

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)

Minutes for Tuesday, January 2, 2018 Meeting

Voting Members

Allison Smith (KDOT)
Keith Browning (Douglas County Public Works Director)
Charles Soules (City of Lawrence Public Works Director)
Scott McCullough (Lawrence-Douglas County Planning & Development)
Bob Nugent (Lawrence Transit)
Danny Kaiser (KU on Wheels)
Ed Courton (Baldwin City)

Non-Voting Members

Chris Tilden (Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department)

Staff

Jessica Mortinger (Senior Transportation Planner)
Ashley Myers (Transportation Planner)
Margaret Campbell (Transportation Planning Intern)

Others

David Hamby (BG Consultants)
Sarah Hill-Nelson (Friends of Lawrence Area Trails (FLAT))
Michael Almon (Sustainability Action Network)

1. Call Meeting to Order, Welcome and Introductions

Danny Kaiser called meeting to order at 1:35 PM. A quorum was present.

2. Public Comment

No public comment was made.

3. Action Item: Approval of minutes from the December 5, 2017 meeting

Danny Kaiser asked if anyone had changes to the minutes. Keith Browning identified a typo and it was amended. Allison Smith moved to approve the minutes as amended; the motion was seconded by Scott McCullough and passed unanimously, 7-0.

4. Action Item: Election of TAC Officers for 2018

Danny Kaiser asked for nominations to serve as Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson during calendar year 2018. Scott McCullough nominated Ed Courton as Chairperson; seconded by Charles Soules. Ed Courton nominated Leslie Herring; seconded by Allison Smith. Danny Kaiser called for a vote; Ed Courton received 5 votes and Leslie Herring received 2 votes. Ed Courton was elected Chairperson. For Vice Chairperson Scott McCullough nominated Leslie Herring; seconded by Charles Soules; passed unanimously, 7-0. Ed Courton assumed his duties as Chair.

5. Action Item: Recommend Approval of the Lawrence Loop Alignment Study

Jessica Mortinger explained the study and planning process showing maps of the alignments considered and prioritized. The public process included notification of 1,707 property owners surrounding the study area. The first open house created a vision of closing the gaps in the Lawrence Loop and participants choose alignments favoring routes with separation from the road and a connection to nature. Three options were chosen by the study team based on public input and a SWOT analysis was developed for the routes.

After the initial analysis was performed F1 was identified as unfeasible and additional work was done to create other options. An additional survey was conducted to explore the alternatives to F1.

The MPO and BG Consultants contacted BNSF Railway/KTA to share the study process and priority routes with them. Neither group would make a formal determination without designs plans. Design work was outside of the scope of this planning process. The current estimates for each route do not include the costs of easements or right-away procurement.

Scott McCullough asked what type of design challenges existed for the routes. David Hamby said there was design leeway and different ways to handle each route's impediments; railroad lines, dumpsters, etc. There was a discussion if business owners along the river and the back of City Hall would be willing to work with the alignments. Sarah Hill-Nelson said the business owners she talked with would be open to the discussion and potential changes.

Mr. McCullough brought up the fact that route F1 did not work because of grade change and the area being below the Base Flood Elevation. The elevation plans originally used in analysis for the building were incorrect and this was discovered later. Segment F1.a was chosen as an alternative to F1. He asked if there was thought to trying to bring the route around any of the other buildings along that particular area. Mr. Hamby replied that a walk around the area was performed and after observing the elevations and flood plans there was not a feasible option to get around Abe & Jakes. Mr. McCullough inquired about the natural habitat easements and what role they played in route E.1. Mr. Hamby replied that the initial investigation showed that the most of the areas are no longer protected in the same way and could be feasible.

Keith Browning asked if F1.a runs between the railroad tracks. Mr. Hamby said yes. Ms. Hill-Nelson said that Rails-to-Trails Conservancy has put together a document showing examples of how to merge trails and railroads safely. This has been distributed to the MPO, city staff and BNSF. Examples of rail trails have been shown as safety improvements for railway companies. Ed Courton asked if the planning level cost estimates included potential barricades for the railroad sections; Mr. Hamby said yes. Chuck Soules asked where would the trail leave the railroad section and Mr. Hamby said the trail would come out at a signalized intersection crossing, which would increase the safety of users.

The committee discussed the challenges to the A/B routes between Sandra Shaw Trail and Peterson Road. Mr. Hamby said the biggest factors were floodplains, working with KTA on timing the project with other roadway improvements, and procuring right-of-way from land owners. Mr. Soules asked how much land is owned by the City along the routes. Mr. Hamby said that parts were owned by the City but KTA and Hallmark own most of the rest.

Allison Smith said that KDOT is satisfied with the wording in the report and the work which was conducted. KDOT will need additional PE and a preferred alignment to be chosen before a formal comment can be made. Mr. Browning asked about the email response from Kamie Young at BNSF about the trail proposal. Ms. Mortinger said the railway does not recommend the trail project as proposed, but they would need a formal design proposal before making a final decision. Ms. Hill-Nelson said the project would need to be framed as a benefit in terms of safety to BNSF but that there will need to be continued discussion.

Michael Almon from the Sustainability Action Network (SAN) said they felt that the planning work that was done did not adequately take into account the previous work which was completed and did not include enough investigation into potential hurdles. There has been previous discussion about the Burroughs Creek trail extension since 2007 and 2013. They feel there should have been more weight given to a previously discussed route option along the street (rather than the railway corridor) because of past participation. There was also a discussion about needing more cost analysis and background analysis conducted to be

included in the SWOT for citizens to be able to vote on routes. Mr. Browning mentioned that this process is for figuring out which routes are feasible. There was also discussion amongst the committee about the fact that the route SAN was suggesting was included in the study, and as a planning study the scope was limited in what costs could be estimated. Ms. Mortinger discussed that the planning work conducted was a result of the feedback KDOT provided to previous City of Lawrence requests for TA funding.

Mr. McCullough said that working with the railroad and other entities can take years to reach the vision of the community. This does not mean that potential conflict and discussions should mean routes, which would better reflect the community vision should be discarded. The planning process for the study allowed all citizen participation and met the intention laid out by the planning staff. Chris Tilden said that this study allows the alignment to go into the bikeway plan and to prepare for the future implementation. Jessica Mortinger explained by including the potential alignment in the bikeway plan that it can be included in the City of Lawrence prioritization ranking for future funding.

Mr. Almon said values are important but that the public may not have been informed enough to choose preferred routes. He says that costs should have been included to better educate the public. Mr. McCullough said the ability to get funding is never a waste and this process helps that. Mr. Tilden said the Lawrence Loop is a good goal in itself but creating overall better network connectivity is better. The Loop can eventually connect East Lawrence, the Arts District, etc., together and that is what they hope to do. Ms. Hill-Nelson pointed out that the group of citizens and business owners, which signed the petition in 2013 may not have been given many options to choose from other than wanting to connect Burroughs Creek to Downtown. This means the route they chose may have seemed the best but now in the future there are more options to consider that were not thought of previously. Mr. Tilden said that every route is going to have a few problems or setbacks but that is to be expected. Mr. McCullough asked if there was a consensus that the vision of the Lawrence Loop is more of a recreation/fitness facility versus solely transportation infrastructure; as such this reflects the community desire to have access to natural areas and be separated from the street network. There can be trail heads added to allow connections between the Loop and the bikeway network and destinations downtown. Ms. Mortinger said that the design phase would provide opportunities to discuss how connections to access the proposed sections would be made.

Mr. Tilden indicated in an ideal world that all the routes would be built and that there are different offsetting costs associated with the routes, no matter what alignment there would be tradeoffs. Ms. Mortinger said that depending on the right of way costs the project costs could change. Chuck Soules moved to recommend approval the Lawrence Loop Alignment Study; the motion was seconded by Keith Browning and passed unanimously, 7-0.

6. Discussion Item: Safety Target Setting

Jessica Mortinger provided handouts with the preliminary safety performance measure data. TAC will be voting in February on targets for the federal safety performance measures. MPO staff is proposing MPO specific targets based on the Douglas County data/trends. KDOT has provided targets and trend data for the state. There are two options for TAC to consider: adopting the state set targets and working to help the state meet their goals or adopting MPO trends and targets.

Ed Courton asked why all of the crash data went down besides non-motorized crashes. There was a discussion on how there might be more reporting now and more people using this option. Chuck Soules asked what the differences and downsides between adopting the state's targets and setting our own would be. Allison Smith said KDOT would be sending a letter saying the committee can choose to adopt each target and trend for performance measures individually. This means if the State's target did not fit with the goal of the region then the MPO could make their own goal and still adopt other state performance measure

targets. Ms. Mortinger and Ms. Smith said many MPOs in Kansas have chosen to set their trends and targets. If the KDOT targets are not met then the repercussions will be for KDOT not the MPOs.

Ms. Mortinger said adopting KDOT's data would not show what's really happening in Douglas County – instead the entirety of Kansas. The point of data-driven planning is to be able to track what is happening at a local level and to make necessary changes based on the data. Ms. Smith said the KDOT data is gathered statewide and covers very different areas and types of networks. Ms. Mortinger said another one of the goals of performance-based data is to analyze if the spending aligns with identified needed projects. This would happen during annual reviews. Ms. Smith said during these reviews targets can be shifted if they are not adequate later. Ms. Mortinger pointed out not everything can be controlled by the MPO. Factors like gas prices can shift behavior patterns that affect outcomes.

Michael Almon asked why the trend for non-motorized crashes is going up. Ms. Mortinger said the way the data is shown is a federally required measure and the rounding up for crashes can cause a small skew in the data making the trend line rise. Ms. Smith mentioned that not all the crashes are included because only incidents, which were reported to the police can be counted. There may have been crashes, which were never reported. Ms. Mortinger said currently the data may not all be collected the same way since it is up to each police officer to determine if the crash resulted in an “injury” or a “serious injury.” According to Ms. Smith the police data given to KDOT is also not always released the year that it happened. Some reports may take a year before they are included in the data sent for KDOT. This along with reporting differences between police departments affects the data statewide. Currently KDOT is working on a state level to try and get the police departments to report similarly to help with these problems.

Mr. Almon asked if the performance measure document is stand-alone or a part of T2040. He also asked if there was a way to incorporate Vision Zero into the goal of the crash data. Jessica Mortinger said the approval of the targets is separate because it there is a need to meet a deadline before T2040 is approved and the annual reporting will be an annual update to the performance measures report (Appendix F of T2040). The goals related to safety are incorporated into T2040. Scott McCullough asked how to recommend these targets to the MPO Policy Board. Ms. Mortinger said the MPO set the minimum baseline and then it becomes a policy question. The data shown was to give the committee time to think about how they want set targets and to identify any changes that might need to be made.

Mr. Soules asked what happens if the numbers in the county were worse than in Lawrence would it reflect badly on the city. Ms. Mortinger replied that the MPO is in charge of planning for the region so all of Douglas County is reported but that the individual cities are separate in the raw data. Mr. McCullough said this will allow us to see what happens each year to create more accountability. Bob Nugent said that the annual report, will provide TAC and local governments the data to determine how funding should be prioritized. Ms. Smith said there are plans to include the performance measures in the TIP as one of the reasons to justify projects. This means that the projects receiving funding will be helping to move towards targets and goals.

7. Quick Updates

T2040 Update – The update draft was released to committee today to review prior to the public 30 day comment period in February.

Bus Transfer Location Analysis – The bus transfer location analysis will be prepared soon.

Safety Analysis – The consultants are making the final revisions on the Safety Analysis.

TIP Amendment – Projects for the TIP amendment are due by January 5th.

8. Other Business

There was no other business.

9. Next Meeting: February 6, 2018 or another date set by the TAC

The meeting adjourned at 3:09PM.