Chapter 6: Transportation

Regional Accessibility

Highways
The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) classifies all state highways according to how the road functions into a rural functional classification system at the county level. This system establishes a hierarchy of roads based on trip length, speed and volume. In ascending order, all roads are classified as local roads, collectors, arterials and interstates. In this system, local roads are municipal and county roads with immediate access to abutting property where most trips originate and end. Collectors gather trips from multiple local roads and feed arterials that move greater amounts of traffic greater distances.

Highways 176 and EE in Rockaway Beach are classified as major and minor collectors respectively in Taney County. Highway EE is a minor collector because it is less than a mile in length, accesses only one local road and connects to Highway 176 at its east and west endpoints. This is the lowest class in the rural functional classification for state highways. Highway 176 serves as a major collector for Highway 160, which is classified as a minor arterial.

Highway 176 connects to Highway 160 one and a half miles to the north and to east of the Rockaway Beach city limits at two T intersections. Beyond the T intersection east of Rockaway Beach, Highway 160 continues as a minor arterial through Forsyth and into Ozark County. Where Highway 176 merges with Highway 160 in the north, Highway 160 continues west functioning as a minor arterial until it is reduced to a major collector at its intersection with Highway F. Highway F then becomes a minor arterial through Bull Creek to U.S. Highway 65. Both of these routes have interchange access to U.S. Highway 65, which serves as a principal arterial and the primary route for moving traffic in and out of Taney County. U.S. Highway 65 is a four lane, limited access highway from Interstate 44 in north Springfield, Missouri to just south of Hollister, Missouri in Taney County. The two interchanges along U.S. Highway 65 at Highways 160 and F are each an approximate 13 minute drive time from Rockaway Beach.

Lake Taneycomo
As a navigable waterway, Lake Taneycomo provides access to and from Rockaway Beach via watercraft. In addition to the Missouri Department of Conservation public access there are commercial marinas located in the city as well as many private boat docks. The development of Branson Landing on Lake Taneycomo fifteen to twenty
minutes away via the Lake provides improved accessibility to shopping and recreation activities and an alternative to the road network. Currently there is no information available on the usage or efficiency of this connection.

**Aviation**
Branson Airport opened in May of 2009 and offers commercial passenger service from multiple carriers to many regional air hubs. The airport is designed for midsize commercial planes and is located south of Hollister in the Ozark foothills of Taney County. More carriers and destinations are available at the Springfield Branson Regional Airport in Springfield, Missouri. Springfield Branson Regional Airport is approximately 52 miles or an hour drive from Rockaway Beach. In 2005, the M. Graham Clark Airport was donated to Taney County. The Taney County Airport provides general aviation services for business and recreational flyers. The airport is located near Point Lookout between Branson and Hollister.

**Transit Services**
Although there is no transit service offered in the city per se, Older Adult Transportation Services (OATS) operates within Taney County. OATS is a private, not-for-profit corporation that provides reliable transportation for the disadvantaged. OATS offers door-to-door transportation to the general public with emphasis on senior citizens and people with disabilities.

**Rails and Trails**
There are no significant rail services near Rockaway Beach. Similarly, there are no multi-use or regional trails in the area. Although the first case is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future, trail systems can be developed and integrated with streets and parks plans to promote and enhance walking and livability.

Getting to and from Rockaway Beach by automobile is relatively limited considering the terrain and distance to the nearest four lane, limited access highway. This limited accessibility and relative seclusion was most likely a contributing factor to the historical development of Rockaway Beach as a recreation and resort community. Even though the regional road network may not significantly change in the future, the regional accessibility of Rockaway Beach can be enhanced by exploring the development of a regional trail system and transportation opportunities to destinations on Lake Taneycomo. Figure 6-1 depicts the regional transportation network relative to Rockaway Beach.
Figure 6-1: Regional Transportation Network
Local Streets

State highways provide primary access for surface transportation to Rockaway Beach. MoDOT is responsible for improvements and maintenance along Highways 176 and EE in Rockaway Beach. Highways 176 and EE are two-lane highways with no shoulders. Highway 176 loops down from the west to the lakefront and merges with Beach Boulevard before becoming the main commercial thoroughfare and meandering through the easternmost city limits afterwards. Segments of Beach Boulevard on the lakefront provide on street parking and pedestrian accommodations meeting the Americans with Disabilities Act standards. Highway EE serves as the northern boundary of the city limits and is an east/west bypass of the lakefront loop providing access to Wallace Street and single family homes. The City of Rockaway Beach is responsible for maintenance and development of local roads within the city limits. Figure 6-2 is a map of existing street conditions and surface types in Rockaway Beach.

![Figure 6-2: Current Street Conditions & Surface Type in Rockaway Beach](image)
Existing Street Conditions

Table 6-1 provides a summary of street conditions by surface type. Information on surface type and condition is based on a visual inspection conducted at the time of the land-use survey on July 23, 2010. Surface types on existing streets in Rockaway Beach are asphalt, chip and seal or gravel. The street condition was categorized as good, fair or poor based on rutting, potholes and other weathering effects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surface Type and Condition</th>
<th>Miles</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asphalt Good</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>60.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asphalt Fair</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chip &amp; Seal Good</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chip &amp; Seal Fair</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chip &amp; Seal Fair to Poor</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chip &amp; Seal Poor</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gravel Good</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gravel Fair</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gravel Poor</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of streets in Rockaway Beach, 60.3%, are paved with asphalt and in good condition. These roads are almost exclusively situated on the southern finger from Lake St. south to the lakefront. Segments of Cedar on the northern finger and Lakeview in the northeastern portion of the city are the exceptions. Chip and seal pavement is formed by laying penetrating oil in the road bed and rolling small stones into it and left to set. Over 20% of streets in the city are paved with chip and seal. Half of these streets are in good condition while the other half are fair to poor. Converse to asphalt streets, chip and seal is almost exclusive to the northern finger. Gravel roads make up 15% of existing streets in Rockaway Beach with almost two thirds being in good or fair condition.
Street Width and Right of Way
The road bed width of nearly all streets in Rockaway Beach is approximately 18 feet. This includes Highways 176 and EE. An exception to this rule is Boys Camp Rd. running east/west from Beach Boulevard to the Rockaway Beach regional wastewater treatment facility with pavement 30 feet wide. Right of way width in Rockaway Beach varies from 30 to 45 feet or more. Right of way is measured from either side of the street center line. A right of way of 45 feet would equate to a distance of 22.5 feet on either side of the street center line. The excess space on either side of the street in the right of way can be used for utilities or public infrastructure, such as; culverts for storm water management and sidewalks.

Traffic Volume
MoDOT has conducted traffic counts on Highway EE on the northern city limits and Highway 176 east of the city boundary almost every year going back to 2000. Additionally, seven day traffic counts were conducted at three locations during July 2 thru July 9, 2010. Counts were conducted on Highway 176 west of Highway EE, Highway 176 south of Highway EE, and east of Boys Camp Rd. on Cave St. Average daily trips for each location are presented in Figure 6-3.

Figure 6-3: Rural functional Classification & Average Daily Traffic Counts in Rockaway Beach
Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodations
Currently the only pedestrian accommodations in Rockaway Beach are sidewalks on the north side of Beach Boulevard from Benton Avenue to the First Home Savings Bank east of Laughing Lane along the lakefront and a crosswalk across Beach Boulevard connecting the community center and the city park. The highest order of traffic control in the city is a stop sign and speed limits are only posted on State Highways Beach Boulevard and Lake St. In addition, there are no bike lanes or multi-use trails in Rockaway Beach. It should be noted that on most neighborhood streets pedestrian or bicycle movements can safely coexist with cars and trucks in Rockaway Beach as the narrow street width and sloping terrain have a traffic calming effect.

Transportation Objectives and Strategies

Objective 6.1:
Develop an efficient and safe transportation system to accommodate planned growth and economic development while promoting a high standard of livability in the community.

Strategy 6.1.1:
Revise street standards to reflect the characteristics of the terrain and transportation needs in Rockaway Beach.

Strategy 6.1.2:
Develop a hierarchy of streets within the community according to how they are intended to function in order to program phased capital improvements.

Strategy 6.1.3:
Manage access along major roads serving through traffic and commercial activities by limiting and providing adequate spacing between driveways and street entrances.

Objective 6.2:
Improve walkability throughout the community.

Strategy 6.2.1:
Increase the number of pedestrian facilities: sidewalks, trails, crosswalks, pedestrian safety improvements at intersections, and other related amenities in the City of Rockaway Beach.
**Strategy 6.2.2:**
Develop and maintain a path system through the city connecting residential areas to the downtown lakefront, planned parks and recreational facilities.

**Strategy 6.2.3:**
Ensure that pedestrian improvements are accessible to citizens with disabilities and conform to the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**Objective 6.3:**
Ensure that the transportation system improvements and future road construction have minimal impact on the natural character of Rockaway Beach.

**Strategy 6.3.1:**
Ensure that street standards and improvements incorporate crowning and pitch in their design to channel runoff and reduce erosion while improving safety.

**Strategy 6.3.2:**
Explore developing a system of check dams in open graded ditches in rights of way to improve storm water management.

**Strategy 6.3.3:**
Incorporate curbs and gutters only when absolutely necessary for improving storm water management.

**Objective 6.4:**
Improve regional accessibility to and from Rockaway Beach.

**Strategy 6.4.1:**
Develop and promote accessibility to lakefront attractions such as Branson Landing via Lake Taneycomo as alternative transportation.

**Strategy 6.4.2:**
Work with MoDOT to develop improved signage directing traffic to Rockaway Beach from U.S. Highway 65.

**Strategy 6.4.3:**
Work with Taney County and neighboring communities to develop “river road” to and from Branson across Bull Creek.
**Strategy 6.4.4:**
Work with Taney County, regional planning agencies, MoDOT and any other relevant transportation advisory committees to ensure that the interests of Rockaway Beach are being addressed in regional transportation initiatives.

**Recommendations:**

Current ordinances that govern street standards do not reflect the limitations of terrain and platted right of way widths within the City. It is recommended that the City develop its own functional classifications for local streets that reflect the unique character of neighborhoods and the physical environment. Local streets that provide access to residential property should be maintained as shared streets for pedestrians, golf carts, bicycles and cars. Narrow road width and terrain make this feasible as they serve as natural traffic calming for cars and are reasonably safe for all formerly mentioned modes of transportation. Other streets and proposed future roads that serve to collect traffic from local roads and neighborhood connectors may require off street pedestrian accommodations in the right of way. Neighborhood connectors should be tied into future trail plans and form a path system that connect natural areas, park spaces and the lakefront. The following local street plan in Figure 6-4 serves as a guide for developing the future transportation system of the City and is consistent with the vision set forth by the community.
Figure 6-4: Rockaway Beach Local Street Plan