



Lewis and Clark Parkway
Two Proposals



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Introduction to Reprints

The following are reprints of two proposals put forward by Scenic Missouri – one in 2004 and one in 2008 – which addressed opportunities presented by the urgent practical need to rebuild a deteriorating I-70 and to increase vehicle capacity across mid-Missouri.

Scenic Missouri, an organization devoted to improving the visual/scenic qualities of Missouri roadways, saw this as a great opportunity to remake one of the worst interstate highways in America into a rewarding aesthetic experience, exploiting this State's great natural beauty, working *with* the topography, and integrating cultural, historic, and tourist attractions.

The first proposal, 2004; *the Lewis and Clark Parkway (Parkway Proposal I)*, responded to a MODOT proposal to simply rebuild and widen I-70 to six lanes. Scenic Missouri's countered that proposal with a parallel divided autos-only *parkway* built to freeway standards. Tolls were essential to make this feasible. The original proposal recommended that the parkway be a toll road; on reconsideration it was thought the tolls should be on I-70.

In 2008, MODOT floated a new scheme; widening I-70 to eight lanes – two lanes in each direction for cars, two in each direction for trucks. Scenic Missouri proposed that the auto lanes be periodically disengaged from I-70, in ten to twelve-mile segments to traverse Missouri's scenic countryside, offering relief from the billboard-blighted, dead-straight monotonous I-70 alignment – again, integrating cultural and tourist-oriented attractions. This scheme was labeled the *I-70 Rebuilding Alternative*, or "*Segmented Parkway*" (*Parkway Proposal II*). It was calculated that, due to relative land acquisition costs, this proposal would be financially competitive with the MODOT scheme.

In any case, the inevitable I-70 rebuilding represents a unique opportunity to enhance and improve that highway. In all respects, including the aesthetic experience. It is an opportunity to celebrate Missouri's scenic beauty and historic/cultural heritage. These proposals represent an urgent request to include these considerations in any scheme to rebuild I-70.

Parkway Proposal I (2004)
The Lewis and Clark Parkway

Parkway Proposal I

The Lewis and Clark Parkway

I-70: THE WORST INTERSTATE IN AMERICA?

Hardly anyone needs convincing that I-70, between Kansas City and St. Louis, is one of the worst interstate highways in America. It is, of course, seriously deteriorated; it is entirely inadequate for the traffic load; it is unsafe; and it is astonishingly ugly. The I-70 alignment is straight, coarse, and boring, almost completely ignoring topography and natural features, bordered by ugly and awkward frontage roads, and lined with billboards from state line to state line. It presents a terribly unfair image of an otherwise beautiful state. It is more than an embarrassment; it represents a crisis in Missouri transportation.

The Missouri Department of Transportation (MODOT), after lengthy studies of potential alternatives, has concluded that the current roadway should be entirely rebuilt and widened to three lanes each direction. MODOT's proposal requires the acquisition and grading of an average of 150 feet of additional right-of-way (much of it expensive commercial property), the lengthening and complete rebuilding of all bridges and interchanges, and the rebuilding and relocation of service roads. The estimated cost: \$2.8 billion!

And what do we end up with? I-70! The same boring, uninspired alignment, the same intimidating truck traffic (only a lot more of it), the same billboards and commercial chaos, and, in little time, the traffic will catch up with the increased design capacity.

A PARALLEL AUTOS-ONLY PARKWAY.

The "Lewis and Clark Parkway" would be an autos-only, divided, fully limited access toll roadway designed for freeway speeds. It would be billboard-free, respectful of topography, landscapes, scenery, and views. The alignment would be visually and physically continuous and flowing, with long gentle curves and variable median widths to acknowledge characteristic natural elements and circumstances. Commercial services would be convenient but out of view. The parkway would be integrated and connected to existing and future natural areas, parks, historic sites, tourist attractions, and towns, and it would be a tourist destination in itself. It would provide a more relaxing, certainly safer, possibly faster, and definitely more pleasant way to travel across Missouri.

The specific location of the route would be the object of thorough study but would generally parallel I-70 and be competitive in terms of distance, and particularly of time. Drivers who do not want to pay the toll could opt to use I-70 (toll free). Toll plazas would be at long intervals along the parkway route; interchanges would be toll-free for easy on-off access. All commercial services at I-70 interchanges would remain and would be convenient to and easily accessible from the parkway. No billboards along I-70 would be removed as part of this proposal. The parkway termini would be somewhat short of the two big metro areas, avoiding huge acquisition and construction costs. The road need not encroach at all on any developed urban areas or towns.

The parkway would traverse and celebrate characteristic Missouri landscapes: prairie, hardwood forest, river and stream bottom land, pasture and cultivated farm land. The road would be a catalyst for reforestation and prairie restoration. The parkway would be protected from commercial intrusions. Vistas and landscapes – including farms – could be preserved through scenic or conservation easements at a fraction of the cost of outright purchase and leaving owners with considerable flexibility and choice.

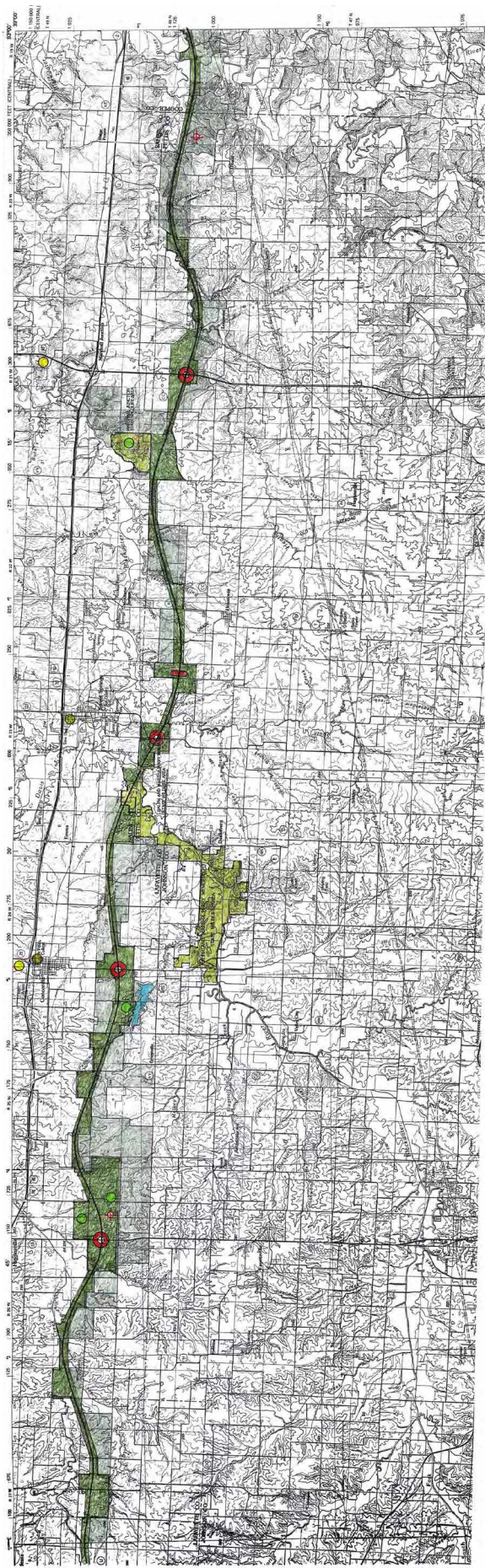
The integration of Lewis and Clark Parkway with other scenic, historic, and recreational attractions and easy access to towns along the route would be an economic boon to these towns and to the state generally. Concentrated marketing efforts could bundle all of the attractions – accessible and interesting towns, historic sites, state parks, and conservation areas, trails, restaurants and accommodations, orchards, wineries, regional shopping opportunities – as a menu of destinations. The parkway would inevitably stimulate expanded and entirely new destination places.

AN INTEGRATED SOLUTION TO A TRANSPORTATION CRISIS.

This parkway is *not* an alternative to rebuilding I-70; it is supplementary. The I-70 sub-grade and roadway and most, if not all, bridges must be reconstructed. And other upgrades must be made. But that is very different, and much less costly, than the current acquisition and widening proposal. In the absence of fundamental change in our transportation attitudes and policies – not likely in the foreseeable future – even the widened I-70 will become obsolete over time. The added capacity provided by a parallel roadway will be necessary. (And the parkway, free of the pounding of trucks, will require less maintenance and last much longer.) The accompanying graph explains why the parkway may be a practical proposal and, in fact, would likely be a very prudent long-term investment. By combining a new autos-only parkway with a rebuilt I-70, Missouri will possess a 21st century highway corridor unmatched in the nation. Goods will move surely and efficiently, and people can relax and enjoy the drive and this State's abundant beauty.

MISSOURIANS DESERVE BETTER.

Missourians deserve better than what we have gotten from our highways. We deserve, not only safe, well-maintained, and adequate highways, but more beautiful highways that respect the environment and topography and reasonably free of gross hucksterism. We deserve highways we can enjoy, not just tolerate; highways that are a source of pride. This is a transportation *and* quality of life issue. The Lewis and Clark Parkway would raise the bar to new heights and bring welcome, positive, national attention to Missouri.



Lewis and Clark Parkway

Hypothetical / Illustrative Alignment



The actual ultimate location and alignment of the Parkway would be the result of thorough and professional study. The above illustration shows the general concept and features of the Parkway in a hypothetical alignment.

I-70



A section of I-70 typical in two ways – a rigid straight line alignment (this section running just south of Booneville stretches 21 miles without a curve!) and an over-abundance of trucks. On the other hand, this photo is a very rare short stretch that is relatively free of billboards.



A pack of trucks; seven within a few hundred yards, four in the passing lane. How long will it take a passenger car to pass this mob? Perhaps not an issue, because most of the trucks are going well over the speed limit.

I-70



I-70 in Missouri is, without question, the most billboard-blighted corridor along the entire coast-to-coast I-70 route. Missouri has more billboards in total and more billboard faces per mile than any other state along the route: nine times as many as Ohio, twenty times the number in Colorado.



The Taconic State Parkway



The Taconic State Parkway, running north from New York City, was designed in the 1940s. It was an early – but by no means the first – highway designed as a parkway, and it set new aesthetic standards. It was not designed for today's freeway speeds, but it remains a functional and beautiful roadway for autos only and a relaxing way to drive through southeastern New York.

I-84 Pennsylvania



It is possible to drive from the New Jersey/Pennsylvania line, 43 miles west on I-84, to the city limits of Scranton without seeing one billboard, nor even one on-premises sign. In fact, there is no visual encroachment by any kind of development. Granted, this runs through especially beautiful, wooded and mountainous country – the Poconos – but it is characteristic of practically any of the freeways running through Pennsylvania. Information about services is posted on discreet state-erected message boards.

I-84



Interstate 84 running east-west just above New York City is a heavily traveled route used by trucks and autos, and it is fairly typical of all of New York's interstates and freeways. Completely, or relatively free of billboards, screened from adjacent commercial uses, and sensitively integrated into the topography with long, sweeping curves and variable medians, these highways are ***Integrated Freeways*** built to interstate standards.



They just *look* like parkways.

I-84 New York



Sensitive design of highways is a complex and demanding discipline. The objective is a continuous physical and visual flow of the alignment, integrated with the topography and landscape. That usually means a high ratio of curves to tangents, careful merging of horizontal and vertical curves including spiral transitions, and variable medians that acknowledge and celebrate topographic changes, vegetation, water features, and geological formations.

I-99 Pennsylvania



I-99 in Pennsylvania, portions of which are still under construction, could serve as a textbook on great interstate highway design. This view shows an uncharacteristically long, but appropriate tangent that smoothly flows and integrates beautifully into the landscape. This is not just a way to get from Altoona to the Pennsylvania Turnpike. It is a pleasurable and rewarding driving experience.

Practical Proposal or Pipedream?

Any proposal to improve the I-70 corridor between St. Louis and Kansas City must be fiscally sound and return a positive net economic benefit to Missouri taxpayers.

The graph (opposite) illustrates that a potential parallel parkway, built in conjunction with a complete reconstruction (not widening) of I-70, may be very competitive, in terms of cost to the taxpayers, with the current \$2.8 billion widening proposal. (The funding source of that necessary \$2.8 billion has, in any case, never been identified.) The studies already completed by MODOT conclude that a parallel expressway would cost \$2.4 billion including acquisition. (It is possible that a *parkway* would cost *less* than an expressway because a parkway would not include adjacent frontage roads.)


Obviously, adding \$2.4 billion to the \$2.8 billion would be prohibitive. But if I-70 were *rebuilt*, but *not* widened, there would be enormous cost savings. Very little land acquisitions would be required. No excavation and grading of the land would be necessary. Bridges and interchanges would be rebuilt, not lengthened. Few frontage roads would be relocated. And four lanes of concrete would be built (re-built) rather than six. Experienced engineers predict the cost of the rebuilt, including some other necessary improvements, at less than half the cost of widening, or not more than \$1.4 billion.

The rebuild, it will be argued, will not completely bring I-70 up to current interstate standards. True, but those rigid standards are being moderated on rebuilding projects all over the country (e.g. Kansas Turnpike). And those demanding requirements are not as supportable with an alternative, truck-free parallel route.

So that would bring the total cost – the I-70 rebuild plus parkway – to \$3.8 billion (\$1.4 billion + \$2.4 billion). Still, no doubt, out of reach. But what if tolls – paid, of course, by users and not out of fuel tax revenue – could amortize a substantial portion of the cost of the parkway? The earlier I-70 study of alternatives concluded that tolls would pay 80 percent of the costs of the parallel expressway. Trucks, however, would account for half that revenue. So on a truck-free parkway, the percentage of costs amortized by cars only must be reduced to about 40 percent. That would be \$.96 billion out of a \$2.4 billion parkway, leaving about \$1.4 billion financed through taxes. Amazing: the total amount out of tax revenue for a concurrent I-70 rebuild and parallel parkway would be about \$2.8 billion – the same cost as the I-70 widening proposal! With one more net lane in each direction, and a 21st century transportation corridor, this proposal merits serious study and consideration.

I-70 | Lewis and Clark Parkway

COMPARATIVE COSTS



	I-70 WIDENING	I-70 WIDENING + PARKWAY	I-70 REBUILD + PARKWAY	I-70 REBUILD + TOLL PARKWAY
I-70	\$2.8 *	\$2.8 *	\$1.4 ‡	\$1.4 ‡
PARKWAY		\$2.4 *	\$2.4 *	\$1.4 ‡ \$1.0 ‡ TOLLS
TOTAL COST	\$2.8	\$5.2	\$3.8	\$3.8
COST PAID BY TAX REVENUES	\$2.8	\$5.2	\$3.8	\$2.8

In Billions

* From I-70 First Tier Improvement Study

‡ Assumed Cost

The Lewis and Clark Parkway

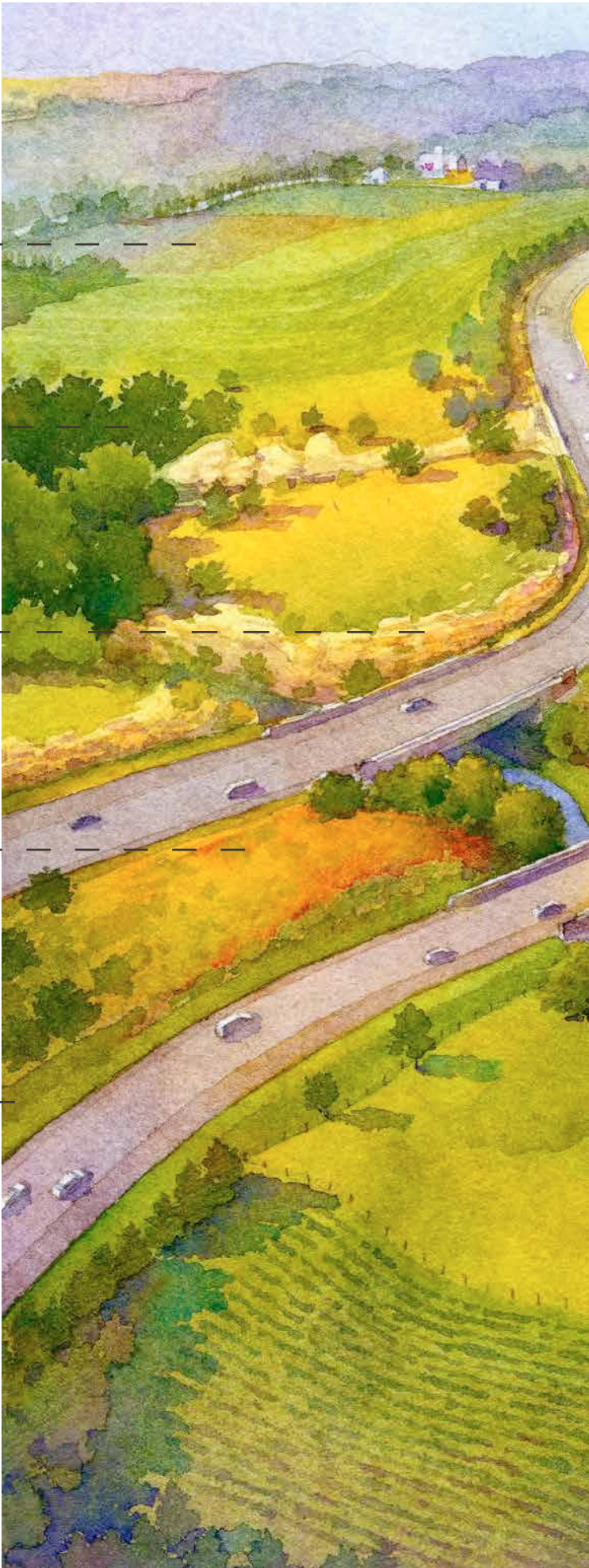
PASTURE SCENIC EASEMENT

EXISTING WOODLANDS

OUTCROPPINGS

PRAIRIE GRASSES +
WILDFLOWERS

MOWN EDGES





EXISTING WOODLANDS
REST STOP / OVERLOOK

RESTORED PRAIRIE

REFORESTATION

CULTIVATION
SCENIC / CONSERVATION EASEMENT

FARMSTEAD
SCENIC / CONSERVATION EASEMENT

The Lewis and Clark Parkway: Summary Points

The Lewis and Clark Parkway would be an autos-only toll parkway across Missouri, roughly parallel to I-70, divided, with fully limited access, and designed to freeway speeds. The parkway would be billboard and commercial-free, would acknowledge topography, vistas, and characteristic Missouri landscapes.

CONSIDERATIONS AND ADVANTAGES:

- The Parkway is a viable solution to a critical transportation problem: the condition and capacity of I-70.
- The Parkway would complement, not supplant or complete with, I-70. I-70 would be completely reconstructed but not widened. I-70 would continue to be toll-free.
- The very expensive widening of I-70 will result in – a wider I-70 – same (more) traffic, same (more) trucks, same uninspired alignment, same billboards, same grim image of Missouri.
- The Parkway would likely cost less, in tax revenue expended, than the current I-70 widening proposal.
- Parkway users pay a major portion of the cost.
- The Parkway could be built in segments over time.
- The Parkway, in comparison to the current I-70 widening proposal, adds one net lane in each direction, anticipating for decades the inevitable and continual increase in traffic volumes.
- The Parkway adds redundancy in case of emergency or construction projects.
- The Parkway would be a destination itself bundled with many other tourist and recreational attractions; a major economic engine for the State.
- The true character of Missouri would reveal itself through the Parkway. The current image of Missouri would be transformed.
- The Parkway would be a safer, more relaxing, and more pleasant way to travel across our state.

The immediate goal is to subject the Parkway proposal to the same cost/benefit analysis applied to other alternatives under the “First Tier Environmental Impact Statement.” The study would include estimated costs, potential routes or alternative routes, toll financing feasibility, alternative financing mechanisms, and a thorough analysis of the economic impact of the Parkway as part of a coordinated tourist, recreational, and transportation package.

Parkway Proposal II (2008)
Segmented Parallel Parkway

Parkway Proposal II

Segmented Parallel Parkway

I-70: THE WORST INTERSTATE IN AMERICA?

Hardly anyone needs convincing that I-70, between Kansas City and St. Louis, is one of the worst interstate highways in America. It is, of course, seriously deteriorated; it is entirely inadequate for the traffic load; it is unsafe; and it is astonishingly ugly. The I-70 alignment is straight, coarse, and boring, almost completely ignoring topography and environment, and it is lined with billboards state line to state line. The “Main Street of Missouri” presents a terribly unfair image of an otherwise beautiful state. It is more than an embarrassment; it represents a crisis in Missouri transportation.

The Missouri Department of Transportation (MODOT) has made lengthy studies of potential alternative ways to improve I-70. No final recommendations have been made and no plan for financing has been put forward. But MODOT is currently studying a new proposal to add two new lanes each direction as exclusive truck lanes with two lanes in each direction for exclusive auto lanes. The existing pavement will be used, but this proposal still requires purchasing expensive additional right-of-way on one or both sides of these lanes – much of it high-priced commercial. Bridges must be widened and interchanges completely reworked. Trucks would exit by crossing over to the auto lanes, crossing auto traffic (!) and then use the common – autos and truck – exit ramp.

This may be an improvement on an earlier scheme, to widen the highway at great expense, to three lanes in each direction. The separation of trucks and cars, in the current study, is an improvement, certainly. But it is still I-70, only a lot wider! The same boring, uninspired alignment, even uglier, with more total traffic, the same billboards, and commercial chaos.

PARALLEL PARKWAY SEGMENTS

In response to the earlier widening scheme, Scenic Missouri, a non-profit citizens organization that is committed to the visual improvement of our Missouri environment, proposed a parallel autos-only parkway. That scheme, the “Lewis and Clark Parkway,” was an autos-only divided, fully limited access toll road designed for freeway speeds, billboard-free, respectful of topography, landscapes, scenery, and views. It would be located one to five miles to one side or the other of I-70. The alignment would be visually and physically continuous and flowing, with long gentle curves and variable median widths to acknowledge characteristic natural elements and circumstances. Commercial services would be convenient but out of view. That is still a practical and reasonable proposal.

A more modest proposal is to build a similar alternate roadway but in segments of 10 or 12 miles, the auto lanes disengaging periodically from the primary autos/truck alignment and then merging back in. The parkway segments would be integrated and connected to existing and future natural areas, parks, historic sites, tourist attractions, and towns, and they would be tourist destinations in themselves. These segments would provide periodic visual and physical respite from the unpleasantness and tension of the auto/truck sections.

The more of these segments the better. But two or three between Kansas City and Columbia and another two or three between Columbia and St. Louis would make a very big difference. Rest stops – autos only, of course – would be located in these segments. As the illustration shows, there could also be much shorter diversions to take advantage of particularly interesting scenic areas. All commercial services at I-70 interchanges would remain and would be convenient to and easily accessible from the parkway segments. No billboards would be removed as part of this proposal.

The specific location and alignment of these segments would be the object of thorough study but two criteria would especially carry weight: they should occur in interesting, scenic characteristic Missouri landscapes and vistas – forests, cultivated farmlands, pastures, river valleys, prairie – free of commercial clutter; and to provide maximum relief, located parallel to particularly offensive stretches of I-70. The latter criterion would offer plenty of location choices.

The integration of these Parkway Segments with other scenic, historic, and recreational attractions and easy access to towns along the route would be an economic boon to these towns and to the state generally. The alignment would be coordinated with the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Department of Natural Resources and the Division of Tourism. Concentrated marketing efforts could bundle all of the attractions – accessible and interesting towns, historic sites, state parks and conservation areas, trails, restaurants and accommodations, orchards, wineries, regional craft shopping opportunities – as a menu of destinations. The parkway segments would inevitably stimulate expanded and entirely new destination places. Many landscapes could be protected by scenic/conservation easements at a fraction of the cost of outright purchase while leaving landowners with considerable flexibility and choice.

MISSOURIANS DESERVE BETTER.

Missourians deserve better than what we have gotten from our highways. We deserve not only safe, well maintained, and adequate highways, but more beautiful highways respecting the environment and topography and reasonably free of gross hucksterism. We deserve highways we can enjoy, not just tolerate; highways that are a source of pride. This is a transportation, economic, and quality of life issue. We really can raise the bar. The Parkway would dramatically improve I-70 and bring welcome, positive, national attention to Missouri.

Autos-Only
Parkway Segment
(±12 Miles)

TRUCK LANES

SCENIC DIVERSION

SERVICE AREA

BOULEVARD TOWN ACCESS

INTERCHANGE SEPARATION

TRUCK LANES

AUTO LANES

SERVICE AREA

WINERY / ORCHARD

FARMLAND:
SCENIC/CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

TRUCK LANES

AUTOS ONLY PARKWAY SECTION

WETLANDS:
CONSERVATION AREA

REST AREA

PRAIRIE RESTORATION

FARMLAND:
SCENIC/CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

PUBLIC RECREATION AREA

SERVICE AREA

HISTORIC SITE
CRAFT SHOPS AND RESTAURANT

TRUCK LANES

AUTOS ONLY PARKWAY SECTION

PRAIRIE GRASSES AND WILDFLOWERS

FARMLAND:
SCENIC/CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

TRUCK LANES

AUTO LANES



I-70 REBUILDING ALTERNATIVE
Autos-Only Parkway Segments



