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KDOT Announces Final Decision for US-24 & Topeka Boulevard Project

The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) has made a final decision regarding a future project for the existing US-24 and Topeka Boulevard cloverleaf interchange in north Topeka (Shawnee County). KDOT has chosen to replace the existing bridge at the interchange with a new bridge structure, along with some pavement improvements on US-24 itself. There will be no work completed on Topeka Boulevard and the remainder of the cloverleaf interchange will remain as is. Construction for the bridge replacement project at the US-24 and Topeka Boulevard interchange is tentatively scheduled for 2013.

After a thorough review of factors on the existing bridge including type, age and condition, it was determined that the costs to replace the bridge are comparable to costs for rehabilitating the existing bridge. In addition, the time to construct a new bridge will be about the same as the time it would take to rehabilitate the existing bridge.

If KDOT chose to rehabilitate the bridge, there is the potential for unknown issues that may arise during construction which could cause delays and increase project costs. By replacing the bridge, these potential impacts are removed. A new bridge will also allow for increased vertical clearance for truck traffic travelling on Topeka Boulevard.

After an extensive public involvement process, KDOT, along with the City of Topeka, had chosen a signalized intersection for the US-24 and Topeka Boulevard project. The intersection project was to be a cooperative project between KDOT and the City of Topeka with construction to be funded through federal dollars and \$1.5 million

from the City of Topeka, subject to Council approval. In March 2012, the Topeka City Council chose not to approve the \$1.5 million for the intersection project.

KDOT had originally planned to repair the overpass bridge; not remove the interchange. After considering the nature of repairs that are needed, the age of the bridge, the outdated interchange design, and the expected increase in traffic, engineers decided it would be more cost effective to replace the interchange with an intersection. An at-grade intersection was chosen to accommodate the future development plans for North Topeka. Plus a signalized intersection at Topeka Boulevard would match the existing character of US-24 which currently has traffic signals at Kansas Avenue and Rochester Road.

The US-24 and Topeka Boulevard interchange opened on September 18, 1941 and was built at a cost of \$168,500. It was the first cloverleaf interchange in the state. KDOT will continue to maintain the existing bridge so it can remain in service until it can be replaced in 2013.

For more information on this project, please contact Kimberly Qualls, Northeast Kansas Public Affairs Manager, at (785) 640-9340.

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