

Written Testimony Submitted to:
Joint Legislative Transportation Vision Task Force, 2018 Interim



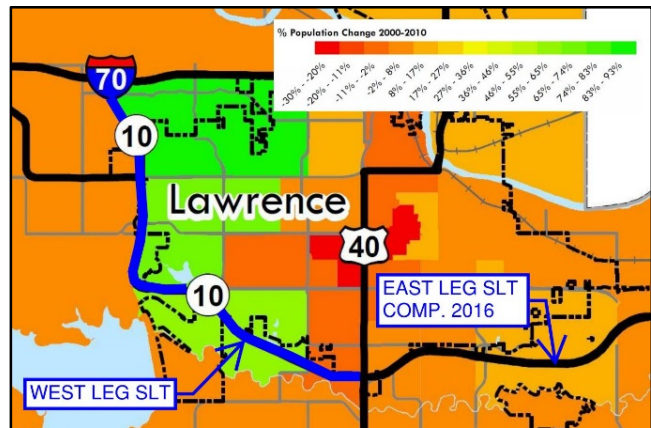
November 8, 2018 – K-State University Innovation Campus, Olathe, KS

Name, Affiliation and Contact Information:

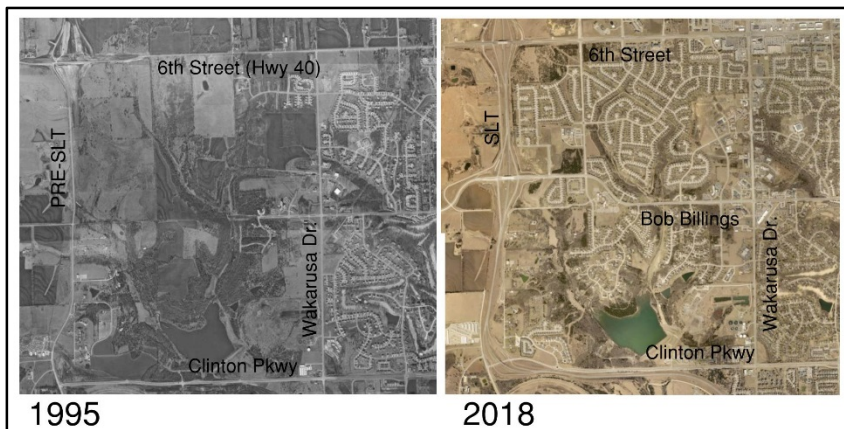
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Honorable Senators, Representatives and Task Force Members:

We are here today to support transportation investment, which is proven to increase economic prosperity, safety of our citizenry, quality of life, and pride in our state. At the local level, we have committed tremendous resources to construct and maintain a multimodal transportation system that serves our constituents. Local support for these efforts is evidenced by City of Lawrence dedication of approximately \$9-\$10 Million per year of sales tax revenues, which fund streets, utilities, bike/pedestrian infrastructure and transit operations. Douglas County has also committed significant funds in their Capital Improvements Program, budgeting about four mills annually. However, we cannot do it alone. In the past, we have relied on partnerships with the State and Federal governments to implement projects supporting the growth and economic prosperity of Douglas County and the City of Lawrence. We have watched as Nebraska, Iowa, and South Dakota have all increased transportation funding in recent years. Our Kansas intergovernmental partnerships will be even more important in the future if we are to compete in a national and global marketplace.



There is no project that better demonstrates the power of transportation to transform a community than



the South Lawrence Trafficway (Kansas Highway 10). With the West Leg, from Interstate 70 to US Highway 59, initially constructed in the mid-90's, Lawrence experienced significant growth and development. Efficient transportation infrastructure supported construction of homes and businesses. As the 2010 T-Works program was developed, each expansion project was assigned an economic benefit score. The East Leg South Lawrence Trafficway, from US Highway 59 to Kansas Highway 10 east of town, had the highest score in the state

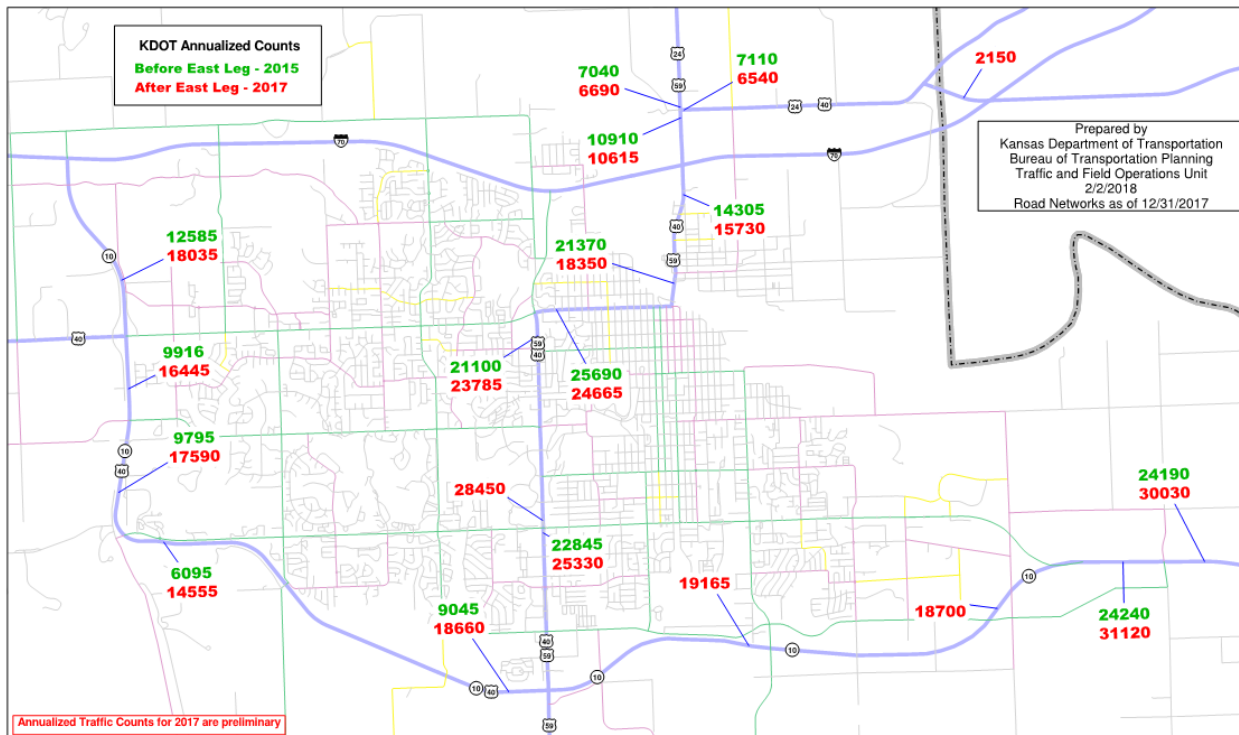
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with an estimated \$3.7 Billion in economic impacts. At an approximate \$180 Million cost to construct, this project has a benefit-cost ratio of over 20! Construction alone involved 29 contractors, 36 suppliers and 6 consultant engineering companies. In the long term, the project has created tangible business development opportunities such as Venture Park, Rock Chalk Park, Mercato (including expansion of Lawrence Memorial Hospital), the Lawrence College and Career Center, the proposed K-Ten Crossing development, and others. While economic development has been significant for Douglas County and the City of Lawrence, we believe the entire state has benefitted, as the South Lawrence Trafficway is a critical link in a “high-tech” corridor from Manhattan to Johnson County. Revenue generated from job creation, sales taxes, and rising property values supports a statewide budget impacting every Kansas citizen.

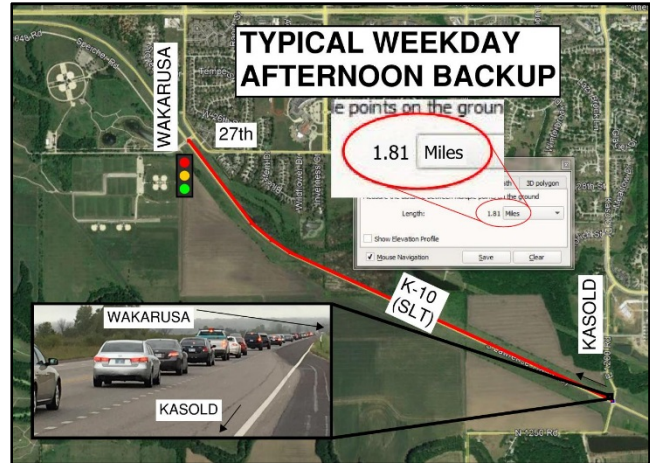
While past projects have had significant success, they have also created new challenges that will need to be solved to sustain and promote future growth and well-being. We have watched in dismay as previous promises to deliver transportation programs have been undercut by transfers to the general fund. This lack of funding has resulted in countless missed opportunities to promote safe, efficient and sustainable infrastructure. One such opportunity is completion of the West Leg SLT expansion from 2-lanes to 4-lanes.

When the four-lane East Leg SLT opened in 2016, traffic approximately doubled on the existing two-lane West Leg SLT.

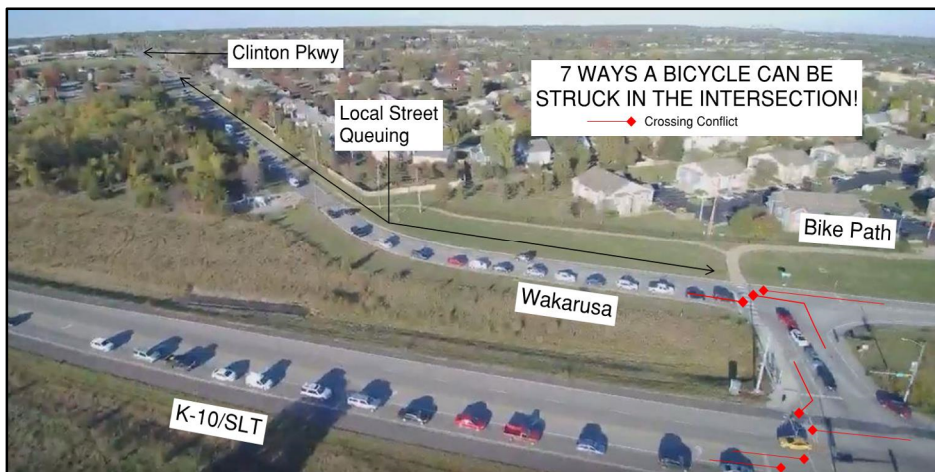


This additional traffic, without supporting infrastructure, has significantly hampered the ability of Kansas motorists to access jobs, homes, and recreation. One of the most serious of these concerns exists at Wakarusa Drive, where a traffic signal controls the at-grade intersection with K-10. During peak times,

highway traffic often backs up over a mile each direction. The intersection provides the only access to Clinton Lake Youth Sports Complex, Lawrence’s largest recreational facility. Local traffic, including vehicles, bikes, and pedestrians, also backs up several blocks in all directions. Wait times to exit the Youth Sports Complex often extend to almost an hour – worse than many professional sporting events. These events, as well as events at Rock Chalk Park, create countless business opportunities for local service providers – and we must protect the customer experience if we are to continue to be a host city.

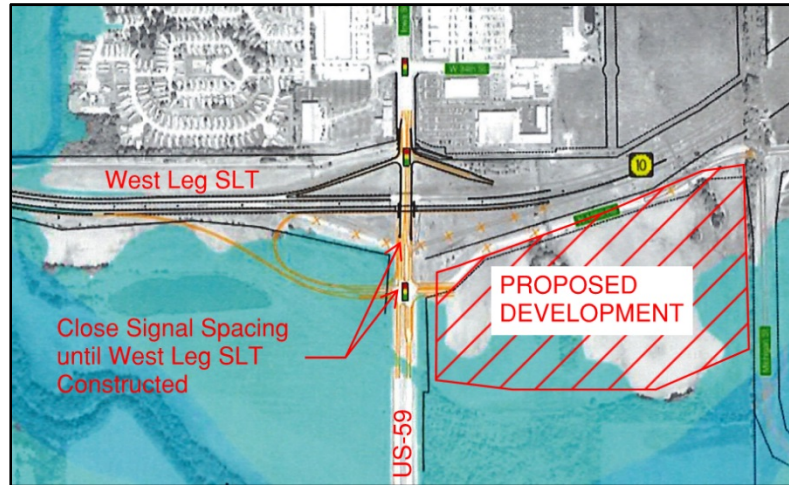


The backups at I-70, 6th Street, Wakarusa Drive, and US-59 not only result in lost production time, increased pollution, and restrictions to further growth, they have had significant negative safety impacts. This is evidenced by the fact that the K-10/Wakarusa Dr. intersection experienced 9 accidents in 2016 (the



year East Leg SLT opened to traffic). This is more than the previous three years combined (8 accidents from 2013-2015). Another example is the intersection of K-10/Kasold Dr. In 2016 there were 11 accidents near the intersection compared to 10 accidents in the previous three years combined. With increasing vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian traffic using and crossing the trafficway, it is only a matter of time before additional avoidable life-altering tragedies manifest.

KDOT has been proactive to develop concepts and environmental documents regarding the west leg SLT, however, no actual construction funding has been identified. This leaves local communities in a lurch and hurts regionally significant private investment. For example, the Governor's office has supported proposed development of K-Ten Crossing near the intersection of US-59 and K-10. It is known that unmitigated development will have



significant negative impacts on safety and operations of the adjacent highways. While KDOT has studied the US-59/K-10 intersection to develop a solution that will ultimately serve both highway and development traffic, our community will need to live with an already stressed system in the interim – an interim with no targeted finish date. We are left with the unenviable choice of delaying private investment or causing irresponsible negative impacts to the traveling public. The long-term solution will benefit development, as well as the traveling public. However, with T-WORKS underfunded and no replacement in sight, will likely be forced to accept significant operational and safety effects at the nexus of two major highways – both of which saw major investment under the Comprehensive Transportation Program and T-WORKS.

The City of Lawrence and Douglas County stand ready to be partners with the State of Kansas in renewed commitment to adequately fund transportation priorities. We support funding for the ultimate SLT project, but also believe that some parts could be advanced. For instance, the conceptual work done on West Leg SLT proposes an interchange at Wakarusa Drive while simultaneously removing the existing at-grade intersection with Kasold Drive. Douglas County has already dedicated CIP funding for a project to extend Wakarusa Drive south across the Wakarusa River, completing an essential connection three miles west of US-59. While funding for the entire West Leg SLT project should be a high priority, we encourage consideration of accelerated funding for initial phases to address the critical needs on the corridor.

We have used the West Leg SLT as an example, but many transportation projects and programs have been indefinitely delayed or forgone altogether due to lack of certainty about the ongoing sustainability of a State government partnership. There is clear support for these programs at a local level – but statewide vision and leadership is needed to promote the best possible outcomes. We believe transportation funding is essential to our long-term viability as a community and State. We support future project selection based on operational, safety, and economic components to ensure the best use of limited resources. We further support revenue sources protected and dedicated to the purpose for which they are raised. As we look to the future of transportation funding in the State of Kansas, the question is not whether we can afford to invest in transportation. Rather the question is whether we can afford to not invest in transportation. Thank-you for your time and commitment to these important issues.