

# Executive Summary

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On June 12, 1998, Kansas Governor Bill Graves announced the formation of a group of Kansans to study the state's transportation needs. Transportation 2000, as the group was named, was charged with "seeking the input, advice, and dreams of Kansas citizens, communities, regions, and advocacy groups." Transportation 2000 was asked to assess the transportation progress as the state's current eight-year Kansas Comprehensive Highway Program (CHP) wraps up and to create a priority needs assessment for the future.

The Governor described Transportation 2000 as "an initiative to examine how far we have come and to investigate how far we might go."

Governor Graves asked the members of Transportation 2000 to look beyond the traditional emphasis on roads alone and to "entertain the ideas Kansans hold for airport improvement, railroad safety, mass transit, and a stronger state partnership with city and county government."

In establishing Transportation 2000 and issuing the Study Group its charge, the Governor reminded the Study Group that an awareness of, and an appreciation for, the vastness of Kansas is important. The Governor told the Study Group that, "The history of our state is full of examples of people's desire to move safely and efficiently from one place to another. From the Chisolm, Santa Fe, and Oregon trails to the Atchison-Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad; from pioneers in automobile and airplane development, such as Walter Chrysler, Clyde Cessna, Walter

Beech, and Bill Lear; to Dwight Eisenhower and the Interstate Highway System, the Kansas Turnpike and the BNSF Railroad; Kansas and Kansans have always understood the desire to travel. To this point in our history, we have made the transportation infrastructure of Kansas a priority." The Governor went on to say he does not believe that priority should change.

In holding true to the Governor's charge, Transportation 2000 held a series of 12 Town Hall meetings in all geographic regions of the state. At these meetings, individuals, businesses, and government representatives with diverse transportation interests and issues of concern were encouraged to appear and to testify. Town Hall meetings were held in Pittsburg, Garden City, Ottawa, Great Bend, Wichita, Colby, Kansas City, Salina, Marysville, Lenexa, Arkansas City, and Topeka.

The following individuals served on the Transportation 2000 Study Group: Mary Turkington, Chair, Topeka; Jim Aubuchon, Pittsburg; Virginia Beamer, Oakley; Marcia Bernard, Kansas City; Mary Birch, Overland Park; E. Dean Carlson, Secretary of Transportation, Topeka, Ex Officio Member; Ann Charles, Parsons; Chris Cherches, Wichita; Don Clarkson, Leawood; Ted Dankert, El Dorado; Jim DeHoff, Lawrence; John Fowler, Topeka; Senator Greta Goodwin, Winfield; Gary Hall, Manhattan; Representative Gary Hayzlett, Lakin; Don Hill, Emporia; Charles Johnson, Andover; Don Landoll, Marysville; T. Nelson Mann, Leawood; Carol Marinovich, Kansas City; Representative Dennis McKinney, Greensburg;

Ken Meier, Newton; Timothy Rogers, Salina; John Rolfe, Topeka; Orville “Butch” Spray, Great Bend; Gary Toebben, Lawrence; Senator Ben Vidricksen, Salina; and Max Zimmerman, Liberal.

## **Major Themes The Study Group Heard**

Testimony given at the Town Hall meetings reflected the transportation needs and concerns of legislators, local officials, chambers of commerce, private industry, school districts, organizations, associations, and individual citizens. Groups and individuals testifying represented both urban and rural areas. Presenters came from large metropolitan cities with complex manufacturing and service industries, as well as small towns and all points in between. The consistent themes presented by the majority of those giving testimony centered on the safety, economic growth, and quality of life that result from an improved multimodal transportation system.

During the course of the Town Hall meetings, requests were made for improvement to four modes of transportation including highways, aviation, public transit, and rail. While many of the presenters focused on highways, the needs of other modes of transportation were also expressed by a large number of citizens and officials. Members of the public clearly stated that they want and expect a Comprehensive Transportation Program (CTP) that addresses aviation, public transit, and rail needs as well as highways.

In addition to statewide concerns, numerous presenters testified about the needs of cities and counties for increased funding to assist in the maintenance and reconstruction of roads, streets, and bridges under local government jurisdiction.

The Study Group heard the vital role transportation plays in tourism and the growing importance of tourism to the Kansas economy.

More than 2,500 people attended the 12 Town Hall meetings and more than 500 people presented testimony. The Study Group heard time after time the strong endorsement of the CHP and praise for the Kansas Department of Transportation’s successful administration of that program. Many of the presenters indicated that the success of that program in improving the transportation system showed what could be accomplished.

## **Conclusions Drawn By The Transportation 2000 Study Group**

During the months of October and November, the Transportation 2000 Study Group met and deliberated. The following are the major conclusions drawn by the Study Group.

### **Kansas Needs A New Transportation Program**

Kansas has a large transportation infrastructure. Kansas ranks fourth in the nation in the number of public road miles, third in the number of bridges, fourth in miles of rail line, and eighteenth in number of airports. Vast needs exist in all areas of transportation.

As the CHP has drawn to a close, roadway construction work has continued but at a reduced level. The state cannot even maintain this reduced level in the long term. In order to build on and protect the investment made in roadways by the CHP, Kansas must continue to invest in its infrastructure.

The 2,500 people who attended the Town Hall meetings underscored the concern that Kansans have for investing in transportation. The more than 500 people who testified at the Town Hall meetings cited needs in all modes of transportation and in all regions of the state. Citizens in attendance at the Town Hall meetings made it clear that they strongly supported the CHP and want to build on it.

## **Existing Resources Will Not Be Adequate**

The CHP was funded with revenue from a combination of motor fuels tax, vehicle registration fees, and sales tax, supplemented by federal-aid and local funds in some categories. Bonds in the amount of \$890 million were also authorized. While revenue sources continue beyond Fiscal Year (FY) 1997, cash flow projections based on an extended Interim Plan (matches federal-aid, provides for Substantial Maintenance, and agency operations) show that after FY 2002 available resources drop below anticipated expenditures.

Recent reauthorization of federal surface transportation legislation, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), did provide for additional transportation funding, but the majority of these increased funds have either been programmed for already announced projects, shared with local units of government, or Congressionally earmarked for specific purposes.

Much of the State Highway Fund's revenue is not sensitive to inflation and remains basically flat over time. In addition, the \$890 million in bond sales used to finance the CHP is not available after FY 1997. The loss of future bond proceeds, coupled with the onset of an annual \$85 million bond debt service after FY 1997, impacts the amount of revenue available for construction improvements after FY 1997.

Costs, unlike revenues, do increase with inflation, and over time the state's "buying power" is eroded. Further, the existing program provides minimal funding for public transit, and no funding for rail or aviation needs. Both KDOT and local governments continue to struggle with the problem of increasing costs and flat revenues in their efforts to maintain and improve roads, streets, and bridges.

## **All Modes Of Transportation Should Be Funded**

Throughout the Town Hall meetings, the Transportation 2000 Study Group heard about needs in aviation, public transit, rail, highways, and local jurisdictions. The Study Group concluded that there is a state interest in maintaining adequate aviation and rail systems as well as highways and public transit.

## **Recommended Program**

The Study Group recommends an eight-year Comprehensive Transportation Program that requires \$4.3 billion in addition to current revenue. The Study Group believes a program of this magnitude is necessary to maintain the state's investment in its transportation infrastructure and address the critical needs expressed by the public in the Town Hall meetings. Figure 1 summarizes the total program recommendation.

## **Recommended Highway Components**

The Transportation 2000 Study Group recognized that to be effective and to properly maintain a State Highway System, any transportation program must include a preservation component, a modernization component, and a system enhancement component. The Study Group recommends that a Comprehensive Transportation Program should include funding for all three components.

- The Preservation Program should be funded at an annual average level of \$194 million for construction.
- The Modernization Program should be funded at an annual average level of \$376 million for construction.
- The System Enhancement Program should be funded at a level of \$2 billion in total for the life of the program.

- A minimum of \$3 million per county should be spent during the life of the program. The Study Group also urges that reasonable and prudent efforts be taken to address needs for engineering and safety enforcement at all levels.

### Local Governments Will Require Additional Resources As Well

The 635 incorporated cities in Kansas have jurisdiction over 12,788 miles of road and 879 bridges. The 105 counties have jurisdiction over 109,562 miles of roadway and 19,644 bridges. More than 50 percent of the local city and county bridges are more than 40 years old. Ninety percent of the roads and 80 percent of the bridges in the state are the direct responsibility of cities and counties. The sheer size of the system makes maintaining the local transportation network an overwhelming task.

The Study Group makes the following recommendations:

- The mainstay of the state-local financial partnership is the Special City and County Highway Fund (SCCHF). It is financed primarily by 40.5 percent of the net motor fuels tax revenue. Funding to the SCCHF should be increased by an amount which is proportional to the increase in the core KDOT programs (approximately \$182 million).
- The “cap” which has been placed on the Motor Carrier Property Tax transfer to the SCCHF, reducing the amount of funds which are transferred to local governments, should be removed.
- City Connecting Link maintenance payments should be increased from \$2,000 per lane-mile per year to \$3,000 per lane-mile per year to reflect inflation.
- Funding for the Local Partnership Program set-asides should be increased to \$4.5 million annually for the KLINK Resurfacing Program, increased from \$5 million to \$8 million annually for the Geometric Improvement Program, and increased

<b>T2000 Recommendation</b>	
Expenditures	Annual Average (\$ Millions)
Maintenance:	
Routine Maintenance	\$119
Substantial Maintenance	194
Construction:	
Major Modification & Priority Bridge	376
System Enhancement	167
CE/PE/ROW/Utilities (Includes engineering for Substantial Maintenance)	190
Modes:	
Aviation	3
Public Transit (Includes both State & Federal Funds)	14
Rail (Includes both State & Federal Funds)	6
Local:	
Special City and County Highway Fund	182
Local Federal Aid Projects (Includes Local Match)	80
Local Partnership (Included in Substantial Maintenance and Major Modification)	---
KLINK Maintenance Payments	3
Management and Other	80
Transfers Out	53
Debt Service	85
	<u>\$1,552</u>
Available Resources	<u>1,017</u>
Shortfall	\$535
\$535 per year for 8-year program = \$4,280	

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Figure 1

funding from \$3 million to \$6 million annually for the Economic Development Program.

- KDOT's long-standing policy of sharing a significant portion of federal-aid highway funds with local units of government should be continued.

## **Recommendations for Aviation**

The Transportation 2000 Study Group recommends that the state fund a Kansas Airport Improvement Program for public-use airports. The aviation component of a transportation program should be funded at an annual level of \$3 million. The program should provide for runways, taxiways and ramps, lighting improvements, and for the addition of navigation and weather equipment.

Projects for the program are to be solicited annually from local governments. A selection committee using an objective priority rating system would evaluate the project applications and there would be a sliding scale for state/sponsor match depending on applicant population. The Study Group understood that this size of program would provide for the funding of approximately 11 projects per year.

It was further recommended that a state-funded aviation program should give smaller communities an opportunity to participate and should have guidelines that are flexible and workable. In addition, funds should be allowed to carry over if necessary from year to year.

A state-funded aviation program would allow for expanded opportunities to obtain federal aviation discretionary funds.

## **Recommendations for Public Transit**

The Study Group recommends that state funding for public transit providers increase from \$1 million per year to \$8.8 million per year to enhance service, to

extend hours of daily and weekend operations, and to address other unmet needs. Public transit providers include members of Coordinated Transit Districts and Urbanized Area Transit Authorities.

The state funding should be flexible, allowing for capital and operating expenditures in rural and urban areas and for the carry over of funds from year to year if necessary, although expeditious use of funds will continue to be encouraged.

As state funds are increased, the local matching percentage share for operating costs will be reduced.

If other urbanized areas in the state institute fixed-route transit systems, the amount of state funding for public transit should be revisited by the Legislature.

If other agencies providing transportation services believe they are in need of more money for transportation, that issue should be addressed separately from this funding and through their respective budgets.

Increases in state funding for public transit must not be used as a substitute for local money now spent on transit. The goal is increased service not decreased local effort.

The Study Group supports efforts to develop commuter rail in the Kansas City area. Efforts to continue cooperative planning between local officials and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad should be encouraged. In addition, efforts to obtain federal funding through the annual appropriations process should be continued.

## **Recommendations for Rail**

The rail component of a transportation program should consist of an annual revolving loan program. It should be capitalized with state funds of up to \$5 million per

year for eight years with matching funds requirements and oversight to be determined by the Secretary of Transportation.

A state-funded rail program would assist Kansas shortline railroads with track rehabilitation. The program would supplement the current revolving loan program which originated with previously programmed federal dollars. It is the Study Group's desire that the program would be available to address, over time, the needs of as many Kansas shortlines as possible. The Study Group recognizes the importance of shortline railroads in the transportation of agricultural and other products and the cost to highway maintenance by failing to support shortline railroads.