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South County Connector

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With Comment Deadline Looming, Protests Continue Over South County Connector

By [RACHEL LIPPMANN](#) (/PEOPLE/RACHEL-LIPPMANN)

Updated 7:37 p.m. Tuesday, July 16 with comments from St. Louis County Executive Charlie Dooley

Local advocacy groups and politicians are urging opponents of a proposed new road through portions of St. Louis County to continue speaking out against the project.

The deadline for comments on an environmental study for the South County Connector is Friday. The street department will review and respond to them before incorporating them into the study for federal approval.

The \$110 million road is meant to provide better access between Interstates 64 and 44, and pull through traffic from local roads in Maplewood, Shrewsbury and Webster Groves.

But County Councilman Pat Dolan, who represents those cities and opposed the connector, says instead of a clamor from his constituents for the project, he's heard the exact opposite.

"We haven't really found out what the need is," the Democrat said. "There's questions as to why this is even going on. We just don't seem to get the answers to that."

And Maplewood city councilman Barry Greenberg, another opponent, says the new road creates more problems trying to fix a phantom one.

"It will create a noise pollution problem without any abatement planned," he said. "It will undermine the investment we've all made in MetroLink and it will severely limit our access to bicycle and pedestrian paths. And what for? Convenience for cars, commuters and casinos?"

County officials say transportation studies identified the need for the connector at least a decade ago, and that it remains a "necessary and positive" project to pursue.



<http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/kwmu/files/201307/SouthCoCon.jpg>

Credit (Rachel Lippmann/St. Louis Public Radio)
Opponents of a proposed new road through portions of South County listen to speakers at an event on July 16, 2013. They are in the parking lot of Deer Creek Center, which will be impacted by the proposed connector.

On Tuesday night St. Louis County Executive Charlie Dooley said plans for the roadway are far from being finalized.

“We welcome all the comments; it’s helpful for us to know what people do want, or what they don’t want. It gives an opportunity to explain the project, to clarify it,” Dooley said. “Again, no path has been designed, no roads have been designed. It’s just conceptual, it is an impact study, that’s all it is.”

Public comments must be collected in order to apply for federal money for roads projects.

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