

SUBJECT: 2015-2019 Transportation Improvement Program—Amendment #5 and Program of Projects for the Lawrence Transit System

TO: Lawrence-Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

1. Thank you for the opportunity to be heard. These views are my own and are not vetted by any other individual or group mentioned in the text

2. **General comment:** Public comments on completed projects in planning documents are usually superfluous. Some projects listed in the subject document are complete. These projects should have “Placed in Service” dates shown in the comments section. MPO #206 and MPO #211 are two examples of such completed projects.

3. **General comment:** Replacement projects should show project rationale in comments section. For example, MPO #224 is a bridge replacement. Is the replacement due to lack of capacity for projected traffic, failure to meet modern safety design standards, lengthy time-in-service related structural deficiencies or a combination of reasons?

4. **General comment: Safe Routes to School (SRTS)** positive impact can be used to provide additional justification to many non-SRTS projects in the TIP. Listing the impacted schools with other non-SRTS specific projects would be helpful.

5. The following list of MPO projects may positively (or in some cases negatively) impact SRTS designated routes for nearby schools. If so, the comments section and more detailed project planning documentation should so state. In certain instances a useful comment would be “No SRTS impact per (insert name of cognizant authority.)”

MPO #	Potential Safe Routes to _____ Impact
211	Langston Hughes ES
226	Free State HS
229	Kennedy ES
230	Free State HS, Langston Hughes ES, and Quail Run ES
234	Kennedy ES*, New York ES*, and Cordley ES*
235	South MS, Broken Arrow ES, and Schwegler ES
239	Schwegler ES
242	Schwegler ES
300	Lawrence HS, South MS, Schwegler ES, and Prairie Park ES
301	Lawrence HS, Southwest MS, Schwegler ES, Sunflower ES, Raintree Montessori, and Bishop Seabury Academy
410	All schools with students using multi-modal transit facility
502	All private and public schools within USD 497 boundary
504	To be determined (See paragraphs 9 and 10 below.)
*	Potential for <u>negative</u> SRTS impact due to increased motorized traffic volume.

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6. **RE MPO #500:** The “Santa Fe Depot” is used every day by AMTRAK for passenger rail service to northeast Kansas residents and by out-of-state visitors to our region. The project description should indicate this is an active passenger facility and not merely a conversion of a former passenger depot to some other worthy public purpose. “AMTRAK” should appear in the project title to denote the current active use of this facility.

7. **RE MPO # 600:** Where is the documented list of hazards to be addressed under this project? Who determines the priority among different hazardous sites? What is the prioritization rubric? How is public input sought and used in governance of this project? The document as written is not sufficient to answer these fundamental questions.

8. **RE MPO #502:** It is unclear that private schools are involved in the SRTS planning process. They should be! For example, SRTS projects that support Liberty Memorial Central Middle School students may also have utility for St. John Catholic School students. Likewise, SRTS projects in service of Southwest Middle School and Sunflower Elementary School students may also have utility for Raintree Montessori School and Bishop Seabury Academy students. Undoubtedly, there are other examples of the need for private school facility input similar to these.

9. **RE MPO #502:** As residential patterns change due to rezoning and subsequent development, Safe Routes to School infrastructure projects must be reevaluated. In northwest Lawrence there are dozens of new residences under construction that were not considered when the current SRTS funds were granted to L-DC Heath Department. Accordingly, the SRTS routes designated two or more years ago in northwest Lawrence are obsolete and incomplete. Further, the opposition of developers, USD 497, and Lawrence Planning Department and the Planning Commission to requests for code-compliant plat refinements to permit improved student pedestrian access to Langston Hughes Elementary School (LHES) from the west and unused pedestrian easements from the north to LHES must be explicitly considered and remediated in future SRTS project planning and prioritization.

10. **RE MPO #504 (and similar follow on efforts):** Through Ordinance 7106, Lawrence sought public advice on Pedestrian and Bicycle Issues. The 7106 Task Force recommended a consolidated change in the local advisory process for transportation matters. ***That recommended change has been presented to but has not been implemented or rejected by local political leadership.*** In the interim, there is no defined process for pedestrian friendly projects (such as Safe Routes to School) to be championed through the local resource allocation decision making as is the case for bicycle facility projects through the Lawrence-Douglas County Bicycle Advisory Committee. Recommend the MPO address this shortfall to Lawrence City officials to ***implement a permanent advisory process for pedestrian-intensive transportation matters such as SRTS. In the interim, the City should direct SRTS advisory matters to the L-DC Bicycle Advisory Committee. In this interim role, BAC should invite input from private schools as well as USD 497 staff on SRTS matters.*** As a courtesy to home rule principle, other than

Lawrence-appointed BAC members would voluntarily recuse themselves from Lawrence-only SRTS advisory decision votes but their views would be welcome in the deliberative phase of the process.

11. My thanks to MPO staff member Jessica Mortinger for her expertise and professionalism. Lawrence and Douglas County are well served by her efforts.

Michael K. Kelly