 60. The project is located three miles from a major population center of Springfield, MO and connects the City of Willard commuters to the City of Republic community. The project is in the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) Southwest District, the Ozarks Transportation Organization (OTO) Metropolitan Planning Organization planning area, and in the city limits of the City of Republic.

A signalized at-grade railroad crossing with BNSF rail and Hwy MM is located approximately 600' from the intersection of US 60. The existing intersection between Hwy MM and Farm Road 160 is 1.2 miles north of US 60.

Segment	Rural/Urban	Latitude	Longitude	Length
Section 1	Rural	37° 11' 20" N	93° 25' 24" W	1.08Miles
Section 2	Rural	37° 10' 53.66" N	93° 25' 25.49" W	1.66 Miles
		@Northern Limit (Carnahan St.)	@Northern Limit	(FR 160 to Carnahan St.)
Section 3	Rural	37° 09' 41.88" N	93° 25' 27.47" W	0.87 Miles
		@Northern Limit (FR 160)	@Northern Limit	(US 60 to FR 160)

Area of Persistent Poverty & Historically Disadvantage Area

The project is in the 48.05 Census Tract of Greene County, Missouri. Greene County is not identified as an Area of Persistent Poverty. The project is not in a historically disadvantaged community. However, this project will increase access to jobs and education in the area. Jobs created in this corridor provide opportunities for the disadvantaged communities in Census Tracts 17, 31, 32, and 33. The project is located outside the Springfield Missouri Urbanized area and is designated as rural in the 2020 Census.

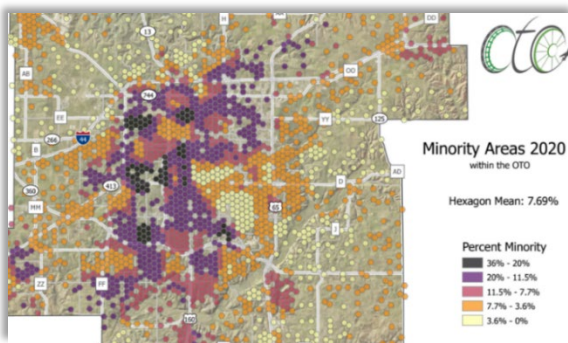


Figure 3 OTO Minority Areas Map

