

# Transportation Update: June 2007

## Local Consultation at Work



There's a significant amount of work underway at the Kansas Department of Transportation, and I want to share important updates with our partners. We're nearing the end of the Comprehensive Transportation Program (CTP) and the primary focus of the agency is on delivering those CTP projects. I am pleased to report that all CTP projects will be under construction by 2009, as promised. And, on page four, you'll learn about more than 200 projects in the Local Partnership Program that are scheduled to begin work before or by 2009 as part of the CTP.

While delivering on the CTP commitments is our top priority, we must also begin to prepare for 2010 and beyond. As part of our planning process, KDOT staff traveled the state last fall to discuss projects that our Priority Formula would identify as important and to seek input on those projects and other ideas local officials had about project needs. I am very pleased with the number of local stakeholders who took time to talk with KDOT staff and am equally pleased with the quality of those discussions.

Feedback from those local discussions was clear. We consistently heard that maintaining and preserving the existing system should be KDOT's top priority. We also heard about significant transportation needs across the State, and learned that there's a great deal of interest in transportation improvement projects.

Because we do not know exactly how much funding will be available after the CTP, we're taking the common sense approach of preparing for two possible futures after the CTP:

**Core Projects:** If a new transportation program is not immediately available, KDOT's primary focus will be on maintaining and preserving the existing transportation system rather than adding significant new capacity.

**Core Projects + New Program:** KDOT needs to have larger, capacity projects under development so that when a new transportation program is passed they will be ready to be considered for construction along with the preservation/maintenance core projects. In addition to the studies and preliminary designs that KDOT already has underway for capacity enhancing work, we have identified an additional eight regionally significant projects upon which to begin preliminary work. These eight projects were identified through the local consultation process and represent more than 140 miles of state highways and carry more than 200,000 vehicles each day.

No construction funding has been committed for either the core or capacity projects. In an effort to balance the need to protect investments in the system and the need to meet emerging demands, it is possible that additional projects may be identified in the future for planning or design work, if the budget allows.

I appreciate your support of transportation. We're still refining the local consultation process and we'll probably always be searching for the right balance between regional input and Priority Formula data. As you read this update, though, I think you'll see that your input combined with our technical data results in benefits for our state. I look forward to continuing our partnerships with you.



Deb Miller  
Secretary, Kansas Department of Transportation

### Local Consultation at Work

Over the last two years, KDOT hosted 16 statewide meetings to discuss the local consult process and how we can better partner with local officials to select and program transportation projects. The response to these outreach efforts was overwhelmingly positive.

Most recently, KDOT hosted 84 county-level meetings with local officials in October 2006 as a precursor to 8 regional meetings to identify a handful of regionally significant projects for planning and design work. In these county-level meetings, local officials identified more than

400 transportation improvement projects for consideration. At the eight regional meetings in November and December 2006, KDOT's district staff presented information about those 400 projects as well as about projects that ranked high in the KDOT priority formula for pavement, geometric, and capacity needs. Clearly, KDOT can't begin work on 400 projects. But by considering both local and regional input along with Priority Formula data, KDOT has identified eight regionally significant projects (described on pages 2 and 3) for preliminary work.

## Common Sense Approach... About the Scenarios

### Core Projects:

There will be limited state dollars for construction until a new transportation program is passed by the Legislature. Kansas stakeholders and transportation professionals agree – the top priority for limited funds is preserving the existing system so KDOT has selected a pool of about 85 preservation-focused candidate projects for planning and design work. Of these candidate projects, 44 projects are relatively small bridge replacements projects, more than 32 are pavement rehab projects on the interstate and state highways, and the remaining projects help complete work that was initiated under the CTP. KDOT will pull projects from the pool to move to construction depending on cash flow, inflation rates and schedules.

Until the projects are further developed we won't know how many we can afford to build or how many will be ready to build. We will share project schedules as they become available. Those projects are shown in green on the map on page 3.

### Core Projects + New Program

Because it takes many years to design major highway projects, KDOT has identified eight projects for preliminary work based on input from the local consultation meetings and the Priority Formula. These projects are described in more detail below and are shown in blue on the map.

These eight projects join other projects where a study or preliminary design is already underway. Projects already underway are noted in red on the map and include:

- NW Wichita Bypass & US-54 through Goddard
- US-54, Pratt to Kingman
- K-18, Ogden to Manhattan
- I-235, Interchanges at Kellogg & Central Ave., Wichita
- US-69 around Pittsburg
- US-69, Johnson County, 119th St. to 75th St.

Construction funding has not been identified for any of these capacity projects and won't be available unless there's a new funding program.

## Newly Identified Preliminary Projects Using Local Consult

Input from local officials was key in helping us make these selections. We heard through the local consult meetings last fall that economic impact, regional travel and regional priorities should be considered when making transportation investments. Those issues, along with pavement, geometric and capacity needs were considered in selecting these projects for preliminary work. Not all the projects identified below are slated for design work; in some cases it is more productive to do a conceptual study first and to talk in more detail with stakeholders and local officials.

### **I-435 from I-35 to K-10**

With more than 118,000 vehicles per day, this interchange is rapidly becoming a bottleneck for commuters and freight in the Kansas City metro area. Due to the time and expense it will take to address these problems, there was wide agreement in the local consultation meetings that KDOT should conduct a study of this interchange and the adjoining highways. This interchange impacts traffic on I-435, I-35 and K-10. Thus, improvements to the interchange will help address congestion along multiple corridors.

### **I-70 and K-7 interchange**

K-7 is a rapidly developing corridor that spans 37 miles and seven communities. Since 2003, more than 100 meetings have been held with local communities to develop a vision for the corridor that the communities can support. Our local partners have worked hard to develop and implement corridor management agreements. While needs abound in the corridor, this interchange is the logical first step for preliminary design work because it has the highest traffic count in the corridor, functions poorly, and can't accommodate projected growth. Improving this interchange also received significant support in local consultation discussions.

### **K-27 in Wallace County**

K-27 was selected due to its poor pavement condition and inadequate shoulders, hills and curves. It's also the last remaining section between Oklahoma and US-36 without adequate shoulders and sight distance. Local officials indicated that it's regionally important to complete the corridor improvements. This section spans 30 miles, so part of the preliminary design work will be to break the corridor into multiple projects and prioritize the projects for improvements.

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

### US-69 from south of Pittsburg to I-44, including the US-400 connection

Under the CTP, Kansas has invested more than \$250 million to develop US-69 as a 4-lane corridor from Johnson County to Fort Scott, and it's important to complete the corridor for regional economic development. KDOT began expanding the corridor from the north to the south and with this project we'll examine southern linkages from Pittsburg south. The actual alignment will be the subject of the study and the goal is to create a connection between US-69 and US-400 to I-44. While many projects were discussed in the southeast Kansas local consultation meetings, there was wide support for a project that serves both US-400 and US-69.

### I-135/KTA/47th St. Interchange

Though this area of Wichita has been economically challenged, economic growth is beginning to occur and more development is proposed. With traffic backing up on I-135 and 47th Street, there are concerns that the economic growth will stop if necessary infrastructure improvements aren't made. Local consult discussions indicated there's a great deal of support for growing that part of Wichita and making improvements to the interchange. This project would address the interchange and also take local roads into consideration.

### K-96 from southeast of Nickerson to north of Sterling

The pavement on this section of K-96 is in poor condition, and the sharp right angle was the subject of considerable local concern. These factors led to a discussion of constructing a new diagonal between Nickerson and Sterling during the local consult meeting. Because there is significant regional interest in a "Northwest Passage," the study will be conducted in a way so that any improvements would not preclude future work on a broader concept like the Northwest Passage.

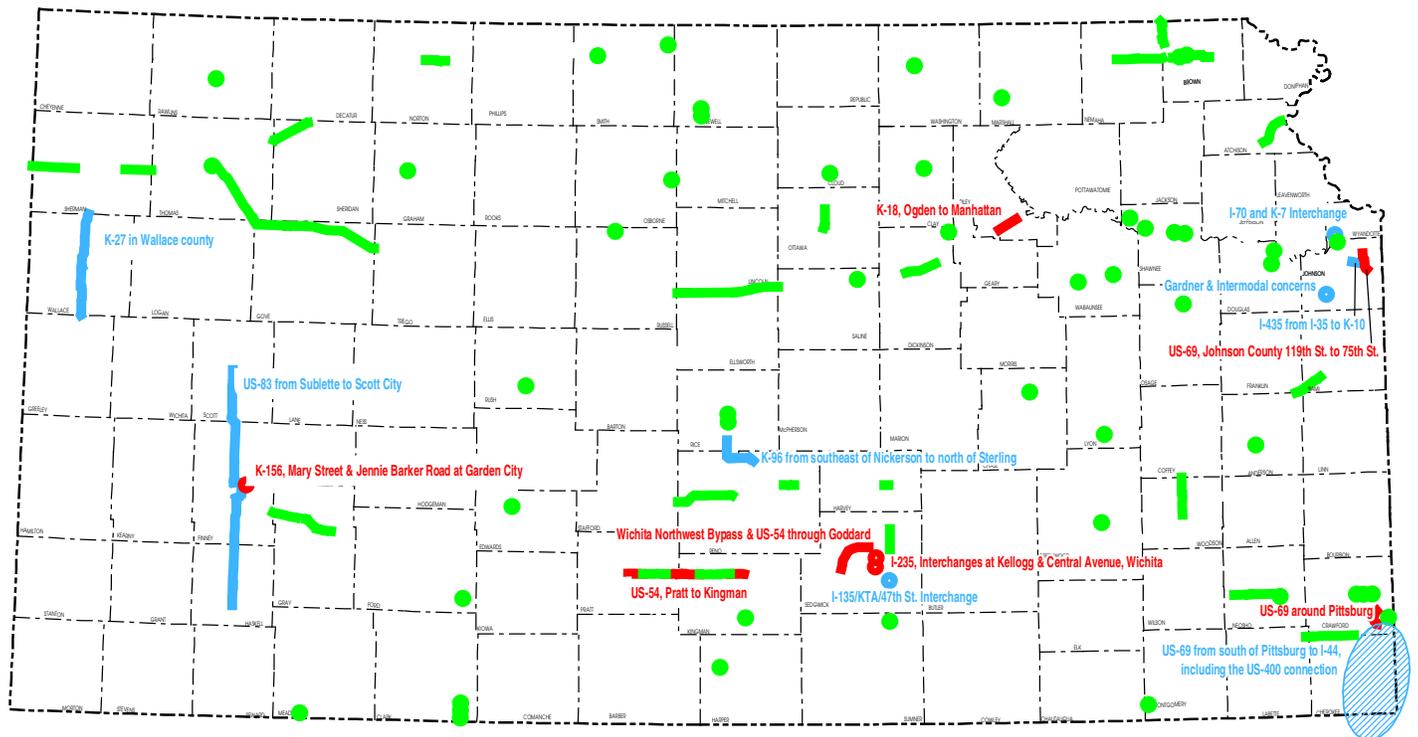
### US 83 from Sublette to Scott City

This 70-mile corridor needs to be studied to identify and prioritize segments for improvement. In addition to pavement and capacity problems, local officials raised concerns about increased truck traffic from ethanol plants and limited passing opportunities. The study will determine whether the scope should focus on passing lanes or a four-lane improvement.

### Gardner Interchange at I-35

There's clearly a need for preliminary work to begin on a new interchange to serve the BNSF intermodal facility and warehousing/logistics park. Up to 4,000 additional trucks per day and an additional 1,900 vehicles per day for employees associated with the facility and logistics park are projected in the next few years.

## Projects That Are Being Studied or are Under Design



Core Projects

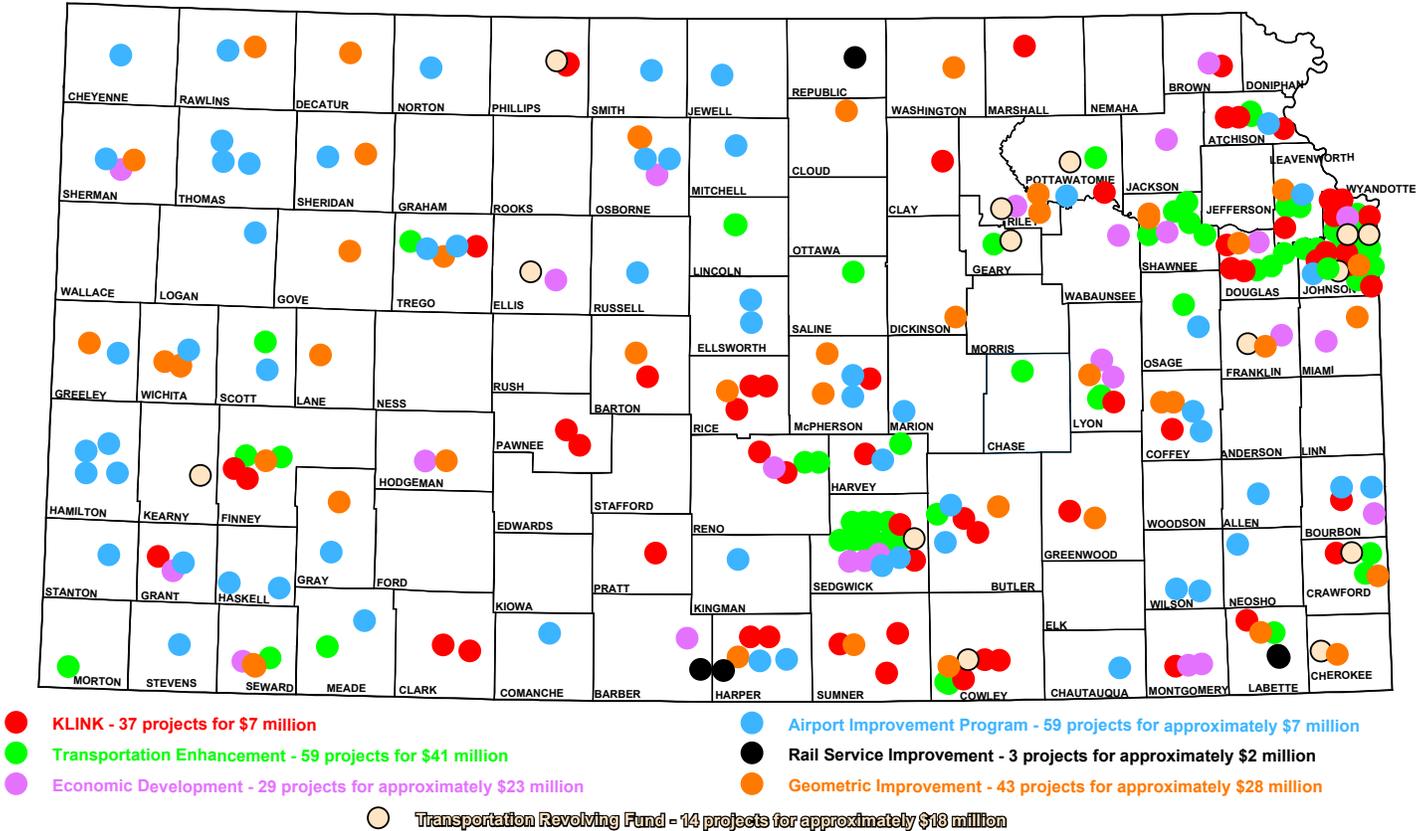
Other Preliminary Work in the Pipeline

Newly Identified Preliminary Projects Using Local Consult

## Local Partnership Projects

Whether improving an airport runway for air ambulance access, rehabilitating railroad track so farmers can reach new markets, or helping modernize a city's infrastructure, the Local Partnership Program provides a valuable service to Kansas communities. The projects below will occur across the state and construction is scheduled to begin by 2009.

### UPCOMING PROJECTS



## Long Range Transportation Plan Update

Visit the website at [www.KansasLRTP.org](http://www.KansasLRTP.org)

**K**DOT is also in the process of developing a long range transportation plan (LRTP), a 20-year vision for transportation in the state. The LRTP is not a new transportation program, but will help shape the discussion about a new program. The LRTP is an evaluation of the current status and future needs of all modes of the Kansas transportation system, including state highways and local roads, transit, rail, aviation, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

During Phase 1 of developing the LRTP, five themes emerged which created the framework for Phase 2:

- Freight
- Metropolitan (defined as counties with a population of 50,000+ and a metropolitan planning organization) transportation issues
- Rural and micropolitan transportation issues
- Funding/finance
- Economic impact

For Phase 2, more than 150 stakeholders are organized into committees to comment on the five themes. Those committees include:

- Five Topical Working Groups (one for each of the themes) to examine issues in detail and develop possible approaches to meet the state's transportation needs in that theme over the next 20 years
- An LRTP Policy Committee to review and integrate input from the Topical Working groups because there are many issues which span more than one theme
- An LRTP Technical Committee to review the investment scenarios options in detail
- A KDOT Steering Committee for input and guidance

Recommendations will be developed in Phase 2, which will run through summer 2007. In Phase 3 (Fall 2007), the draft LRTP will be available for public comment. Based on those comments, the LRTP will be refined and finalized.