

# Capstone Awards 2017: Infrastructure - Woods Chapel Road improvements

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**Location:** Woods Chapel Road from Interstate 70 to Walnut Street, Blue Springs area

**Size:** 1.4 miles

**Value:** \$19 million

**Players:** City of Blue Springs, developer; Vireo, architect; TranSystems Corp., Olsson Associates, engineers; Miles Excavating Inc., Amino Brothers Construction, general contractors. The Missouri Department of Transportation also played a key role, reviewing some plans and helping with the cost.



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Woods Chapel Road improvements, Phases 1 and 2

**Description:** The project transformed congested and accident-laden Woods Chapel Road into a smooth-running arterial by implementing a less-common diverging diamond design that used existing bridges. Phase 1 opened a year and a half ago; phase 2 had a groundbreaking in September, said John Zimmermann, senior transportation consultant and project manager with TranSystems.

**Features:** A diverging diamond interchange intended to ease left turns, pedestrian and cyclist accommodations, upgraded traffic signals, an upgraded railroad crossing that now is a quiet zone, new neighborhood markers and retaining walls with rock-face finishes, landscaping, a frontage road, and vegetated swales that absorb and filter runoff

**Financing:** The project used proceeds from a bond issue passed by Blue Springs, plus Surface Transportation Program financing from MoDOT.

The full project could have cost \$25 million had the bridges been replaced, Zimmerman estimated.

“We only had \$19 million to work with, so we just wouldn’t have done (the other things),” said Christopher Sandie, public works director for Blue Springs.

**Community impact:** During the project, participants arranged public and one-on-one meetings to understand existing businesses’ schedules and needs. Traffic controls were proactively adjusted to minimize disruptions, Zimmerman said.

Now, the focus is on future businesses.

“Woods Chapel Road had an inordinate amount of congestion,” Sandie said. “Now that it’s been relieved, the area is more economically viable for development.”

A CVS and QuikTrip have located along the corridor, and others are looking at it. A good-sized spot could hold a big-box store and satellite tenants, Sandie said, adding that the economy had been a little tentative, but things seem to be moving now.

**What’s next:** A third phase would extend the project to U.S. Highway 40, basically completing the corridor, but financing has yet to be secured.

— Suzanna Stagemeyer