

Good morning –

We're looking forward to hosting the first of the local consultation meetings next week in Ulysses and Hays on behalf of the T-Link task force – and additional local consultation meetings are scheduled across the state throughout September.

Because the T-Link local consultation meetings are somewhat different than the 1998 T-2000 process used to develop the Comprehensive Transportation Program (CTP), we've fielded many questions about the local consultation meetings and the type of input that we're looking for at the meetings. In order to help you, your community, and/or organization plan your participation in the local consultation meetings, below is an outline of the day's schedule and some suggestions for the day.

### **First – how and why is the local consult process different than T-2000?**

During T-2000, local needs for transportation were identified through testimony in front of the T-2000 task force. From that testimony and other input, the task force developed recommendations about the type and size of programs needed to continue the progress made during the 1989 Comprehensive Highway Program (CHP).

As we begin the T-Link process though we already have a lot of information about statewide needs. Through previous local consultation meetings and the development of the State's Long Range Transportation Plan, KDOT has conducted a needs assessment and identified funding gaps. The purpose of the next set of local consultation meetings is to go back to communities to determine if any local economic issues or transportation needs have changed and to continue discussions about regional priorities.

Like T-2000 a decade ago, T-Links is relying on a grassroots approach to gathering information about local transportation needs and priorities. The difference is that instead of relying on testimony, the T-Links process has been designed to reflect our commitment to using collaborative decision-making processes and to sparking regional discussion around highway and other modal needs.

### **What is the agenda?**

8:30 am - 9:00 am– Overview - KDOT staff will provide an overview of the T-LINK process and other background info

*Suggestion: Please arrive early if you can. We're worried that it will take a while to get everyone signed in and we'd like to start on time. No rsvp is needed.*

9:00 am – 10:30 am Break-out groups. You will be asked to participate in one of five breakout groups: highway and local roads, transit (including passenger rail), aviation, rail freight (including shortline rail), and bike and pedestrian. In these sessions, participants will:

1. Review transportation needs. For example, for highways and airports, we'll review proposed project lists that were developed during local consult meetings in 2006 and through the statewide aviation planning process. In all cases, we'll also review the needs assessment developed as part of the long-range plan. We'll ask also communities if there are projects or needs that should be added and what has changed in your community – in terms of demographics, the economy or anything else that would impact transportation needs. Examples of the handouts the KDOT will provide have been posted on the website at [www.kansastlink.com/calendar](http://www.kansastlink.com/calendar) . Please keep checking the website as we'll post the actual handouts in advance of each local consultation meeting.
2. We'll also ask for your thoughts on regional transportation priorities.
3. Also, we're interested in hearing your thoughts about funding for these needs – both at the state and local level.

*Suggestion: Your city or county will want to send a representative for each breakout session in which you have interest.*

10:30 am– 11:00 am Breakout groups report back

11:00 am – noon T-LINK member discussion and preview of T-LINK calculator. T-LINK members will provide their reaction to the morning's discussion and may ask for additional input from attendees. Also, participants will learn how they can use the T-LINK calculator to create and fund their own theoretical transportation program.

Noon – 1:00 pm Lunch – on your own

1:00 pm – on Availability Session – Time has been set aside in the afternoon for communities or advocacy groups that want to present information about specific projects or concerns. Please sign in for a time-slot when you arrive for the morning session. Presentations will be made in the order in which you sign in and you should plan for a 5-10 minute presentation. The exact length depends on how many communities want to present information. We want to give communities a chance to present information if they want - but there is NO requirement that you present information. KDOT staff will be available to hear the presentations and T-LINK members have been invited to stay for the afternoon session as well. We'll have a laptop and projector available if you want to use them – but there is no expectation that a formal presentation must be given. If there isn't time to everyone to present specific project information, we'll figure out a way to expand the process so that everyone can be assured that they will be heard.

*Suggestion: When I've talked with communities about the availability session, I've suggested that communities make sure that they talk about how a specific project fits within a regional context and about support for the project (that could be financial support or it could be community support. If you're talking about community support, I'd be curious what sort of process you've used to assess community support).*

### **What's the role of the T-LINK members in the local consultation process?**

Each T-LINK member was asked to participate in at least two local consultation meetings. And they've risen to the challenge with most members attending more than two meetings. Their job at these meetings is to listen to discussions within each breakout group and to raise questions. By participating in this process, members of the T-LINK task force will become more familiar with the transportation needs and concerns across the state.

### **Will projects be selected for funding at the local consultation meetings?**

The purpose of the local consultation meetings is to develop and refine regional and statewide transportation needs and priorities in Kansas. No specific projects will be selected for funding through the local consultation or the T-LINK task force process.

I hope this information is helpful and if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact any the T-LINK staff by calling (785) 296-3585. A summary of each local consultation meeting and participant reaction will be posted on the website as quickly as possible, so I encourage you to track our progress as we meet with communities.

Deb Miller