

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN SPECIAL JOINT
MEETING WITH THE TANEY COUNTY COMMISSION
MAY 5, 2003**

The Board of Aldermen of the City of Branson, Missouri, met in a **SPECIAL JOINT MEETING** with the Taney County Commission in the Council Chambers of City Hall on May 5, 2003 at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Schaefer called the special meeting to order with the "Pledge of Allegiance" and Larry VanGilder gave the invocation.

City Clerk Williams called the roll for the Board of Aldermen with the following present: Mayor Lou Schaefer, Dick Gass, Stan Barker, Beverly Martin, Ron Huff, David Edie, and Jack Purvis.

Presiding Commissioner Chuck Pennel called the meeting to order and called the roll for the Taney County Commission with the following present: Presiding Commissioner Chuck Pennel, and Commissioner Ron Herschend. Commissioner Don Swan was absent.

Also in attendance were: City Administrator Terry Dody, Assistant Administrator Kevin Faught, Acting City Attorney Dan Wichmer, City Clerk Sandra Williams, County Clerk Donna Neeley, Finance Director Deanna Schlegel, Communications Director Jerry Adams, City Engineer David Miller, Public Works Director Larry VanGilder, and Economic Development Director Mike Rankin.

Mayor Schaefer welcomed everyone to the special meeting and stated both items concerned the downtown and waterfront transportation issues.

Mayor Schaefer then asked the Clerk to introduce the first item.

City Clerk Williams stated this item is in regard to Phase I: **PHASE I**
Downtown Transportation Study relating to the Branson Landing **DOWNTOWN**
Project. Administrator Dody said this is to look at Phase I **TRANSPORTATION**
report which was presented on March 20th before the new **STUDY REVIEW**
Board members were elected. The main thing that I would
ask for, if the Board feels it is able to make the decision, is to vote on whether to
go with a standard intersection or a roundabout on Bus. 65 Highway. The
importance of that is because we do need to begin the design work for the bridge
over Roark Creek, and we need to have a better understanding of what the bridge
will be coming into before that can begin. Therefore, I need to ask, with the
information given, if you can get to the point of voting on the Phase I issue,
indicated Mr. Dody.

At this point, City Engineer David Miller provided an update on where the City is to date. Mr. Miller stated, the Phase I portion of the Transportation Study was presented to the Board at the end of March by the firm of Berger Devine and Yaeger. They concentrated on moving 100% of the traffic out of the Branson Landing development to the north utilizing Bus. 65 and the interchange at Highway 65 and Bus. 65, and the Parnell-Skaggs intersections with Bus. 65. They looked at today's traffic to see what the level of service is at those locations, level "F" is failing and Level "A" is great. typically to get a "C" level is alright as the delays are not too bad. Then they used their computer modeling and projections from Branson Landing to look at the traffic volumes in the year 2010. They did it without Branson Landing and one with Branson Landing in place to see how much impact the development would have on those intersections. So we can see what we need to do to get that level of service back as if Branson Landing wasn't there. They also took into account shopping, retail businesses, restaurants, anchor tenants, and the convention center. They looked at the total build-out with the most traffic possible. The bottom line when they were done is it showed that we could move 100% of the Branson Landing traffic northward on Box Car Willie and Bus. 65 and come out at the 65 interchange which would feed people back into Branson by Hwy. 248. This could be done with minimal improvements. It showed that we can handle the Branson Landing project, and most of the level of services would be in the "B" range and some "C" range so it was all tolerable levels. Summing up their recommendations were a series of roundabouts. A roundabout on south bound 65 exit ramp on Hwy. 248. People coming in would no longer have a signal but would free flow onto the overpass, by widening the overpass to four lanes. Right now there are two through lanes and a center turn lane. We would not have a center turn lane because with a roundabout it is not needed. There would also be a roundabout on the east end of the overpass and they further recommended two more lanes be added to Bs. 65 Hwy. from the interchange southward all the way to the Parnell intersection. At that location their recommendation was to build another roundabout with Skaggs coming in with two lanes at Bus. 65; Parnell coming in and then Box Car Willie across Roark Creek would also connect into the round-about. A new four-lane bridge would be built across Roark Creek and that would be an extension of Box Car Willie Drive which would be a four-lane road down to Main Street. They stopped the study at that point because we wanted to look at Branson Landing to the north in Phase II of the study. The improvements just described, had an estimated cost amount of \$8.6 million dollars. They also looked at another alternate to replace the roundabouts with normal traffic signals and the problem was that Parnell would be a difficult connection to make. The cost of that type of improvements was \$10.1 million dollars which is about \$1.5 million dollars more. Their recommendation was to go with the roundabouts. Staff has reviewed their numbers and did not have any problems, so the recommendations before you is to go with the roundabouts. Since Bus. 65 is a Missouri Highway Department route, the City needs their approval and needs to work with them on this project. Matt Seiler with the MoDOT was present to answer any questions.

DAVID MILLER

Alderman Huff asked if it was possible to make a decision without knowing the outcome of Phase II of the study. Mr. Miller replied, it is fine. The Branson Landing will need to utilize Box Car Willie Drive, and the improvements to Bus. 65 will still need to be done.

At this time Wayne Whitehead of Berger Devine Yaeger (BDY) began the presentation.

Mr. Whitehead indicated he represented Berger Devine Yaeger, Inc. and the Louis Berger Group Consulting Engineers, and they were here to present the results of the Traffic Study they performed. Mr. Whitehead stated his role was to introduce the experts that performed the Study. "I do want to emphasize the word 'study' because what we present tonight is a result of months of studies and analysis. What you will see will be conceptual layouts and not a detailed design. That will come later. Exact locations of intersections, roadway centerlines and so forth will be determined during the design phase of this project. We are proud of the fact that we are considered by our peers to be one of the nation's leading design firms for Traffic and Transportation Planning and Roadways and Bridge Design," stated Mr. Whitehead. Matt Seiler, Senior Traffic Engineer with the Missouri Department of transportation District #8; Dane Ismart, Senior Traffic Engineer; Gary Vandel, Transportation Design Engineer were then introduced.

Dane Ismart addressed the Board and Commission stating, "I would like to talk about the Branson Landing Traffic Study. The study was needed to go ahead and evaluate the traffic and transportation impact in the downtown Branson area resulting from the Branson Landing Development. We looked at Branson Landing as being fully developed, when it is completed. The study was completed in phases and this is Phase I of the Traffic Study. This is the final report for Phase I, and it covers the corridor of 65 down to Skaggs to Boxcar Willie and over to Main Street. This will be followed up with Phase II where more details will be analyzed. We identified the improvements needed between U.S. 65 and the Branson Landing Development, along Business 65 and Box Car Willie Drive. We came up with a series of alternatives, and we are presenting two of the alternatives that we believe are feasible and should provide a reasonable level of operational service, along with the estimates of the cost of the improvements."

Gary Vandel addressed the Board and Commission indicating the study area went from the intersection at Skaggs Road up to the interchange of 65. There are three intersections that we looked at – the southbound ramps with Hwy. 248 on your right and business 65 on your left; northbound ramps and business 65, we looked at the ramps; the third intersection that we looked at was Business 65 with Skaggs Road. We looked at four different scenarios to establish what if any improvements would be needed with the Branson Landing Development. The first step was the 2002 traffic on existing roadways. Using those volumes to establish a base, we built on that to project traffic up to 2010. For 2010, we

looked at existing roadways without the Branson Landing to establish the level of service we would have at that time. Then the third step was to look at 2010 with the Branson Landing Development and project the trips and add that to the existing trips projected for 2010. We came up with the total traffic to see what the level of service would be with the Branson Landing Development. The fourth item was to look at the 2010 traffic with the Branson Landing Development, with improvements to make it come up to an acceptable level of service that would operate with everybody to 2010 and beyond giving satisfactory service.

Mr. Ismart indicated there were two alternatives that would provide some reasonable service and explained them to the Board using overheads. Alternative One is for a five legged roundabout with Skaggs Road, Business 65, Parnell, and Box Car Willie. Alternative Two was an improved signalization program which includes widening of the bridge over U.S. 65 to six lanes rather than four, with two additional lanes on Business 65 from Box Car Willie Drive, Skaggs Road, to the interchange with 65. The recommendations were for Box Car Willie to be constructed with four-lanes from Main Street, across Roark Creek, to the intersection with Skaggs Road and Business 65. The roundabouts on U.S. 65 Southbound ramps and 248 as well as the Northbound ramps on Business 65 and Skaggs Road, Parnell, Box Car Willie Drive for a series of three roundabouts or two-tier drop roundabouts plus the third roundabout at Skaggs and Box Car Willie; additional lanes between Business 65 and U.S. 65 interchange, and to Skaggs Road; and the bridge be widened to four-lanes. Essentially we are recommending Alternative One, indicated Mr. Ismart. The advantages of roundabouts were given and questions were taken and answered and a video tape from MoDOT was shown which explains the operation of roundabouts.

Mayor Schaefer opened the floor for questions from the Board and Commissioners.

Alderman Huff inquired what it entails if the bridge at 65 would need to be six lanes, and what if it needs to be four lanes and if there was enough room? Mr. Ismart replied the bridge would have to be physically widen for the six lanes which would be a major reconstruction project. To go to four lanes you would still have to widen it, but it is not going to be a major project, as you now have sufficient room for three lanes.

Alderman Huff inquired what the level of service is currently on Business 65, with "A" being the best level and "F" failing. Mr. Ismart replied by Skaggs and Parnell is probably an "F+".

Alderman Huff asked if additional land would have to be acquired or is there right-of-way available? Mr. Whitehead replied that MoDOT owns 80 feet of right-of-way and until they get into detail design as to where it will be it is hard to say whether additional land will have to be acquired.

Alderman Gass asked if the \$8.6 million dollars includes the cost of the bridge? Mr. Vandel replied that the cost estimate of \$8.6 million dollars does include \$5.1 million dollars for Box Car Willie and a four lane bridge plus sidewalks.

Alderman Gass asked if this includes any relocation of utilities? Mr. Vandel replied there were some utilities so possibly that would have to be looked at in Phase II of the study but the \$8.6 million dollars does include some miscellaneous cost to cover some utility costs.

Commissioner Herschend asked what the time period was for Phase II. Mr. Ismart replied that Phase II is under discussion now, and they are looking at expanding the time period to the year 2023 possibly 2025 as they are looking at a 20 year future.

Commissioner Herschend stated, "I think it is important for the audience to know that you plan to include the Hollister end of the 65 bridge, as in the meeting last week there was discussion that the City of Branson and possibly the County would assist in making that happen. I think that is important for the public to know."

Commissioner Herschend asked them to describe the alternatives if the roundabout is built, and we find out that traffic is stacking up and that one direction can never get into the roundabout? Mr. Ismart replied that when you are designing a roundabout you have to consider the queues at the other facilities downstream from your roundabout. Under Phase II we are going to be taking a look at the queues. Queues meaning the back up of the traffic. We will be looking at various types of alternatives; redesign of 76 and Business 65 to get a better flow; possibly wider radiuses; better signalization; and better timing. When we look at the alternatives in Phase II we will determine exactly what is needed so those queues won't backup. The roundabout will actually reduce your queues. What we would be concerned about would be downstream and then the flow back.

Commissioner Pennel discussed the \$8.6 million dollars and what it covers, and the \$10.1 million dollars costs and what is covered in that. Also discussed was Phase II of this project and what it covers.

Commissioner Pennel asked if they had given any thought to the possibility that traffic, instead of going out the Strip would now go right back out of Branson. Administrator Dody replied that interestingly enough, the corridor that we call 248 and Gretna, is now handling more traffic than Hwy. 76 and the reality is that more of our visitors are now traveling up and down 248 and Gretna. So, instead of sending them back to Springfield, it is going to be sending them right back to where they are already getting back into the center city anyway or

the Strip area. Actually we are just providing a better ingress and egress access than what they already have for an area they already are using more than the Strip.

Commissioner Pennel stated the roundabout concerns him because the stranger to our City, does not know where to turn ahead of time. That little old man, or little old lady that has never been here before is still going to get confused in a roundabout. Mr. Vandel replied there are a number of pieces of information and literature that can be given out when tourist come in. We actually have pamphlets on how to drive roundabouts. There is a number of states that are building many of them, here in Missouri, and in Springfield. You can have an educational program. You can talk to people about how to go ahead and negotiate them, and MoDOT has a video to help explain them that can be used. Commissioner Pennel replied, he thought that there were still a lot of hurdles to overcome, for instance when a visitor is driving a big motor home and pulling a car. We don't have the opportunity to educate them like we would our citizens. Mr. Vandel indicated they are becoming more prevalent; people are looking at them, and the one saving grace is that they are forgiving. If you make a mistake, it will be at 10-15 miles an hour. It is extremely rare to have a serious injury.

Alderman Barker said that in this study and their recommendations were that safety is the highest factor in the roundabouts and the cost. Mr. Ismart replied that safety was extremely high, along with capacity, cost, and a lot less land would be used. There is absolutely no question, that roundabouts have significant reduction in the number of accidents and are much more safe for pedestrians, because you are slowing down the vehicles.

Mayor Schaefer then opened the floor up to questions and comments.

Alderman Huff inquired if it was possible for the Board to make a decision regarding the roundabouts and the bridge without having a complete understanding of the rest of the study. City Engineer David Miller replied that it was fine. According to the traffic studies the Branson Landing Development will need to utilize Box Car Willie Drive so the improvements to Business Highway 65 will be needed. There is a division between south of Roark Creek and north of Roark Creek and those things north of Roark Creek can happen without the rest of the study being done, indicated Mr. Miller.

Alderman Huff asked if additional land would be needed for right-a-ways. Mr. Miller answered that the interchange will not take any extra, but at the Parnell-Skaggs intersection, the preliminary layout shows that the Super Stop and possibly the motel would be in the way. We haven't got to that detail of a survey to know exactly because, we could shift things around some, indicated Mr. Miller.

Alderman Edie inquired if there were any studies comparing roundabouts in tourist-destination areas opposed to normal city routes where everyday use is by the same people. Mr. Miller replied that the consultant found several examples where they did work in tourist areas and accident levels dropped drastically.

Alderman Gass inquired if the \$8.6 million dollars included any utilities, and does it include the bridge.? Mr. Miller answered that it did include the bridge but it does not include utilities. The utilities that are located on MoDOT's right-a-way will have to be moved at no cost to the road-widening project. But the utilities that are located off of the right-a-way, on private easements would be an extra cost.

Commissioner Herschend asked if the Council was being asked to approve the total \$8.6 million dollars tonight. Administrator Dody replied that what staff was looking for is for the Council to take action on the decision of whether or not to go forward with the roundabout concept or the standardized intersection concept as the design of the bridge cannot be designed until that decision is made. Staff is looking for guidance and direction on what type of intersection they want to pursue. Primarily we are trying to focus on getting guidance on the Parnell/Bus. 65 intersection.

Alderman Huff inquired which option, the roundabout or the signalized intersection provide the best level of service overall. Mr. Miller replied that the roundabout was the best level of service.

Alderman Gass inquired about the safety of roundabouts compared to a signal. Wayne Whitehead replied that the safety issue is really the overriding issue here when it comes to roundabouts versus a regular signalized intersection. What we have today is people running red lights, yellow lights, and broad siding a car, and that does not happen in roundabouts. You might have some minor fender benders, but you don't have people getting seriously injured or killed, and that is the most important factor when it comes to roundabouts versus the signalized intersection.

Commissioner Pennel inquired where MoDOT stood regarding roundabouts. Matt Seiler of the MoDOT District #8 office replied that they were in favor of roundabouts in general and had some in Kansas City and Columbia, and were designing some throughout the state. Our biggest concern regarding the roundabout at the intersections was the northbound movements coming off of Highway 65 causing the traffic to back up on Highway 65. However, the consultants went over the numbers and how the flows would be affected, and they showed that the roundabout would handle the traffic. Our biggest concern is whether it will cause the backup of traffic beginning at the south end of Taneycomo Bridge and going all the way along Bus. 65. There are some promising alternatives with roundabouts. I think, from what we have seen and

with the traffic volumes that are projected, we can support either one, indicated Mr. Seiler.

At this time Alderman Huff moved to move forward with the concept of a 'Roundabout' at the intersection, and to proceed with the engineering in regards to that. Motion was seconded by Alderman Gass. Voting aye: Gass, Barker, Martin, Huff, Edie, and Purvis. Nays: none. Motion carried.

Administrator Dody clarified that the Taney County Commission were present for input only and would not be voting on these issues.

Presentation of Phase II: Downtown Transportation PHASE II SCOPE
Scope of Work related to the Branson Landing Project was OF WORK
the next item, and Administrator Dody provided the staff TRANSPORTATION
report. Mr. Dody explained that normally the Scope of
Services is not done in a public meeting. However, because of the issues
surrounding the Downtown Project, the Transportation issues, and because it
was felt it might be beneficial to involve not only the Council but the Commission
also in this process of developing a Scope of Services. That is what brings us
here today to actually discuss in an open meeting the development of a Scope of
Work. At this time Mr. Dody turned the meeting over to Wayne Whitehead of
Berger Devine Yaeger, Inc., and the Louis Berger Group Consulting Engineers.
He informed the Board this was the first public meeting as we get into Phase II of
the Traffic Study. There would need to have a number of public meetings as
everyone gets into Phase II, because this is the big Traffic Study portion which is
going to involve all of downtown Branson. Mr. Whitehead then introduced some
of the people who are involved in the project. Matt Seiler, Senior Traffic Engineer
with the Missouri Department of Transportation District #8; and Gary Chetwiggin,
Gary Vandel and Scott Bidderman with Berger Devine Yaeger, Inc.

Gary Chetwiggin addressed the Board and Commission indicating they would present the proposed objectives of the study first and then go into the actual task of the study. Mr. Chetwiggin then presented a power point presentation outlining the nine proposed objectives of the Phase II Traffic Study (see Attachment #1).

Scott Bidderman provided a power point presentation showing the fourteen proposed tasks to complete the study (see Attachment #2). Mr. Bidderman indicated that after their draft report was developed, a public meeting will be held to present that report to obtain any additional input on their findings and recommendations. The Draft Report would then be submitted to the City and MoDOT for review and comments. After that a Public Hearing will be held to present the final report.

Mayor Schaefer opened the floor for comments and questions.

Alderman Huff inquired that since Task 1 is to look at the possibility of a roundabout at the end of Lake Taneycomo Bridge if that was the top priority.

Mr. Whitehead indicated that is what he understands is the #1 priority. He stated they would like to get a report and recommendation as quickly as possible to the City so that the plan and design can move ahead, so we can get MoDOT's concurrence.

Alderman Huff asked if Task 5 regarding all new trips accessing the Branson Landing Development without disrupting the intersection at Bus. 65, could be explained, and asked if they were going to take into consideration traffic coming down off of 65 down Main Street into the Landing? Mr. Whitehead indicated they would certainly take into account that traffic, but what they want to assume is that all of the traffic can get out of one corridor, and if they design that corridor to handle all of the traffic then they know the traffic has been taken care of for Branson Landing.

Alderman Huff inquired who would be doing the parking demand analysis for the Branson Landing. Rick Huffman of HCW replied that Urban Retail Out of Chicago, Illinois had been contracted to do the parking studies based upon the tenancy and the amount of square footage for lease.

Alderman Gass inquired who paid for any additional signals that may be required. Mr. Whitehead replied that the way they currently operate is when a signal warrant is issued it goes on a list with all the other requests in the district. They are then prioritized based upon safety and warrants, and the ones that fall at the top of the list when funding becomes available the state pays and puts them in. Otherwise, it is relied on the community to participate in the cost of a signal if it is important to them to put a signal in.

Commissioner Herschend inquired if we assume that 100% of the Branson Landing traffic will go out the north corridor are we not missing some potential traffic problems because some folks go to motels on 76 and some head back to Arkansas? Gary Vandel stated there will be some traffic coming from those areas into the downtown. But with the way it is being designed the Business 65 corridor will be the easiest route to get to Branson Landing, and we are assuming that the traffic will use that corridor to avoid the congestion on Main Street. Commissioner Herschend indicated he believed a potential serious problem is being missed as he felt it would be more likely to have 50% of the visitors to Branson Landing come down the north corridor. Mr. Vandel replied that this was something they could look at when they also look at various roadways to see if there is a better way to get people in and out of the Landing. Administrator Dody indicated that he understood the design was to get a 100% in and out of the northern route, but there is still anticipated traffic of 15% going out in other directions. It was going to be built to handle 100% with 15% anticipated going other directions. Alderman Huff indicated he agreed with Commissioner

Herschend's comments and felt that 15% was far too low. Most people will go to their hotel before they head for the convention and then will go straight down the hill, down Main Street and the Intersection of Main Street and Bus. 65. That is really going to be impacted by the new visitors. So, I agree with Ron that we are going to be missing something if we don't factor in those new visitors coming from other directions, and encouraged that a closer look be given. Mr. Whitehead stated they would figure out a way to add this to their scope of work.

Commissioner Pennel indicated he had one concern about what the impact would be on those businesses along Long Street, Main Street, etc., and asked for them to think about that. Mr. Pennel also inquired how long it would take before the study was done? Mr. Whitehead replied that the time frame agreed upon was four to five months.

Rick Huffman of HCW indicated if we move forward a time frame on the Project is May 1, 2005 opening date of the retail sector of the project, and asked if with a 4 or 5 months for the study and a year for the design would the Bridge and road opening be Christmas 2004. Mr. Whitehead indicated the time of Phase II would have little to do with the design of the Roark Creek Bridge and getting it underway. There should not be a problem having that bridge constructed and that short piece of roadway on the north side built by Christmas 2004, indicated Mr. Whitehead.

Alderman Huff inquired if that also included the roundabout and the 4-laning of Box Car Willie Drive. David Miller replied, yes, that is right.

Gary Groman, 230 Riverpoint Road, Hollister, indicated that the Board had just authorized the study of the roundabout by Skaggs and yet one of the tasks in Phase II is to look at the re-location of the Skaggs Emergency Entrance, and suggested that it should be prioritized up to the top of Phase II to better coincide with the work that is going to be done in Phase I. Mr. Groman also asked if anyone had looked at the Lake Taneycomo Bridge to see if it is structurally sound to handle the increased traffic? Matt Seiler stated, that all state bridges are inspected every other year, and that particular bridge has a good structural rating. The deficiency in that bridge is the width of it because it was built when cars were narrower. Gary Vandell indicated that the new location for the Skaggs Emergency Entrance would be further to the north and will be out of the intersection of the roundabout and Business 65. Alderman Barker stated that he understood that was something the Hospital was proposing not something the City was proposing.

After no further comments, Mayor Schaefer entertained a motion to accept this Scope of Services. Alderman Gass made the motion, seconded by Alderman Barker. Voting aye: Gass, Barker, Martin, Huff, Purvis, and Edie. Nays: none. Motion carried.

ADJOURN:

At this time, Mayor Schaefer entertained a motion to adjourn. Alderman Huff moved to adjourn the Board of Aldermen meeting, seconded by Alderman Barker. Voting aye: Gass, Barker, Martin, Huff, Edie, and Purvis. Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Commissioner Pennel moved to adjourn the Taney County Commission, seconded by Commissioner Herschend. Presiding Commissioner Pennel adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.