

# A Transportation System that Works for You

This June marked the end of the state's current transportation program and consequently the completion of 20 years worth of transportation projects. Recognizing that there is still more work to do, Governor Kathleen Sebelius assembled a 35-person taskforce, T-LINK, charged with crafting a new approach to transportation. A quality transportation system does many things but at its most basic it enhances safety, creates jobs and serves our economy. After months of discussion and obtaining input from more than 850 Kansans, T-LINK made the following recommendations for how the state transportation system could provide all these things even better in the future.

**ECONOMY:** Communities all across the state have benefitted economically from transportation investments. For instance, one project on US-69 in southeast Kansas resulted in more than 600 local businesses getting additional work/customers. From glass shops to hotels to wrecking services and cell phone companies— transportation projects create a ripple effect. The last transportation program generated \$3 dollars in economic growth for every dollar invested. But, we can do even better.

#### T-LINK Economic-Related Recommendations:

- In the past, the State has selected all 10-years worth of projects at once. Recognizing that this process is no longer compatible with today's fast-paced economy, T-LINK recommends a more frequent and flexible selection process. Projects should be selected every few years to better accommodate evolving economic needs. And T-LINK recommends funds be set aside for projects that are needed immediately to capture a new economic opportunity. For example, a manufacturing plant may need an additional turning lane to be built or an industrial park may require a rail spur in order to locate in your community.
- T-LINK recommends reserving a portion of the proposed bonding cap for financing fast emerging projects that have a significant economic impact.
- T-LINK recommends increasing short-line rail funding critical to shipping agriculture products and expanding the program to make shippers eligible for it.
- Recognizing the importance both to economic development and emergency air services, T-LINK recommended creating an aviation priority network, which would prioritize airport projects to fill gaps in the network so Kansans will have access to air ambulance service despite weather conditions.



**JOBS:** The previous transportation program created/sustained over 115,000 jobs in our state. Impressive, but T-LINK has crafted an approach that should allow Kansas to capitalize even more on transportation investments.

#### T-LINK Job-Related Recommendations:

- T-LINK recommends selecting transportation projects based on three elements 1) Local Input, 2) Engineering Factors and 3) Economic Impact Analysis. By utilizing economic impact analysis, Kansas will invest in transportation projects that will not only improve our transportation infrastructure, but also those that will potentially create/save the most jobs.

**SAFETY:** Driving is the most dangerous thing we do each day. While most accidents are caused by driver error, there is still comfort in knowing that our family members are traveling on safe roads and bridges each day. A well-funded transportation program provides the means necessary to keep our roads and bridges safe and in good repair.

Safety isn't exclusive to roads. For some, public transportation provides an environmentally friendly and cost-effective way to get to work every day. For others, it's the only means through which they can access medical services. Having a good public transit system that we can count on every day is critical for our work force and for our quality of life. The same is true about airports. Having an airport that is accessible for air ambulances allows many rural residents the freedom to stay in the community they love.

#### T-LINK Safety-Related Recommendations:

- T-LINK recommends fully funding preservation & repair work to keep our roads and bridges at the same performance level we've come to expect.
- Growing demand requires increase funding for the transportation modes. T-LINK recommends both a funding increase and a more efficient approach to transit. For example, a regional approach to transit will streamline costs by utilizing one-call dispatching and requiring transit providers in the same area to coordinate their actions.



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# Complete List of T-LINK Recommendations

## Transportation Program

- Should be multimodal
- Develop a more frequent and flexible project selection process. Use a more collaborative approach including local consultation and advisory panel input.
- Expand and reform existing Economic Development program ( up to \$20 million from \$7 million)
- Most Mega-Projects (\$200 million +) will need separate financing plans from the State Program
- More emphasis on the interaction between transportation investments and the impact on the economy
- Use economic impact analysis as part of project selection

## Highways

- Preserving the existing system is the top priority.
- Current performance targets are appropriate.
- Capacity needs should be the focus of the next program
- Utilize practical improvements, such as passing lanes instead of 4-lanes, whenever possible.
- Consider adding passing lanes instead of full upgrades to 4 lanes

## Local Roads

- Create a network of priority local roads. Provide incentives for local governments to close little-used roads and bridges.
- Allow local governments to swap federal funds for state funds to give them more flexibility.

## Transit

- Create and evaluate pilot Regional Transit approach in an effort to improve delivery and level of transit service.
- Revise funding formulas. And create discretionary funding for special opportunities.

## Rail

- Continue funding the short-line rail program. Expand it to include shippers, industrial parks and local govts.
- Establish a freight advisory committee

## Aviation

- All weather air-ambulance access is a priority
- Develop a strategic aviation plan to guide and upgrade the airport network

## Funding and Finance

- Funding should come from a variety of sources. Increase funding for all modes eventually.
- Special City County Highway Fund, City Connecting Links payments and the Local Partnership Program should be increased
- Continue Transportation Revolving Fund
- Utilize bonding for transportation projects
- Provide greater flexibility for KDOT to manage its debt within a clearly establish ceiling
- Make Transportation Development Districts more Star-Bond like

## T-LINK Funding Recommendations

State Highway Construction	CTP Annual Spending Average	T-LINK Rec
Preservation & Repair	\$278 million	\$370 million
Modernization	\$ 84 million	\$ 35 million
Expansion & Enhancement	\$170 million	\$290 million
<b>State Highway Total</b>	<b>\$532 million</b>	<b>\$695 million</b>

Modes	CTP Annual Spending Average	T-LINK Rec
Local Roads*	\$169 million	\$232 million
Aviation	\$3 million	\$6 million
Transit	\$6 million	\$16 million
Short line Rail	\$3 million	\$7 million
Bike/Ped	\$0 million	\$0 million
Economic Development Set Aside	\$7 million	\$20 million
<b>Modes Total</b>	<b>\$188 million</b>	<b>\$281 million</b>
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM</b>	<b>\$720 million</b>	<b>\$976 million</b>

\*Includes Special City County Highway Fund

**Over 10 years, the average annual gap between current revenues and T-LINK recommendations = \$550 million**