
2006 Federal Issues Statement

FEDERAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION FUNDING WILL BE AN IMPORTANT PART OF LAWRENCE'S FUTURE

The Lawrence and Douglas County area continues to face major surface transportation needs as we grow as a community and as the entire northeast Kansas area continues to face new highway needs. Neither local nor state resources will be sufficient to provide the highways of the future that Lawrence and Douglas County will need to ensure the safety and convenience of the public. Additionally our desire to foster a positive economic development climate for the businesses of tomorrow require that we begin building the transportation network which will respond to our street and highway needs today. We urge our delegation to provide increased surface transportation funding for our community, including a focus on the transportation needs of K-10 (East 23rd Street) at the former Farmland site and East Hills Business Park site.

CHALLENGING THE 2005 FEDERAL CENSUS ESTIMATES FOR LAWRENCE AND DOUGLAS COUNTY

Both the City of Lawrence and Douglas County are challenging the most recent Census Bureau estimates (July 1, 2005) released in mid 2006. The Census Bureau numbers indicated that Lawrence lost population, while our utility connection and building permit numbers continued to indicate an increased population. We believe these estimates do not fairly reflect the growth that our communities are

experiencing. Our appeal to the Census Bureau has been submitted and we await their review.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE DESIGNATION AS A NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA



The Lawrence and Douglas County communities wish to express our appreciation for the efforts of our Congressional delegation which recently resulted in the passage of legislation obtaining federal designation as a National Heritage Area. This designation will provide educational and cultural opportunities that capture and preserve the history of the area and focus attention on the role the region has played in the nation's struggle for freedom and opportunity for all of its people.



Historic Antebellum Murphy-Bromelsick House

LAWRENCE MUNICIPAL AIRPORT FLIES HIGH WITH SUPPORT FROM THE FAA

The Lawrence Municipal Airport has received FAA funding for a variety of infrastructure improvement projects over the past several years, benefiting the safety and operations of an airport that strives to meet the aviation related demands of a growing community. These projects included a major expansion/rehab of the apron, improvements/expansion of the main runway and taxiway, lighting improvements, and this year's project, which involves the construction of a partial parallel taxiway to the secondary (crosswind) runway.

Operations at the airport continue to increase, as recent estimates (2005) indicate a total of 62 based aircraft and over 33,000 annual operations. Air traffic associated with university events, NASCAR events, Lifstar helicopter operations, etc. provides the bulk of these operations, along with a charter operation that was recently added to the Fixed Base Operator's services. There continues to be interest in the development community for locating an industrial park in the general vicinity of the airport. Proximity to the airport and the air transportation support that can be provided are relevant factors in the consideration of this location.

The Lawrence Aviation Advisory Board and the City of Lawrence seeks legislative support and assistance in procuring appropriate earmarks to allow the City to proceed with the completion of the next major infrastructure project at the airport that will support this level of anticipated activity. To that end, we will seek additional FAA funding for a runway safety project that is scheduled for 2007, involving upgrades designed to meet current C-II FAA standards. Tasks include widening, obstruction removal and grading to current standards within the safety area of Runway 15-33. Estimated costs for this project are in the range of \$1,300,000.

We appreciate the past support provided by our legislative leaders and look forward to funding assistance in the future in order to continue providing aviation services that are safe, proactive, responsive, and contribute to the economic viability of the community.



Photo courtesy of the Lawrence Journal World

FEDERAL FUNDS HELP FUEL LAWRENCE'S TRANSIT SYSTEM



The City of Lawrence Transit System continues to experience steady growth in ridership as it celebrates its 5 year anniversary. In 2006, ridership to date is up 15% from the prior year, and the transit system anticipates an annual ridership total of 500,000 for fixed-route and complementary paratransit operations. Annual ridership since the system's start in 2001 is up a remarkable 150% when 200,145 trips were provided. Currently the transit system provides an average of 1,600 rides each day. It remains clear that the citizens of Lawrence are embracing the benefits of public transportation.

Efforts to improve transit service in the community continues as the City earlier this year was able work successfully with the University of Kansas in acquiring five transit vehicles, from Optima Bus Corporation in Wichita, Kansas, to be used to operate a 1,500 Park and Ride Facility located on their West Campus that is estimated to generate 600,000 trips annually. In addition, a Coordinated Public Transportation Development Plan is currently underway that explores the feasibility of coordinating and/or consolidating City "T" and University

(KU on Wheels) transit services. A final report with recommendations is expected in mid-November.

Other efforts include, launching an online matching service for commuters in June 2006 called, "Carpool Connection" by working in conjunction with the Mid-American Regional Council of Kansas City to encourage ridesharing activities to reduce traffic congestion on North Eastern Kansas highways. So far 904 people have registered on the site, and 190 of those are from Lawrence.

Finally, the City is currently working with the Kansas Department of Transportation and Johnson County Transit to explore the feasibility of operating commuter service along Kansas Highway 10 between Lawrence and Johnson County to help alleviate growing traffic congestion along this corridor as development continues.

The continued commitment of funding by the Federal Transit Administration is vital. At this time, we respectfully seek legislative assistance in revising the language of the City's FY2007 transit appropriations request as well as prior earmarks received in FY2004 and FY2005, to read, "City of Lawrence, KS Transit System – Bus and Bus Facilities".

We urge our legislative partners to continue to support the City of Lawrence's thriving public transportation system that positively impacts the lives of many citizens by maintaining their independence through increased mobility.



LAWRENCE CONTINUES TO BENEFIT FROM THE FEDERAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM



Atherton Court homes built by Tenants to Homeowners and Habitat for Humanity through funds provided by CDBG and HOME programs.

For fiscal year 2006, the City of Lawrence CDBG allocation was \$816,981 and for HOME, \$645,694. Although HOME funds have remained relatively steady (only 1.2% decrease since 2004), the CDBG allocation has experienced a 13.8% decrease since the 2001 allocation. The City of Lawrence uses CDBG and HOME funding for various community wide activities including a highly successful comprehensive housing rehabilitation program, first time homebuyer, emergency, energy efficiency, and weatherization programs – all for low and moderate income owner/occupants, funding of neighborhood associations in target neighborhoods, target neighborhood capital improvement projects, as well as funding for public service agencies helping the homeless and other low and moderate income persons in the community. As the City awaits the outcome of the 2007 funding allocation, we oppose efforts for any further cuts to these allocations.

THE PROSPERITY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS IS ESSENTIAL TO THE LAWRENCE / DOUGLAS COUNTY COMMUNITY

The Lawrence and Douglas County communities continue to urge our congressional delegation to see the value of the University of Kansas for our entire state as the flagship research institution and as the excellent educational institution

educating our future leaders. Congressional support for future research grants and research facility, including those in the bioscience and life science fields will bring great value to the entire state. Additionally, the economic benefits to the entire state through possible commercial benefits from research will greatly assist the entire state.

FEDERAL SUPPORT KEY FOR HASKELL INDIAN NATIONS UNIVERSITY

Haskell Indian Nations University represents an important commitment for the nation in providing an excellent education for Native American students from around the country. We urge our congressional delegation to support full funding for this important institution.

FEDERAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS LAWS

Recent proposed legislation would strip the ability of local communities to regulate the use of their local right-of-way by telecommunications companies. We urge our federal legislators to recognize the recent changes made by the Kansas legislature on this topic removing the need for federal legislation for Kansas companies and consumers. Kansas cities must continue to receive appropriate compensation for the use of their public right-of-way and must continue to be able to regulate the use of public right-of-way.



Lawrence must be able to regulate utilities that use public right-of-way.

THE INTERNET, CATALOG SALES AND LOCAL SALES TAXES

Sales taxes are an increasingly important component of City and County budgets, funding essential municipal services and capital improvements which benefit our entire community. An important federal and state issue that must be addressed is the legal authority to impose state, city, and county sales taxes on electronic commerce and catalog sales. A sales tax on e-commerce and catalog sales protects an important revenue source for state and local governments and puts traditional land based businesses in our communities on an equal taxation footing with their electronic competitors.

UNFUNDED MANDATES

The City of Lawrence and Douglas County opposes unfunded mandates from the federal government. These mandates drain limited resources from needed City programs and activities.

SUPPORT OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IMPORTANT FOR LAWRENCE AND DOUGLAS COUNTY

The City of Lawrence and Douglas County have recognized the importance of mental health for the well-being, productivity and safety of their citizens. For example, specific incidents of school violence have been prevented by Bert Nash staff located in our schools under our successful WRAP program. This program was initiated with support from a federal grant and is now partially supported by local tax dollars. We urge federal funding support for mental health programs, such as WRAP, which benefit our community. We also note that Medicaid is essential to the appropriate care for disabling mental illness. Yet the federal Medicaid Commission has virtually ignored this issue or the consequences of proposed restrictions on mental health services. We urge our delegation to contact the

Commission to support full access to quality mental health care.

BIOSCIENCES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Lawrence – Douglas County Biosciences Authority is seeking to partner with State resources to enhance the biosciences industry in the Lawrence – Douglas County area. We urge support for these efforts as we seek to enhance the economic growth in Lawrence and Douglas County.

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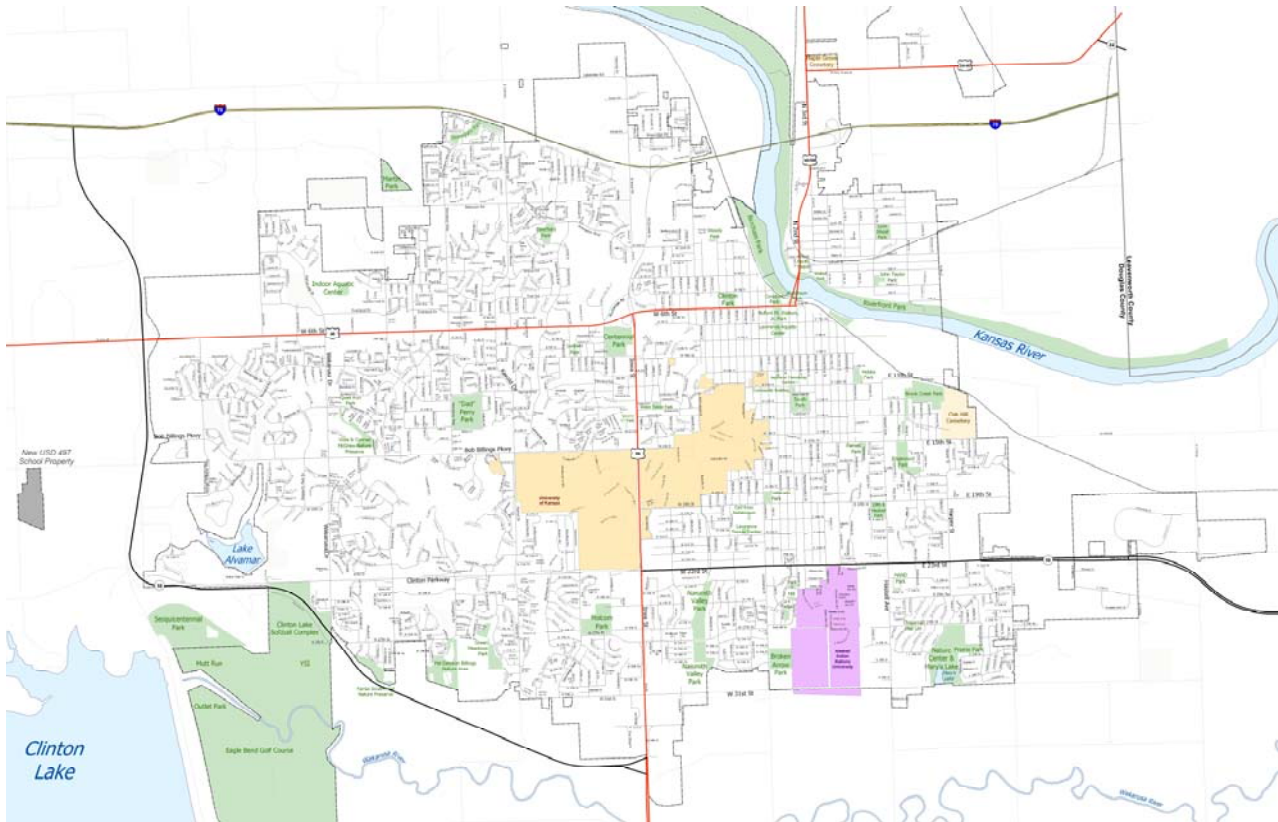
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CITY OF LAWRENCE, KANSAS



DOUGLAS COUNTY, KANSAS

