

Press Release

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Partnership for Community Growth & Development
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Partnership for Community Growth & Development Board Hears about Road Projects

The Partnership for Community Growth & Development (PCGD) Board of Directors was presented information about the South Liberty Parkway Phases I & II and the Flintlock overpass at their April meeting. The underlying theme, consistent throughout the comments made by a panel representing parties involved in many aspects of these transportation projects, was that planning is critical and MUST continue no matter what future funding challenges may exist.

The Liberty Public School District's assistant superintendent, Kent Peach began with a discussion of the proposed Flintlock overpass. Dr. Peach noted that the idea for the fly-over came out of an alignment study done by the school district which found that it could be a major east-west connector, especially important for the school district's transportation safety concerns. Many jurisdictions have been involved throughout the process. At this time, engineering is funded by the school district, City of Kansas City and the City of Liberty. Liberty was able to provide funds due to a previous project coming in under budget.

Tim Kristl, an attorney with Mitchell Kristl & Lieber in Kansas City, serves as an advisory member of Kansas City TIF Commission. Kristl explained, "MODOT had to accept the Flintlock overpass as a viable bridge project, since they have jurisdiction over all bridges." Tim noted that revenues from the TIF project on the west side of I-35 would pay for the KCMO portion of the Flintlock overpass project.

Congressman Sam Graves' chief of staff, Jeff Roe, explained that staff did a tour of the area with local banker, Tom Atkins, where it became evident that the overpass is important infrastructure for the area. Roe went on to explain the process in obtaining federal funds for the Flintlock overpass. The bill has passed 2 committees and the U.S. House and has one more committee to pass through before being voted on by the Senate.

(Graves' local staff person, Melissa Goss confirmed that it passed the last committee and is scheduled for Senate debate on Monday). The current proposed level of funding for the Flintlock fly-over is \$18 million. Roe noted that Senators Bond & Talent also support the project. This Highway Bill could be voted on in May or July of this year. Federal funding approved by Congress is dispersed by the Federal Highway Administration which then allocates that amount through the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT). MoDOT will then work with the City of Liberty in the funding of the project. When federal funds are allocated, they must be spent within 6 years.

Liberty city administrator, Patty Gentrup, provided background and an update on Phase I of the South Liberty Parkway. Phase I comes off of I-35 and will intersect Withers Drive with an anticipated November completion. Phase II is currently in the design stage. Construction of Phase II is slated for completion in 2009-2010 with bond repayment through 2015. Gentrup pointed out that the funding aspect makes it difficult to prioritize infrastructure projects. "Development on South Liberty Parkway could help pay for the infrastructure along that corridor and depending on the growth, possibly even additional infrastructure," Gentrup noted. Planning for projects will continue but until funding can be arranged there is no timeline for the Flintlock overpass. City staffers Gentrup and Steve Hansen, Liberty's Director of Public Works, noted that if alternative funding methods could be devised, timelines could change.

PCGD chairman, John Engelmann, said, "It is agreed that these infrastructure projects are critical for growth and development in the Liberty area. Finding the funding is one of the hardest aspects and, of course, the deciding factor. This is not a matter of choosing one project over another, both projects hold importance to the future of Liberty."

PCGD is a private/public partnership which serves as a vehicle to address issues critical to economic development. PCGD can be reached at 816/407-9242.