

Introduction

- ◆ *The formation of Transportation 2000 was announced by Governor Bill Graves on June 12, 1998.*
- ◆ *Governor Graves charged the group with conducting a transportation priority needs assessment and with exploring the needs of highways, aviation, public transportation, rail, and local government.*
- ◆ *Transportation 2000 held 12 Town Hall meetings throughout the state. More than 2,500 people attended these meetings and more than 500 people testified.*

On June 12, 1998, Kansas Governor Bill Graves announced the formation of a group of Kansans to study the state's transportation needs. The group was named Transportation 2000 and was charged with "seeking the input, advice, and dreams of Kansas citizens, communities, regions, and advocacy groups." Transportation 2000 was asked to assess transportation progress to date as the state's eight-year Kansas Comprehensive Highway Program (CHP) wraps up and to create a priority needs assessment. The Governor described Transportation 2000 as "an initiative to examine how far we have come and to investigate how far we might go."

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.

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 holding true to the charge that Governor Graves gave the Transportation 2000 Study Group, 12 Town Hall meetings were scheduled throughout the state. Individuals, businesses, and government representatives with diverse transportation interests and issues of concern were encouraged to appear and testify before Transportation 2000 at these meetings. Public meetings were held in Pittsburg, Garden City, Ottawa, Great Bend, Wichita, Colby, Kansas City, Salina, Marysville, Lenexa, Arkansas City, and Topeka. More than 2,500 people attended the 12

meetings. More than 500 people presented testimony.

To prepare for the 12 Town Hall meetings, the Transportation 2000 Study Group also heard from the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT). KDOT presented information to the Study Group on transportation issues in Kansas so that the Study Group would be well informed for its public meetings. These presentations included background information on rail, public transit, aviation, federal funding, local jurisdiction issues, the State Highway Improvement Program, transportation funding in Kansas, a review of the report “Economic Impacts of the Kansas Comprehensive Highway Program,” Corridor Management, Intelligent Transportation Systems, and making individuals with disabilities full partners in transportation. The Study Group also was provided multiple transportation-related documents for its review.

At the conclusion of the Town Hall meetings, Transportation 2000 members met again in Topeka. The Study Group was presented information that assessed the current condition of the state’s transportation system, looked at possible approaches to a future transportation program, and reviewed current funding.

Based upon all of this input, the Transportation 2000 Study Group deliberated, drew conclusions, and made recommendations. The rest of this report summarizes major themes heard by the Study Group, outlines its deliberations, documents their conclusions, and lists their recommendations.