

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



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Name, Affiliation and Contact Information:

Matthew Herbert, City of Lawrence Commissioner (matthewjherbert@gmail.com, 785-331-9162)

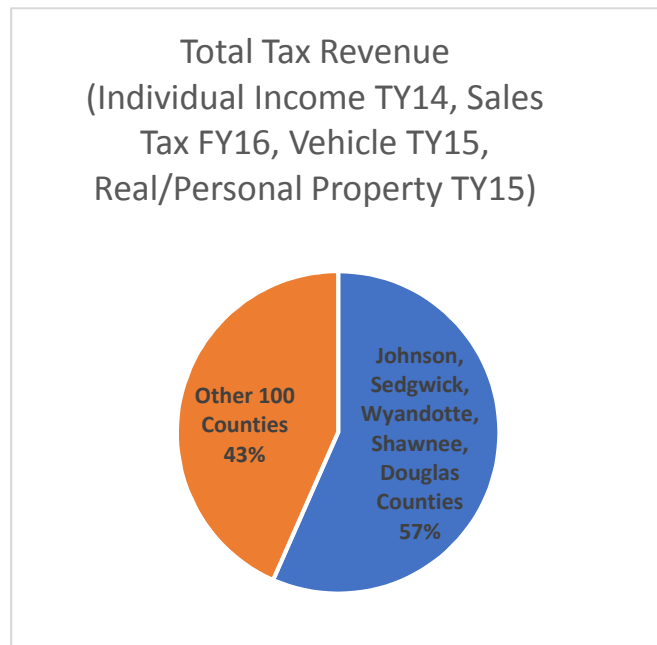
Mike Gaughan, Douglas County Commissioner (mgaughan@douglascountyks.org, 785-550-3697)

Honorable Senators, Representatives and Task Force Members:

I am here today representing the community of Lawrence, Kansas to describe the direct economic benefits that transportation programs and projects have had on our City and State. It is my hope that by relating this information to you that you will support efforts to adequately fund transportation in the future.

Ancient Hebrew advice admonishes farmers to “not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain.” This bit of agrarian wisdom applies even today, and it relates to the economic generators in the State of Kansas. The farmer knows the ox will be stronger, more productive, and live longer if he cares for it. His good

stewardship ultimately benefits the farmer and his family. The City of Lawrence and Douglas County have provided and will continue to provide major economic contributions to the State of Kansas. Based on the Kansas Department of Revenue January 2017 Annual Report, five counties provide 57 percent of the tax revenues for the State of Kansas. We are like the ox, and we must have continued resources if we are to be as productive as possible for the State, who is like a farmer who reaps the benefits of good management. The final component of my analogy is the grain, which for the purposes of today’s testimony is our transportation network, providing access to State, National, and International markets, services, and human capital.



The City of Lawrence sits at the nexus of Interstate 70, US-59, and Kansas Highway 10. There are almost 500 roadway miles and almost 400 sidewalk miles in our city. We have two Class I railroads (BNSF and Union Pacific) and operate a local airport and transit system. We are home to two universities, who employ over 10,000 people. Lawrence is consistently named a best college town in national publications and websites and was named a “Best Small Place for Business and Careers” by Forbes. We see the transportation system as an integral piece of our strategy to stay at the top of our game.

That said, several economic development opportunities have been made possible by past transportation investments:

- Venture Park
- Rock Chalk Park
- Mercato (including expansion of Lawrence Memorial Hospital)
- Lawrence College and Career Center
- Baker Wetlands
- Amtrak Heartland Flyer
- Proposed K-Ten Crossing Development

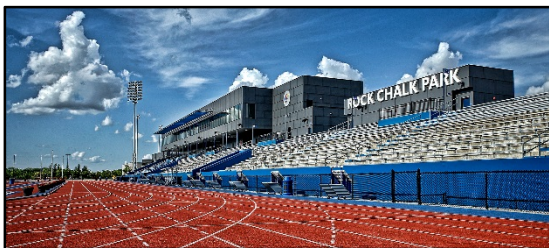
Venture Park

Venture Park sits on more than 200 acres and is adjacent to the new K-10/23rd Street direction interchange on the eastern edge of Lawrence. In August 2017, the City authorized a request from VanTrust Real Estate, LLC to develop a three-phase project in Venture Park. Once completed, the three phases will provide over 550,000 square feet of industrial space within the park at a total investment estimated at \$31 million. Nearby at East Hills Business Park, the City authorized Plastikon Healthcare, LLC to develop a two-phase expansion project. Plastikon is a contract manufacturing organization that specializes in the formulation and packaging of liquid medical devices and pharmaceuticals. Capital investment for buildings, machinery, and equipment is estimated at \$7.3 million.



Rock Chalk Park, Sports Pavilion Lawrence, & Youth Sports Complex

Rock Chalk Park & the Sports Pavilion Lawrence were a cooperative effort between private developers, the City and the University of Kansas. Located near K-10, the complex provides a 181,000 square foot public recreation center that hosts volleyball, basketball and indoor soccer events. In 2017 alone, local sales taxes generated from Sports pavilion Tournaments was over \$400,000. Rock Chalk Park is a state-of-the-art Division I sports arena, hosting tennis, soccer, track and softball events – allowing KU to host major NCAA events – all of which bring visitors (and revenue) to the State of Kansas.



The Youth Sports Complex sits at the intersection of K-10 and Wakarusa Drive. We host approximately 30,000 parents, athletes, and spectators annually, many who are from out of town. Investment in the West Leg South Lawrence Trafficway is critical to the ongoing viability of this amenity.

Mercato & Lawrence Memorial Hospital

The 82-acre Mercato development is located directly adjacent to K-10 and 6th Street. Close coordination was completed between the developer, KDOT and the City to assess current and future transportation improvements to make the site accessible. The project will provide an approximate 600,000 square feet of retail space. In addition, Lawrence Memorial Hospital is planning a 200,000 square foot \$93 million facility within the development. The proximity to the K-10 interchange at 6th Street has been cited in local media as a major feature of the site. The medical facility alone is anticipated to generate over 7000 trips per day – highlighting the need for continued improvements to the local streets, adjacent highway and interchange.



Lawrence College and Career Center

The Lawrence College and Career Center provides hands-on learning experiences and college credit, tuition free, while students are still in high school. The Center is located just north of the South Lawrence Trafficway off a portion of Haskell Avenue that was relocated with the SLT East Leg project and came online as work on the highway project was progressing. The 33,000 square-foot facility includes labs, workshops and open study spaces and was constructed at a cost of approximately \$7.2 million. When it opened in 2015, over 100 different businesses and industry professionals visited with students at the site. While the building itself represents a major economic benefit, the impacts to over 140 students a semester studying topics such as “Innovation & Engineering” with a view of one of the largest public projects completed in the State of Kansas is priceless and will contribute to our long-range competitiveness as a State for years to come.

Baker Wetlands

House Beautiful magazine declared the Baker Wetlands the most beautiful place in Kansas – and construction of this 927-acre nature complex was made possible in large part by the construction of the East Leg South Lawrence Trafficway. Classes, hiking trails, camp sites, and a 12,000 square-foot Discovery Center draw thousands of students, researchers and visitors to Lawrence each year.

Amtrak Heartland Flyer

In 2013, the City of Lawrence was awarded a Transportation Enhancement grant funding a \$1.5 million renovation of the historic Santa Fe depot, which serves as an active Amtrak station. This preservation project is located only four blocks east of our historic downtown area. The project is currently under construction and will address Americans with Disabilities Act issues with the current facility, as well as provide much needed revitalization – attracting more users of the Southwest Chief passenger rail connection. Providing transportation alternatives to driving, bus, or air travel is critical as it provides service to underserved citizens.



Proposed KTen Crossing Development

The proposed KTen Crossing Development is a perfect example of the relationship between infrastructure and economic benefits. The developers estimate the development will generate \$1.2 million of sales taxes and \$200,000 in property taxes each year. The developers cite the intersection of two major highways as their principal reason for locating their development in Lawrence. It has such an impact, their very name credits transportation infrastructure for their existence. Presently, concerns over unmitigated traffic generation are slowing the approvals process. If the traffic generated by this development is not addressed by highway improvements, there is a threat of major operational and safety issues at the nexus of two major highways, each of which with significant investment under the Comprehensive Transportation Program and T-WORKS. The good news is previous investments can be protected by improving K-10 and the Iowa Street interchange. However, additional funding is needed to make sure developers who are chomping at the bit to enter our market can be adequately served by adjacent infrastructure.

I could list many other examples, such as the projected \$3.7 billion (with a “B”) economic impacts of the eastern leg of the SLT, but hopefully I’ve made the point that economic growth cannot happen without correlating infrastructure improvements. The West Leg SLT expansion, local program funding, and continued highway maintenance are major efforts that must be advanced. The City of Lawrence has grown significantly due to past partnerships with the State of Kansas and will continue to grow and be a tax generating powerhouse serving the entire state – but to reach our full potential we must not be muzzled by lack of transportation funding. Thank-you for your time and interest in these matters, we look forward to future partnerships with the State government that will enhance or community and State.