

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:

Keith Browning, Douglas County, Public Works Director (kbrowning@douglascountyks.org, 785-832-5293)
David Cronin, City of Lawrence, City Engineer (dcronin@lawrenceks.org, 785-832-3130)

Honorable Senators, Representatives and Task Force Members:

The City of Lawrence and Douglas County depend on KDOT programs to partner in delivering safe, efficient transportation in our communities. These programs include:

- KLINK/Geometric Improvement (CCLIP)
- Access Management
- ITS Set-Aside
- Federal Fund Exchange
- Special City/County Highway Fund
- High Risk Rural Roads
- Bridge Replacement Programs

KLINK/Geometric Improvement (CCLIP)

The KLINK (now CCLIP) program, is crucial to maintaining state highways in Lawrence. The City received KLINK funds every year from 1987-2016 for surface preservation of K-10, US-59, and US-40; matching every state dollar with a local dollar. The city cycle for maintenance projects on City Connecting Links is 7 years and recent reduction in the funding level to the CCLIP program has delayed the project to mill/overlay 6th Street (US-40) from Iowa to Massachusetts St. 6th Street is deteriorating with an average pavement condition index of 59/100 (65/100 is the critical point).



Access Management

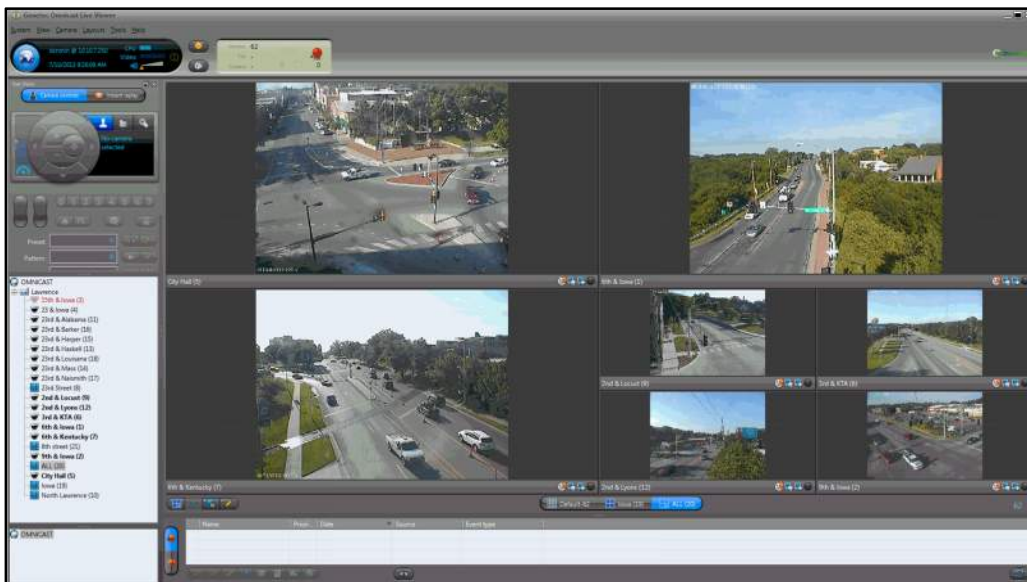
Lawrence has used \$400,000 in Access Management Funds the past 10 years reducing costs to businesses (CVS Pharmacy, Myers Liquor, Whole Foods, University Bookstore, Orscheln, Qdoba) redeveloping along 23rd Street, to meet the KDOT corridor plan. Assistance to these business would not be possible without our state partnerships. Lawrence recently utilized a combination of Geometric Improvement, Access Management, and Highway Safety Improvement Funds to supplement \$2.5M of local funds to modernize the intersection of 23rd St (old K-10) and Iowa (US-59) to increase capacity and safety.

Douglas County and Baldwin City have benefitted from approximately \$2.1 million in Access Management funds for construction of geometric improvements at three US-56 intersections in and near Baldwin City. The local governments were responsible for all engineering, right-of-way acquisition, and utility relocation costs while KDOT covered 100% of construction costs.

ITS Set-Aside

The City is interested in continuing to expand its fiber network with funding through the ITS Set-Aside program. Lawrence has matched state funds to complete three projects to construct a Traffic Operations Center that is connected to 38 of 98 traffic signals with 60 miles of fiber. South Iowa (US-59) from 23rd Street to K-10 is a growing commercial corridor and the next project awaiting connection to the network when funding is available. The benefits of the ITS system include:

- The public can view live conditions on city website
- Signal optimization lowers emissions and user costs
- Staff can control signal timing during peak times or large events
- Technicians can remotely diagnose and repair system malfunctions (i.e. safety and efficiency)



Federal Fund Exchange

The City and County support the continuation of the 90 cents on the dollar exchange rate for federal funds. When the rate was unexpectedly lowered in 2018 the City of Lawrence’s capital improvement budget was lowered by \$150,000 resulting in less local street maintenance. The major benefit of the federal funds exchange is that it allows us to stretch the dollars further on our local system, without the burdensome federal requirements that add time and cost to projects. The state funds exchanged from federal funds can be spent on critical maintenance projects that would not be eligible for federal funds. Without an adequate state funding mechanism, this program could be in peril.

Transportation Alternatives & Highway Safety Improvement Program

The decrease in state funding has hindered KDOT’s flexibility with Federal Programs including Transportation Alternatives (TA) and Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). This flexibility used to allow for “roll-over” of funds, which enabled local governments to work through local funding, design, right-of-way, or environmental issues. However, there is currently a “use it or lose it” situation, which may put projects on the chopping block and jeopardize federal funds if the slightest issue pushes out a project schedule. Lawrence/Douglas County have used TA funds to construct pedestrian and bicycle facilities to promote active lifestyles and safe alternative mode of transportation for all users. 75% of the “Lawrence Loop”, a circumferential 22.4 mile 10’ wide shared-use path, was completed primarily with TA funding. Utilizing these funds will be critical in completing the remaining sections which connect the northern missing link to downtown. HSIP funds are being used to reconfigure lanes on Massachusetts Street south of downtown to reduce vehicular crashes (11 in the past 3 years) with dedicated left turn lanes and designated on-street bike lanes.

E. 23rd Street

The City is embarking on a planning project in 2019 to identify safety and geometric improvement opportunities on East 23rd Street from Haskell to the east city limits. This segment of roadway was formerly part of Kansas Highway 10. While the turn back agreement provided approximately \$4 million to bring the roadway up to a maintainable condition, there are more needs to be addressed. The upcoming plan will create a vision for reconstructing the corridor in 2021-2022 with an estimated cost of over \$9 million. Support from KDOT local programs are instrumental in supplementing local funds to provide flexibility in preserving and modernizing our transportation system.



Special City/County Highway Fund

Maintaining adequate funding to the Special City/County Highway Fund is important to local governments. The rate, originally set at 44%, has been reduced to 33% over time while the amount of vehicle miles traveled on local roads has increased. The task force should take into consideration the equity of how gas tax funds are allocated.

High Risk Rural Roads (HRRR)

Rural major and minor collector roads experience disproportionately higher fatality rates than urban roads and highways. The HRRR program provides federal HSIP funds for much needed safety improvements on these roads, including removal of roadside obstructions like trees, steep slopes and narrow culverts, and signing and pavement marking improvements. Douglas County has utilized approximately \$1.6 million in HRRR funding in the last six years to improve safety on the county route system.



Bridge Replacements

The majority of bridges in the state are on county roads, and over 1/3 of those bridges cannot carry state legal loads. Bridge deficiencies significantly affect the agriculture industry as well as the safety of the traveling public. Two KDOT programs have helped repair and replace deficient bridges. The Off-System Bridge Program provides a portion of the state’s federal STP funds to rehabilitate or replace local bridges not on the federal aid system. The Local Bridge Improvement Program was a one-time state funded program to replace relatively small (<50’ span) deficient bridges, which comprise more than half of all deficient bridges in the state. This effective program is no longer available. A dedicated bridge program is needed to address the many deficient bridges on local road systems.

In summary, Lawrence and Douglas County encourage the task force to continue supporting KDOT programs. Local governments depend on the funding and flexibility of these programs to provide safe, efficient transportation for the citizens of Kansas.