May 12, 2011

News Release

For Immediate Release

"The Link" Opens With Ribbon-cutting, Bike Ride

A ribbon-cutting and ceremonial bike ride will be held on the evening of Sunday, May 15 to celebrate the opening of the first section of "The Link," a new bicycle and pedestrian corridor that aims to connect greenway trails, existing bike routes and major activity centers in Springfield.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony will begin at 4:15 p.m., Sunday, May 15, on the plaza in front of Hammons Hall for the Performing Arts, 525 John Q. Hammons Parkway. The ceremony kicks off a bike ride organized by SpringBike Bicycle Club that will take cyclists to Hammons Field for a special "Springbike/Ozark Greenways Night" at the ballgame. Cyclists will ride through the ribbon on Hammons Parkway and bike to Hammons Field, where they will ride around the warning track as a group. The ribbon cutting and bike ride also help kick off the annual "Bike To Work Week" May 16-20.

The Link is a planned north-south bicycle and pedestrian route running through Springfield's core that will connect existing and planned greenways, bike routes, neighborhoods and activity centers from Doling Park to Medical Mile. The planned route runs through or right next to the following areas: Doling Park, Commercial Street, Drury University, the O'Reilly Family Events Center, Ozarks Technical Community College, the IDEA Commons, Jordan Valley, the Jordan Creek Greenway, Hammons Field, Downtown, JQH Arena, Missouri State University, Phelps Grove Park, the St. John's hospital campus, Battlefield Mall, the South Creek Greenway, the Cox South hospital campus and the Ward Branch Greenway.
The Link is not a series of bike lanes. Rather, it is an attempt to create a route where drivers and cyclists are expected to share traffic lanes. The route is primarily on low-speed, low-traffic streets such as Summit, Washington, Hammons and Kings, and it will be clearly marked with signs and pavement markers on the surface of the streets and sidewalks. The ultimate goal is to develop a system of shared-use routes that creates an experience of comfort and safety. Eventually, landscaping and wider sidewalks will help this corridor become a more pleasant experience for all who travel along it.

The first portion of The Link is now underway, running from Doling Park to Phelps Grove Park. Signs and marking are being installed now. More will be installed as routes are identified and funding becomes available. Two more planned legs of The Link will connect to other greenways and activity centers in northwest and southeast Springfield.

Download the concept map for a complete picture of the project (700k PDF). The areas in blue are scheduled to be complete by the end of 2012. The shaded areas will be completed as funding becomes available in subsequent years.

The cost of the first phase of the The Link is estimated to be $988,000, which mainly pays for signs and roadway markings. Funding comes from 1/4-Cent Sales Tax For Capital Improvements.

For more information about The Link, contact: Ralph Rognstad, Director of Planning and Development, (417) 864-1035; or David Hutchison, Professional Engineer - Public Works Traffic Engineering, (417) 864-1971. More information is also available online at www.springfieldmo.gov/thelink.

For more information about the May 15 event, contact: Mike Brothers, Department of Public Information, (417) 864-1119.

For more about Bike To Work Week, go to: www.ozarkgreenways.org.