



STATE OF ARKANSAS

House of Representatives

REPRESENTATIVE

Denise Jones Ennett
621 East 16th Street
Little Rock, Arkansas 72202-5539

501-690-4211 Cell
denise.ennett@arkansashouse.org

DISTRICT 80

Counties:
Part Pulaski

COMMITTEES:

Public Transportation
Insurance and Commerce
Joint Committee on Advanced
Communications and Information
Technology

1st Alternate,
Arkansas Legislative Council

2nd Alternate,
Legislative Joint Auditing Committee

March 21, 2023

The Honorable Frank Scott, Jr.
Mayor of Little Rock
500 W. Markham, Room 203
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Mayor Scott:

For as long as I have been involved with the Downtown Neighborhood Association, Broadway Street has been a subject of interest. I requested a feasibility study from the Arkansas Department of Transportation, included, from which it was recommended that the portion of Broadway, from 17th Street to Roosevelt, be taken from four lanes to two lanes and include pedestrian refuges and curb extensions to aid in the abolition of street racing.

On behalf of my constituents who live on or near Broadway Street, I am respectfully asking the City of Little Rock to include Broadway Street in the application proposal, as you apply for the Surface Transportation Block Grant, which aids in projects to preserve and improve the conditions and performance on federal-aid highways.

I appreciate your attention to this important matter. If I may answer any questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denise Jones Ennett".

Denise Jones Ennett
State Representative
District 80

DJE/ss

Enclosure

Mayor Scott

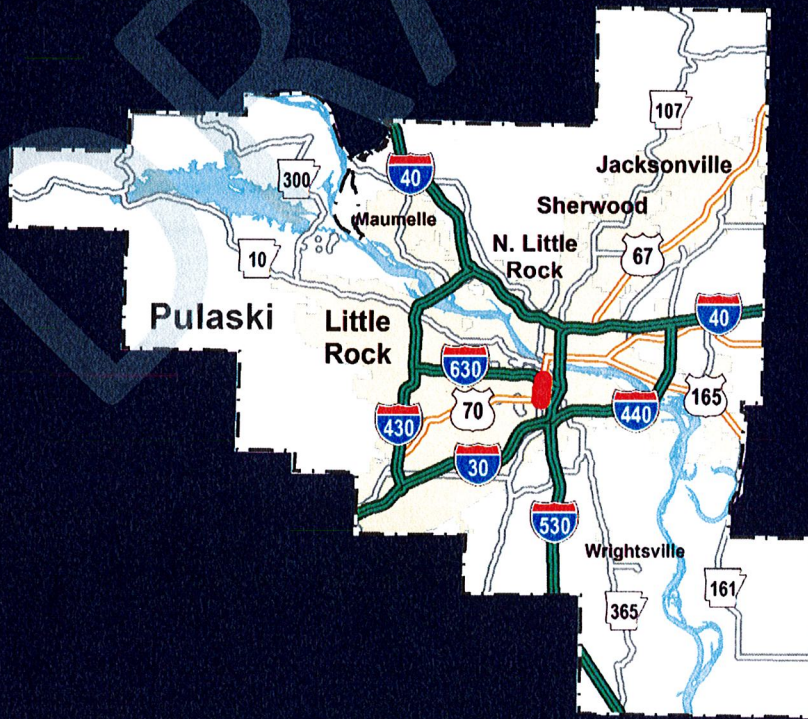
03/21/2023

Page 2

cc: Mr. Jon Honeywell, Director, Little Rock Public Works Department
The Honorable Virgil Miller, Little Rock Board of Directors
The Honorable Ken Richardson, Little Rock Board of Directors
The Honorable Kathy Webb, Little Rock Board of Directors
The Honorable Capi Peck, Little Rock Board of Directors
The Honorable Lance Hines, Little Rock Board of Directors
The Honorable Andrea Hogan Lewis, Little Rock Board of Directors
The Honorable Brenda "B.J." Wyrick, Little Rock Board of Directors
The Honorable Dean Kumpuris, Little Rock Board of Directors
The Honorable Antwan Phillips, Little Rock Board of Directors
The Honorable Joan Adcock, Little Rock Board of Directors

HIGHWAY 70 (BROADWAY) STUDY

CITY OF LITTLE ROCK
PULASKI COUNTY



DRAFT

HIGHWAY 70 (BROADWAY) STUDY

CITY OF LITTLE ROCK
PULASKI COUNTY
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Prepared by the Transportation Planning and Policy Division
Arkansas Department of Transportation
In Cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration

This report was funded in part by the Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation. The views and opinions of the authors expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

The Arkansas Department of Transportation (Department) complies with all civil rights provisions of federal statutes and related authorities that prohibit discrimination in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. Therefore, the Department does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, age, national origin, religion (not applicable as a protected group under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Title VI Program), disability, Limited English Proficiency (LEP), or low-income status in the admission, access to and treatment in the Department's programs and activities, as well as the Department's hiring or employment practices. Complaints of alleged discrimination and inquiries regarding the Department's nondiscrimination policies may be directed to Joanna P. McFadden Section Head – EEO/DBE (ADA/504/Title VI Coordinator), P.O. Box 2261, Little Rock, AR 72203, (501) 569-2298, (Voice/TTY 711), or the following email address: joanna.mcfadden@ardot.gov

Free language assistance for the Limited English Proficient individuals is available upon request.

This notice is available from the ADA/504/Title VI Coordinator in large print, on audiotape and in Braille.

ARDOT:TPP:PP:AP 1/18/2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
Introduction	1
Existing Conditions	1
Current Plans	3
Purpose and Need	4
Safety and Resiliency	4
Mobility and System Reliability	6
Multimodal Transportation System.....	6
Environmental Sustainability	7
Other LRITP Goals	7
Purpose and Need Summary	7
Alternatives Analysis	8
Rightsizing	8
Pedestrian Crossing Opportunities	9
Sidewalk Condition	12
Sight Distance Improvements	12
Access Management	12
Conclusions	13
Appendix A – Minute Order 2020-077	A-1

INTRODUCTION

Downtown Little Rock residents have expressed concerns about walking or biking on or across Highway 70, locally known as Broadway Street, in their neighborhood. One proposal is to reallocate the Highway 70 right-of-way to better accommodate non-automobile modes of travel. For this reason, the Arkansas State Highway Commission adopted Minute Order 2020-077 in September 2020, authorizing a study of Highway 70. The study area is shown in **Figure 1**.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Highway 70 corridor is a principal arterial that connects neighborhoods in southern Little Rock to downtown and the Interstate system. The study segment was originally constructed as a major intercity corridor leading to one of the state's few Arkansas River bridges; however, almost all intercity travel has now shifted to the Interstate system. Today, most Highway 70 travelers are making short trips to or from neighborhoods south of downtown Little Rock. The study segment is located in a relatively dense urban environment with numerous pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. A roadway grid provides numerous nearby north-south routes, thus Highway 70 volumes are modest. As such, Highway 70 functions more as a city street than a highway.

Highway 70 is currently a four-lane undivided route with curb, gutter, and sidewalks. The speed limit is posted as 35 miles per hour (MPH). The current cross-section is shown in **Figure 2**. In recent years, the community has expressed frustration that multimodal accommodations are limited or of poor quality, even when there appears to be sufficient vehicular capacity.

Figure 1 – ADT Map



Figure 2 – Current Cross-Section



CURRENT PLANS

The 2023-2026 Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) includes no jobs within the study area.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The study corridor is considered in the context of the six goal areas identified in the Arkansas Long Range Intermodal Transportation Plan (LRITP) that support the Department’s mission. These goal areas inform the purpose and the need for improvements to Highway 70 in Little Rock.

SAFETY AND RESILIENCY

Safety

Historical crash data was compiled from 2017 to 2021 to consider the safety performance of Highway 70. Crash rates, computed for both total crashes and fatal and serious injury (KA) crashes, were reviewed. Data for the 5-year analysis is shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1 – Highway 70 Crash Rates (2017-2021)

Segment	Log Miles	Weighted ADT ¹	Total Crashes			KA Crashes		
			Number of Crashes	Crash Rate (per mvm) ²	Statewide Average (per mvm) ²	Number of Crashes	Crash Rate (per 100 mvm) ³	Statewide Average (per 100 mvm) ³
Highway 70, Section 12								
I-630 to Highway 365	8.50 to 9.57	11,900	148	6.35	4.45 ⁴	2	8.58	9.67 ⁵
1 – Average Daily Traffic 2 – Crash rates reported in crashes per million vehicle miles (mvm) 3 – KA crash rates reported in crashes per 100 million vehicle miles (mvm) 4 – Statewide average crash rate for urban, four-lane, undivided highways (no access control) 5 – Statewide average KA crash rates for urban, four-lane, undivided highways (no access control) Values above the Statewide Average are shown in red.								

As expected in an urban setting, signalized intersections had the highest number of crashes, as seen in **Figure 3**. Most of the crashes were angle and rear-end incidents resulting in no apparent injuries. The two KA crashes during the analysis period resulted in serious injury, both of which were at intersections. **Figure 3** also shows the locations of the three pedestrian-involved crashes, two of which occurred under dark lighting conditions. One of the pedestrian-involved crashes resulted in serious injury.

Figure 3 – KA Crash and Non-Motorist Crash Locations Map



Resiliency

Interstate 30 and Interstate 630 are critical high-volume routes that move traffic across Central Arkansas. Vehicle probe data was used to determine what happens when an incident disrupts traffic on these Interstates. This data showed that even during the most severe freeway incidents, Highway 70 hourly volumes would increase by a few hundred vehicles, a surge that the local street network can handle. More traffic shifts to other Interstates and higher capacity arterials (like University Avenue), or it disperses across the transportation grid south of downtown. Nevertheless, it is important to be aware of how freeway incidents impact Highway 70.

MOBILITY AND SYSTEM RELIABILITY

South of Interstate 630, Highway 70 peak volumes are well below capacity with minimal delays as currently configured. Congestion levels are higher, but still reasonable, at Interstate 630. These trends are expected to continue through at least 2045.

MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The Department received feedback from area residents concerning multimodal travel. Many residents prefer to make short-distance trips by walking or cycling instead of driving. Common multimodal destinations include other residences, stores, parks, churches, restaurants, and adjacent neighborhoods (like Downtown and South Main). Residents usually drive to work or other more distant destinations.

Residents stated that they often do not feel safe walking or bicycling along Broadway, or even crossing the street. Specific concerns include high vehicular speeds, limited crossing opportunities, and poor sidewalks. These concerns were specifically recognized south of 17th Street, where no traffic signals exist. These residents desire that Highway 70 be

modified to better accommodate all users, including automobiles, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

A cursory environmental review of the study area identified constraints that are typical for established urban areas. The constraints include cemeteries, historic sites, parks, underground storage tanks, and environmental justice populations. Impacts to these areas should be avoided or minimized to the extent possible.

OTHER LRITP GOALS

The two remaining LRITP Goals are briefly discussed below:

- **Infrastructure Condition** – The pavement and bridge in the study segment are in fair condition. The sidewalks are generally in poor condition, with many spots damaged by tree roots. There are also a number of locations that do not meet current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) design standards.
- **Economic Competitiveness** – Most Highway 70 travel is to area residences and businesses. Freight providers do not typically rely on this route to reach major industries.

PURPOSE AND NEED SUMMARY

Highway 70 serves vehicular travel well. This study, however, shows that there is a demand for multimodal travel that is not being met. Alternatives should be explored to improve multimodal performance while still serving vehicular travel needs, particularly south of 17th Street.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

While Highway 70 automobile mobility is great, the route does not serve the community's multimodal needs as well as it could. Several improvement strategies were developed to improve multimodal performance with minimal impact on automobile mobility. It is anticipated that each alternative could be implemented within the existing right of way. Opportunities are listed without regard to what agency would be responsible for the work.

RIGHTSIZING

Highway 70 would be restriped with two travel lanes and a flush median south of 18th Street. Most pedestrian-oriented comments received were focused on this southern segment. A transition zone between 17th Street and 18th Street would allow a return to the existing four-lane, undivided configuration north of 17th Street. This configuration would encourage reasonable automobile speeds and provide safer pedestrian crossings, with minimal negative impacts on automobile travel. The extra roadway width on each side would be striped to provide motorists with additional separation from both trees and pedestrians, and additional space for transit rider service. Bicycle lanes are not recommended because traffic volumes to the north are higher. Bicyclists would be better accommodated on nearby parallel routes.

Four travel lanes should be maintained north of 17th Street to maintain capacity for higher traffic volumes. This also provides needed extra capacity when incidents disrupt other roadways, providing exiting freeway traffic an opportunity to disperse across the roadway network. Traffic signals are more frequent here, so pedestrians have opportunities to cross the street, and automobiles naturally travel slower.

At the request of City of Little Rock staff and the City's Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC), different rightsizing configurations extending to Interstate 630 and Daisy L. Gatson Bates Drive were evaluated. Extending the rightsized section all the way to Interstate 630 could result in extensive automobile delay that queues into downtown and is not recommended. Extending the rightsized section north only to Daisy L. Gatson Bates Drive would improve multimodal performance for these additional few blocks but would result in some additional peak hour automobile delays.

A rightsizing project between Roosevelt Road and 18th Street would provide meaningful multimodal benefits to the section of Broadway where pedestrian crossing opportunities are most limited, and where most public concerns were received. This is accomplished while ensuring that vehicles are also well served. For these reasons, it is recommended that rightsizing be considered between Roosevelt Road and 18th Street.

PEDESTRIAN CROSSING OPPORTUNITIES

As previously discussed, Highway 70 lacks protected pedestrian crossing opportunities between Roosevelt Road and 17th Street. To increase the visibility of pedestrians, crossings with rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) signs should be considered. By locating up to three crosswalk locations with neighborhood input, pedestrians along the corridor would have opportunities to cross with minimal indirection. Pedestrian refuge islands or curb extensions can also be considered to reduce pedestrian crossing distances. Examples of these safety countermeasures are shown in **Figures 4, 5, and 6**. A more intrusive pedestrian hybrid beacon (PHB) crosswalk is not recommended because pedestrian crossings are spread out throughout the corridor and cannot reasonably be consolidated at one point.

North of 17th Street, traffic signals are frequent enough to meet pedestrian crossing needs. The crosswalks at these traffic signals, however, do not appear to conform to current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) design standards. These features should be considered as future improvements are made.

Figure 4 – Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon



Source: LJB Incorporated

Figure 5 – Refuge Island



Source: James R. Barrera

Figure 6 – Curb Extension



Source: Creative Commons / Richard Drdul

SIDEWALK CONDITION

The sidewalks along Highway 70 are generally in poor condition. Many segments have been damaged by tree roots, and other locations do not meet current ADA standards. Sidewalk conditions should be considered in the development of future projects.

SIGHT DISTANCE IMPROVEMENTS

Owing to the neighborhood's long history, many large trees are very close to Highway 70. These trees often reduce the intersection sight distance when turning from side streets. Furthermore, limbs hanging over the road can threaten users during storms and large tree trunks can also pose a safety hazard. Going forward, regular tree trimming will be an important Highway 70 maintenance activity, and targeted tree removal may also improve the facility's performance while retaining neighborhood character. By shifting Highway 70 right-lane motorists closer to the centerline, a rightsizing project would naturally improve intersection sight distance.

ACCESS MANAGEMENT

Access management on Highway 70 is generally good, with many residences accessing properties from rear alleys. That said, there are a few locations where closely spaced access points impact Highway 70 performance. One location is in the southeast quadrant of the Interstate 630 interchange, where driveway turns can impact interchange operations. As land parcels redevelop, the impacts of driveway locations should be evaluated, and driveways should be consolidated to minimize the impacts on other travelers.

CONCLUSIONS

Although Highway 70 was constructed decades ago as an intercity highway, the route now serves as an arterial route through a residential community. As a result, there is more multimodal travel through the neighborhood, and people who drive through the neighborhood are usually traveling to nearby destinations. This study has outlined strategies for adapting this route to meet the multimodal needs of current users while ensuring that drivers are still well served.

Restriping Highway 70 to include two travel lanes and a flush median between Roosevelt Road and 18th Street (with a transition zone to 17th Street) is recommended to be considered as a strategy to improve multimodal performance while ensuring strong automobile performance. As a part of this project, up to three enhanced crosswalk locations should be identified between Roosevelt Road and 18th Street. Enhancements to be considered should include RRFB signage, pedestrian refuge islands, and/or curb extensions. The estimated total cost of this rightsizing project between Roosevelt Road and 17th Street, including an asphalt pavement overlay for the entire study corridor, and new traffic signals at the current signalized intersections is \$7.0 million, in 2022 dollars. This includes \$5.3 million in construction costs.

No funding has been identified for any of the study recommendations. Due to the limited funds available for highway projects, partnerships should be explored as a strategy to fund the improvements discussed in the study. If the recommended improvements are implemented, the study portion of Highway 70 would need to be removed from the State Highway System. Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant funding can also be pursued for pedestrian elements discussed in this study, including sidewalk reconstruction.

APPENDIX A

MINUTE ORDER 2020-077

ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION

MINUTE ORDER

District: Six
County: Pulaski
Category: Miscellaneous


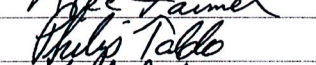

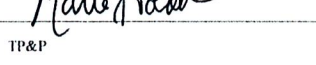

Page 1 of 1 Page

WHEREAS, IN PULASKI COUNTY, IN THE CITY OF LITTLE ROCK, community members have requested modifications to the lane configuration of Highway 70 (Broadway Street) between Highway 365 (Roosevelt Road) and Interstate 630; and

WHEREAS, a study is necessary to determine the need for and feasibility of modifications to this segment of Highway 70.

NOW THEREFORE, the Director is authorized to conduct a study to determine the need for and feasibility of modifications to the Highway 70 Corridor between Highway 365 and Interstate 630.

Approved:

Chairman
Vice-Chairman
Member
Member
Member

TP&P


Form 19-456
Rev. 6/18/2015

Y:\MPP\Minute Orders\2020\MO Authorize Hwy 70 Study Little Rock 2020-09.docx

Submitted By:


Assistant Chief Engineer, Planning

Approved:


Director
Minute Order No. 2020 077
Date Passed SEP 02 2020



DRAFT



HIGHWAY 70 (BROADWAY) STUDY

CITY OF LITTLE ROCK
PULASKI COUNTY

