

Chapter 1—Introduction

K-68 CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN PURPOSE AND NEED

The Kansas Highway 68 (K-68) corridor between US-75 and the Kansas / Missouri state line is an important east /west arterial roadway located in the southwest corner of the Mid America Regional Council metropolitan planning area. The rapidly growing communities of Olathe, Overland Park, Gardner, and Spring Hill in Johnson County, Kansas are located just north of this corridor. The portion of K-68 in the Corridor Management Plan study area, links the communities of Ottawa, Paola, and Louisburg, as well as providing access to Missouri Route 2 and Missouri Route D. Within the boundaries of this corridor plan, K-68 intersects the major north / south highways of Interstate Freeway 35 (I-35) on the west at Ottawa, U.S. Highway 169 (US-169) in the middle of the corridor at Paola, and U.S. Highway 69 (US-69) at Louisburg on the east.

The cities of Ottawa, Paola, and Louisburg, as well as the counties of Miami and Franklin, have all identified K-68 as a major traffic carrier and growth area for their communities. All of these communities are situated on the next ring of expansion

of the Kansas City metropolitan area and anticipate significant residential, commercial, and industrial growth within the next 20 to 30 years. These agencies partnered with KDOT and were awarded funding for a corridor plan through KDOT's Corridor Management Program.

In February 2008, the study partners selected GBA, of Lenexa, Kansas to prepare the K-68 Corridor Management Plan. To assist with the development of the plan, GBA recruited the public involvement and marketing firm Patti Banks Associates of Kansas City, Missouri and the law firm Stinson Morrison Hecker, LLC of Kansas City, Missouri.

The purpose of the K-68 Corridor Management Plan is to be a useful coordination tool that each of the partner agencies agree to follow and update as necessary. Its intent is to set a common vision for the type of roadway that K-68 will be in the future and to facilitate orderly growth throughout the K-68 corridor. In order to develop the K-68 Corridor Management Plan, the consultant team completed comprehensive review of

transportation issues, expected land use configurations, local regulatory policies / ordinances, local infrastructure, and general economic conditions within the planning area. The Corridor Management Plan outlines a strategy for sustainable corridor development by:

- Following a process that seeks input from the public regarding their perceptions, issues, needs, and vision for the corridor
- Analyzing existing and future traffic conditions and recommending improvements that will help maintain / improve traffic safety and operations as the corridor further develops
- Creating an "Access Management" plan that provides safe, reasonable access to adjacent development
- Identifying favorable land use patterns that complement K-68 and benefit the communities as a whole
- Analyzing recent economic trends to determine what growth the local economy can reasonably expect in the coming years
- Providing the associated communities implementation strategies, access management strategies, as well as funding mechanisms to assist in the cost of infrastructure improvements



KDOT'S CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Corridor Management Plans are one of the tools KDOT uses to deliver a safe and efficient highway system to the citizens of Kansas. Agencies that develop and follow such plans are eligible to receive KDOT Corridor Management funds to assist in the financing of recommended construction improvement projects.

Corridor management plans are developed by communities to create strategies for preserving highway investments by maximizing safe and efficient traffic movements and providing reasonable, safe access to adjacent development and to facilitate the preservation of existing infrastructure and help position communities for sustainable growth.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The planning boundary for the K-68 Corridor Management Plan stretched 34 miles along K-68 from I-35 in eastern Ottawa to the Missouri State Line, approximately two miles east of Louisburg. The K-68 corridor planning limits included areas about 1 mile north and south of K-68 and the urban development area of Paola between K-68 and the Paola City limits.

The terrain of the K-68 corridor is generally flat throughout much of the 34 miles but there are segments where significant rolling terrain is encountered primarily near Paola in the central portion of the corridor. The major population centers along the corridor include eastern Ottawa, northern Paola, Hillsdale, and Louisburg. The corridor is mostly rural with some retail development near the Louisburg Cider Mill and within the urbanized sections of Ottawa and Louisburg. Some sporadic residential development has occurred along the K-68 corridor.

The development of the K-68 corridor management plan consisted of five major components:

Public Involvement: The public involvement portion of the K-68 Corridor Management Plan was an ongoing task for over a year. The consultant team conducted numerous stakeholder interviews and a community questionnaire, developed an electronic newsletter, and worked with a technical steering

committee. In addition, the consultant team conducted multiple open-house meetings throughout various stages of the study to gather community input. The meeting locations were rotated through the three cities along the corridor to promote community involvement at all stages of the project. The entire public involvement effort was focused on providing updates regarding important study information and to build community consensus for the final K-68 Corridor Management Plan.

See Table 1.A on the following page for the project schedule of the public involvement process.

Table 1.A: Project Schedule

Phase	Timing	Activity
Data Collection*	May – September 2008	Data Collection
Analysis	October 2008	Land Use Plan
	February 2009	Traffic Demand Model & Deficiencies
Improvement Alternatives*#	April – May 2009	Additional Regulations
Preferred Alternative	May 2009	Preferred Alternative & Selection Criteria
Documentation*#	June – August 2009	Draft Plan
	Fall 2009	Final Corridor Management Plan, & Interlocal Agreements

*Public Officials Briefings

#Public Meetings

Market Analysis: The consultant team completed a market analysis to determine the attractiveness of residential and commercial markets surrounding the corridor. This analysis provided assumptions on growth relating to the corridor over the next 20 years and separated that growth into a few categories. These categories included residential, commercial, office, and light industrial development. As a part of this analysis, low-, moderate-, and high-growth scenarios were developed.

Land Use Planning: The land use planning component built on information provided within the three growth scenarios completed as a part of the market analysis. The consultant team utilized these market demands and expanded the existing land use plans in coordination with local community planners. As with the market analysis, the project team developed three separate land use plans—, low-, moderate-, and high-growth.

Transportation Engineering and Planning: The consultant team developed the transportation engineering and planning portion of the K-68 Corridor Management Plan using data collected in the field, information obtained from local agencies, as well as historical information from KDOT. This information, along with the information developed in the land use planning portion, was refined and imported into the VISUM travel demand model software. Based on information from the travel demand model, both near-term and long-term recommendations have been provided as a part of the K-68 Corridor Management Plan.

Regulatory Issues: As the final task of the K-68 corridor planning process, the consultant team provided a gap analysis of the existing regulations, ordinances, technical memoranda, community plans, and governmental policies to determine their effectiveness towards implementing the K-68 Corridor Management Plan. In addition, the consultant team provided recommendations for any identified regulatory gaps.

PARTNERS & INTERLOCAL AGREEMENTS

After the approval of the K-68 Corridor Management Plan, the six partner agencies developed an Interlocal agreement that provides a commitment of cooperation in following the expectations and guidelines set forth in the K-68 Corridor Management Plan. A brief description of the partner agencies and their roles follows.

Franklin County: Franklin County currently has a population of about 26,500 and the K-68 corridor is the main east / west corridor within the county. Developing an understanding of how growth is and should be occurring along the K-68 corridor, as well as preserving the integrity the K-68 corridor, are Franklin County's primary objectives.

Miami County: The limits of the K-68 Corridor Plan cross the boundaries of two communities within Miami County, which currently has a population of over 31,000. The K-68 corridor is also the main east / west corridor within this county. Like Franklin County, developing an understanding of how growth is and should be occurring along the K-68 corridor, as well as preserving the integrity the K-68 corridor, are Miami County's primary objectives.

City of Ottawa: The City of Ottawa lies on the west end of the K-68 corridor planning area. The land use adjacent to K-68 within the Ottawa portion of the corridor plan is comprised mostly of commercial and light industrial development areas located between I-35 and Nevada Road. Ottawa's population exceeds 12,800. I-35, US-59, and K-68 have a critical influence on the Ottawa economy, and K-68 is a key linkage to the interstate.

City of Paola: The City of Paola, with a population of approximately 5,400, lies near the center of the K-68 corridor planning area on US-169. This corridor, and its future development, has a major impact on the vision of growth set forth by the City and its governing body. Paola officials envision residential and commercial development occurring along the K-68 corridor, while maintaining the urban center of existing Paola in its current location.

City of Louisburg: The City of Louisburg is located on K-68 near the east end of the planning area at the interchange of K-68 with US-69, and has a population of approximately 3,800. The development that has occurred along the K-68 corridor within Louisburg is a mix of residential and commercial. The majority of the retail development within Louisburg is located along K-68 between Metcalf and US-69 and a block south of the highway in the urban center of Louisburg. A large portion of the Louisburg Community relies on the K-68 corridor for their daily commutes.

KDOT: The Kansas Department of Transportation is the owner and agency ultimately responsible for the integrity and safety of the K-68 corridor. In addition to participating in the creation of the plan, KDOT is the primary contributor of funding for the K-68 Corridor Management Plan and likely, for future improvement projects related to the corridor.

