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SPRINGFIELD, MO



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Highway 60 access points at Farm Road 189 and Highland Springs Boulevard are at the center of an opposition campaign by nearby property owners.

Business owners, residents step up resistance to Hwy 60 plans

Letters of opposition are sent to MoDOT, which has signaled incoming work



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Property owners along U.S. Highway 60, near Springfield city limits on the southeast side, are increasing pressure on the Missouri Department of Transportation to reconsider a plan that would remove their direct access to the busy thoroughfare.

A group of business owners with stakes around the Farm Road 189 and Highland Springs Boulevard access points, along with residents represented by the Highland Springs Community Association Inc., have issued new letters of opposition to MoDOT and the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission that governs the state transportation department. Copies of the letters, both dated in late



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EDITORS' PICK



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2025 Most Influential Women (/stories/2025-most-influential-women,101339)

For 26 years, Springfield Business Journal has honored local women for their professional and civic accomplishments and contributions. An independent panel of judges has selected this year's class of Most Influential Women. With the addition of this class, 520 women have received this award.

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August, were recently provided to Springfield Business Journal by Tyler Padgitt, lead pastor at The Courageous Church, who is one of the key voices in the opposition initiative.

"I remain hopeful for an acceptable plan moving forward, though I have received no indication of such at this point," Padgitt said. "We are all eager for a path to be settled that ensures this important corridor – both for the present and future of Springfield – is fully utilized and not disregarded."

MoDOT has previously signaled plans to remove driveways and intersections with direct Highway 60 access along the stretch from the 60/65 interchange to Route 125 in Rogersville, with the existing interchange at Routes NN/J serving as the only access point to Highway 60, according to past SBJ reporting. Safety concerns and freeway considerations have been cited by the transportation agency, which intends to build outer roads from NN/J to the impacted business and residential areas.

Letters of opposition

Both petitions sent to MoDOT and the MHTC in late August point to access issues, among several other concerns, that they say would result if the plan moves forward.

The business owner petition, signed by 11 individuals, references a survey of stakeholders indicating their belief that the removal of the access points would cause revenue losses, lost tenants or closures, and reduced customer visits.

"This is not speculation – it is the lived knowledge and expertise of business leaders who operate on these roads every day," the letter reads. "While we are all pro-safety, we believe the current proposal is the wrong solution. Limiting access solely to Highway J will not make our community safer – instead, it will undermine the economic vitality of Rogersville and Springfield."

The businesspeople named in the petition are as follows:

- Howard W. Bailey, BACO Investments LLC
- Larry Childress, Childress Family LP
- Terry Conner, Prime Capital Financial
- Bill Dunton, Abacus
- Jane Harpole, Kodiak Property Management Inc.
- Cameron G. Jones, LifeGen Law Group LLC
- Brad King, James River Market Center LLC
- Rob Marsh, Missouri Sports Hall of Fame
- Tyler Padgitt, The Courageous Church
- Mark Stahlman, Highland Springs Country Club
- Brian VanFosson, Citizens Bank of Rogersville

A group of Highland Springs residents say the removal of their Highland Springs Boulevard access point to Highway 60 would result in lower property values, increased wait times for emergency services and safety hazards, among other concerns. Their names are redacted across 19 pages of a letter sent by residents to MoDOT that was shared with SBJ.

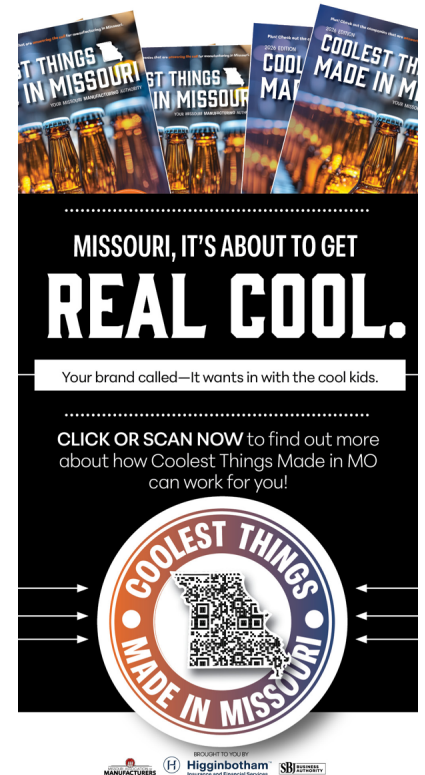
"The current MoDOT plan to alter the entrance to Highland Springs significantly devalues all residences and lots within HSCC, which devaluation we estimate to be in the millions of dollars; this would constitute a 'taking' under Missouri law, at a cost we do not believe MoDOT has appropriately weighed or considered," the letter reads.

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- ☐ Help
- ☐ Hinder
- ☐ Unsure

The Highland Springs residents also pointed to a nearly 40-year-old agreement between late developer John Q. Hammons and Missouri transportation officials that appears to guarantee direct access to Highland Springs from Highway 60, as SBJ reported in March.

“This direct connection to Highway 60 was a foundational infrastructure commitment that influenced home purchases, community planning and long-term expectations,” the residents’ letter reads. “Any attempt to alter this access disregards that agreement and undermines the integrity of Highland Springs’ original development vision.”

MoDOT response

Taylor Brune, MoDOT communications director, provided a statement on behalf of the department in response to a request for comment on the opposition letters.

“MoDOT is aiming to enhance safety and reduce crashes along the Route 60 corridor at this location,” the statement reads. “This improvement was identified by local planning partners as a priority.”

The statement indicates those local partners are city and county leadership, elected officials and business owners, who MoDOT says helped the department craft improvements to Highway 60 identified in the current five-year Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. The access point removal work, according to the statement, is scheduled for fiscal 2029.

“That project is currently in the early stages of conceptual development, and MoDOT will be doing extensive public outreach and engagement as designs are drafted,” the statement reads. “In recent discussions with the local planning organization – the Ozarks Transportation Organization – there is potential for a study to examine this corridor from a more global perspective beyond this project.”

Alternatives

MoDOT officials have previously told SBJ that it would mean going back to the drawing board and engaging in extensive study to find an alternative solution.

That’s exactly what the business owners and Highland Springs residents advocate for in the letters of opposition.

“The remedy is not restricting access, but rather providing a better-designed exit and improved access points that serve both safety and commerce,” the letter from business owners states.

The residents, in their letter, add, “We respectfully request that MoDOT reconsider this proposal and engage with our community to identify safer, more suitable alternatives that do not involve eliminating our primary point of access. Viable options exist to improve roadway safety without disrupting established neighborhood access.”

What that might look like is currently up in the air, but one of the business owners, Childress, who with his family owns some 600 acres that are mostly northeast of the 60/65 interchange, told SBJ in February he had been in talks with MoDOT around a decade ago for a “dogbone” style interchange at the Farm Road 189 intersection. Such an interchange resembles the shape of a dogbone, with ramps that connect the highway to two roundabouts – one on each side – allowing traffic to flow between the local road and the highway, according to a general explanation of that type of interchange on MoDOT’s website.

Comments

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