

NEWS RELEASE

Kansas Department of Transportation news release

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Automated vehicle transport subject of research project

The Kansas Department of Transportation has teamed with public and private researchers to investigate the potential of a system of small, automated vehicles to ease congestion in the commercial area near the Kansas Speedway in Wyandotte County.

The researchers will consider how Automated Small Vehicle Transport (ASVT) could enhance mobility and relieve parking and vehicle congestion in the area that also includes the Legends at Village West, the Woodlands Race Park and Providence Medical Center.

ASVT comprises a fleet of fully automated vehicles – each with a capacity to transport between two and 12 people. Unlike conventional transit that runs on a schedule, stops every mile or so and groups people together in masses, ASVT operates more like automobiles. ASVT vehicles are available on demand and transport people directly to their destination without stopping for additional riders. Such a system is scheduled to open at England’s Heathrow International Airport in 2009.

“Despite the number of attractions, the dominant use of developed land is parking lots and roads to serve these attractions,” said Dr. Stan Young, a member of the study team who is a former KDOT researcher and now a member of the University of Maryland faculty. “The principal complaint of patrons is movement in and about the attractions in the area.”

The research project will focus on accessibility improvements to the existing and planned facilities, possible links to any existing and planned transit systems and reduction in land area dedicated to parking.

The estimated \$115,000 cost of the study will be paid for by KDOT and Kansas University's Transportation Research Institute. Also participating in the project are Unified Government of Wyandotte County, Kansas State University's Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, University of Maryland's Center for Advanced Transportation Technology, Federal Transit Administration, Mid-America Regional Council and Advanced Transit Association.

A project kickoff and stake holder meeting is scheduled for Thursday at Kansas Speedway.

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