
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: GOVERNOR
FROM: RILEY
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR YOU TO INTERVENE AND REQUIRE MDOT TO ALLOW DRIVEWAY CONNECTION OFF OF I-55 EXIT RAMP FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES
DATE: 5/16/2002
CC: HALE

Charles Kealhofer of Lexington has met with me and requested that you intervene on his behalf and require MDOT to allow him have direct access off of an exit ramp of I-55 in Holmes County onto property that he is developing. Mr. Kealhofer is in the process of beginning construction of a fuel plaza at the I-55 and Highway 12 intersection near Durant. Kealhofer reports that he also has a commitment of a chain motel that will locate next to the fuel plaza.

Kealhofer is constructing in the southwest corner of the interchange. All I-55 ramps at this interchange, both entrance and exit, are located on the north side of Highway 12. Kealhofer wants to construct entrances to the fuel plaza directly across Highway 12 from the I-55 entrance and exit ramps.

MDOT staff has recommended to Butch Brown that Kealhofer's request be denied based on policies established by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and the fact that the site already has access to Highway 12. This access is located approximately 1100 feet west of the ramps, past the end of the no-access right-of-way (i.e., the Highway 12 grass median). Access to Highway 12 via entrances to the site located directly across from the I-55 ramps would provide access via no-access right-of-way (i.e., across the grass median). According to AASHTO standards, the central theme is a consistent design that prohibits wrong-way operation. The placement of a driveway adjacent to or near an interstate off-ramp terminal would promote wrong-way travel. In addition, AASHTO standards provide that control for connections to crossroads (i.e., entrances to sites) extend beyond the ramp terminal at least 300-feet in rural areas. As stated above, existing access exists approximately 1100 feet west of a ramp terminal.

Kealhofer requested your assistance in order for his to be able to continue with the project, which he feels will enhance the industrial park located directly across Highway 12, at a cost much less than the entrances proposed by MDOT (existing access 1100 feet west of ramp terminals). Kealhofer informed me that Lee Abraham of Greenwood told

him that he had discussed this issue with you and that, according to you, direct access is a done deal because you were going to take care of it. Kealhofer contacted Senator Lott's office and informed them of this. Lott's office contacted Butch Brown who knew nothing of your reported involvement and provided Lott's office with the above reasoning why access could not be provided directly across from the I-55 ramps.

Kealhofer is requesting your action. I would advise that we not request MDOT to bypass AASHTO standards for this site, especially given the fact that access is currently available. If MDOT were an executive agency, we could possibly have a little more leeway.

Please advise as to if you agree with my recommendation and I will prepare a letter from you to Kealhofer.

Draft letter _____

Request MDOT to reconsider _____