Executive Summary

Project Overview

In 2013, the Lawrence-Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Organization (L-DC MPO) completed the Multimodal Planning Studies. The goal of this planning effort was to identify and prioritize transportation needs for commuters, pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders for the next five to ten years and to develop a range of short and long-term improvements to support a more multimodal region.

Evaluation Methodology

The project team conducted a three-phase evaluation process to assess the fixed-route and pedestrian accessibility conditions within Lawrence, as follows:

Phase 1: System Wide Bus Stop Analysis
Each bus stop in Lawrence was scored using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data. Scoring focused on nearby infrastructure conditions, multimodal connectivity to major destinations, and potential high transit ridership demand.

Phase 2: Targeted Corridors
Four corridors were selected for detailed evaluation based on the results of the Phase 1 analysis. Evaluation of the corridors included review of aerial imagery followed by extensive fieldwork.

Phase 3: Multimodal Planning Studies Coordination
This phase included conceptual opportunities to coordinate recommendations from the other two Multimodal Planning Studies with this Fixed Route Transit and Pedestrian Accessibility Study.

Policy Recommendations

1. Arterial roadways should include sidewalks on both sides of the street.
2. Enhance existing crosswalks and identify new crossing locations.
4. Adopt typical bus stop standards.
5. Identify locations for bus turnouts.
6. Evaluate relocating mid-block stops closer to marked pedestrian crosswalks.
7. Review sidewalk replacement policy.
8. Seek a dedicated funding source.
9. Incorporate pedestrian improvements into larger-scale roadway projects.
10. Utilize Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) to enhance transit.
Overview of Corridors Map

6th Street Corridor (Rockledge Rd. to Massachusetts St.)

The 6th Street Corridor features very high traffic volumes with congestion forecast to increase in the near future. Recommendations focus on crossing 6th Street, which is a major concern of area residents, as well as consideration of bus turnouts at key locations to help mitigate traffic congestion and reduce bus dwell times. Additionally, there exists an opportunity to coordinate a bus stop with bicycle improvements in the area near Kentucky Street one block east near Vermont, to enhance this site’s multi-modal connections. Painted crosswalks, curb ramps, and bus stop amenities are all common recommendations for this corridor.

Naismith Drive Corridor (19th Street to 24th Street)

The Naismith Drive Corridor represents perhaps the most significant transit-pedestrian accessibility needs in Lawrence. This corridor connects major destinations including KU and the 23rd Street commercial area. The entire east side of the Naismith Drive Corridor does not have a sidewalk, and there are also bus stops in this corridor that would benefit from the addition of sidewalks and improved east-west accessible connections across Naismith Drive. The 19th Street Intersection is in particular need of improvement given the transit connections made there. Overall, this intersection would benefit from sidewalks and improved intersection crossings.

19th Street Corridor (Iowa Street to Alabama Street)

The 19th Street Corridor provides perhaps the greatest opportunity to make significant improvements to enhance transit-pedestrian accessibility. With the KU master plan process winding down, there could be opportunities to significantly improve pedestrian access on the north side of 19th Street. Potential redevelopment in the area could provide opportunities to better connect student housing to the corridor and improve the overall transit-pedestrian access along 19th Street. One major recommendation is the installation of ~3,500’ of sidewalk along the north side of 19th Street.

23rd Street Corridor (Iowa Street to Louisiana Street)

The 23rd Street Corridor was identified through both public comments and the online survey as being the area most in need of infrastructure improvements to enhance pedestrian access to transit. It is the most heavily congested of the four corridors, and also contains several highly used bus stop locations. The installation of sidewalks, bus stop amenities, and reconstruction of curb ramps is expected to augment several other major improvements which are already planned or underway, including the rebuild of the 23rd / Iowa Intersection and the completion of the South Lawrence Trafficway / K-10 (SLT).

Study Goals

Each element of the Multimodal Planning Studies has its own set of issues, project goals, and evaluation methodology. However, this planning effort recognizes that a number of issues from the individual studies will overlap and impact the selection and prioritization of regional infrastructure improvements.

Efforts to incorporate projects from all three studies make sense in terms of coordinated planning and leveraging financial resources. The Fixed Route Transit and Pedestrian Accessibility Study goals include the identification of:

- Obstacles transit riders face in accessing the fixed-route system;
- Locations where improvements to the pedestrian environment can be made to improve and/or enable people to access fixed-route transit services;
- Issues with streets/sidewalks that prevent people from accessing the fixed-route system and force them to rely on paratransit; and
- Possible locations for bus turnouts that could make the bus boarding and exiting process more convenient and enhance traffic operations.

“Heat Map” of Targeted Transit Destinations

This map highlights areas of greatest potential transit use in the City of Lawrence. The “hot” or dark red areas signify the confluence of bus stop boardings, student housing, common destinations for older adults, and travel destinations for people with disabilities.

These zones were created by synthesizing together the data from several other maps that contained information from the above-mentioned criteria. This map was the basis for identifying the corridors of analysis shown on the bottom of this page.