

Although revenues may decrease and purchasing power decline, demand for transportation improvements will not diminish. In the last update we announced a list of eight projects across Kansas that had been identified for preliminary analysis. Work on these projects, known as the preliminary engineering only, or "PE-Only," projects is under way. While there is no construction funding identified for these projects, KDOT staff is working with the communities where the projects are located to keep them informed and involved in the project development process. In addition to these, KDOT is conducting several other studies.

- **Five-County Regional Transportation Study** - Rapid development in portions of Douglas, Johnson, Leavenworth, Miami and Wyandotte counties has led KDOT to undertake a regional transportation planning study. No construction dollars are associated with this study. Given the limited availability of transportation improvement funds, KDOT wants to work with cities and counties in this region to develop a plan to identify and evaluate transportation needs.

- **Toll Feasibility Study** - As the gap between transportation needs and funding sources grows, it's important to weigh the financing options available for transportation projects in Kansas. Expanded use of tolling may help meet both current and emerging transportation needs. KDOT and the Kansas Turnpike Authority will look at how other states and countries use tolling and will also work to create a framework that identifies the conditions under which policymakers could consider toll financing. The study will include the development of criteria to assess the tolling potential of various corridors. The study will not identify specific tolling projects; it will serve only as a resource for state policymakers to use as they consider tolling applications.

- **Amtrak Expansion Feasibility Study** - We want to assess the potential impacts of state-supported passenger rail service in Kansas. KDOT, in cooperation with the Oklahoma and Texas departments of transportation, has asked Amtrak to study potential passenger rail service between Oklahoma City and Kansas City. The study will only provide information upon which to base decisions; it will not make recommendations concerning expansion. The information will help officials in both states decide whether to consider expansion. The decision would rest, ultimately, with the Kansas and Oklahoma legislatures. The study is expected to begin in late summer 2008 and last at least six months.



- **Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) in Wichita** - Last fall, design began on a Freeway Traffic Management Center (TMC) that will be located in the Sedgwick County 911 center. Using cameras and electronic signs, the TMC will notify the traveling public about road conditions, traffic incidents and road closures on major highways. The camera views and sign messages will eventually be available on a public web site. This fall, KDOT will launch a project that tests the use of ITS technology at three interchanges in the city. Although this test project is for KDOT internal testing purposes only, it's the next step toward full deployment of the TMC and website, scheduled in 2010.

In addition to an ITS system being developed in the Wichita area, work is also under way to deploy electronic signs and cameras along I-70 across Kansas. Camera views and sign messages will be available to the public on KDOT's 511 website by the winter of 2008.

- **Practical Improvements** - KDOT is examining ways to make investments in some areas more cost effective through a "practical improvements" approach. This spring, KDOT conducted a pilot project using the approach on a stretch of US-156 in Ford County. A small shoulder will be added rather than a full-size shoulder – an improvement that will cost substantially less. The "practical improvements" approach won't work everywhere, but it's an option that KDOT wants to consider for some projects.

- **Local Bridge Task Force** - KDOT, the Kansas Association of Counties (KAC) and the League of Kansas Municipalities (LKM) have formed the Kansas Local Bridge Task Force. The task force, made up of elected city and county officials and staff from across the state, as well as staff from transportation agencies and the Federal Highway Administration, is studying options that local governments and KDOT can take to improve the inspection and condition of bridges under local jurisdiction. (Many local bridges in the state are behind on inspections.) The task force is finishing a draft proposal to share with stakeholders statewide.

If you have questions or would like more information please contact:
 Kansas Department of Transportation - Division of Public Affairs
 785-296-3276

Transportation Update: July 2008



Dear Stakeholder,

By 2009, all the projects committed to in the Comprehensive Transportation Program (CTP) will be underway. This means it is time to start looking to the future on transportation in our state.

Stakeholders across Kansas want to know what happens next. I'm pleased to announce

that Governor Kathleen Sebelius has convened a task force to develop a range of scenarios for a new multimodal transportation program. The task force won't be developing a list of projects, but a range of scenarios that will provide flexibility, permitting different levels of investment.

The task force, known as T-LINK, or Transportation – Leveraging Investments in Kansas, represents various industries, interests and regions in Kansas. Its work will be presented in December to the governor.

This task force is a logical outgrowth of the work of recent years – years when we've sought your collaboration and assistance. The Partnership Project helped us to better work with our stakeholders. The Local Consultation process informed us about the projects important to your community and region. These and other efforts, including the development of the state's long range transportation plan, have been good stepping stones to bring us to the formation of T-LINK.

In the pages that follow, I'll describe some recent plans and emerging possibilities, as well as express our hope for your continued involvement.

The work ahead brings with it both challenge and opportunity. The economy today is different from the economy within which the CHP and the CTP were developed. There may be cuts in federal funding that affect every level of government. These and other challenges – from fuel prices to materials costs – require our careful attention to using transportation dollars both wisely and strategically -- in ways that benefit the Kansas economy.

T-LINK Members

Chairs:

Tim Rogers, *Salina Airport Authority*
 Deb Miller, *KDOT Secretary*

Members:

Fred Bailey, *Bailey Truck Line*, Abilene
 Gary Beachner, *Beachner Grain*, St. Paul
 Mary Birch, *Lanthrop and Gage*, Overland Park
 Joan Brabec, *Twin Valley Developmental Services Inc*
 Shelly Buhler, *Shawnee County Commissioner*
 Ed DeSoignie, *Heavy Contractors Association*
 Allie Devine, *Kansas Livestock Association*
 Pat Hageman, *Rooks County Commissioner*, Natoma
 Bernie Hayen, *City of Manhattan*
 Brenda Herrman, *City of Hays*
 Bart Hildreth, *Wichita State University*
 Jan Huston, *Highway Advisory Commission*, Americus
 Roger Kaminska, *Operating Engineers Local 101*, Kansas City
 Mike Kelley, *YRC Worldwide*, Kansas City
 Don Linville, *Garden City Chamber of Commerce*
 Richard Lopez, *SER-Jobs for Progress*, Wichita
 Dean Mann, *Citizens Bank*, Fort Scott
 Scott Moore, *City of Wichita*
 Bill Pickert, *BKD*, Wichita



Please note that not all task force members have been confirmed and that there will be additions to this group including state legislators. For the latest information about T-LINK please visit:

www.kansastlink.com

Joe Reardon, *Mayor United Govt. Wyandotte County*
 Randall Riggs, *City of Newton*
 Bob Totten, *Kansas Contractors Association*, Topeka
 Pat Weaver, *University of Kansas Transportation Center*
 Jane Westerman, *Cargill*, Dodge City

Ex-Officio Members

David Kerr, Department of Commerce Secretary
 Joan Wagnon, Department of Revenue Secretary
 Michael Johnston, Kansas Turnpike Authority CEO
 Steve Weatherford, Kansas Development Finance Authority

Governor's Charge to the T-LINK Task Force

The Governor has provided the following charge to the T-LINK task force. These are the principles that will guide the task force as they work towards developing potential scenarios for transportation investments into the future.



Transportation has driven the development of Kansas from its very first days.

While we don't know what funding options might be possible, we do know there will always be infrastructure needs. And, we also know that transportation is key to seizing economic opportunities and creating jobs to stimulate our economy.

The task force, Transportation-Leveraging Investments in Kansas (T-LINK), will develop recommendations for an approach that recognizes all forms of transportation and serves our future.

I ask that T-LINK's recommendations be shaped by the following priorities:

1. A commitment to keep our roads and bridges safe and in good repair

Kansans want safe transportation. I ask the task force to make recommendations to enhance the safety of our state and local roads and bridges.

Over the last 20 years, our state has made a major investment in our transportation system. Kansans expect their tax dollars to be spent wisely and so do I. It would be wasteful to lose our investment because we did not care for our roads and bridges. The task force should make recommendations that protect the investment Kansans have already made.

In addition to the state's infrastructure, local transportation needs must also be addressed. Kansas has one of the largest local road and bridge networks in the nation. While many of these roads and bridges are critical for getting goods and crops to market, maintaining such an extensive network is difficult particularly for those counties with declining populations. Conversely, areas that are growing have transportation demands that have proven equally difficult to meet. The task force should explore how to best meet the needs of preserving and improving local roads and bridges.

2. Forward thinking without relying on old business models

Our citizens want and need better modal options. Our project

selection processes should be transparent and collaborative in order to support regional priorities. To create the greatest benefit to the state, our transportation investments need to align with our state's top economic priorities. And, moving transportation projects from concept through construction takes longer than it should. Delays are frustrating to communities and travelers and costly to our economy. The speed of project delivery during both the development and the construction stage must be increased.

Accomplishing these goals requires fresh thinking. I also ask the task force to consider how this new transportation approach recognizes growing concerns about energy independence, climate change and sustainability. The new approach should move Kansas towards a more diversified transportation portfolio that includes enhancing rail and aviation assets for the Kansas economy along with discussion on enhancing transit for Kansans.

3. A new approach that reflects today's realities but also creates a framework that prepares our state for the future

Our state is facing fiscal pressures and at the same time the cost of materials needed to build transportation projects is increasing. The task force recommendations should reflect that reality. However, transportation needs don't just go away and in order for our economy to grow we must continue to invest. The State will be best served if the task force reviews a range of transportation investment scenarios and considers approaches that could be implemented in stages if necessary.

I recognize that financing a new transportation approach will be challenging. I ask that you examine federal, state and local funding sources and consider the extent to which traditional funding sources are viable and determine if creative financing tools make sense for Kansas.

New and innovative funding frameworks that seek to maximize and leverage federal, state and local funding sources should be fully explored. Concepts that should be explored include Transportation Development Districts, Star Bond type financing structures and other models where infrastructure costs are paid through transportation user fees. These types of models will require more local support and commitment than typical bonding models currently used.

With current fuel prices at all time highs I cannot support any increase in motor fuel taxes and ask that the task force look to other approaches.

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Governor's Charge Continued

Working Collaboratively

Our state has enjoyed twenty years of success in transportation, which has been a direct result of legislators from both parties from all across the state working together. Accordingly, we will enlist the help of legislative leadership from both parties to find the appropriate legislators to serve as task force members.

The task force must create a vision that is mindful of our money, recognizes the needs of both rural and urban Kansas, and uses the strength of all transportation



modes. I look forward to seeing a set of recommendations that frame a new strategic approach to our future transportation needs.

Challenges to Overcome

While all of the projects from the Comprehensive Transportation Program (CTP) will be underway this fiscal year, there are some challenges yet to overcome:

Material Costs - Since 1999, the same year that the CTP was passed, the cost of a barrel of oil has risen from under \$20 to over \$120 today. In the same time period the average cost of a ton of asphalt has increased from just under \$30 to around \$70 and the average unit cost of concrete as grown from over \$30 to \$55. Increasing costs will continue to impact state's purchasing power and KDOT's ability to maintain and improve our transportation system.

Tight Budgets - While the Kansas economy is still performing well compared to other states, recently our growth has started to show some signs of slowing down. In addition, interest rates have fallen, causing our interest income to decrease. In response, Governor Kathleen Sebelius has asked all cabinet agencies to find ways to reduce their upcoming budgets by one to two percent.

Federal Funding - There are funding concerns at the national level because of a shortfall in the federal Highway Trust Fund. Congressional action is needed before October to prevent a more than 30 percent cut in federal highway funds from affecting both state and local transportation projects. The cut would reduce funding to Kansas by nearly \$120 million.

Impact of the LRTP

KDOT worked with stakeholders across Kansas for more than a year to develop the Kansas Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The LRTP sets forth a practical policy vision of how to maintain and improve the state's transportation system between now and 2030. Work is under way to put the plan into action.

• **Transit Study** - One LRTP recommendation called for KDOT and its stakeholders to develop a comprehensive transit plan to determine statewide transit needs, develop strategies to meet those needs and support more efficient, effective transit programs. Currently, the KDOT Office of Public Transportation is working with the Kansas Collaborative on creating pilot projects to cover such issues as regional dispatch and maintenance, one-call mobility management, workforce transportation and Medicaid transit.

• **Aviation Study** - The LRTP also called on KDOT and its stakeholders to develop a statewide aviation system plan to determine needs and establish an airport ranking system to help prioritize aviation investments. An FAA grant was

secured to undertake the study. In developing the statewide aviation system plan, KDOT will incorporate the findings of a recently completed adverse weather landing systems study and an on-going pavement condition study of all hard surfaced runways, both done by Kansas State University.

• **Freight Study** - Freight movement is an issue of growing importance nationwide. KDOT is working on a freight plan. It will analyze the movement of freight across Kansas; identify key infrastructure, operations and institutional issues that may hinder movement; and propose strategies to improve freight mobility, efficiency and safety.

• **Economic Impact Analysis Group** - During LRTP discussions, stakeholders repeatedly said that transportation decisions should align with and support the Kansas economy. KDOT is now working to integrate economic impact analysis into project selection and programming. An Economic Impact Analysis Working Group has met in recent months to discuss various analytic approaches. Its recommendations are due by late summer.