

# **MARC Policy on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations on Missouri and Kansas River Bridges**

(Adopted by the MARC Board on April 25, 2006)

## **Background**

The Total Transportation Policy Committee authorized the formation of a task force in September 2005 to draft a policy on bicycle and pedestrian accommodations on Missouri and Kansas River bridges. The policy will be used to guide actions by TTPC in making comments and recommendations on proposed Missouri and Kansas River crossings, and could be adopted as part of the policy framework of the Long-Range Transportation Plan.

## **Overview of Current MARC Policy Related to this Issue**

MARC's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) identifies the four following goals:

### Transportation Goals

*Goal 1: Support a healthy, strong, regional economy*

*Goal 2: Maximize access to opportunity for all area residents*

*Goal 3: Support a quality built and natural environment*

*Goal 4: Promote the safety and well-being of the traveling public*

The region's ability to improve bicycle and pedestrian accommodation across major rivers is fundamental to meeting the goals of maximizing access and promoting safe transportation.

Within the LRTP's policy framework, four priority focus areas were developed to guide the region's transportation planning and programming activities:

*Policy 1: Increase emphasis on maintaining transportation infrastructure*

*Policy 2: Increase modal choice*

*Policy 3: Better integrate projects into the community*

*Policy 4: Better manage roadway capacity*

The LRTP's Bicycle and Pedestrian Elements address these policies, particularly in increasing modal choice. These elements identify rivers as major barriers to bicycle and pedestrian travel in the Kansas City region.

## **Proposed Policy**

The following proposed *Policy on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations on Missouri and Kansas River Bridges* is intended to address major barriers for bicyclists and pedestrians, connect the communities of our region, and implement the policies identified in the LRTP in a cost-effective manner. This policy also reflects the LRTP's goals to support a visionary multi-modal transportation system that will provide value and utility to all citizens of the region. The principal objective of this policy is to ensure that safe, practical and appropriate bicycle and pedestrian accommodations will be considered in the planning and design of all surface transportation projects that cross the Kansas and Missouri Rivers in the Kansas City metropolitan area and that such accommodations will be made wherever warranted and feasible.

This policy applies to projects in MARC's LRTP and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The policy is also provided as a recommended good practice for projects not identified in the LRTP or TIP.

Implementation of this policy will require that the lead agency develop and foster a partnership with KDOT, MoDOT, appropriate local governments, advocacy groups and other appropriate groups which MARC will facilitate. The intent of the partnership should be to work together to identify issues, review progress, establish priorities, and identify funding sources.

## **1. Warrants for Planning and Design:**

The investigation and evaluation of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations in all<sup>1</sup> projects for bridges crossing the Missouri and Kansas Rivers during planning and design activities is necessary when both of the following conditions exist:

- a) *Existing or Anticipated Demand* – Warrant accommodations exist when sufficient existing or planned future<sup>2</sup> bicycle or pedestrian traffic generators are located within one mile of the project. Such generators may include residential neighborhoods, employment centers, shopping centers, schools, parks, trails, etc. Local governments should assist project sponsors in defining when current and future bicycle and pedestrian traffic generators will result in sufficient need to warrant accommodation. For projects where no existing or planned bicycle or pedestrian generators are located within one mile of the project, the project sponsor should also consider including provisions for future bicycle and pedestrian accommodations if the anticipated life of the project exceeds the planning horizon of the LRTP. However, each bridge shall be evaluated on its own merits with a decision based on a technical evaluation, not a set distance from traffic generators.
- b) *Legal Access* – Bicyclists and pedestrians are legally allowed to use roadways<sup>3</sup> except where prohibited by law or local traffic ordinance. If bicyclists and pedestrians are not legal users but other safe, practical, and appropriate accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians can be established elsewhere within the right-of-way or within the same transportation corridor, the project sponsor should investigate and evaluate such accommodations. MARC and the appropriate local government should assist in providing relevant planning information.

## **2. Feasibility for Construction:**

- a) If the warrants listed above exist for a proposed major river crossing project, and if the cost of establishing safe, practical and appropriate bicycle and pedestrian accommodations on a bridge does not exceed 15%<sup>4</sup> of the cost of the entire bridge structure, MARC will consider bicycle or pedestrian accommodations to be feasible and should be provided in the design and construction of the project.
- b) Documentation will be developed by the project sponsor on all projects to support the decision to provide or not provide bicycle and/or pedestrian accommodations.

## **3. Other Design Considerations:**

- a) Bicycle and/or pedestrian connections should be made to streets, roadways, sidewalks or trails found in proximity to river crossing accommodations so that the system is seamless and useful to the traveling, walking, and bicycling public. For portions of the system outside of the corridor right-of-way, the local governments should plan for making needed extensions to the local or regional facilities to make these connections possible.
- b) Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations to, on and from major river bridges should be designed, constructed, operated and maintained to meet federal ADA requirements so that all bicyclists and pedestrians, including people with disabilities, can travel safely and independently.
- c) Projects should be planned to address needs for the long-term. Bridge crossings are long-term investments that remain in place for many years. The design of the bridge should anticipate both current and future demand for bicycling and walking facilities.
- d) Bridge design should be done in a manner that gives strong consideration to the safety of all modes. The design should be done in a manner to minimize detrimental effects for any mode.
- e) Major river bridges should be designed to allow bicyclists and pedestrians to travel along the rivers and under the bridges.
- f) Facilities should be designed to appropriate standards and guidelines. The design of Kansas and Missouri River crossing facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians should follow design guidelines and

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<sup>1</sup> "All" is not intended to include routine maintenance.

<sup>2</sup> Expected future generators are defined as being documented on an agency's plan (i.e. MetroGreen, future land use plans of local jurisdictions).

<sup>3</sup> It is not the intention of the policy to refer to interstate travel ways.

<sup>4</sup> The policy's intent is not to mandate that 15% of a bridge structure budget should be dedicated to bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Rather any percentage below 15% that will establish the facilities or structural accommodations is satisfactory. If the accommodations exceed 15%, they can still be included in the project.

standards that are commonly used, such as the AASHTO's Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, AASHTO's Guide For The Planning, Design and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities, FHWA's A-RD-92-073 Selecting Roadway Design Treatments to Accommodate Bicycles, AASHTO's A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, ITE's Recommended Practice "Design and Safety of Pedestrian Facilities", the Kansas City American Public Works Association's (KCAPWA) Incidental Construction and Local Bicycle Facility Design Guidance, and the ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG).

- g) The project sponsor, and local government and/or local agencies will work together to ensure that the bicycle and pedestrian accommodation is ground to ground, allowing for connections to other bicycle and/or pedestrian facilities.
- h) The bridge and its approaches should be designed to avoid obstructions for current or future connections to bicycle or pedestrian facilities on either end of or under the bridge.

#### **4. Funding:**

Funding of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations for major river crossing projects must be determined on a case-by-case basis for each project. Potential funding sources for these improvements may include federal, state, and local funds as appropriate, including, but not limited to, federal funds administered by MARC in the TIP.

The project sponsor, local governments and/or local agencies will work together to develop project financial plans, fund applications, and project funding agreements between participating state or local governments; however, nothing in this policy should be construed as requiring or preventing any project sponsor from bearing all or part of the cost of providing safe, practical and appropriate bicycle/pedestrian accommodations.

MARC will assist in the development of financial plans for all major river crossing projects to be included in the regional LRTP and TIP, as requested by project sponsors, member local governments or other metropolitan planning stakeholders.

Because this policy elevates the priority of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations on major river crossings, MARC shall review the evaluation criteria for relevant federal funds under its control, including suballocated Bridge, CMAQ, STP, and STP-TE to ensure that appropriate consideration is given for applications for these types of improvements in regional competitive programming processes.

#### **5. Replacement of Existing Accommodations:**

Major river bridge projects that replace existing bridges with bicycle and pedestrian accommodation should provide for at least the same level if not safer levels of accommodation.

#### **6. Maintenance:**

Maintenance of bicycle and pedestrian facilities is an important element of assuring safe and convenient crossings of the Kansas and Missouri Rivers for all travelers. Once again, the arrangements for maintaining these facilities should be made on a case-by-case basis and may require participation between multiple state and/or local agencies. However, the owner of the bridge is ultimately responsible for maintenance either by maintaining the bicycle/pedestrian facilities themselves or by securing maintenance agreements from other agencies.

#### **7. Policy Updates:**

This policy will be reviewed periodically as the state of the practice for such matters as forecasting bicycle and pedestrian demand evolve.