

~~Strikethrough print~~ represents text which has been deleted.

Bold and italicized print represents text which has been added or modified.

RESOLUTION HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT

Delta Council commends the Mississippi Legislature for enacting the four-lane highway construction program 34 years ago. Completion of this four-lane highway network in the State of Mississippi has been of paramount importance to the economic growth of our State, and the safety of our citizens.

Delta Council encourages the completion of four-laning of U.S. Highway 6 throughout the remainder of North Mississippi, extending from Batesville to the Helena Bridge. Of all of the east-west major highway segments in the State of Mississippi, the “missing link” is the section between Batesville and Clarksdale/Helena Bridge MS River crossing into Arkansas. (Interstate 10, U.S. 84, Interstate 20, U.S. 82, Interstate 22, with Highway 6 being the only incomplete segment.) This roadway has long been a high priority of Delta Council and should be for all of the State. We also express our support for the recently proposed Western Corridor Blues and Freight Corridor, which would four-lane U.S. 61 from Leland to Vicksburg and then continue four-laning the portion of MS 27 from Vicksburg to Crystal Springs at the intersection of Interstate 55 south of Jackson. This route would create a westernmost north-south corridor for the efficient movement of freight, agricultural commodities, other goods, and increase safety by allowing for an alternate route from the current bottlenecks experienced in the I-55 and I-20 intersection area.

We also offer praise for the Mississippi Department of Transportation for completion of I-269 from Collierville to Hernando. We further express appreciation to the Mississippi Department of Transportation for the completion of the bridge realignment on U.S. Highway 61 in Nitta Yuma and for the final completion of the 4-laning of Highway 8 from Ruleville to Cleveland. Special recognition should be given for the rehabilitation work by the Mississippi Department of Transportation on the Steele Bayou-Highway 465 bridge infrastructure in Warren County.

Delta Council continues to support the priorities established in previous highway committee resolutions, including the elective form of Commission for the Department of Transportation. In conclusion, Delta Council restates its support for the concept of:

- utilizing revenues from the sale of motor fuel to construct and maintain highways and opposes the use of future and additional motor fuel tax revenues for other State priorities. To the extent practicable,

- we encourage Commissioners of our Mississippi Department of Transportation to utilize State and federal resources in a way which allows us to “pay as you go”, rather than transferring the note to our children to pay for our highways through long-term bonds unless there is a dedicated source for retiring these debts. Specifically,
- we make exception to the philosophy of “pay as you go” in those cases of bridge replacement, since bridges traditionally enjoy a 50-70-year life.

Delta Council continues to view that any new State initiative to:

- enhance maintenance,
- commence with 2-lane road/bridge improvements,
- and any future four-lane highway construction should include specific legislative authority, similar to the 1987 legislation, consisting of:
- Precisely which highway segments and bridges will be four-laned or improved. (the ‘where’ question)
- The order of the scheduled multi-year phases for road and bridge improvements and/or 2-lane improvements, to be determined by volume/capacity or other accepted State and national transportation standards. (the ‘when’ question)
- The adoption of necessary revenues, or user fees to offset construction costs. (the ‘how’ question)
- Adequate funding to sustain a maintenance program which meets acceptable pavement and bridge condition ratings.
- Consideration of long-term financing for serious bridge repair and replacement efforts by MDOT, local bridge funding, State Aid, and Local System Bridge Program (LSBP), since unlike roads, bridges are expected to possess a 50-year life.

Delta Council pledges to work with other trade and business organizations, local public officials, Chambers of Commerce, counties and cities, Transportation Commissioners, the Legislature, and the Executive Branch to develop a consensus for implementing timely action on these areas of critical need.

Adopted by: Delta Council Board of Directors
November 3, 2023

