

Solutions appear far away for daily traffic problem in Jerseyville

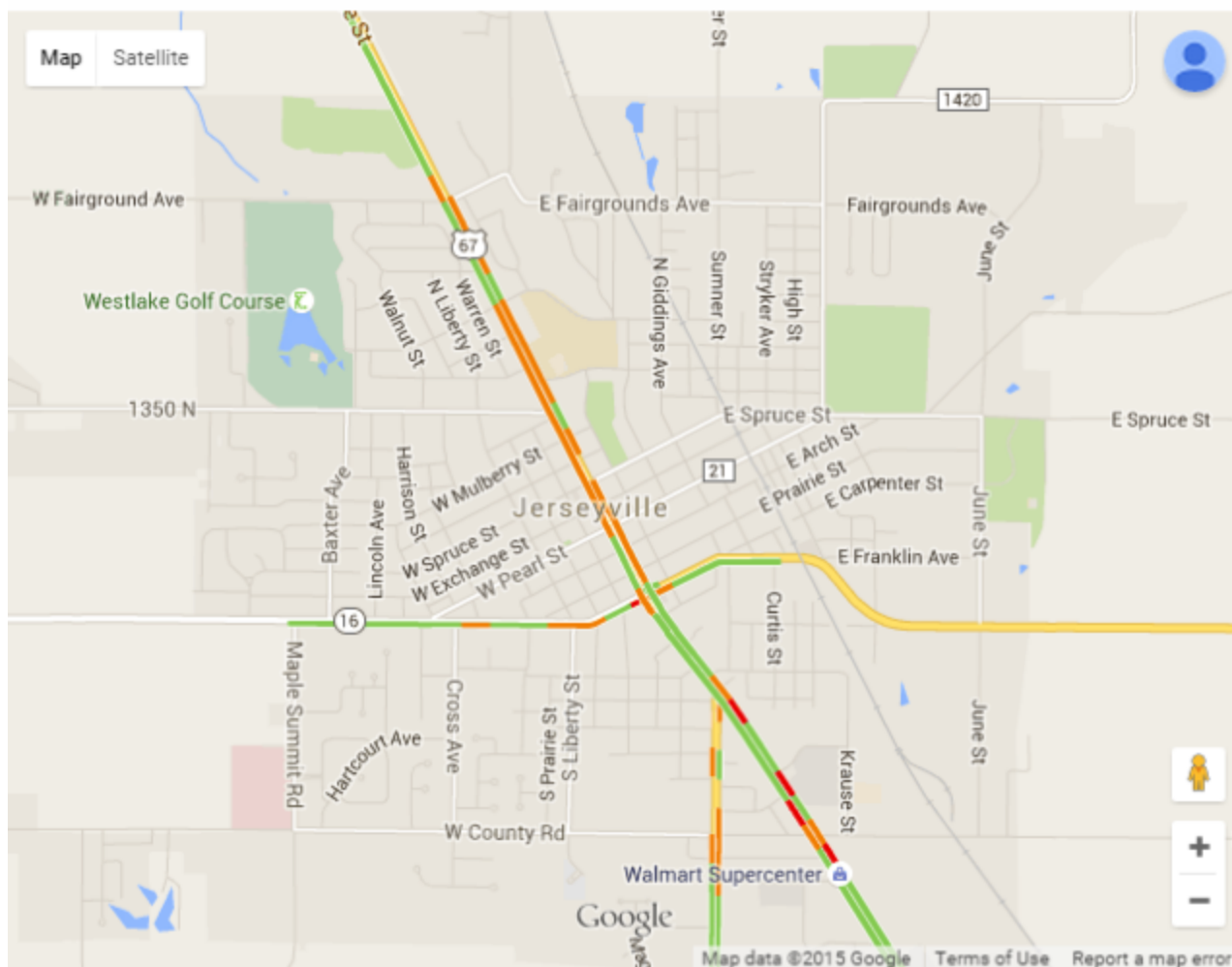
by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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JERSEYVILLE - Anyone driving through Jerseyville at certain times of day, early morning, lunch hour, and between 4 to about 5:30 will notice a backlog of traffic going in and out of the city.

The colors indicate the speed of traffic on the road.

- Green means there are no traffic delays.
- Orange means there's a medium amount of traffic.
- Red means there are traffic delays. The more red, the slower the speed of traffic on the road.
- If you see gray or blue lines on the map, these lines are your directions routes.



[You can check the traffic at anytime with our traffic map: riverbender.com/traffic/](http://riverbender.com/traffic/)

Jersey County Business Association Chief Executive Officer Mary Heitzig said it is not uncommon at 5 at night when she is heading out and driving to the South, to count 200 cars all in one lane coming on in from Delhi.

“The traffic is constant,” she said. “In the evening and early morning going South and back North, people come from the surrounding counties of Greene, Calhoun and Macoupin.”

Some in Jerseyville now take back streets to get around the city to avoid the heavy traffic. A simple solution to the daily congestion is to complete the bypass on U.S.

Route 67 go through Carrollton and ultimately connect the other part of the route that comes from Jacksonville.

With the present state of affairs in Illinois and on a federal level, that completion will not likely be any time soon.

Corridor 67 Inc. Executive Director Don Miller returned from a meeting with state and federal representatives on Friday about completing the project and walked away disappointed with the results.

“This was what I expected,” Miller said about Friday’s discussion. “The governor didn’t show up but everybody else did for the meeting. It went exactly as predicted, there is no Federal Transportation Bill and no new federal highway dollars and no dollars available on a state level. Basically until those things happen, there is no way of funding new projects, let alone existing ones.”

Sen. Dick Durbin was present and there were other federal reps at the meeting, Miller said.

“The highway dollars are dried up,” Miller said. “I knew this was coming. One person with IDOT said he thought the Jerseyville bypass for Route 67 was still in the IDOT multi year plan, but I checked on a computer and couldn’t find any reference to it.”

Heitzig said completing Route 67 has been something she and her constituents have been working on for a long period of time.

“Traffic is growing in Jerseyville,” she said. “It is wild. We have been pushing for almost 30 years to get 255 finished up and as 67 becomes four lanes, it cuts off at Delhi. We are supposed to get that leg finished to Crystal Lake Road, right outside a town then head east a ways and there will be a flyover Highway 16 for us to go North and back into the existing Route 67. The existing 67 is supposed to go to Jacksonville and all the way up to the Quad Cities. It would make a tremendous difference for us.”

Heitzig said without a doubt, completion of the Route 67 would be a huge economic boost for Jerseyville, Carrollton and surrounding communities, even Godfrey.

Miller said he sees without the added bypass and ability to trek around Jerseyville, the traffic problems will continue to escalate.

Miller’s contention is that money taxed in Illinois for highways should go just for that – the highways. He said instead, the money is being taken to balance a budget that is impossible to balance.

“As they say, we have been kicking this can down road for years in Illinois and for years spending money we didn’t have and underfunding projects,” Miller said. “The governor has not made any recent comments about transportation, so it is hard to visualize any changes coming any time soon.”

Miller and Heitzig both advised that taxpayers continue to contact their state and federal representatives about the importance of completing the bypass around Jerseyville and the next section of Route 67 to move toward Jacksonville.

For now, there doesn’t appear to be any easy solution to the traffic crunch in Jerseyville each day that will most likely continue to grow.

