



## FINAL REPORT

May 2000

Prepared By:



*in association with:*

STV Incorporated  
KPMG Peat Marwick  
Jane Mobley Associates  
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Archer Engineers



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May 2000

Prepared By:

**TRANSYSTEMS**  
CORPORATION 

The Springfield-Branson Corridor Transportation study was  
financed by the Federal Transit Administration,  
the Missouri Department of Transportation,  
the cities of Springfield and Branson, and Greene County.



## Table of Contents

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LIST OF FIGURES.....	II
LIST OF TABLES .....	II
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	I
RECOMMENDED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT SOLUTIONS .....	I
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW.....	1
1.1 THE STUDY PROCESS.....	2
1.2 OVERVIEW OF THE SPRINGFIELD - BRANSON TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR.....	3
1.2.1 Highways .....	4
1.2.2 Railroads.....	4
1.2.3 Airports .....	4
1.2.4 Transit.....	6
1.2.5 Transportation Problems .....	6
1.3 ORGANIZATION OF REPORT.....	6
SECTION 2: SUMMARY OF PHASE I ACTIVITIES .....	7
2.1 DATA COLLECTION .....	7
2.2 CORRIDOR TRANSPORTATION PROJECTIONS .....	7
2.2.1 Tourism: Travel to the Branson/Lakes Area .....	8
2.2.2 Future Highway Performance.....	14
2.3 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION FROM PHASE I .....	23
2.3.1 Analysis of Future Transportation System.....	23
2.4 RECOMMENDATION REGARDING PHASE II OF THE STUDY.....	25
SECTION 3: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT .....	26
3.1 COMMUNITY OUTREACH ACTIVITIES .....	27
3.1.1 Develop and distribute project newsletters .....	27
3.1.2 Promote media coverage .....	27
3.1.3 Host three rounds of three open house public information meetings .....	27
3.2 REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF SPECIAL PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES .....	29
3.3 SUMMARY OF SELECTED PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES .....	30
SECTION 4: ALTERNATIVES SCREENING PROCESS .....	31
4.1 TIER I SCREENING PROCESS .....	31
4.2 TIER I SUMMARY .....	32
4.3 TIER II SCREENING PROCESS.....	35
4.4 TIER II SCREENING RESULTS .....	37
4.5 DISCUSSION OF TIER II SCREENING RESULTS .....	37
4.6 BUS TRANSIT STRATEGY .....	37
4.7 RAIL TRANSIT STRATEGIES .....	41
4.8 STRATEGIES RECOMMENDED FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION.....	42
SECTION 5: RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES.....	43



<b>SECTION 6: COSTS, FUNDING, AND FINANCING .....</b>	<b>46</b>
6.1 OVERVIEW OF LOCAL FINANCING STRATEGIES .....	48
6.1.1 <i>Introduction</i> .....	48
6.1.2 <i>Generic Financing Strategies</i> .....	48
6.1.3 <i>Springfield-Branson Corridor Status</i> .....	49
6.1.4 <i>Joint Action and Special Taxing Districts</i> .....	52
6.1.5 <i>Conclusions and Recommendations</i> .....	53
<b>SECTION 7: RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>54</b>
7.1 COSTS AND FINANCING .....	54
7.2 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES .....	57
7.3 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING .....	58
7.4 ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS IN THE CORRIDOR: A RATIONALE FOR TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT .....	60

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Springfield-Branson Corridor .....	5
Figure 2: Travel Projections—High Projection .....	15
Figure 3: Travel Projections—Moderate Projection .....	16
Figure 4: 2003 AADT on Committed Network .....	19
Figure 5: 2020 AADT on Committed Network .....	20
Figure 6: Tier II Screening Process .....	36
Figure 7: Springfield-Branson Corridor: General Transportation Needs .....	44
Figure 8: Springfield-Branson Corridor: Priority Transportation Solutions .....	55
Figure 9: Recommended Actions Map .....	56
Figure 10: Total Direct Impact of Tourism .....	61
Figure 11: Projected Population Growth 2000—2020 .....	61

## List of Tables

Table 1: Projection of Branson-Lakes Area Leisure and Corporate Travel Annual Trips	14
Table 2: Level of Service Descriptions .....	21
Table 3: Projected Levels of Service 2003 .....	22
Table 4: Projected Levels of Service 2020 .....	23
Table 5: Summary of Tier I Screening Process .....	34
Table 6: Evaluation Matrix .....	35
Table 7: Results of Tier II Screening for Highway Strategies .....	39
Table 8: Results of Tier II Screening for Rail Transit Strategies .....	40
Table 9: 20-Year Summary of Alternative Financing Options .....	46
Table 10: Projected Tax Receipts for Various Sales Tax Rates .....	50
Table 11: Tax Distribution for Corridor Municipal and County Entities .....	51
Table 12: Debt Supported at Various Sales Tax Rates .....	52
Table 13: Priority Transportation Solutions— Estimated Construction Cost .....	54
Table 14: Rail Transit Strategy Evaluation .....	59



# LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL



3<sup>rd</sup> Floor - 2400 Pershing Road, Suite 400, Kansas City, Missouri 64108 (816) 329-8600 ♦ (816) 329-8602 Fax

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DATE: November 9, 2000

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WE ARE SENDING YOU THE FOLLOWING ITEMS VIA: ☒ Mail ☐ Overnight ☐ Courier ☐ Hand Deliver

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1	Springfield-Branson Corridor Transportation Study Final Report

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REMARKS:

CC: David Awbrey

SIGNED:

John Dobies



## Executive Summary

The Springfield - Branson Corridor Transportation Study, initiated in November of 1998, is the Region's most comprehensive examination ever of travel projections and future transportation needs. The first phase of the Study focused on the impact of continuing and astonishing growth in the Springfield - Branson Corridor during the next 20 years, and provided an analysis of the area's transportation and related community development needs and opportunities. The objective of Phase II was to provide a detailed blueprint to ensure that the transportation system is commensurate with community growth opportunities into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

With the collaboration of the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT), a study Steering Committee was formed. The Steering Committee was comprised of representatives of state and local governmental agencies, and representatives of various civic organizations and had overall responsibility for the Study as well as approved all major decisions and recommendations during the past two years. The entire study area is represented on the Steering Committee, making the Study truly regional in nature.

A Technical Committee comprised of governmental staff involved with transportation planning and operations worked closely with the consultant team to review the detail of the Study. As with the Steering Committee, the Technical Committee has a regional perspective.

### Recommended Transportation System Improvement Solutions

The Steering Committee adopted recommendations for the Region's highway system, and for the establishment of new transit services.

The recommended Highway transportation solutions were prioritized by categorizing the actions as Immediate priorities, Short Range priorities or Longer-Range priorities based on estimates of when the transportation needs would be realized. These priorities identified by the Study Committee are as follows:

#### IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES (1 TO 5 YEARS)

- Address the capacity and safety deficiencies along US 65 between I-44 and US 60, including the major interchanges at I-44 and US 60. This may involve interchange improvements, or improvements along the entire segment of US 65, for example widening to 6 lanes.
- Address the capacity deficiency on US 160 (South Campbell) between the James River Freeway and Nixa. This may involve the widening of existing US 160, a new roadway to the west, or a new transportation corridor.
- Complete improvements to the West Bypass to improve access to the Springfield-Branson Regional Airport.
- Improve Route 13 from Reeds Spring to Kimberling City.
- Address the deficiency in east-west connections in southern Greene County.



- Address the deficiency in east-west connections in northern Christian County.

#### **SHORT TERM PRIORITIES (6 TO 10 YEARS)**

- Widen US 65 south of Hollister to Arkansas line to 4 lanes.
- Improvements may be necessary to the segment of US 65 between US 60 and Route F, including widening to 6 lanes.
- A new connection to the airport terminal will be required if the mid-field terminal relocation project is completed.
- Address the need for an improved east-west connection in Stone County.
- Complete the southern leg of the High Road to Table Rock Dam.
- Improve US 160/Route 248 from Reeds Spring to Highroad.

#### **LONGER-RANGE PRIORITIES (11 TO 20+ YEARS)**

- Complete grade separation of US 65 in Christian and Taney counties.
- Improvements to US 65 between Bee Creek Road and Route 76, including interchange improvements or widening to 6 lanes.
- Improve US 160 between Nixa and Reeds Spring.
- Complete the south leg of the Highroad from Table Rock Dam south to US 65.

The cost of providing these transportation improvements is substantial. The cost for the highway improvements alone is estimated at \$885 million in 1999 dollars. The total cost would become about \$1.7 billion with the effects of inflation on the projects over the twenty year implementation period.

The funding for these improvements does not exist in current local or state programs. MoDOT's funding situation is critical. MoDOT expects to have very little funding available for highway capacity improvements because the limited funding must be used for system preservation and maintenance. A strategy was identified for funding major highway transportation improvements in the Corridor, including securing federal discretionary funding, and increasing the share of state funding received by the southwest Missouri region. The Steering Committee recognizes that even with increased federal and state funding, it appears likely that an increase in local funding will be required to make all of the improvements.

The Study concluded that highway transportation and the personal auto will remain the predominate means of transportation into the foreseeable future. However, the Committee did recognize that having a multi-modal transportation system is important to the Region. Several transit strategies were included in the Study.



Passenger rail transportation strategies were evaluated as part of the examination of transportation solutions for the Springfield-Branson Corridor. The Steering Committee concluded that the passenger rail strategy should be excluded from the Study's recommendations for several reasons:

- The capital cost was found to be very high and ongoing operating costs were a concern.
- Virtually no substantial support emerged during the public meetings and stakeholder meetings held late in 1999.
- The benefits of rail did not include significant traffic congestion relief for the highway system nor a significant share of the commuter market.
- The ridership forecasts for the passenger rail service depended heavily on substantial growth of the air travel market and attendant growth in air travel to/from Springfield-Branson Regional Airport. This component of the overall travel forecasts was judged to be the most tenuous.

The Steering Committee directed that the consultant develop a series "checkpoints" for growth in tourism levels, traffic levels and other factors that the region could use to continually evaluate the advisability of initiating the project development for rail transit.

Bus service was recommended to serve two markets in the Corridor. One is an express bus service between Springfield and Branson, primarily focused on providing service to tourists, particularly air travelers with destinations in Branson. The other is local service focused on providing transportation for employees in the Branson/Lakes area.

The Steering Committee also concluded that transportation planning in the Corridor needs to be strengthened from a region-wide perspective. Currently, regional planning in the Corridor is limited and the need for a more comprehensive approach increases as transportation needs increase and the individual jurisdictions become more interdependent. The Springfield-Branson Corridor Transportation Study began the task of regional planning, but the work needs to be continued beyond the conceptual stage of the study. There are different approaches to the issue of regional transportation planning for the Springfield - Branson Corridor. An important subsequent step will be to address the regional transportation planning needs in the area.



## Section 1: Introduction and Overview

This report summarizes the key activities of the Springfield - Branson Corridor Transportation Study. The Study, initiated in November of 1998 to determine the transportation needs of tourists, workers and residents moving between the Springfield and Branson areas, has been directed by the Springfield - Branson Corridor Transportation Study Committee in collaboration with the Missouri Department of Transportation. The Study is the Region's most comprehensive examination ever of travel projections and future transportation needs.

The Study was divided into two phases. Phase I focused on the impact of continuing and astonishing growth in the Springfield - Branson Corridor during the next 20 years, and provided an analysis of the area's transportation and related community development needs and opportunities. The objective of Phase II was to provide a detailed blueprint to ensure that the transportation system is commensurate with community growth opportunities into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

A Steering Committee comprised of representatives of state and local governmental agencies, and representatives of various civic organizations had overall responsibility for the Study and approved all major decisions and recommendations during the past two years. The entire study area is represented on the Steering Committee, making the Study truly regional in nature.

### Springfield - Branson Corridor Transportation Study Steering Committee

Sam Hamra, Steering Committee Chairman Government Relations Attorney, City of Branson	Bob Roundtree General Manager, City Utilities
Bill Adams Operations Manager, Conco Quarry	Jay Wasson Mayor, City of Nixa
Bill Barnett Commissioner, Christian County, Western District	Roger Howard Director of Government Affairs, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway
Anita Horton Director of Analysis & Market Planning M&NA Railroad	John Lewis City Administrator, City of Hollister
Tony DeLong Stone County Commissioner	Gary Ludlam Assistant District Engineer, MoDOT
Teri Hacker Councilman, City of Springfield	Chip Mason Director of Corporate Affairs, Silver Dollar City, Inc.
Robert Hall Planning Administrator, Taney County Planning Commission	Howard Moore Administrator, Greene Co. Highway Department
Phil Richeson Administrator of Transit, MODOT	Lou Schaefer Mayor, City of Branson



A Technical Committee comprised of governmental staff involved with transportation planning and operations worked closely with the consultant team to review the detail of the Study. As with the Steering Committee, the Technical Committee has a regional perspective.

**Springfield - Branson Corridor Transportation Study Technical Committee**

David Awbrey  
Technical Committee Chairman,  
Assistant Administrator of Transit,  
MoDOT

Dave Erwin  
Project Manager,  
MoDOT District 8

David Miller  
Deputy Chairman  
City Engineer, City of Branson

Kathy Fritts  
Transportation Manager,  
City Utilities of Springfield

Bill Robinett  
Greene County Highway Department

Jim Hall  
Chief Engineer, Greene County  
Highway Department

Harold Bastin  
Citizen Representative

Rob Hancik  
Director of Aviation  
Springfield-Branson Regional Airport

Earl Newman Assistant Director of Public  
Works, City of Springfield

Al Gonzales  
Building Inspector, City of Ozark

Brian Bingle  
City Administrator  
City of Nixa

Kathy Clark  
Chair of RABIT/TAC

A consultant team comprised of transportation engineering and planning firms assisted the Study Committee during the course of the Study.

### **1.1 The Study Process**

The Study was divided into two phases:

Phase I included data collection and the preparation of projections of traffic levels and transportation patterns in the Corridor for the next 20 years. Phase I was designed to determine the viability of the Corridor's transportation system to meet future transportation and economic development needs.

Study objectives were developed during Phase I. These objectives guided the work of the Study Committee and the consultant team during the course of the Study.



### **Study Objectives**

1. Develop transportation improvement plans to support anticipated economic development in Springfield and Branson.
2. Ensure that transportation plans maintain the quality of life in the Corridor.
3. Develop multi-modal transportation systems that provide a choice for travelers in the Corridor.
4. Improve coordination of land use and transportation decisions in the Corridor.
5. Develop alternative financing approaches for new and upgraded transportation facilities.
6. Develop consensus and support for the Study's recommendations.

Phase II involved the evaluation of transportation needs and the detailed analysis of alternative strategies for addressing these needs. The consultant team performed technical planning and engineering analyses including transportation system design, benefits and costs. The Study evaluated all modes of transportation that could reasonably address the Region's current and future needs, including new and improved highways, new bus service, passenger rail systems and even high technology people movers.

An important companion to the technical work was an intensive public involvement and community outreach program. This effort to inform and involve all segments of the community included eight public meetings, a corridor-wide "newspaper public meeting" and over forty meetings with corridor groups. The result has been the most "community involvement" ever included in a transportation study for the southwest Missouri Region.

The Technical Committee developed an evaluation process to reduce the candidate transportation improvement solutions to a preferred transportation strategy for the Region. This evaluation process considered all of the technical engineering and planning data and the input from the intensive public involvement campaign. The evaluation process used objectives and criteria developed by the Technical Committee and approved by the Steering Committee.

Evidence that the evaluation process was effective can be found in the Steering Committee's action on the Study's recommendations. The Steering Committee, with representatives of communities throughout the Region, approved the final recommendations unanimously on April 18, 2000.

### **1.2 Overview of the Springfield - Branson Transportation Corridor**

The Springfield - Branson Transportation Corridor is defined as the area between the cities of Springfield and Branson approximately fifty miles in length and eight to 15 miles wide. The corridor is largely rural, running through the Ozark Mountain region of southwest Missouri. Topography is severe, reflecting the character of the region. Figure 1 shows the Study Corridor.

The Corridor encompasses parts of the counties of Greene, Christian, Stone and Taney. Springfield at the north end of the Corridor is the third largest city in Missouri with a population



of 150,500. Branson, a city of fewer than 4,000, is the center of an entertainment and tourist area that attracts 7,000,000 annual visitors and supports a work force of over 20,000. The Branson-Lakes area is rated as the 20th largest leisure time destination in the United States.

#### *1.2.1 Highways*

US Route 65 is the primary link between the two cities in the Corridor. The roadway is being improved by the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) and will be a four lane facility for the entire distance in the Corridor by the year 2001. US Route 160 also provides an important highway link from the west side of Springfield to the west side of the Branson-Lakes Area through connections with routes 13 and 248 in the south part of the Corridor. Route 14 is the primary east-west state highway in the Corridor. Route 60 is another east west link in the north part of the Corridor. Interstate 44 is an important highway link into the region, framing the Corridor on the north.

#### *1.2.2 Railroads*

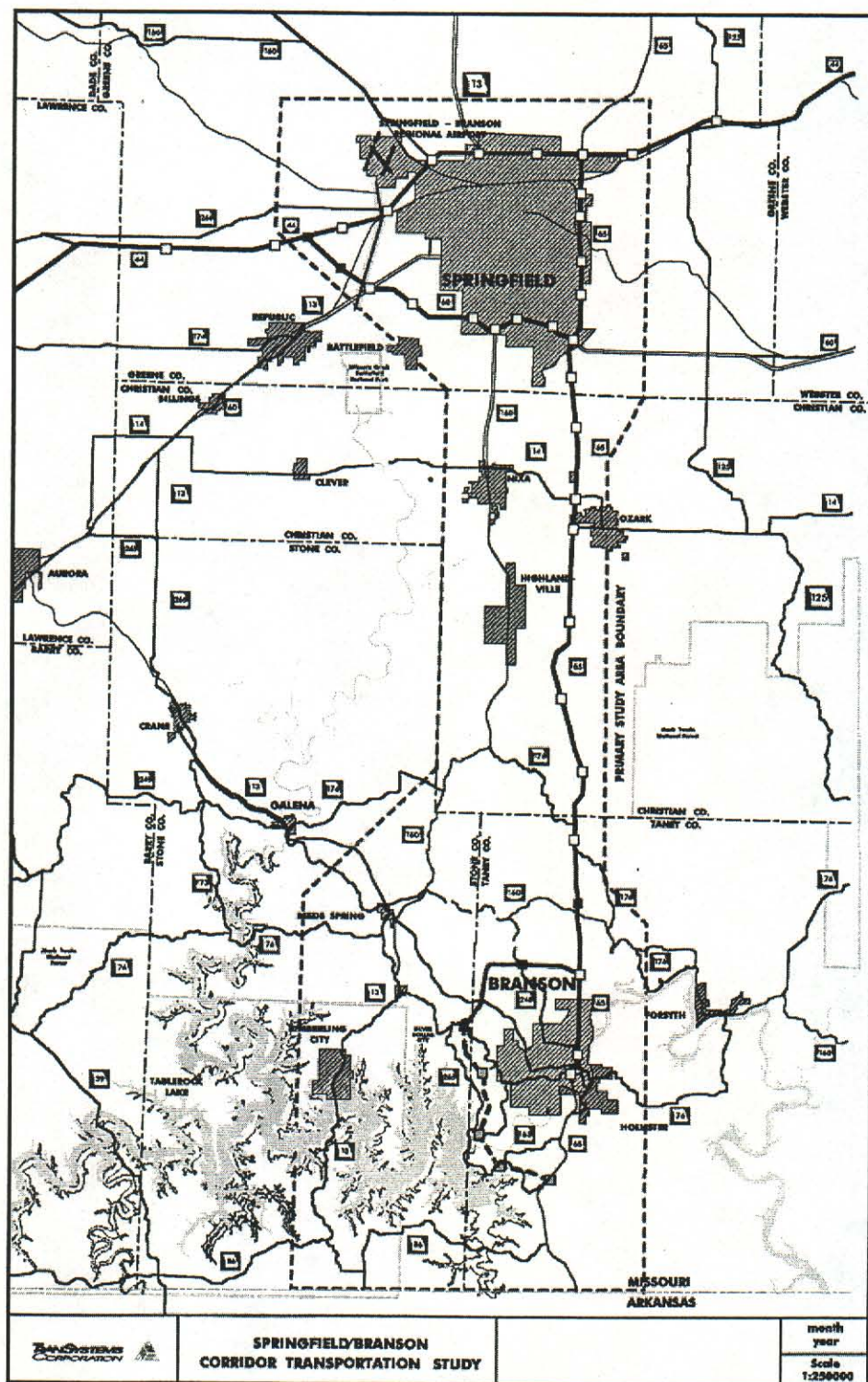
Historically, Springfield was an important rail center, however railroads are less important to the region's economy today. The Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) has a single track line that crosses the north portion of the Corridor. The BNSF also has a track from Springfield to Ozark, a distance of about 16 miles. The Missouri and North Arkansas (M&NA) leases two lines in the Corridor from the Union Pacific Railroad, including a line from Aurora to Branson, and south into Arkansas. There is no regularly scheduled passenger rail transportation in the Corridor.

#### *1.2.3 Airports*

Springfield-Branson Regional Airport, located on the west side of the City of Springfield, is the only commercial aviation airport in the Corridor. In addition, general aviation airports are located at the College of the Ozarks just south of Branson, in Ozark and in Branson West.



Figure 1: Springfield-Branson Corridor





#### *1.2.4 Transit*

City Utilities (CU) in Springfield operates fixed route transit and paratransit services within the city, however CU does not provide transit service between the cities of Springfield and Branson. OATS, Inc. provides paratransit services for the general public in the Corridor area with approximately twelve vans assigned to the area.

A number of private transportation companies operate bus service in the Corridor, including airport ground transportation between Springfield-Branson Regional Airport and destinations throughout the Corridor, particularly Branson. This service is operated on a charter basis; there is currently no scheduled bus service between Springfield and Branson.

#### *1.2.5 Transportation Problems*

Based on interviews with key persons, prior studies and the consultant team's observations during Phase I of the Study, the following transportation problems were identified:

- Traffic congestion, characterized by significant delays during peak travel periods, on the north - south highways in the Corridor, particularly routes 65 and 160.
- Inadequate ground transportation for air travelers arriving at Springfield-Branson Regional Airport with destinations in Branson.
- A lack of transportation alternatives to travel by private auto in the Corridor.
- Inadequate transportation for employees of the Branson-Lakes Area, and increasing commuter-oriented traffic congestion on major arterial roadways serving Springfield.

#### **1.3 Organization of Report**

This report highlights the key activities of the Springfield-Branson Corridor Transportation Study. The report first highlights Phase I activities. Next, a summary of public involvement activities is presented. The development and screening of transportation alternatives is discussed along with recommendations and financing strategies.



## Section 2: Summary of Phase I Activities

This outlines the key activities, conclusions and recommendations developed during Phase I of the Study. The first phase pointed to the need to explore future transportation needs and solutions in detail. The most compelling future need relates to the inability of the committed transportation system to support the economic development objectives of the Branson/Lakes Area. Phase I concluded that further study was warranted to determine the most cost-effective manner in which these needs can be addressed over the next twenty years.

### 2.1 Data Collection

Phase I included data collection and the preparation of projections of traffic levels and transportation patterns in the Corridor for the next 20 years. Phase I was designed to determine the viability of the Corridor's transportation system to meet future transportation and economic development needs. Much of this data collection effort was assembled in a series of "working papers." These papers are contained in a volume of technical reports entitled "Working Papers: Phase I Products." This volume is a separate appendix to this final report.

The working papers cover a wide range of topics, and have undergone rigorous review by the Technical Committee. A list of the Phase I working papers is shown below:

Working Paper I-1:	Project Introduction and Study Purpose
Working Paper I-2:	Branson Traveler Market Research
Working Paper I-3:	Phase I Stakeholder Interviews
Working Paper I-4:	Travel Market Segments and Growth Assumptions
Working Paper I-5:	Highway System Inventory and Analysis
Working Paper I-6:	Tour Bus and Charter Travel
Working Paper I-7:	Railroad Facilities Inventory
Working Paper I-8:	Aviation Inventory and Evaluation
Working Paper I-9:	Corridor Demographic and Economic Projections
Working Paper I-10:	Corridor Travel Patterns & Volumes
Working Paper I-11:	Tourism Transportation Corridor Analogies
Working Paper I-12:	Phase II Public Participation Program Outline
Working Paper I-13:	Rail Transit Project Development Process
Working Paper I-14:	Summary of Findings and Conclusions

As seen from the above list, the papers cover a wide-range of topics from inventories of transportation infrastructure to demographic, economic, and traffic projections.

### 2.2 Corridor Transportation Projections

Two key projections were made as part of Phase I. The first involved the projection of travel to the Branson-Lakes region. Of this, tourism is crucial as it is expected to be the driver of economic and traffic growth in the area. The second projection, similar to the first, looked at the growth in traffic on vital highway segments in the corridor.



### *2.2.1 Tourism: Travel to the Branson/Lakes Area*

This section briefly documents the methodology and assumptions used to develop projections of travel to the Branson-lakes area for the purpose of leisure and tourism, and group business functions. This latter category is termed "corporate."

The methodology and assumptions were fashioned from information provided by individuals in the Branson area familiar with markets, trends and future developments. The market segment assessment relies heavily on information prepared for the Branson Chamber of Commerce by D. K. Shifflet. The future projections were adapted from preliminary short term projections being prepared in Branson, and other information such as demographic projections for the Springfield - Branson region, and the Midwest region of the United States.

Despite the generous contributions of many individuals, no representation is made as to the origin of the projections, except the TranSystems Consultant Team.

#### Market Segment and Travel Component Definition

For the purpose of analyzing travel patterns in the corridor, and developing projections of future travel patterns and volumes, it is necessary to segment the travel market. These market segments must have similar characteristics with respect to choice of travel mode. In addition, the market segments should be developed in consideration of the ability to predict the level of future visitation by individuals within the segment. As such, the market segments should be consistent with strategic and marketing plans in the corridor.

The market segments will initially be limited to travelers with a destination in the Branson/Lakes area. This is because these travelers will largely define travel patterns in the corridor, and will likely be the primary users of any non-automobile transportation system. In addition, the size and characteristics of these market segments will be influenced by future growth and development of the Branson leisure and business markets. Other travel markets will have to be included for the analysis of travel patterns and volumes in the corridor.

As such, the following market segments will be used for the purpose of developing future travel projections:

#### Intra-regional

Families within 500 miles  
Families beyond 500 miles

Couples within 500 miles  
Couples beyond 500 miles

Seniors within 200 miles  
Seniors beyond 200 miles

#### International

Corporate within 200 miles  
Corporate beyond 200 miles



These market segments are defined as follows:

*Intra-Regional.* Leisure travelers from within the Corridor, especially the City of Springfield. Daytrippers (i.e., visitors to Branson who do not stay overnight in Branson) represent nearly a third of the total leisure market. For simplicity, this segment includes all demographic types; geographical proximity is the primary characteristic. Springfield is included as a market segment because of the potential for transit use.

*Families.* A group of three or more related persons, with at least one child in the group, traveling to Branson for entertainment and/or leisure. 500 miles is used as a threshold representing one day's travel by auto.

*Couples.* Two persons traveling together for entertainment or leisure. 500 miles is used as a threshold representing one day's travel by auto.

*Seniors.* Persons 65 years of age or over, traveling alone or in groups, for the purpose of entertainment and/or leisure. 200 miles is used as a threshold representing one day's travel by auto.

*International.* Travelers of any demographic originating in a foreign country traveling to Branson for recreation and/or leisure.

*Corporate.* Persons traveling alone or in groups for the primary purpose of business; to attend business meetings, seminars, conferences or conventions. 200 miles is used as a threshold representing "desirable" travel distance by auto for business travel.

The other (i.e., non-Branson leisure/corporate) components of total travel in the corridor include:

*Branson workforce.* Individuals who are employed in the Branson/Lakes area with residences outside the immediate area, north of Branson, in or adjacent to the study corridor.. These travelers are such that they will use Route 65 or Route 160 for auto travel, or potentially a transit system, in the corridor. The size of this component is directly dependent on the level of activity in the Branson/Lakes area.

*Springfield workforce.* Individuals who are employed in the Springfield area with residences south of Springfield in or adjacent to the study corridor. These travelers are such that they will use Route 65 or Route 160 for auto travel, or potentially a transit system in the corridor. The size of this component is not directly dependent on the level of activity in the Branson/Lakes area.

*Incidental travel.* Travel within the corridor not included in any of the specific categories previously noted. The size of this component is not directly dependent on the level of activity in the Branson/Lakes area.

*Through travel.* Travel through the area on routes 65 or 160 with origins and destinations outside the study area. The size of this component is not directly dependent on the level of activity in the Branson/Lakes area.



### Market Segment Growth Assumptions

This section provides detail on the assumptions used for the projections of leisure and corporate travel to the Branson - Lakes area to the year 2020. A range of future visitor levels is described based on "high" and "moderate" growth estimates for each market segment described in the preceding section. The short-term (five-year) growth assumptions closely parallel projections developed by Jerry Henry of Silver Dollar City, Inc. As of January 15, 1999 longer-term projections have not been developed. Therefore, the consultant developed growth estimates for each market segment based on available information, and general assumptions about the Branson market over the long term. The following section provides an explanation of these assumptions, along with documentation of the growth factors used.

#### **Intra-Regional**

**Data and Information:** Daytrippers represent 31.2% of total leisure travelers, and is expected to continue to be a strong segment. This segment represents only a portion (about one third) of the daytrippers, those within 100 miles, primarily Springfield area residents. As Branson markets more to families, and as Springfield grows, this segment is expected to lead growth in the near term. Strong drive-to market segment, which is expected to respond to the completion of capacity improvements to Route 65.

**Trends and Future Assumptions:** Segment will experience strong growth in the short-term, and gradually decrease as market segment matures. Improved highway access will contribute to strong growth.

<u>Period</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Moderate</u>
1999 to 2003	5.5%	4.0%
2004 to 2010	6.0%	3.0%
2011 to 2015	2.0%	1.5%
2016 to 2020	2.0%	1.5%

#### **Families within 500 miles**

**Data and Information:** Currently represents 36.3% of overnight travelers, second only to couples. Branson's share of families lags somewhat behind peer group tourism areas. Hoped to be one of the better segments through increased marketing. Strong drive-to market.

**Trends and Future Assumptions:** Will lag a bit behind adult segment growth in short term, but reflect overall projections. Christmas season travel should appeal. After first period, revert to background growth.

<u>Period</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Moderate</u>
1999 to 2003	5.0%	4.0%
2004 to 2010	4.0%	3.0%
2011 to 2015	2.0%	1.5%
2016 to 2020	0%	0%

#### **Families beyond 500 miles**

**Data and Information:** Same as for within 500 mile family segment, except families less likely to drive extended distance; similar family entertainment likely available closer to residence. Also,



lower likelihood of repeat travel. Not a good potential fly-in market, especially with relatively high air fares.

Trends and Future Assumptions: No growth market.

<u>Period</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Moderate</u>
1999 to 2003	1.0%	0%
2004 to 2010	0%	0%
2011 to 2015	0%	0%
2016 to 2020	0%	0%

#### **Couples within 500 miles**

Data and Information: Single largest market segment at 37.9%. Anticipated to be a strong growth market. One day's drive includes several substantial markets. Good potential air travel market from major markets with direct flights; probably quite sensitive to air fares.

Trends and Future Assumptions: Segment will lead growth among all leisure markets in short term, and reflect steady growth through 2010. Background growth thereafter as market matures.

<u>Period</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Moderate</u>
1999 to 2003	6.0%	3.5%
2004 to 2010	4.0%	2.0%
2011 to 2015	2.0%	1.0%
2016 to 2020	1.0%	1.0%

#### **Couples beyond 500 miles**

Data and Information: Part of the largest market segment, but visitors with origins over 500 miles represent only 16% of total leisure market. Anticipated to be a target of future marketing efforts. Not a good drive-to market segment; air travel preferred mode.

Trends and Future Assumptions: Segment will parallel projected growth for leisure markets in short term, and reflect increased growth 2004 through 2010 as air service develops. Background growth thereafter.

<u>Period</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Moderate</u>
1999 to 2003	6.0%	3.0%
2004 to 2010	6.0%	2.0%
2011 to 2015	2.0%	1.0%
2016 to 2020	0%	0%

#### **Seniors within 200 miles**

Data and Information: Seniors (65 years and older) represent 22.2% of total market, more than double peer group areas. Size of segment contributes to strong tour bus market.

Trends and Future Assumptions: Current market share for seniors suggests near-maximum penetration of segment. Growth in seniors population generally offset by reduction in tour bus



market and lack of focused marketing. Low growth to the year 2010, background growth thereafter.

<u>Period</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Moderate</u>
1999 to 2003	2.0%	1.0%
2004 to 2010	0%	0%
2011 to 2015	2.0%	0%
2016 to 2020	1.0%	0%

### Seniors beyond 200 miles

Data and Information: Seniors from beyond 200 miles is likely a small portion of overall senior market segment.

Trends and Future Assumptions: Attraction of Branson to senior market could result in growth if air service and fares improve, and if entertainment reflects segment's preferences. Modest growth assumed after 2004.

<u>Period</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Moderate</u>
1999 to 2003	1.0%	0.5%
2004 to 2010	3.0%	0%
2011 to 2015	3.0%	0%
2016 to 2020	1.0%	0%

### International

Data and Information: Very little information exists on international market segment; likely represents about 1% of the market. International visitors will be a target for marketing. Considered a high potential growth market for Branson. This market will be affected by two conflicting influences. On the positive side, both European and Asian visitors have exhibited a trend toward discovering the "real America". Having already visited New York and Disney World, these travelers are increasingly seeking a more "authentic" American experience. Branson would be a very viable attraction for this niche. Unfortunately, the propensity among these travelers is the "fly and drive" custom of flying their national flag carrier into a gateway city, then renting a car to drive into the interior. KCI has no scheduled carriers - U.S. or foreign flag - to either Asia or Europe. The only service that St. Louis Lambert has to either market is TWA's less than daily departures to London and Paris. No foreign flag carriers serve St. Louis. It is certainly possible for foreign visitors to fly into the gateway cities and connect with U.S. carriers into Kansas City or St. Louis. However, this level of air service would likely be perceived as a disincentive.

Trends and Future Assumptions: Target marketing and small size of existing market will result in relatively high increases through 2010.

<u>Period</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Moderate</u>
1999 to 2003	5.0%	3.0%
2004 to 2010	6.0%	3.0%
2011 to 2015	3.0%	2.0%
2016 to 2020	3.0%	2.0%



### Corporate within 200 miles

Data and Information: Very little information exists on the corporate market segment. Corporate market segment estimated to represent 2 to 3% of total leisure market (135,000 to 200,000 annual travelers). Considered a high potential growth market for Branson; targeted for marketing and development programs. Proposed convention center will result in significant increase in segment. Dependent upon improved air travel accommodations, although 200-mile radius market also a significant drive-to market. Given the level of air service offered, competition for national conventions and conferences will be difficult. Consequently, the proposed conference center is much more likely to be competitive for the regional and state conference niches - largely arriving by automobile from within the state.

Trends and Future Assumptions: Growth in short term will be gradual due to lack of facilities to attract and accommodate business group travel. Development of convention center and related facilities will result in accelerated growth in 2004 to 2010. Background growth thereafter as market segment matures.

<u>Period</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Moderate</u>
1999 to 2003	2.0%	2.0%
2004 to 2010	2.0% *	2.0%
2011 to 2015	2.0%	2.0%
2016 to 2020	2.0%	2.0%

\* Includes estimated increase from proposed convention center.

### Corporate beyond 200 miles

Data and Information: Very little information exists on the corporate market segment. Corporate market segment is currently very small. Considered a high potential growth market for Branson; targeted for marketing and development programs. Proposed convention center will result in significant increase in segment. Dependent upon improved air travel accommodations; segment cannot be developed without significantly improved air travel.

Trends and Future Assumptions: Growth in short term will be gradual due to lack of facilities to attract and accommodate business group travel, and limited air service. Development of convention center and related facilities, and air travel improvements, will result in accelerated growth in 2004 to 2010. Growth reduced after 2010 as market matures.

<u>Period</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Moderate</u>
1999 to 2003	1.0%	1.0%
2004 to 2010	2.0% *	2.0%
2011 to 2015	4.0%	2.0%
2016 to 2020	3.0%	2.0%

\* Includes estimated increase from proposed convention center.



Projections of Leisure and Corporate Travel

The projections of travel to the Branson - Lakes area based on these assumptions are summarized in the following table.

**Table 1: Projection of Branson-Lakes Area Leisure and Corporate Travel Annual Trips**

	1998	2003	2010	2020
<b>High</b>				
Leisure	6,840,000	8,492,000	10,893,000	13,169,000
Corporate	<u>205,200</u>	<u>223,000</u>	<u>380,000</u>	<u>487,000</u>
Total	7,045,200	8,715,000	11,273,000	13,656,000
<b>Moderate</b>				
Leisure	6,840,000	7,856,000	8,948,000	9,622,000
Corporate	<u>205,200</u>	<u>223,000</u>	<u>254,000</u>	<u>309,000</u>
Total	7,045,200	8,079,000	9,202,000	9,931,000

These projections represent the initial estimate of future travel levels into the Branson - Lakes area.

Figures 2 and 3 show these projections by market segment and in the context of past trends.

**2.2.2 Future Highway Performance**

Projecting future highway performance was accomplished in two steps. First, traffic volume forecasts were made with a capacity analysis performed with the traffic volume projections. The traffic forecasts are made to 2003 and 2020. The year 2003 represents a five year period within which a series of committed roadway improvements are scheduled to be constructed and open to the travelling public. The year 2020 represents the design year for the highway transportation network. The capacity analysis has been performed at a qualitative level along the major travel corridor of US 65.



Figure 2: Travel Projections—High Projection

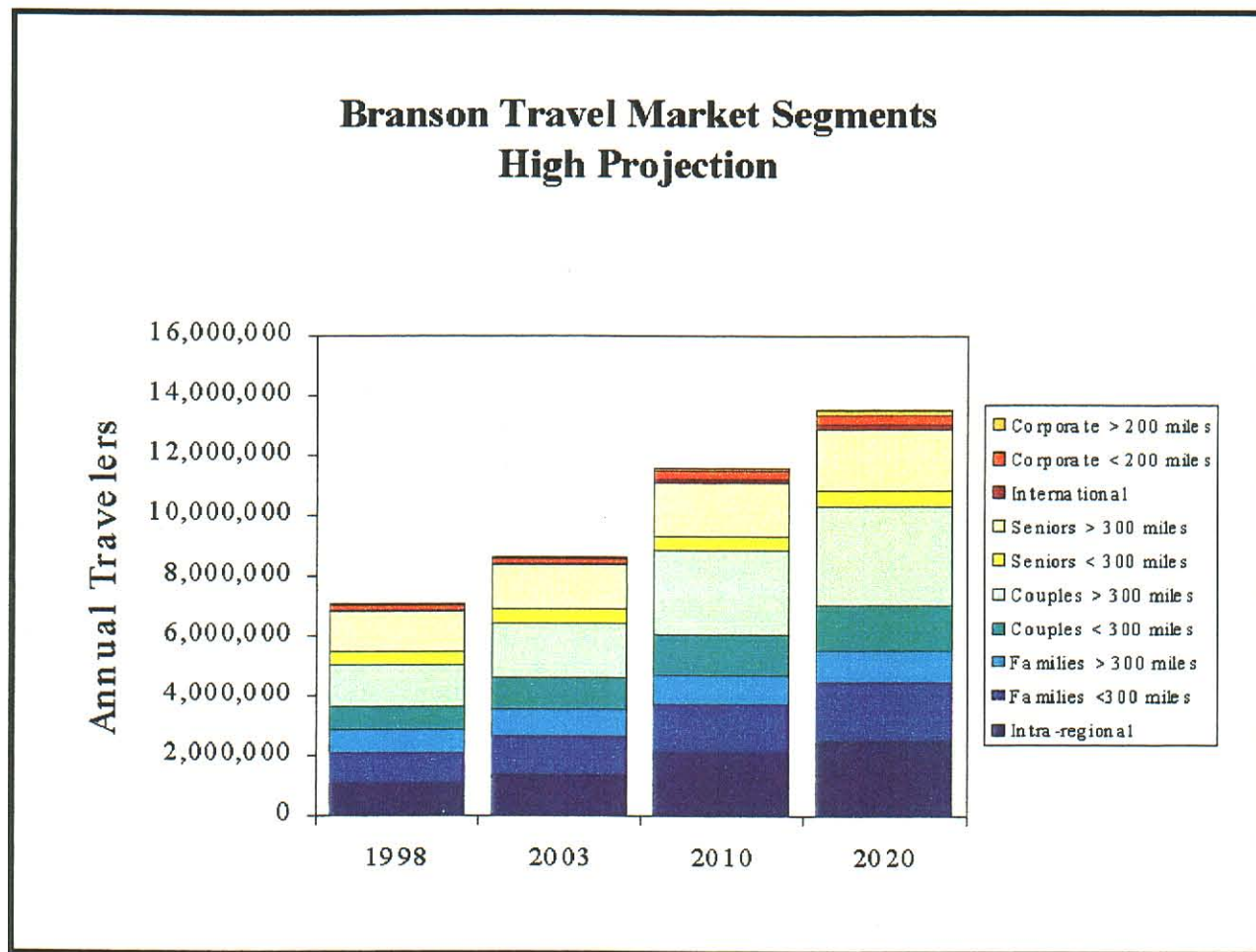
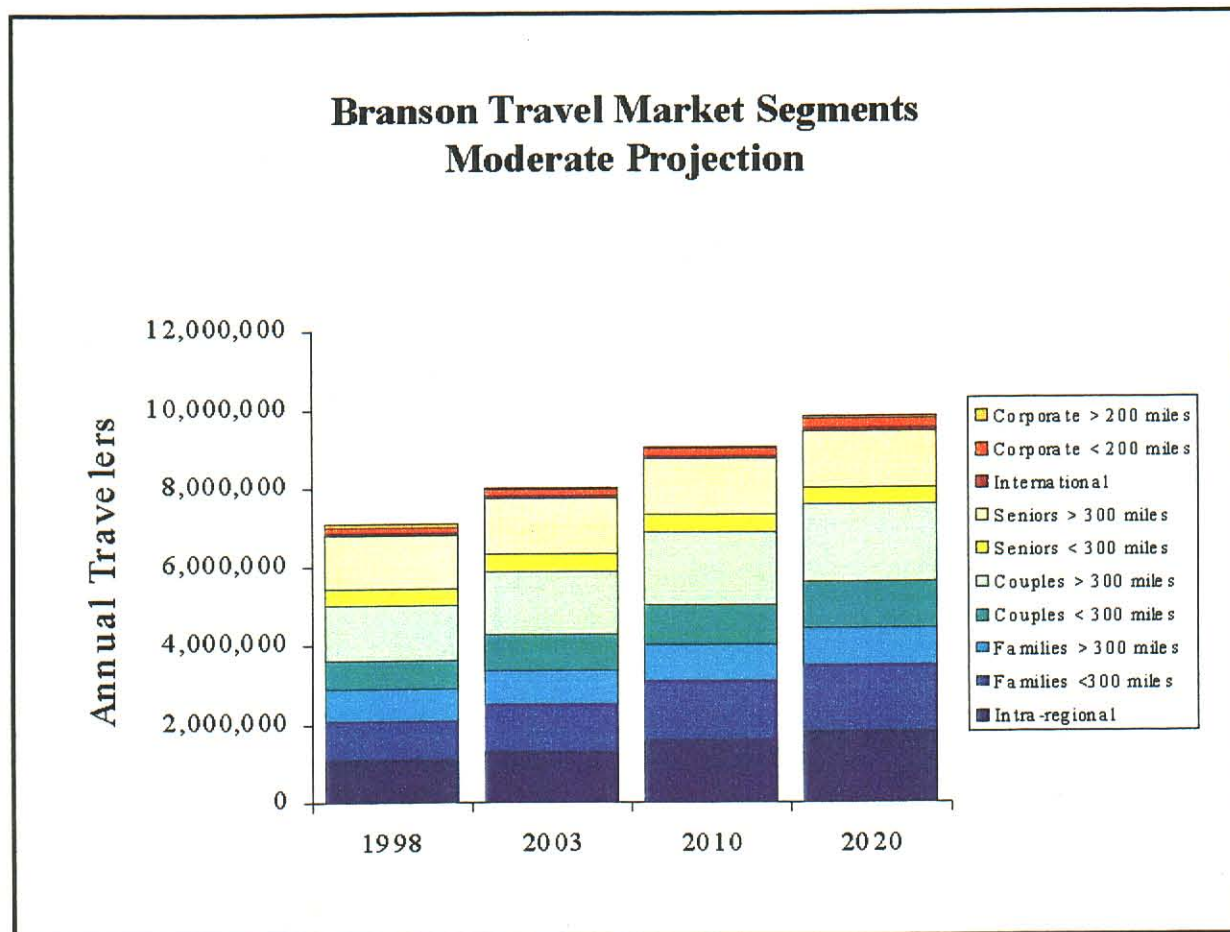




Figure 3: Travel Projections—Moderate Projection





#### Traffic Volume and Facility Use Projections for 2003 and 2020

This section focuses upon Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) for the roadway network described in Working Paper 5 - Highway System Inventory (see appendix). That existing transportation network was updated to include committed transportation improvement projects over the next five years. Forecasts for traffic volumes were then made for the committed network and until a future design year 20 years in the future.

#### **Committed Transportation Network**

The committed transportation network has been assembled with information primarily collected from the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) as well as the Cities of Springfield and Branson. Committed is defined as those projects that are funded through construction and are proposed to be in place (open to traffic) at the end of 2003. Only major transportation improvements along the corridor have been considered.

The improvements have been reviewed in the order of anticipated year of construction start. The majority of projects are estimated to start in 1999 and the number of projects decrease over time. Only one project is scheduled to start in 2001 and 2002.

In essence there are four major transportation improvement projects to occur within the corridor. These are:

- US 65 widen from 2-lanes to 4-lane freeway.
- MO Rte. 465 (Ozark Mountain Highway) New 4-lane freeway
- US 60 (James River Freeway) New 4-lane freeway from MO Route 13 to I-44
- MO Rte's 248 and 13 New 2-lane on 4-lane right-of-way around Reeds Spring Junction



### Traffic Projection Methodologies

Projected traffic volumes need to:

- Be focused upon Springfield to Branson "pipeline."
- Relate and reflect projections of visitors per year to Branson.
- Relate and reflect projected changes in market segments to Branson.
- Reflect committed transportation improvements and effects upon highway capacity.
- Be sensitive to potential trip-mode choices.

In order to achieve the above outlined objectives, three basic methodologies have been blended together to project traffic volumes.

1. Historical traffic growth trends
2. Previous traffic projections Committed MoDOT Projects Springfield-Greene County Travel Demand Model and Branson Highroad EIS
3. Trip Type Percentage Estimate

### Projected Traffic Volumes

Utilizing the above methodologies, estimates of projected traffic volumes along the corridor and its transportation network were made. The majority of estimates for the year 2003 are based upon historical growth trends extended out over the five-year period. The majority of improvements constructed under the committed transportation network are anticipated to have been open to traffic for approximately a year. Consequently, significant alterations to existing traffic patterns are not expected. The traffic volumes projected on the committed network are shown in Figure 4.

The estimates for the year 2020 are based upon a combination of the above described methods including historical growth trends, comparison to previous projections and adjustments to reflect the projected annual visitors to Branson. Planned improvements are not considered to have been constructed under the committed transportation network. This should be noted when reviewing estimates of capacity along certain roadway segments, in particular US 65 on the east side of Springfield. It should also be noted that only half of the planned Ozark Mountain Highroad is assumed. Prior projections assumed a complete bypass. Significant alterations to bypass traffic patterns with only half the roadway could be expected. The traffic volumes projected on the committed network are shown in Figure 5.



Figure 4: 2003 AADT on Committed Network

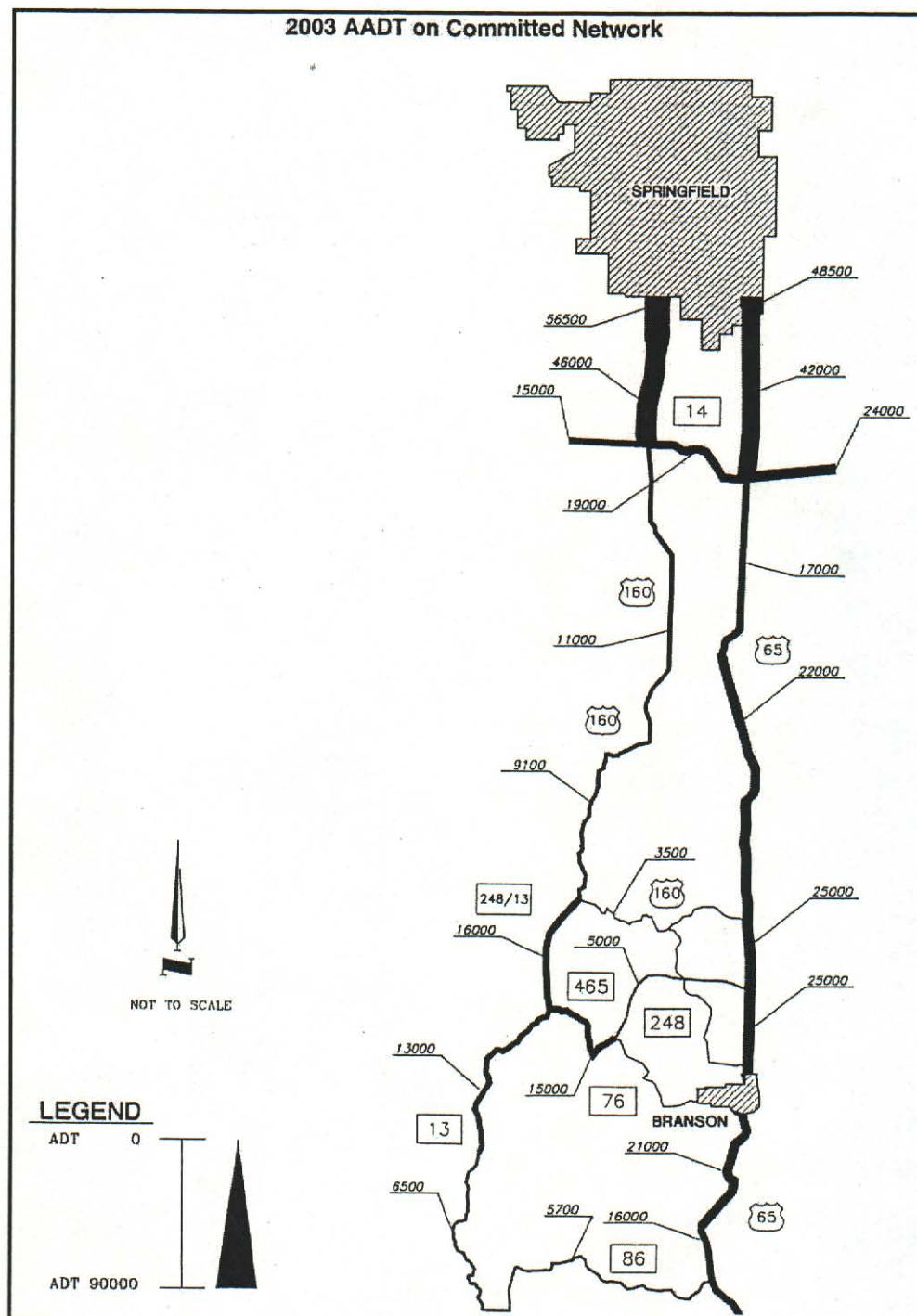
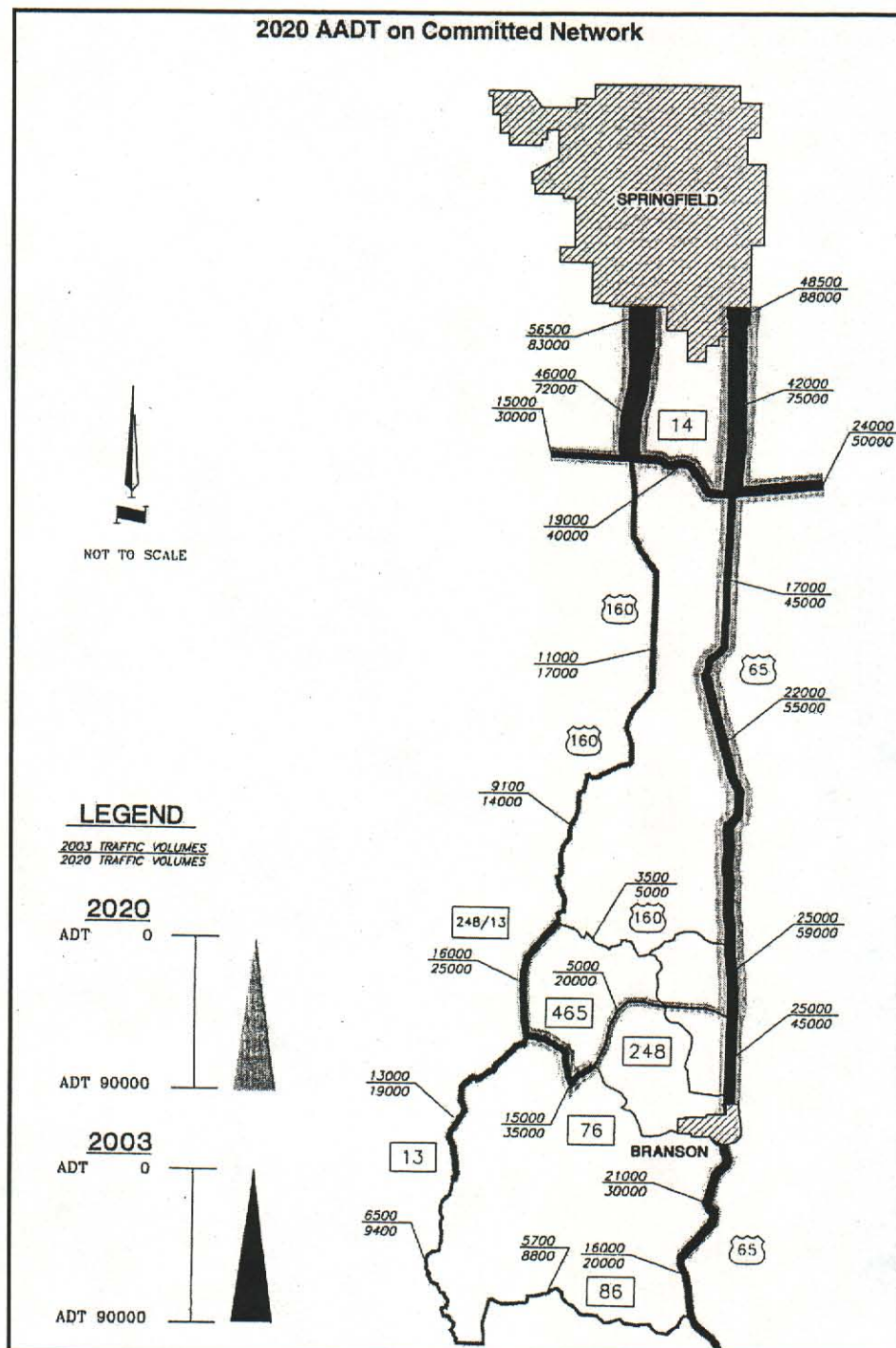




Figure 5: 2020 AADT on Committed Network





### Level of Service and Capacity for Various Roadway Types

The quality of transportation service deemed acceptable or unacceptable on highways will vary based on the type of facility. The characteristics of travel on a freeway differ from that on an urban arterial street with frequent traffic signals. While the factors that transportation professionals measure to assess quality vary by type of facility, the results are often presented in the same manner - by assigning a grade from A to F much like a child's report card from school. A generic description of each of these service levels is provided in Table 2.

**Table 2: Level of Service Descriptions**

Level of Service	Description
A	Drivers generally have freedom to maneuver and travel at desired speed.
B	Reasonably free flow conditions. Other vehicles may have some influence on maneuvering and speed selection.
C	Stable operations but travel speeds might be inhibited somewhat. Delays at traffic signals become noticeable.
D	Lower speed range of stable flow. Passing opportunities decrease and delays at intersections become extensive.
E	Traffic flow becomes unstable as practical capacity is reached. Continuous queuing at intersections; passing is extremely difficult.
F	Flow is forced and congestion becomes extensive and unpredictable.

Most transportation agencies will select a level of service as a target for traffic operations at the end of the 20-year planning horizon. For many years Level of Service C was widely adopted across the country as the desired target. In recent years and particularly in urban areas, Level of Service D has been deemed acceptable as travel demands have progressively increased. The target level of service will obviously have significant ramifications on the cost and impact of a transportation facility.

### Capacity Analysis 2003

Table 3 shows the level of service for the various segments of highway in the study corridor based on the traffic volumes projected for 2003 and the committed highway projects.

Completion of the US 65 freeway improvements is anticipated to provide excellent levels of service generally from Evans Road to Route 76. Many other highway segments in the study corridor, however, are projected to experience significant problems. On US 65 south of Route 76, the 2-lane highway will be operating at or beyond the capacity of the facility. On US 160, severe congestion is projected to continue between Nixa and Springfield while Route 14 through Nixa will also experience demands beyond the capacity of the facility. Route 248-13 and Route 13 in the Reed Springs area are also projected to operate near capacity.



**Table 3: Projected Levels of Service 2003**

Roadway	From	To	Roadway Type	2003 AADT	Level of Service
US 65	US 60	Evans Road	4-Lane Freeway		
US 65	Evans Road	Route 14	4-Lane Freeway	42,000	C
US 65	Route 14	Route F	4-Lane Freeway	24,000	B
US 65	Route F	Route BB	4-Lane Freeway	17,000	A
US 65	Route BB	Route 160	4-Lane Freeway	22,000	B
US 65	Route 160	Route 465	4-Lane Freeway	25,000	B
US 65	Route 465	Route 76	4-Lane Freeway	25,000	B
US 65	Route 76	Route 165	2-Lane Super	21,000	F
US 65	Route 165	Route 86	2-Lane Super	16,000	E
US 160	US 60	Weaver Road	4-Lane w/ signals		
US 160	Weaver Road	Route 14	4-Lane w/signals	46,000	F
US 160	Route 14	Route 176	2-Lane Super	11,000	D
US 160	Route 176	Route 248 (W)	2-Lane Super	9,100	D
US 160	Route 248 (W)	US 65	2-Lane Rural	3,500	C
Route 248-13	US 160	Route 76	2-Lane Super	16,000	E
Route 13	Route 76	Table Rock Br.	2-Lane Rural	13,000	E
Route 13	Table Rock Br.	Route 86	2-Lane Rural	6,500	D
Route 14	US 160	US 65	2-Lane Rural	19,000	F
Route 465	Route 76	US 65	4-Lane Freeway	5,000	A
Route 76	Route 13	Route 465	3-Lane Urban	15,000	D
Route 86	Route 13	US 65	2-Lane Rural	5,700	D

#### Capacity Analysis 2020

Table 4 shows the level of service for the various segments of highway in the study corridor based on the traffic volumes projected for 2020. No other highway improvements were assumed to have been completed by this horizon year.

The levels of service included in Table 4 clearly indicate that nearly all highway segments in the study corridor will be operating at less than desirable levels of service; many of which will experience travel demands well beyond their physical capacity.



Table 4: Projected Levels of Service 2020

Roadway	From	To	Roadway Type	2020 AADT	Level of Service
US 65	US 60	Evans Road	4-Lane Freeway		
US 65	Evans Road	Route 14	4-Lane Freeway	75,000	F
US 65	Route 14	Route F	4-Lane Freeway	60,000	E
US 65	Route F	Route BB	4-Lane Freeway	45,000	D
US 65	Route BB	Route 160	4-Lane Freeway	55,000	E
US 65	Route 160	Route 465	4-Lane Freeway	59,000	E
US 65	Route 465	Route 76	4-Lane Freeway	45,000	D
US 65	Route 76	Route 165	2-Lane Super	30,000	F
US 65	Route 165	Route 86	2-Lane Super	28,000	F
US 160	US 60	Weaver Road	4-Lane w/ signals		
US 160	Weaver Road	Route 14	4-Lane w/signals	72,000	F
US 160	Route 14	Route 176	2-Lane Super	17,000	E
US 160	Route 176	Route 248 (W)	2-Lane Super	14,000	E
US 160	Route 248 (W)	US 65	2-Lane Rural	5,000	D
Route 248-13	US 160	Route 76	2-Lane Super	25,000	F
Route 13	Route 76	Table Rock Br.	2-Lane Rural	19,000	F
Route 13	Table Rock Br.	Route 86	2-Lane Rural	9,400	E
Route 14	US 160	US 65	2-Lane Rural	40,000	F
Route 465	Route 76	US 65	4-Lane Freeway	20,000	B
Route 76	Route 13	Route 465	3-Lane Urban	35,000	F
Route 86	Route 13	US 65	2-Lane Rural	8,800	E

## 2.3 Conclusions and Recommendation from Phase I

This summarizes key conclusions and recommendations from Phase I. First a brief analysis of the transportation challenge facing the corridor is presented. Next, the recommendation for continuing on to Phase II of the Study is justified.

### 2.3.1 Analysis of Future Transportation System

#### Economic Development Objectives

One of the most important objectives of the Corridor Study involves supporting the growth of tourism and other economic development in the Branson/Lakes Area and the entire region.

The committed transportation system in the Corridor is not adequate to support the economic development goals of the Branson/Lakes Area, especially to the extent attainment of these goals is reliant on improved air service.



### Aviation

Springfield - Branson Regional Airport has experienced rapid growth during the past decade in terms of air traffic. Nonetheless, the level of air service is considered to be inadequate to meet the current demand for air travel and related travel needs in the Corridor. Airport capacity, in terms of physical capacity and air service, is inadequate to accommodate potential increases in future air travel into the Region.

Future increases in air travel to Branson will likely require some form of off-airport ground transportation, other than auto rental, to meet the needs of leisure and business travelers.

### Availability of Transportation Options

One of the objectives of the Corridor Study has to do with a "Multi-Modal Approach" or a "Total Transportation Approach." These phrases mean that all transportation modes are to be considered as part of future solutions. Currently there are limited alternatives to the private automobile for most travelers.

### Environmental

One of the most important assets on the Branson/Lakes Area, and the entire Region, is the natural beauty and amenities of the Ozark Mountain Region. As the Region develops, and as transportation in the Corridor improves, a balance that preserves the Region's environment and amenities, and the "Ozark Mountain Lifestyle", must remain an important consideration.

## **2.4 Recommendation Regarding Phase II of the Study**

Based on the findings and conclusions of Phase I of the Springfield - Branson Corridor Transportation Study, it is recommended that the Study proceed to Phase II. Although significant transportation improvements have been made in recent years, particularly in the highway system, unmet needs have been identified, and all objectives will not be addressed by the committed transportation system.

The most compelling future need relates to the inability of the committed transportation system to support the economic development objectives of the Branson/Lakes Area.

Further study is warranted to determine the most cost-effective manner in which these needs can be addressed over the next twenty years.



## Section 3: Public Involvement

The public involvement component of the Springfield-Branson Corridor Transportation Study was designed to accomplish four interrelated goals:

1. Ensure that constituencies (stakeholders) effected by activities in the corridor were given the opportunity and information necessary to participate in the study process.
2. Ensure that key decision-makers in the corridor who have the potential to influence the study or any subsequent work are involved and encouraged to participate in a substantive way in the study process.
3. Ensure that stakeholders examining the study record find clear evidence that public involvement opportunities were frequent and substantive.
4. Ensure that activities of key project personnel contribute to a healthy exchange of ideas and information between and among stakeholders.

In order to achieve these goals, the Springfield-Branson Corridor Transportation Study had to overcome two primary challenges.

1. The long-term and complex nature of the Springfield-Branson Corridor Transportation Study created a challenging environment for public involvement. Public interest and participation in long-term, policy-oriented (versus design) studies is often low given the lack of immediacy.
2. The study area, which comprised over 750 square miles, presented a complex constellation of issues and interests, ranging from business interest to environmental concerns and quality of life issues.

To address these challenges and achieve the study's stated goals, the study employed a variety of public involvement tools and an ongoing process of evaluation and adaptation to changing conditions and issues. Tools such as traditional and non-traditional public meetings, a Web site, a video and speaker's bureau as well as special stakeholder briefings were employed effectively to achieve broad-based and frequent input from corridor constituencies. Ultimately, more than 1,500 individuals had direct contact with study leaders while more than 50,000 corridor residents were given the opportunity for direct participation through the "newspaper" public meeting.

The "newspaper" public meeting was designed to provide an opportunity for the residents of the region to review the preliminary conclusions and recommendations prior to action by the Technical and Steering Committees.

Generally, the responses were either neutral or supportive of the need for transportation improvements. The responses did not address the questions of financing and local taxes, for the most part. The results of the public involvement campaign do not suggest that the Study Committee should alter the course.



### 3.1 Community Outreach Activities

In support of the above goals, a number of activities were undertaken. This section focuses on efforts specifically designed to solicit community input.

#### 3.1.1 Develop and distribute project newsletters

Three project newsletters were distributed. The first newsletter introduced corridor residents to the study's purpose, schedule and team. Subsequent newsletters provided updates on the alternatives still under consideration as well as future activities and milestones.

#### 3.1.2 Promote media coverage

Media relations activities, including one-on-contacts with reporters, occurred at key milestones of the project. As a result of these efforts, the study received frequent and extensive coverage in both the electronic and print media in the corridor. Highlights of media coverage include:

- *The Springfield News Leader* – One front-page article; two "Ozark" section, page 1 articles; one featured editorial with two follow-ups and two letters to the editor.
- *The Branson Tri-Lakes Daily News* – Two front page articles
- On at least three occasions, segments were aired during the 10:00 p.m. news broadcasts on all three major network stations in Springfield. Segments lasted anywhere from :30 seconds to two minutes and generally tracked with alternative screenings and public meetings.
- Coverage was secured on several area radio stations and numerous other newspapers, including the *Christian County Headliner News*, *Taney County Times*, *Nixa News-Enterprise*, and *Crane Chronicle-Stone County Republican*.
- The project manager was also featured on a television network's local affiliate's morning talk show.

#### 3.1.3 Host three rounds of three open house public information meetings

The most significant revision to the original scope of work was the expansion of the public meeting component. The initial plan and scope called for three public meetings in the corridor for the duration of the study. Given the intense local interest in issues related to this study, however, the plan was expanded to include three rounds of four public meetings. The plan was further refined and adjusted based on the nature and degree of public involvement in this project to ultimately include two rounds of four public meetings and one "newspaper" public meeting.

##### Round one public meetings

Round one public meetings were designed to introduce corridor residents to the study and to communicate what strategies were under consideration. Attendees were asked to express their position on various strategies by placing a green, yellow or red dot indicating positive position, neutral or uncertain position, and negative position or concern. The outcome of this "dot exercise" is available through the project manager.

##### Pre-meeting promotion:

- Approximately 400 letters of invitation were distributed.
- Nine advertisements were placed in the *Nixa News*, *Branson Tri-Lakes Daily News*, *Springfield News Leader*, *Crane Chronicle-Stone County Republican* and *Christian County Headliner News*.



- Meetings were announced at least 10 times on area radio stations.
- A news release and fact sheet was distributed to 53 media outlets. Pre-meeting coverage was secured in at least four newspapers, two radio stations and two television stations.

*Meeting dates and overall attendance:*

Ozark	May 10, 1999	15
Branson	May 11, 1999	30
Springfield	May 11, 1999	17
Reeds Spring	June 10, 1999	25
TOTAL ATTENDANCE:		87

Round two public meetings

In response to low attendance at the first round of public meetings, the following adjustments were made to the approach to the round two meetings.

- Conceptual alignments of various rail and highway strategies were released to motivate involvement on the part of the effected public.
- A new location was selected for the meeting in Springfield.
- The Branson "meeting" was held over the course of three days on the grounds of the Branson Autumn Daze Arts and Crafts Fair.

Pre-Meeting Promotion: Round two public meetings received the same promotional support as round one.

*Meeting dates and overall attendance:*

Nixa	September 14, 1999	29
Reeds Spring	September 15, 1999	47
Springfield	September 15, 1999	18
Branson	September 16-18, 1999	175 (estimated)
TOTAL ATTENDANCE:		269

Round three – newspaper public meetings

Given the challenge of engaging the public on long-term and complex projects, Study leaders elected to forgo the final round of traditional public meetings. Instead, a "newspaper public meeting" was conducted. This "meeting" involved purchasing large advertisements in newspapers in the Corridor. Study findings and tentative recommendations were presented in these advertisements. Interested individuals were given direction on how to comment on the study material through email, mail or through the hot line. More than 80,000 subscribers of five area newspapers (or 200,000 readers if pass-alongs are counted) were exposed to the project findings in this way.



### 3.2 Review and Evaluation of Special Public Involvement Activities

A hallmark of the public involvement component of the Springfield-Branson Corridor Transportation Study was a system of ongoing evaluation and responsiveness to changing conditions and needs.

In July 1998, this system of ongoing evaluation led the project team to conclude that a program relying primarily on traditional public meetings would not engage a number of corridor residents sufficient to achieve the public involvement goals of the study.

Based on this conclusion and motivated by an objective to involve the broadest population possible, the project team made the following adjustments to the original public involvement plan:

- *A video was produced to create an effective means of conveying project information to a wider audience.*
- *Project team members would conduct presentations to civic groups throughout the corridor to reach a wider group of key stakeholders and "decision leaders."*
- *A "newspaper public meeting" would be conducted in lieu of a third round of public meetings.*

The project video was designed to be used independently or in conjunction with a live presentation. The video provided a summary of the strategies still under consideration at the time of production and outlined the study process and evaluation methods. Production of the project video was placed on a fast track in order to ensure that it was introduced with sufficient time to impact the study. Approximately 100 project videos were distributed throughout the corridor to an audience in excess of 1,500 viewers. The video was also presented at the second round of public meetings, with an audience of approximately 250 viewers.

Determined to extend the reach and exposure of the study, project team members began making civic group presentations in earnest during the fall of 1999. Approximately 50 presentations were made to groups ranging from the Southwest Missouri Council of Communities to the Missouri Archeological Society to the Rotary Clubs in Branson and Springfield. These presentations reached a total audience in excess of 1,500. A complete list of civic group presentations is available through the project manager.

This alternate approach to public meetings is described in detail under *Objective 4*. This creative response to the challenge of public meetings in this project offered a much wider audience the opportunity to comment on the study and contributed significantly to an effective study of the corridor's needs.

The "newspaper" public meeting was designed to provide an opportunity for the residents of the region to review the preliminary conclusions and recommendations prior to action by the Technical and Steering Committees. The preliminary conclusions and recommendations were



publicized to approximately 80,000 households in the region. Approximately 50 responses were received by mail, phone or e-mail.

Generally, the responses were either neutral or supportive of the need for transportation improvements. The responses did not address the questions of financing and local taxes, for the most part. The results of the public involvement campaign do not suggest that the Study Committee should alter the course.

### **3.3 Summary of Selected Public Involvement Activities**

1. Mailing List
  - Maintained and updated throughout study
  - Final list included 424 names
2. Information Kits
  - Created at launch of project
  - Updated at launch of Phase II of study
  - 250 kits distributed throughout project
3. Web Site
  - Posted at launch of project
  - Updated periodically throughout process
4. Civic Group Presentations
  - 50 presentations
  - 1,500 corridor residents
  - Included governmental organizations, volunteer associations and business and special interest groups
5. Newsletters
  - Three newsletters
  - 2,150 copies of newsletter distributed through mail and at public meetings
6. Traditional Public Meetings
  - Two rounds of four meetings were held (May/June 1999; September 1999)
  - At least one meeting was held in every county in the corridor
  - 355 corridor residents attended public meetings
7. Non-traditional Public Meeting
  - Project information published in five area newspapers (January 2000)
  - Total exposure in excess of 80,000 subscribers (200,000 if pass-along readers counted)
8. Project Video
  - 100 videos distributed
  - Over 1,750 viewers over course of project



## Section 4: Alternatives Screening Process

A major activity of Phase II of the Study was to develop and evaluate various alternatives to meet the growing travel demand in the corridor. This and the sections that follow document those activities. The following working papers were produced as part of Phase II and provide more detail than what is supplied in this report:

Working Paper II-1	Evaluation of Alternative Strategies Methodology
Working Paper II-2	Tier I Screening Evaluation
Working Paper II-3	Economic Benefits
Working Paper II-4	Tier II Strategy – Highways
Working Paper II-5	Tier II Strategy – Bus Transit
Working Paper II-6	Tier II Strategy – Rail Transit
Working Paper II-6A	White Paper on Rail Transit Viability
Working Paper II-7	Tier II Transit Ridership Forecasts
Working Paper II-8	Tier II Screening Evaluation
Working Paper II-9	Tier III Refinement of Strategies
Working Paper II-10	Tier III Transit Ridership Forecasts
Working Paper II-11	Tier III Screening and Recommendations
Working Paper II-12	Regional Planning
Working Paper II-13	Summary of Financing Options
Working Paper II-14	Public Involvement Review

In addition to these working papers, Phase II also produced a *Preliminary Environmental Review* which was an “environmental scan” of the Corridor. This scan is intended to lay the ground work for any future Environmental Assessment or Environment Impact Statement that may be needed in advance of major transportation investments. The Preliminary Environmental Review is contained in these volumes:

- ◆ Preliminary Environmental Review – Volume 1 –Main Report
- ◆ Preliminary Environmental Review – Volume 2—Appendix A
- ◆ Preliminary Environmental Review – Volume 3—Appendix B

The process of developing and recommending transportation strategies for the Corridor involves three levels of “screening.” Each step attempts to narrow down the field of options with the third and final step being the preferred strategy. This section documents the initial two steps.

### 4.1 Tier I Screening Process

Five criteria have been reviewed in order to perform the first tier of screening. The five criteria are that the strategy must:

- Advance the goals and objectives of the study,
- Be technically feasible,
- Be operationally feasible,
- Be environmentally sensitive, and
- Enhances livable communities.



The majority of the criteria are self-explanatory. The goals and objectives of the study can be summarized as follows from the work performed during Phase I of the study. The goals and objectives are to:

- *Support anticipated economic development in the Springfield and Branson-Lakes area.*
- *Ensure that transportation plans maintain the quality of life.*
- *Develop multi-modal transportation systems that provide more travel choices.*
- *Improve coordination of land use and transportation decisions*
- *Develop strategy financing approaches for new and upgraded transportation facilities*
- *Develop consensus and support for the Study's recommendations.*

It is not necessary that a strategy pass each criterion for it to advance into the second tier. The strategies are rated on a three scale system consisting of a "+" indicating a positive effect, a "0" indicating both positive and negative effects which may balance or cancel each other, and a "-" indicating a potential negative effect for each criteria. Then an overall pass or fail judgment is reached. No weighted value system has been applied.

The following strategies were included for Tier 1 Screening:

#### **HIGHWAYS**

Widen Existing Highway(s) – General Purpose Lanes  
New North-South Limited Access Highway  
High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes

#### **TRANSIT**

##### **Bus**

Inter-regional Bus Service  
Express Bus Service

##### **Rail**

Commuter Rail on Existing Track  
Commuter Rail on New Track  
Light Rail on New Track  
High Technology Applications

Table 5 summarizes the evaluation of the above strategies.

#### **4.2 Tier I Summary**

Of the nine strategies that were included in the Tier 1 Screening, five strategies have been selected for further study. The five strategies are:

#### **HIGHWAYS**

Widen Existing Highway(s) – General Purpose Lanes  
High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV) Lanes



## TRANSIT

### Bus

Combined Inter-regional and Express Bus Service

### Rail

Commuter Rail on Existing Track

Combined Commuter Rail and Light Rail on New Track

These strategies provide a realistic range of potential transportation improvements to be evaluated during the remainder of the Springfield – Branson Corridor Transportation Study.

Two additional strategies remain under consideration for comparative purposes, the “No Action” strategy and the Transportation Management strategy. Federal guidelines require that these strategies be included. These strategies will be developed at a level suitable to provide comparisons with other strategies. They will continue to pass the screening tiers without evaluation until Tier III Screening.

Other modal strategies, such as non-motorized transportation have not been independently advanced as feasible strategies. Nonetheless, bicycle and pedestrian facilities are important transportation components of major transportation facilities. Appropriate bicycle and pedestrian facilities will be included in the development of the remaining strategies.



Table 5: Summary of Tier I Screening Process

MODE	Alternative	Goals and Objectives	Technically Feasible	Operationally Feasible	Environmentally Sensitive	Enhance Communities	OVERALL
<b>HIGHWAYS</b>							
	Widen Existing Highway(s) - General Purpose Lanes	+	+	+	0	0	RETAIN
	New North-South Limited Access Highway	0	+	0	-	-	DELETE
	High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes	+	+	+	0	0	RETAIN
<b>TRANSIT</b>							
<b>Bus</b>							
	Inter-regional Bus Service	+	+	+	+	+	RETAIN
	Express Bus Service	+	+	+	+	+	RETAIN
<b>Rail</b>							
	Commuter Rail on Existing Track	+	+	0	+	+	RETAIN
	Commuter Rail on New Track	+	+	+	+	0	RETAIN
	Light Rail on New Track	+	+	+	+	0	RETAIN
	High Technology Applications	+	0	0	0	+	DELETE

Legend

- + Potential positive implications
- 0 Potential positive and negative implications
- Potential negative implications



### 4.3 Tier II Screening Process

The objective of the Tier II analysis is to identify and refine strategies from the Tier I evaluation. Various measures were used to assess the degree to which each strategy met the goals and objectives of the study. The evaluation matrix shown as table 6 illustrates the types of measures for each of the goals developed during Phase I of the Study.

Table 6: Evaluation Matrix

Measure	Strategy					
	1	2	3	4	TSM	No-Build
<b>Goal 1: Develop Transportation Improvement Plans for the Corridor to Support Anticipated Economic Development in Springfield and Branson</b>						
Potential to support projected tourism levels						
Improvements in commuter transportation						
Enhances goods movement						
<b>Goal 2: Ensure that Transportation Plans Maintain the Quality of Life in the Corridor</b>						
Impact on various environmental resources						
<b>Goal 3: Develop Multi-Modal Transportation Systems that Provide a Choice for Travelers in the Corridor</b>						
Change in travel volume by mode and mode share						
<b>Goal 4: Improve Coordination of Land Use and Transportation Decisions in the Corridor</b>						
Change in open space within the corridor; reduce sprawl development						
<b>Goal 5: Cost Effectiveness and Development of Alternative Financing Approaches</b>						
Total annualized capital costs						
Annualized capital cost per route mile						
Annualized capital cost per new rider						
Cost-effectiveness – Incremental cost per incremental passenger						
Operating efficiencies - O&M cost per passenger mile						
Operating cost recovery						
Availability of alternative financing						



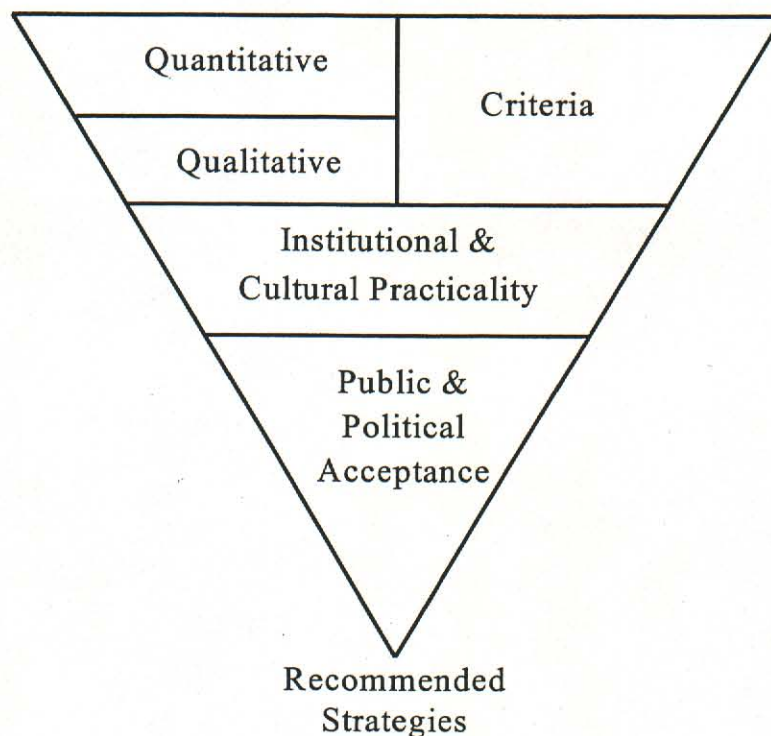
During the Tier II evaluation process a number of sub-strategies or variations were developed for each of the strategies that survived the Tier I screening. For example, a sub-strategy may represent an alternative alignment or station location for a specific mode.

The Tier II analysis examined the attributes of the various strategies to a greater degree of detail than the Tier I analysis. In addition, the strategies were defined in greater detail in terms of alignment, service characteristics and cost. Projections of facility usage, traffic volumes for highways and ridership for the transit strategies were also prepared.

The Tier II screening was conducted as an iterative process making use of quantitative data and qualitative information. For example, preliminary ridership forecasts allow quantified travel volume, mode share and travel time data to be used. In instances where quantifiable data are not available, a qualitative assessment was assigned to the specific measure. This part of the Tier II screening process results in a numerical score for each strategy. These scores are the mathematical product of the ratings for each criteria and the value, or weight, assigned to each criteria.

The Tier II screening exercise did not solely rely in total on the numerical score, or the attendant ranking of strategies. The Tier II evaluation also relied on input from the Technical and Steering Committees, and public input, from public meetings and other techniques employed to solicit input. Figure 6 illustrates how the Tier II screening process combines both systematic and analytical considerations in the evaluation of the strategies.

**Figure 6: Tier II Screening Process**





The objective of the Tier II screening is to synthesize the information developed during the Study and reduce the number of strategies under consideration to the most realistic set. This will allow for a focused evaluation in the remaining evaluation in Tier III.

This process was applied to the following strategies included for Tier II Screening:

**HIGHWAYS**

- Widen Existing Highway(s) – General Purpose Lanes
- New North-South Limited Access Highway

**TRANSIT**

**Bus**

- Inter-Regional and Express Bus Service

**Rail**

- Passenger Rail on Existing Rail Corridor (Commuter Rail)
- Passenger Rail on New Rail Alignment (Commuter Rail or Light Rail)

**4.4 Tier II Screening Results**

Using the methodology developed for the Tier II screening, the consultant team rated each strategy against each criteria using the information developed for each strategy. Table 7 shows the results of this exercise for the Highway Strategies and Table 8 shows the Transit Strategies.

**4.5 Discussion of Tier II Screening Results**

As explained in for Tier I screening, the Tier II Screening is not intended to address the matter of cross-modal evaluation directly. Therefore, one of the objectives of the Tier II screening is to identify the "best" strategy for each mode. In this manner, the highway strategy that best meets the corridor's transportation needs will be identified along with the rail transit and bus transit strategy that best addressed transportation needs.

The following sections describes the results of the Tier II screening. The application of the methodology described earlier has identified the strategies and variations that best addressed the corridor's transportation's needs, in the context of the criteria and values ascribed by the Study's Technical Committee.

In addition, there are additional considerations that may be of importance in identifying strategies that are to be carried to Tier III for the final evaluation.

**4.6 Bus Transit Strategy**

Because there is only one bus transit strategy, with the combination of the express bus and inter-regional bus service in Tier I screening, the bus transit strategy is recommended for inclusion in Tier III.



The bus transit strategy does have significant merit. This strategy actually has a higher numerical score than any of the rail transit strategies because it has the capability to meet the corridor's needs and objectives and it has several attributes that are very appealing:

It has the best potential for addressing the region's commuter transportation needs. This is particularly true of work trips for the Branson market. The nature of service employment and the disbursed pattern of employment sites in Branson is such that bus transportation is best suited to serve the market.



# Springfield-Branson Corridor Transportation Study Alternatives Screening Process

**Table 7: Results of Tier II Screening for Highway Strategies**

SUMMARY OF HIGHWAY STRATEGIES	Widen Existing Highways - US 65 (from 4 to 6 lanes)	Widen Existing Highways - US 160/13 from 2 to 4 Lanes	New Multimodal Corridor - Alignmet Option A	New Multimodal Corridor - Alignmet Option B	Weighting	Widen Existing Highways - US 65 (from 4 to 6 lanes)	Widen Existing Highways - US 160/13 from 2 to 4 Lanes	New Multimodal Corridor - Alignmet Option A	New Multimodal Corridor - Alignmet Option B
Develop Transportation Improvement Plans for the Corridor to Support Anticipated Economic Development in the Springfield and Branson-Lakes Area						0.68	0.66	0.86	0.66
Potential to support projected tourism levels	3	3	4	3	10%	0.30	0.30	0.40	0.30
Improvements in commuter transportation	3	4	5	4	6%	0.18	0.24	0.30	0.24
Enhance goods movement	5	3	4	3	4%	0.20	0.12	0.16	0.12
Ensure that Transportation Plans Maintain the Quality of Life in the Corridor									
Impacts on various environmental resources	2	2	1	1	19%	0.38	0.38	0.19	0.19
Develop Multi-Modal Transportation Systems that Provide a Choice for Travelers in the Corridor									
Change in travel volume by mode and mode share	3	3	4	4	12%	0.36	0.36	0.48	0.48
Improve Coordination of Land Use and Transportation Decisions in the Corridor									
Change in open space within the corridor; reduce sprawl development	2	2	1	1	18%	0.36	0.36	0.18	0.18
Cost Effectiveness and Development of Alternative Financing Approaches	4	3	2	4	31%	1.24	0.93	0.62	1.24
Total annualized capital costs									
Annualized capital costs per route mile									
Annualized capital costs per new rider	NA	NA	NA	NA					
Cost Effectiveness - Incremental cost per incremental rider	NA	NA	NA	NA					
Operating efficiencies - O&M cost per passenger	NA	NA	NA	NA					
Operating Cost Recovery	NA	NA	NA	NA					
Availability of alternative financing	No	No	Yes	No					
						3.02	2.69	2.33	2.75

1 = Very Poor, significant decrease, many negatives, no change

2 = Poor, slight decrease, few negatives, little change

3 = Fair, none, none, some change

4 = Good, slight increase, few positive, moderate change

5 = Very good, significant increase, many positives, significant change

NA = Not Applicable



# Springfield-Branson Corridor Transportation Study Alternatives Screening Process

**Table 8: Results of Tier II Screening for Rail Transit Strategies**

SUMMARY OF RAIL TRANSIT STRATEGIES	Existing Rail Corridor	Partial Existing Rail Corridor	New Multimodal Corridor - Alignment Option A	New Rail Alignment - SP-OZ-BR	Weighting	Existing Rail Corridor	Partial Existing Rail Corridor	New Multimodal Corridor - Alignment Option A	New Rail Alignment - SP-OZ-BR
<b>Develop Transportation Improvement Plans for the Corridor to Support Anticipated Economic Development in the Springfield and Branson-Lakes Area</b>						0.50	0.50	0.86	0.62
Potential to support projected tourism levels	3	3	4	2	10%	0.30	0.30	0.40	0.20
Improvements in commuter transportation	2	2	5	5	6%	0.12	0.12	0.30	0.30
Enhance goods movement	2	2	4	3	4%	0.08	0.08	0.16	0.12
<b>Ensure that Transportation Plans Maintain the Quality of Life in the Corridor</b>									
Impacts on various environmental resources	4	3	2	1	19%	0.76	0.57	0.38	0.19
<b>Develop Multi-Modal Transportation Systems that Provide a Choice for Travelers in the Corridor</b>									
Change in travel volume by mode and mode share	3	3	4	3	12%	0.36	0.36	0.48	0.36
<b>Improve Coordination of Land Use and Transportation Decisions in the Corridor</b>									
Change in open space within the corridor; reduce sprawl development	3	2	1	2	18%	0.54	0.36	0.18	0.36
<b>Cost Effectiveness and Development of Alternative Financing Approaches</b>	3	4	2	2	31%	0.93	1.24	0.62	0.62
Total annualized capital costs									
Annualized capital costs per route mile									
Annualized capital costs per new rider	NA	NA	NA	NA					
Cost Effectiveness - Incremental cost per incremental rider	NA	NA	NA	NA					
Operating efficiencies - O&M cost per passenger	NA	NA	NA	NA					
Operating Cost Recovery	NA	NA	NA	NA					
Availability of alternative financing	No	No	Yes	No					
						3.09	3.03	2.52	2.15

1 = Very Poor, significant decrease, many negatives, no change  
2 = Poor, slight decrease, few negatives, little change  
3 = Fair, none, none, some change  
4 = Good, slight increase, few positive, moderate change  
5 = Very good, significant increase, many positives, significant change  
NA = Not Applicable



Bus transportation can be established incrementally. That is, bus service can be added as funding becomes available and as routes and services are evaluated for effectiveness. Costs, particularly capital costs, are relatively low.

Bus service can be instituted in a relatively short time frame, therefore, the benefits of the strategy can be realized much more quickly than for strategies that require long periods of time for project development and construction.

Finally, bus transit can be employed as a strategy to "test the market" for transit service in the region. If successful, bus transit can be used to build a market for rail transit service in the future.

A major drawback of the bus transit strategy is that many individuals have a preference for travel by rail rather than bus transit. This preference has been established in numerous studies, and was supported by the market research performed in November, 1998 for this study. This factor may reduce the effectiveness of this strategy in attracting ridership, particularly trips diverted from automobiles.

Another drawback is that bus transit is less likely than rail transit to affect land use and development decisions because the service improvements are not perceived to be "fixed" or "permanent".

#### **4.7 Rail Transit Strategies**

The new multi-modal corridor strategy was determined to be the rail transit strategy that should be carried to Tier III screening. This is the only rail transit strategy that has the potential to capture a significant share of the travel in the corridor. This is because of the ability of this strategy to deliver transit travel times that are comparable to automobile travel time between Springfield and Branson. In addition, this strategy is more likely to have significant positive effects on the region's quality of life due to the significant number of trips diverted from auto to transit. These potential benefits will be evaluated in greater detail during Tier III.

Importantly, this strategy has the potential to provide the most effective ground transportation link between Springfield-Branson Regional Airport and the Branson Lakes Area.

Because rail transit is a long-term, fixed asset, this strategy is most likely to serve as part of the solution to better coordinating land use and transportation in the region.

The cost of a new rail transit line is high. Further, the rail transit strategies are expected to have an operating cost component that cannot reasonably be covered by passenger fares. However, the capital costs of a rail transit system is more likely to attract external funding (e.g. Federal funding) and various forms of "alternative financing". System costs for this strategy and cost effectiveness, along with financing opportunities will be explored in Tier III screening.

Passenger rail service on the existing alignment is not recommended for further study. The primary reason is that this strategy is not able to provide travel times that are competitive with auto travel time in the corridor. As a result, the passenger service on the existing alignment is not likely to attract significant ridership, and therefore, will not contribute to the region's



## **Springfield-Branson Corridor Transportation Study Alternatives Screening Process**

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economic development objectives. In addition, the attractive aspects of this strategy & relatively low costs were determined to be only partially accurate. The cost of infrastructure improvements to the existing BNSF and M&NA alignments is significant. Under the circumstances, this investment would be very difficult to justify.

It is possible that an excursion-type service could be instituted along the existing alignment, without the significant infrastructure improvements. However, this type of service would not contribute to the corridor's transportation solutions.

For similar reasons, the Springfield-Ozark-Branson new rail alignment is not recommended for further study. The primary reason is the long travel time between Springfield-Branson Regional Airport and the Branson Lakes Area. Train speeds through the central area of the city of Springfield would be very low due to freight traffic and the high number of grade crossings on the alignment. The resultant overall travel time of 86 minutes is not expected to result in the diversion of a significant number of auto trips to transit trips.

### **4.8 Strategies Recommended for Further Consideration**

The strategies recommended by the consultant team for further consideration, based on the Tier II screening were as follows:

**Widen Existing Highways-US 160/13** from two lanes to four lanes. This strategy may also include additional improvements in this corridor, for example additional capacity improvements for the segment of US 160 between Route 14 and Sunshine Road. Although the primary improvements would be focused on the 160/13 corridor, widening of portions of US 65 may also be included in this strategy.

Institute **Inter-regional and Express Bus Service** in the corridor. The bus service would be configured to serve both trips between Springfield and Branson and trips within the corridor. Ground transportation between Springfield-Branson Regional Airport and destinations in Springfield and Branson is a key component of this strategy.

Establish **Passenger Rail Service on New Rail Alignment**. This strategy would employ light rail transit technology and would use a new alignment for most of the distance between Springfield and Branson. Existing rail rights of way would be used where possible and available, including the use of the existing M&NA alignment for access to Branson.

If accepted, these three strategies will be evaluated in greater detail in the Tier III screening. These three strategies will be compared with each other and the "No Build" strategy (status quo) and TSM strategy (transportation system management), involving low capital cost improvements to increase the effectiveness of the existing and committed transportation system.



## Section 5: Recommended Strategies

The first step in the process of prioritizing transportation needs required the general identification of unmet needs today and in the future. Transportation objectives and attendant needs defined by the Study Steering Committee are shown in figure 7 on the following page.

The second step was to identify more specific needs by segment in the Corridor. These more specific needs were outlined as follows:

### 1. SPRINGFIELD TO BRANSON/LAKES AREA REGIONAL TRAVEL

- Today there is congestion on US 65 south and east of Springfield, particularly at the interchanges with I-44, and US 60. The result is a safety deficiency as well as a capacity deficiency. This deficiency is an immediate need.
- Widening portions of US 65 in Greene County and northern Christian County to six lanes may be required within the next 10-year period as travel demand continues to grow.
- US 160 north of Nixa into Springfield is currently at capacity.
- US 160 on the west side of the Corridor requires better connections to the existing highway system on both the northend and southend to allow US 160 to be a more viable link in the Corridor highway system.
- With the projected growth in tourism and population, interchange improvements along US 65 in southern Christian County and Taney may be required after 2015.
- With the projected growth in tourism and population, widening and other improvements to the US 160 Corridor may be required after 2015.
- There is no alternative to auto travel in the Corridor for most travelers.

### 2. SPRINGFIELD/BRANSON REGIONAL AIRPORT TO BRANSON/LAKES AREA

- A new access roadway to the airport with connections to the regional freeway system will be required.
- Other improvements to the US 160 Corridor may be desirable with the western orientation of airport-related travel.
- There is no scheduled airport ground transportation between the airport and destinations in the Branson/Lakes Area.



**Figure 7: Springfield-Branson Corridor: General Transportation Needs**

**1. SPRINGFIELD TO BRANSON/LAKES AREA REGIONAL TRAVEL**

Efficient and convenient transportation must be provided for tourists and area residents between the two main focal points in the Corridor. The transportation system in this Corridor must be capable of accommodating growth in leisure travel to tourist destinations within the Corridor as well as resident travel by the Corridor's growing population. Failure to properly balance transportation capacity and demand may impose a constraint on economic development in the Corridor.

*Need: Highway transportation improvements currently underway will provide significant benefits to motorists in the Corridor. However, several highway segments in the Corridor are already at or near capacity. Continued growth in population and tourism will exacerbate the congestion-related problems. In addition to these immediate and short-term needs, continued growth will result in highway capacity improvements in the period five to ten years into the future.*

**2. SPRINGFIELD/BRANSON REGIONAL AIRPORT TO BRANSON/LAKES AREA**

This is very similar to the first priority except that number two is focused on providing good intermodal connections for air travelers with final destinations in the Branson/Lakes Area. The proposed airport expansion project will likely distinguish this priority from priority one.

*Need: Establish highway connections between the airport and the regional highway system. As air travel becomes more important in the region the result may be the need for added capacity and possibly new routes to destinations in the Branson/Lakes area.*

**3. IMPROVED TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIONS FOR EAST/WEST TRAVEL IN THE CORRIDOR**

The Corridor's transportation system has developed along the north/south axis and east/west connections are inadequate. These east/west connections are important to effectively distribute traffic throughout the Corridor.

*Need: East-west travel throughout the Corridor is limited by the inadequate connections and links between the north-south arterial highways. A complete highway system must include these shorter, sub-regional links.*

**4. INTERSTATE TRAVEL**

It is recognized that I-44 and US 65 serve important functions beyond those associated with the region. Travel through the region should be accommodated in an efficient manner. Connectivity with the Midwest's highway system is an important consideration.

*Need: The two-lane section of US 65 south of Hollister to the Arkansas state line represents a constraint on the statewide highway system.*



### 3. EAST/WEST TRAVEL CORRIDORS

- A need has been identified in southern Greene County for an east/west roadway to augment the James River Freeway (US 60) and to provide better connectivity with the north/south arterial roadways in the Corridor.
- A need has been identified in Christian County to serve sub-regional trips in the rapidly developing northern portion of the county and to provide better connectivity between the north/south arterial roadways in the Corridor.
- A need has been identified for an east/west connector between Stone and Taney counties to provide better distribution among destinations in the Branson/Lakes Area, and to augment congested links in the existing highway system, such as Route 76.
- There is no transit service in the Corridor to provide for employment trips to the Branson/Lakes Area from Stone County to the west and Greene and Christian counties to the north.



## Section 6: Costs, Funding, and Financing

The costs and financing options for the highway improvements recommended in the Springfield-Branson Corridor Transportation Study were analyzed relative to available highway improvement funding. In addition, several funding strategies were analyzed including increased state funding, increased federal discretionary funding and increased local funding.

In inflated dollars, the estimated \$885 million program becomes approximately \$1.73 billion over the 20-year period assuming 5% annual inflation on construction costs (and including design and administration costs). Conversely, state funding for these types of highway improvements can be expected to increase at a much slower rate because the funding is derived from a fuel consumption tax, which does not reflect inflation.

Five approaches, or options, were evaluated ranging from reliance on new discretionary federal funding to securing new state revenues to a local option. The possibility of "doing nothing" was also evaluated. There is any number of ways to approach the funding for the recommended highway transportation improvements. These six options represent a reasonable range of possibilities.

For simplicity of presenting the information, all figures are presented as 20-year totals of current (inflated) dollars. The following table shows these options and the resultant local funding requirement.

**Table 9: 20-Year Summary of Alternative Financing Options**  
(Millions of inflated dollars)

Financing Option	Total Cost	State Share	Federal Share	Local Share	Local Annual Average
1. No New Funding	668	668	0	0	-
2. All Local Funding	1,729	668	0	1,062	53
3. Increased State Share	1,729	954	0	775	39
4. New State Funding	1,729	1,677	0	52	3
5a. Federal Discretionary Funding	1,729	668	385	676	34
5b. Federal Discretionary Funding	1,729	668	849	212	11

**Notes:** Total Cost is the total estimated cost of the recommended improvements in inflated dollars.

- State share includes state revenue and federal revenue distributed by MoDOT.
- Federal share is new discretionary funding.
- Local share is revenue derived from new local or regional taxes.

There is no guarantee that the region can secure significant new state or federal revenue. It is important to consider the options and decide upon a course of action or strategy for meeting the region's future highway transportation needs.



Following is a brief summary of the financing options:

1. **No New Funding.** Without additional funding less than 40% of the identified highway improvements could be accomplished over the 20-year period. In this scenario, it is likely that MoDOT would focus the available funding on US 65 and I-44. The result would be that there would be virtually no funding for the other improvements included in the recommended plan.
2. **Reliance on Local Funding.** If only local funding was used to make up the gap between costs and available funding the equivalent of a 1 % sales tax in the Corridor would be required. A summary of various local financing approaches is below.
3. **Increased Share of State Funding.** A concerted effort by the Southwest Missouri region to increase the portion of state funding allocated to District 8 from about 7% to 10%, for example, would significantly decrease the required local funding over the 20-year period. The local funding requirement would be reduced by nearly 30%, reducing the equivalent tax requirement to about a 0.6% corridor sales tax. Without new local funding the increase state share could fund about 55% of the recommended highway transportation improvements.
4. **New State Funding Program.** A new statewide highway and transportation funding program could fund nearly all of the recommended improvements if the program was of a magnitude similar to the Governor's 1997 Total Transportation Commission recommendations. The local share requirement would be reduced to the point that new local revenue sources may not be needed.
5. **Federal Discretionary Funding.** The use of federal discretionary funding is difficult to evaluate because of the nature of the grants. Two scenarios were analyzed, one with new federal sources providing 80% of the constant dollar value of the recommended projects (\$385 million) and the other 80% of the current dollar value of the improvements (\$849 million). The local funding requirement is reduced to an equivalent sales tax of about 0.2% to 0.5%. These federal grants are congressional allocations and the funding amount, if any, cannot be predicted.



## 6.1 Overview of Local Financing Strategies

### 6.1.1 Introduction

If the recommendations of the Springfield-Branson Corridor Transportation Study are to be implemented, they will require local funding. How much local funding partly depends on the availability of state and federal sources. Both sources, obviously, are not unlimited. Nonetheless, these sources typically require local participation. This paper presents an overview of local financing strategies as well as mechanism by which these strategies can be implemented.

The study has identified a number of projects for improving mobility in the Springfield-Branson Corridor. Projects include highway and transit improvements. This paper addresses only the highway improvements.

As will be seen later in this report, the cost of all improvements is estimated at \$885 million over the 20-year period. When inflation is factored in, the total cost increases to \$1.7 billion. Depending upon the financing option used, new local funding of as much as \$1.1 billion will be needed to finance these improvements.

### 6.1.2 Generic Financing Strategies

There are two basic approaches to local financing. The first is *pay-as-you-go* where the cost of an improvement is paid as the project sponsor has funds available. For example, if a sponsor has \$5 million a year in available funds, a \$20 million improvement would take four years (\$20 million divided by the \$5 million annual cash flow) to completed. The second is *debt* financing where the cost of the improvement is *borrowed*. Thus, the \$20 million improvement could be accomplished in one year if the sponsor borrowed the \$20 million up-front. Presumably, the \$5 million annual cash flow would pay off the debt.

#### Pay-As-You-Go (PAYG) Financing

Most local governmental funding is from taxes on property, income and retail sales. With PAYG, tax revenues are used to pay for projects, as money is available. Another option is for tax revenues to be accumulated in a capital fund. Once enough money is available in the fund, a given project would move forward. The advantage of PAYG is that municipalities avoid interest and other finance costs associated with debt financing. Thus, the cost of the project is kept to a minimum. Another advantage is that the municipality avoids the accumulation of debt and the risk of tying up future tax dollars for principle and interest payments.

Disadvantages of PAYG include the limit to the number and scope of improvements that can be made. Typically, a community's list of capital improvements exceeds its available resources. Thus, projects are held off until sufficient funds are accumulated. The consequences of delaying projects depend on the circumstances. Important community needs, obviously, may not be met. In addition, less vital needs may become more vital if delayed. For example, as community assets age, their maintenance becomes increasingly more expensive. Delaying replacement not only increases these



maintenance costs, but also inflation increases the replacement cost as well. Thus, the consequences of delaying projects are higher costs.

#### Debt Financing

Debt financing involves a municipality borrowing the funds needed for an improvement. There is a variety of borrowing mechanisms available. General obligation bonds, revenue bonds, and certificates of participation are among these methods. They are all similar in that the local governmental unit obtains needed cash up front and repays the loan over time. Of course the government incurs not only the principle cost, but also interest and issuance costs as well.

The advantage of debt financing is that improvements can move forward on an accelerated schedule. The advantages in moving forward include meeting crucial community needs quicker as well as avoiding higher capital costs that accompany a delay. The disadvantage is that the community has pledged a future revenue stream to retire the debt as well as incurred additional costs through borrowing funds.

Typically, in incurring debt, municipalities are pledging a future revenue stream. This stream can be tax revenue or revenue that may be derived from a project itself. The revenue can also be a special tax levied for the purpose of retiring the debt. Before debt is incurred, municipalities normally conduct a "feasibility" study to determine the availability of revenue to pay off the debt as well as which strategy should be used to secure such revenue.

#### *6. 1.3 Springfield-Branson Corridor Status*

The sources of debt financing and taxes are well established in the Springfield-Branson Transportation Study Corridor. Virtually all municipalities with a population of 1,000 or more levy local sales and property taxes. Sales tax rates range from 6.1 percent to 7.975 percent. Property tax rates range from 4.13 mills to 5.32 mills. Further, the use of bonded debt is common in local finance throughout Missouri.

Table 11 shows key tax receipts at the county and local levels for communities in the study corridor. Six tax sources are shown: County Sales Tax, County Alternate Sale Tax, City Sales Tax, City Alternate Sales Tax, Public Mass Transportation Sales Tax, and Local Option Use Tax. County Sales and Alternate Sales taxes are effectively tax the same things.

The same for the City Sales and City Alternate taxes. The local option tax works the same way as the other sales taxes. The Public Mass Transportation Sales Taxes works like the other taxes except proceeds are for transportation purposes.<sup>1</sup>

Missouri State statutes allow units of governments to levy these taxes and stipulate a range of rates that can be enacted. Ninety-nine percent of revenue collected is returned to the local jurisdiction. The remaining one percent goes to the State's general fund.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Missouri Department of Revenue, *Comprehensive Annual Financial Report—Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1998*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



**Springfield – Branson Corridor Transportation Study**  
**Costs, Funding, and Financing**

As seen in table 10 below, major corridor cities and towns collectively received almost \$60 million from these various taxes. The corridor counties received about \$40 million. In total, various sales taxes generate about \$100 million per year.

Table 10 shows a projection of sales tax revenue generated with varied rates. Only the major communities in Table 11 are shown in Table 10. Using 1998 taxable sales, the major communities generate about \$4.1 billion. With tax rates of .25 %, .50 %, .75 % and 1 %, sales tax receipts of \$10 million to \$41 million would be generated.

**Table 10: Projected Tax Receipts for Various Sales Tax Rates**

City	1998 Taxable Sales	Sales Tax Rate**			
		0.25%	0.50%	0.75%	1.00%
Springfield	\$ 3,107,833,610	\$ 7,691,900	\$ 15,383,800	\$ 23,075,700	\$ 30,767,600
Branson	730,309,582	1,807,500	3,615,000	5,422,500	7,230,100
Other Local*	257,413,011	637,100	1,274,200	1,911,300	2,548,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 4,095,556,203</b>	<b>\$ 10,136,500</b>	<b>\$ 20,273,000</b>	<b>\$ 30,409,500</b>	<b>\$ 40,546,100</b>

\* Ozark, Nixa, Republic, and Rogersville

\*\*Receipts are 99 percent of rate times sales; one percent is retained by state general fund

Source: Taxables sales from Table 2 of Reed Neil Olsen, Ph.D., *Springfield One Percent Sales Tax Revenue: Recent Trends and Analysis*, August 1999.

Table 12 shows how much debt the tax revenue could possibly support over time. For discussion purposes, twenty-year and thirty-year time periods are used. Longer time periods may be feasible for highway projects. The table shows average tax revenue received over these 20 and 30 year time periods. As can be seen, a .25 % tax rate can support about \$185 million to \$293 million in debt for 20 and 30 years respectively. A .75 % rate can support \$554 million to \$879 million in debt. The table assumes taxable sales increase 5 percent annually. Historic growth has been 6.1 percent.<sup>3</sup> This latter range finances a large share of the highway projects discussed earlier in this Appendix.

<sup>3</sup> Reed Neil Olsen, Ph.D., *Springfield One Percent Sales Tax Revenue: Recent Trends and Statistical Analysis* (August, 1999), Table 2: Annual Sales Taxable Sales for Springfield, Branson and Other Local Cities.



Table 11: Tax Distribution for Corridor Municipal and County Entities

Tax Distribution for Corridor Municipal and County Entities  
Year Ended June 30, 1998

Taxing Entity	County	County Sales	County Alter Sales	City Sales	City Alter Sales	Public Mass Transp	Local Option Use	Totals
<b>City</b>								
Battlefield	Greene			\$ 11,052		\$ 8,377		\$ 19,429
Branson	Taney			6,792,713		3,383,030		10,175,743
Crane	Stone			93,072		42,279		135,351
Hollister	Taney			353,178	176,590			529,768
Kimberling City	Stone			270,538	257,098		120,367	648,003
Nixa	Christian			848,814		424,406		1,273,220
Ozark	Christian			953,667	308,196			1,261,863
Reeds Spring	Stone			75,635				75,635
Republic	Greene			657,256	328,502	328,627		1,314,385
Springfield	Greene			29,812,594	7,262,395	3,605,194	2,524,888	43,205,071
<b>Sub-Total</b>		-	-	\$ 39,868,519	\$ 8,332,781	\$ 7,791,913	\$ 2,645,255	\$ 58,638,468
<b>County</b>								
Christian		\$ 1,504,366	\$ 2,256,554					\$ 3,760,920
Greene		17,156,185	983,780					18,119,965
Stone		1,358,237	3,165,320					4,523,557
Taney		4,528,390	9,052,838					13,581,228
<b>Sub-Total</b>		\$ 24,547,178	\$ 15,438,492					\$ 39,985,670
<b>Grand Total</b>		\$ 24,547,178	\$ 15,438,492	\$ 39,868,519	\$ 8,332,781	\$ 7,791,913	\$ 2,645,255	\$ 98,624,138

Source: Missouri Department of Revenue, Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1998.



Table 12: Debt Supported at Various Sales Tax Rates

Life of Debt	Sales Tax Rate			
	0.25%	0.50%	0.75%	1.00%
20 Years	\$ 184,660,000	\$ 369,310,000	\$ 553,970,000	\$ 738,620,000
30 Years	\$ 293,150,000	\$ 586,300,000	\$ 879,450,000	\$ 1,172,600,000

Note: 6.5 percent interest rate assumed, includes assumption for issuance fees.

#### 6.1.4 Joint Action and Special Taxing Districts

One way for the corridor to collect such taxes would be through a special taxing district set-up for the purpose of making the desired transportation improvements. While there are a number of special district types, this will focus on *transportation development districts* and *transportation corporations*.<sup>5</sup> Another method is for communities to act in a collective fashion through joint action.

##### Joint Action

An alternative to a special taxing district would be for the communities in the study corridor to agree to pool necessary financial resources to the above project list. There could be varying degrees of formality for this arrangement ranging from letters of understanding to joint-powers agreements.

Advantages of this approach, compared with the creation of a special taxing district, include elimination of a level a government. Further, decisions regarding improvements would be made directly by the participating communities, ensuring that individual needs are met.

Disadvantages include more risk relative to completion of projects because communities may change their priorities over time and elect not to support the overall program. With literally dozens of communities involved, achieving consensus and unified action may be difficult if not cumbersome over time. Also, a separate taxing district may have a better financial rating than some of the individual member communities, resulting in lower financing costs.

##### Special Taxing Districts

The advantage of creating special taxing districts is that voters more clearly see the relationship between the tax being imposed and the purpose of the tax. A general sales tax may get lost in other programs and projects. Thus, the benefits of the tax may not be

<sup>4</sup> Reed Neil Olsen, Ph.D., *Springfield One Percent Sales Tax Revenue: Recent Trends and Statistical Analysis* (August, 1999), Table 2: Annual Sales Taxable Sales for Springfield, Branson and Other Local Cities.

<sup>5</sup> This discussion is partly based on *Innovative Finance Program Guide* of the Missouri Department of Transportation.



obvious. Further, the district crosses municipal boundaries and represents a more efficient way to collect the tax. Alternatively, each affected municipality would need to enact a transportation improvement tax and provide a distribution mechanism. Instead of one source for tax collection, there could be a dozen. Finally, the work of the district may be removed from the day to day issues of individual taxing entities, allowing undivided focus.

Disadvantages of a special district include perceived equity issues. For example, some parts of a district may not feel it is getting services or benefits equal to its need or its contribution. Another disadvantage is that voters may chafe under what may be seen as yet another layer of government being created. Finally, the governing boards of special districts are somewhat insulated from the average citizen. Accountability to voters and similar issues may create programs that are out of sync with the desires of the public.

### **Transportation Development Districts**

A Transportation Development District (TDD) would be a political subdivision of the State of Missouri. As such it has broad powers to carry out transportation projects. These can be roadway construction related or involve operating a mass transportation system. The TDD would be governed by a board of directors and have the ability to collect taxes and issue debt. In virtually all respects, it would function like a school district or other special purpose unit of government.

To form a TDD, petitions from affected jurisdictions need to be made calling for a TDD. As part of the petition, the boundaries of the TDD would also be defined along with proposed activities and funding of the district. The TDD plan would be put to voters in the affected jurisdictions.

### **Transportation Corporations**

A transportation corporation is similar to a TDD. However, the formation of the corporation is under the direction of the Missouri Department of Transportation. In many ways, the corporation is more like a non-profit business while the TDD is more like a governmental unit. Further, the intent of the legislation appears to have been for corporation to develop *public* transportation operations more so than build road, etc. However, the corporation statute can be easily interpreted to allow roadway-related activities.

#### **6.1.5 Conclusions and Recommendations**

The corridor community would appear to have the financial resources to raise significant money to cover at least the local share of project costs. The mechanisms for bonding and taxing are well established and can be implemented. It is recommended that a special taxing district be established to better harness the financial resources and streamline decision making. Finally, the transportation development district is recommended as it is broad in its mission and resembles a governmental entity, more so than a transportation corporation.



## Section 7: Recommendations

The recommended transportation solutions were prioritized by categorizing the actions as Immediate Priorities, Short Range Priorities or Longer-Range Priorities based on estimates of when the transportation needs would be realized. The priorities identified by the Study Committee are shown in Figure 8 on the following page.

These recommendations are also shown on the map of the Corridor in Figure 9.

### 7.1 Costs and Financing

The cost of providing these transportation improvements is substantial. Table 13 shows the estimated cost of the highway improvements.

**Table 13: Priority Transportation Solutions— Estimated Construction Cost**

<b>Immediate Priorities (1 to 5 years)</b>	
Improve US 65 to 6 lanes US 60 to I-44	\$300
Improve US 160 from US 60 to south of Nixa	\$50
Improve Current Airport Access via West Bypass	\$10
Improve Rt. 13 from Reeds Spring to Kimberling City	\$20
Improve east-west access in southern Greene County	\$60
Improve east-west access in northern Christian County	<u>\$10</u>
Sub-Total	\$450
<b>Short Term Priorities (6 to 10 Years)</b>	
Widen US 65 to 4 lanes between Hollister and Arkansas line	\$75
Widen US 65 to 6 lanes between I-44 and Rt. F	\$20
New roadway from Airport to James River Freeway	\$10
New east-west connection in Stone and Taney counties	\$60
South Leg of Highroad Route 76 to Table Rock Dam	\$45
Improve US 160/Rt. 248 from Reeds Spring to Highroad	<u>\$30</u>
Sub-Total	\$240
<b>Longer-Range Priorities (11 to 20 years)</b>	
Complete grade separation of US 65	\$35
Widen US 65 to 6 lanes Bee Creek to Rt. 76	\$30
Improve 160 from Reeds Spring to Nixa	\$90
South Leg of Highroad Route 65 to Table Rock Dam	<u>\$40</u>
Sub-Total	\$195
Total Highway Improvements	<u>\$885</u>



**Figure 8: Springfield-Branson Corridor: Priority Transportation Solutions**

**IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES (1 TO 5 YEARS)**

- Address the capacity and safety deficiencies along US 65 between I-44 and US 60, including the major interchanges at I-44 and US 60. This may involve interchange improvements, or improvements along the entire segment of US 65, for example widening to 6 lanes.
- Address the capacity deficiency on US 160 (South Campbell) between the James River Freeway and Nixa. This may involve the widening of existing US 160, a new roadway to the west, or a new transportation corridor.
- Complete improvements to the West Bypass to improve access to the Springfield-Branson Regional Airport.
- Improve Route 13 from Reeds Spring to Kimberling City.
- Address the deficiency in east-west connections in southern Greene County.
- Address the deficiency in east-west connections in northern Christian County.

**SHORT TERM PRIORITIES (6 TO 10 YEARS)**

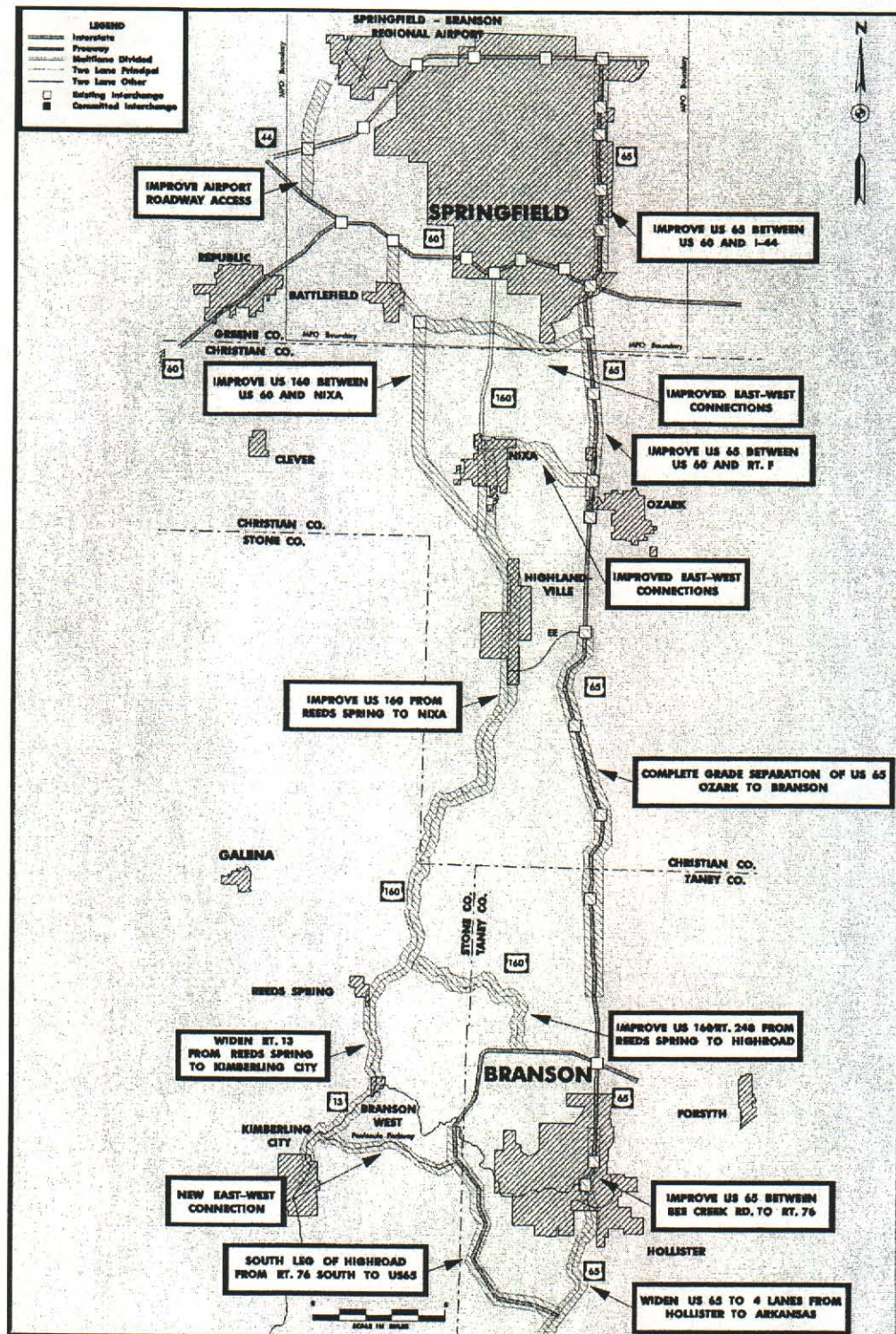
- Widen US 65 south of Hollister to Arkansas line to 4 lanes.
- Improvements may be necessary to the segment of US 65 between US 60 and Route F, including widening to 6 lanes.
- A new connection to the airport terminal will be required if the mid-field terminal relocation project is completed.
- Address the need for an improved east-west connection in Stone County.
- Complete the southern leg of the High Road to Table Rock Dam.
- Improve US 160/Route 248 from Reeds Spring to Highroad.

**LONGER-RANGE PRIORITIES (11 TO 20+ YEARS)**

- Complete grade separation of US 65 in Christian and Taney counties.
- Improvements to US 65 between Bee Creek Road and Route 76, including interchange improvements or widening to 6 lanes.
- Improve US 160 between Nixa and Reeds Spring.
- Complete the south leg of the Highroad from Table Rock Dam south to US 65.



Figure 9: Recommended Actions Map





The total cost of over \$800 million would become about \$1.7 billion with the effects of inflation on the projects over the twenty year implementation period.

The funding for these improvements does not exist in current local or state programs. MoDOT's funding situation is critical. MoDOT expects to have very little funding available for highway capacity improvements because the limited funding must be used for system preservation and maintenance. A new funding initiative employing bonding is being considered by the state legislature. MoDOT is currently conducting a Long-Range Transportation Plan. Even if a new statewide funding program is created, it is unlikely that state funding will be made available to complete all the highway projects developed during the Study.

A strategy has been identified for funding major transportation improvements in the Corridor, including securing federal discretionary funding, and increasing the share of state funding received by the southwest Missouri region. The Steering Committee recognizes that even with increased federal and state funding, it appears likely that an increase in local funding will be required to make all of the improvements.

The Steering Committee has outlined the following approach to financing:

- Begin the process of vying for discretionary federal funding.
- Advocate for increased transportation funding from the state.

The adoption of the transportation plan by the Steering Committee is an important first step in accessing increased funding from both the state and federal government.

The critical question of increased local funding, and how to achieve the increased funding, will be taken up as part of the "next steps" to achieving the improvements.

## **7.2 Public Transportation Strategies**

Passenger rail transportation strategies were evaluated as part of the examination of transportation solutions for the Springfield-Branson Corridor. The rail transit strategies in the evaluation included:

- Passenger Rail on Existing Rail Corridor (Commuter Rail)
- Passenger Rail on New Rail Alignment (Commuter Rail or Light Rail)

The Steering Committee concluded that the passenger rail strategy should be excluded from the Study's recommendations for several reasons:

- The capital cost was found to be very high and ongoing operating costs were a concern.
- Virtually no substantial support emerged during the public meetings and stakeholder meetings held late in 1999.



- The benefits of rail did not include significant traffic congestion relief for the highway system nor a significant share of the commuter market.
- The ridership forecasts for the passenger rail service depended heavily on substantial growth of the air travel market and attendant growth in air travel to/from Springfield-Branson Regional Airport. This component of the overall travel forecasts was judged to be the most tenuous.

The Steering Committee directed that the consultant develop a series "checkpoints" for growth in tourism levels, traffic levels and other factors that the region could use to continually evaluate the advisability of initiating the project development for rail transit.

The development of a passenger rail project can be expected to require ten years. If advanced planning is initiated by 2010, a rail transit system linking Springfield and Branson could be in place. It is recommended that the region reassess rail transit at least in five years to determine whether the concept should be maintained in the region's long-range plan.

Bus service was recommended by the Technical Committee to serve the markets in the Corridor. One is an express bus service between Springfield and Branson, primarily focused on providing service to tourists, particularly air travelers with destinations in Branson. The other is local service focused on providing transportation for employees in the Branson/Lakes area.

See table 14 for a summary of the rail strategy evaluation. In addition, see *Rail Transit Strategies - Summary of Evaluation*, a separate report produced as part of this study. It contains more detail on the rail evaluation process.

### **7.3 Regional Transportation Planning**

There is general agreement among Steering Committee members that transportation planning in the Corridor needs to be strengthened from a region-wide perspective. Currently, regional planning in the Corridor is limited and the need for a more comprehensive approach increases as transportation needs increase and the individual jurisdictions become more interdependent. The Springfield-Branson Corridor Transportation Study began the task of regional planning, but the work needs to be continued beyond the conceptual stage of the study. For example, transportation planning employing quantitative modeling techniques that allow for a full assessment of benefits and system wide effects is limited to the immediate Springfield area. The Springfield Area MPO is responsible for transportation planning for the City of Springfield and a small portion of Greene County outside of the city.

SMACOG is a regional planning commission representing ten counties in the region, including Christian, Greene, Stone and Taney. SMACOG contributes to transportation planning in the region through an agreement with MoDOT to assist in the prioritization of highway improvements.

In addition, a future regional transit system will require some type of regional coordination for operations as well as planning.



Table 14: Rail Transit Strategy Evaluation

Feasibility Factor	Assumption for Feasibility	2005 Checkpoint	2010 Checkpoint
Total Tourism Level	Growth to 13.5 million annual visitors to the Branson/Lakes area by 2020. Development of significant corporate visitor market.	Tourism at 8.0 million annual visitors with prospects for continued growth of approximately 3% per year. Commitment for new convention facility.	Tourism at 9.3 million annual visitors with prospects for continued growth of approximately 3% per year. Development of new convention facilities.
Air Travel	Substantial traffic growth at Springfield Branson Regional Airport, with an increase in aviation's share of the Branson/Lakes market from 6% to 20% by 2020.	Aviation market share increased to 8% to 9%, with decrease in "leakage" to airports in Kansas City and St. Louis. Prospects for future growth apparent.	Aviation market share increased to 10% to 11%, with no "leakage" to airports in Kansas City and St. Louis. Prospects for future growth apparent.
Intra-Branson Transit System	A transit system must be in place to distribute transit passengers within the Branson/Lakes area.	Branson commitment to a comprehensive internal transit system, along with initiation of advanced planning.	Funding in place for internal transit system and preliminary engineering started.
Bus Transit Precedes Rail	Bus transit, especially for air travelers, will be initiated and test the market for rail transit.	Airport bus service initiated successfully.	Airport bus service achieving a market share of at least 15 % of air travelers to Branson.



There are fundamentally three approaches to the issue of regional transportation planning:

1. Adapt an existing organization, such as the Springfield Area MPO or SMACOG to improve transportation planning throughout the corridor.
2. Create a new agency or organization to deal specifically with regional transportation planning.
3. Address the issue in an ad hoc manner similar to the approach used for the past two years by the Springfield-Branson Corridor Transportation Study Committee.

The Steering Committee recognizes that there are advantages and disadvantages to each approach. The Committee will serve a valuable interim role until a permanent organization is created. The consensus of the Steering Committee is that the effort relative to the matter of regional transportation planning should be continued.

#### **7.4 Economic Benefits of Transportation Investments in the Corridor: A Rationale for Transportation Investment**

The Springfield – Branson area is part of Missouri's Ozark Mountain region that accounted for \$1.67 billion or approximately 21.7% of Missouri's Direct Tourism and Travel Expenditures. %. If airport-related expenditures are removed from these totals, the Ozark Mountain region the following market shares for the top three regions: St. Louis (34.9%), Ozark Mountain (29.6%) and Kansas City (17.4%). Lake of the Ozarks would place fourth with (9.7%). The Springfield – Branson Region accounts for about two-thirds of the Ozark Mountain Region's tourism-related contribution to the State's economy. See Figure 10.

The economic impact of the Springfield – Branson area has been estimated at over one billion dollars annually for direct expenditures and \$1.6 billion annually when indirect impacts are included.

In terms of Missouri tax revenues contributed by regional tourism and travel, the Ozark Mountain region is estimated to have provided more than \$110 million in FY98 or roughly 21percent of the State's total for tourism.

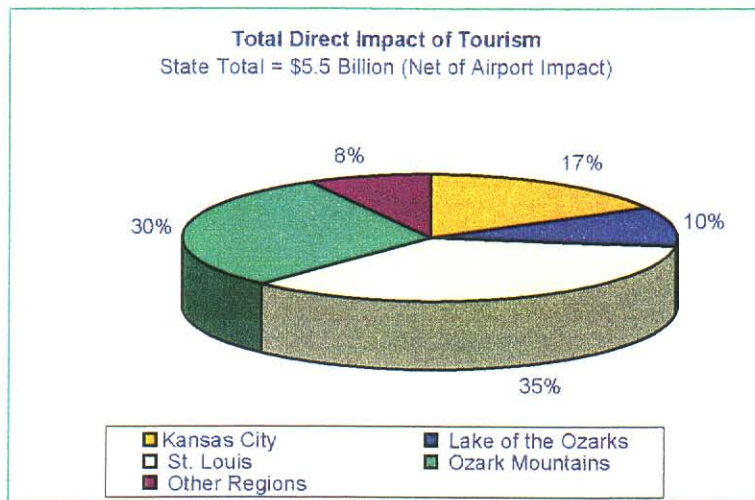
The four counties in the Corridor have been among the State's fastest growing counties, and this growth is expected to continue. Projections prepared by the Missouri Department of Administration show that the population in Christian, Greene, Stone and Taney counties is expected to grow by 26 percent by the year 2020. Statewide population growth is projected at 10 percent over the next twenty years.

This rapid growth is led by Christian County's 74 percent rate of population growth and 54 percent in Stone County. See Figure 11.

The rapid growth in population and tourism and population in communities comprising the Corridor can only be supported by the transportation investments recommended by the Springfield – Branson Transportation Corridor Study.

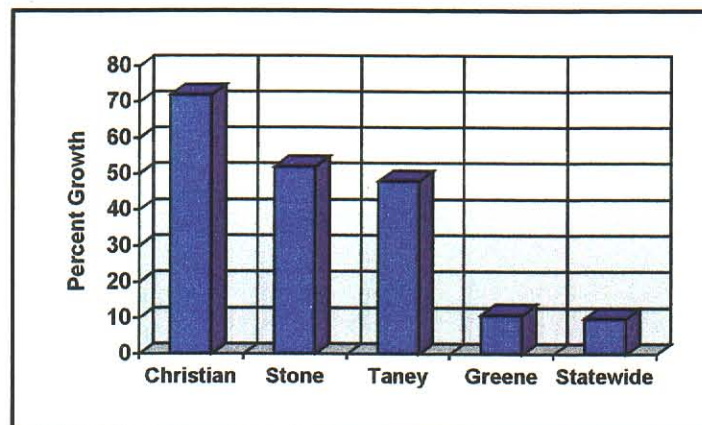


Figure 10: Total Direct Impact of Tourism



Source: Missouri

Figure 11: Projected Population Growth 2000—2020



Source: Missouri Department of Administration



The Region's huge contribution to the State's economy must be protected by continued investment in the Region's transportation system.

Without continued improvements in the transportation system in the Study Corridor continued growth in population, tourism and economic development is not likely to be achieved