

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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FHWA Releases Final Section 4(f) Evaluation for the SLT

Two important developments concerning a new section of K-10 Highway, commonly known as the South Lawrence Trafficway (SLT), have been announced by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

The FHWA has released its Final Section 4(f) Evaluation of the SLT, determining there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to the 32nd St. Alignment B alternative. The determination possibly gives the state the flexibility of using federal-aid highway funds to help build the SLT along that alignment.

The Final Section 4(f) Evaluation examines the potential impacts of two alternate alignments for the eastern leg of the SLT – 32nd Street Alignment B and 42nd Street Alignment A – on historic properties. It also examines the No Action Alternative. The two historic properties are the Haskell Agricultural Farm Property, which includes the Baker Wetlands, and the William Meairs Farmstead south of the Wakarusa River. It also discusses measures to minimize potential harm to the properties.

FHWA to Adopt Corps' Final EIS

In a separate action, the FHWA also announced that it will formally adopt the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS). Federal regulations allow a federal agency to adopt the Final EIS of another federal agency.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released its Final EIS in January 2003. In its Record of Decision (ROD) in December 2003, the Corps selected 32nd Street Alignment B, allowing the state to build along that route without using federal-aid highway funds. The FHWA plans to issue its own ROD which may or may not be the same as the Corps'. The FHWA can adopt the

Corps' Final EIS, but reach a different conclusion in its ROD. The Final Section 4(f) Evaluation gives the FHWA additional necessary information to make its ROD.

The upcoming ROD from the FHWA is independent of the Corps' ROD that already allows the state to build on 32nd St. Alignment B. The FHWA can release its ROD no sooner than 30 days after it formally adopts the Corps' Final EIS.

Copies of the Final Section 4(f) Evaluation and the Corps' Final EIS will be available for review at the following locations during their normal business hours:

- Federal Highway Administration, 6111 SW 29th St., Suite 100, Topeka
- Kansas Department of Transportation, Bureau of Design, 11th Floor, Eisenhower State Office Building, 700 SW Harrison, Topeka
- Haskell Indian Nations University Library, Tommaney Hall, Haskell Indian Nations University, Lawrence
- Anschutz Library, University of Kansas, 1301 Hoch Auditoria Drive, Lawrence
- Lawrence Public Library, Local Document Collection, 707 Vermont, Lawrence
- Douglas County Public Works Department, 1242 Massachusetts, Lawrence
- Lawrence/Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Office, 1st Fl., City Hall, 6 East 6th St., Lawrence
- Baker University Collins Library, 606 8th Street, Baldwin

The Final Section 4(f) Evaluation is also available on the South Lawrence Trafficway website at www.southlawrencetrafficway.org. The Final EIS released by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is available in CD-ROM format by contacting the KDOT Bureau of Design at 785-296-3901 or 1-877-550-5368 (toll-free).

Persons with questions or concerns about the Final Section 4(f) Evaluation or adoption of the Corps' Final EIS can contact Doug Hecox, FHWA Office of Public Affairs, at 202-366-0660.

BACKGROUND

The FHWA became involved with the SLT in November 2005 as a result of a \$1.5 million federal appropriation to resume development of the project. The funds will not be sufficient to start construction of the project. The 32 St. Alignment B alternative is estimated to cost about \$148 million to build and the 42nd St. alignment is estimated to cost about \$167 million to construct. No funding was included for the project in the ten-year Comprehensive Transportation Program which ends in 2009, so no construction is scheduled.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released its approved Final EIS for the SLT in January 2003. In its Record of Decision (ROD) in December 2003, the Corps selected 32nd Street Alignment B as its preferred alternative. On April 10, 2006, the FHWA announced its intent to adopt the Corp's approved Final EIS, for which it accepted comments through May 31, 2006. Also on April 10, 2006, the FHWA announced it would prepare and coordinate the distribution of a Draft and Final Section 4(f) Evaluation for the project.

Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (as amended) applies specifically to projects involving federal funding for transportation improvements. It is intended to protect publicly-owned land of a publicly-owned park; recreation area; wildlife and/or

waterfowl refuge of national, state, or local significance; or land of a historic site of national, state, or local significance from conversion to transportation use unless two provisions are met:

1. There is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of the land from the property; and
2. The action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from such use.

The SLT project consists of building a new section of K-10 Highway beginning at the K-10/ US-59 Highway interchange in southwest Lawrence extending approximately six miles north and east to the existing K-10 near the eastern edge of the city of Lawrence. The No-Action alternative and five roadway corridors with a total of twelve reasonable-build alternative alignments were evaluated and discussed in the Corps' Draft and Final EIS.

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This information can be made available in alternative accessible formats upon request. For information about obtaining an alternative format, contact the Bureau of Transportation Information, 700 SW Harrison St., 2nd Fl West, Topeka, KS 66603-3754 or phone 785-296-3585 (Voice) (TTY).