

Jan. 9, 2012
Janice Osadczuk
Engineering Services Team Leader
Federal Highway Administration
575 North Pennsylvania Street, Room 254
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

HDA-IN

Re: Louisville-Southern Indiana Ohio River Bridges Project Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS)

Dear Ms. Osadczuk,

TARC is responding to solicitation for comment regarding the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Louisville-Southern Indiana Ohio River Bridges Project.

TARC outlined comments in a letter dated Sept. 6, 2011 in response to a previous project solicitation for input. Because there was no official written response to the first round of solicitation, TARC is reiterating and expanding on our previous comments. We appreciate the opportunity to participate.

As the public transportation provider for Greater Louisville, TARC operates 46 bus routes in Jefferson, Bullitt and Oldham counties in Kentucky and Floyd and Clark counties in Indiana with average daily ridership of more than 48,000 passengers. Six of our routes serve Southern Indiana and our buses cross the river in the Bridges Project area 725 times each week.

TARC's engagement in project planning is imperative to help maintain traffic flow during construction and after the project completion. We request that TARC and appropriate project staff meet to discuss the development of plans and to address other issues such as assurances that TARC and the passengers who use public transportation will be exempt from paying tolls associated with the project.

As stated in our previous letter, the potential for enhanced public transportation to help address the project's purpose and need deserves careful consideration especially in light of plans to scale back the project and to rely on tolls to help cover the costs. Public transportation can help relieve traffic congestion, thus improving safety, reducing air pollution, and providing a cost-effective means of travel for people needing to get to and from jobs, educational opportunities and other destinations. Public transportation is a lifeline and the only option for many people to access necessities and what life has to offer.

TARC has recently demonstrated the popularity of public transportation in Louisville with convenient, predictable service. On our two major routes, ridership has increased dramatically – 20 percent – since February when TARC improved service so that buses began arriving at stops every 15 minutes from 6 a.m. – 9 p.m. on weekdays. The public has embraced this frequent service and a recent scientific survey commissioned by a task force appointed by Mayor Greg Fischer indicated TARC users want improved bus service.

Enhanced bus service was part of the selected alternative for the project in 2003, although specifics have never been clearly defined. Because the construction phase will cover a long period of time, enhanced bus service will be needed to help maintain traffic flow. This service could in some ways become permanent as a result of the public's familiarity with the service and the direct benefits to users and the general public.

TARC believes enhanced public transportation, both during construction and as part of the built project, will benefit the project and the greater community. Planning, design, construction and funding for enhanced bus service should be incorporated in the project's development/traffic maintenance plan and should be part of the completed project.

The project should also be designed so that it does not preclude public transportation options as part of long-term, permanent solutions to improve cross-river mobility.

Specifics to be addressed in the construction phase around both bridges and the Spaghetti Junction rebuild include:

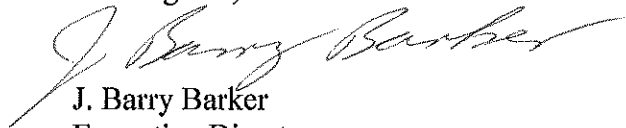
- Ensuring that turning radii, lane widths and other project features meet design criteria to accommodate buses
- Establishment of permanent park-and-ride facilities in final construction contracts
- Express and shuttle bus service during construction and options for this service to become permanent between Louisville and Southern Indiana
- Improved and/or new bus stops, shelters, benches, sidewalk access and pull-off areas for buses. Locations should be designated as part of the traffic maintenance and construction plan.
- An aggressive public information campaign and increased tools including use of emerging technology such as texting and online services to communicate with the public about public transportation service and arrival times of buses.
- Designation of HOV public transportation lanes as part of the traffic maintenance and construction plans.
- Traffic signal priority for public transportation

Because the use of public transportation has community-wide benefits and because many people are dependent on public transportation as their travel option for economic, disability and other reasons, TARC services and the passengers who use public transportation should be exempt from paying any tolls associated with the project. Public transportation passengers already pay a fare, now set at \$1.50 per trip and \$2.50 for express service.

TARC looks forward to working with Bridges Project representatives to ensure effective public transportation services during construction and upon completion of the project. We applaud the improved mobility and public safety on our roads and bridges throughout Greater Louisville that will result from the project's completion.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Best regards,



J. Barry Barker
Executive Director

cc: Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer, Jeffersonville Mayor Mike Moore, New Albany Mayor Jeff Gahan, Louisville-Southern Indiana Bridges Authority Executive Director Steve Schultz