

## Advisory Group – Meeting #3 Summary

### Overview

The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) hosted the third U.S. 69 Expansion and Modernization Project Advisory Group Meeting virtually on Feb. 23, 2021, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The objectives of the third meeting were to discuss express toll lane (ETL) and non-ETL alternatives, Project screening criteria and stakeholder engagement activities and seek feedback from the Advisory Group.

### Meeting Summary

1. The meeting and its contents are summarized in the attached:
  - a. Meeting PowerPoint
  - b. Meeting Recording
  
2. **Welcome and Meeting Logistics** - The meeting kicked off with a meeting welcome and introduction by Michael DeMent.
  
3. **Opening** – KDOT Deputy Secretary Lindsey Douglas described how U.S. 69 is a major freight and commuter corridor in the state connecting Southeast Kansas/Pittsburg State to the Kansas City metro. KDOT is pleased that we have finally let for construction the final remaining project to complete the four-lane divided expressway to Pittsburg. This corridor is the backbone of moving Overland Park and has been for the last 20 years. She described the partnership with the community its contribution to the corridor’s success. Over the past 15 years, more than \$456.5 million has been put into the U.S. 69 corridor and Overland Park has invested more than \$20 million in the last 10 years and over \$60 million in the last 20 years.

She thanked the advisory group for their valued input on the Project.
  
4. **Non-ETL Alternatives** – Cameron McGown, HNTB Project Manager, reviewed the timeline of the upcoming Advisory Group Meetings and what will be covered at the meetings.

**Transit** – Cameron then discussed how the Project Team is examining other alternatives that could help manage congestion. The no-build option is always carried through to the environmental clearance process to compare to alternative projects. This alternative would have no capacity improvements but will have ongoing rehabilitation and maintenance as well

as planned and committed projects. Cameron also discussed how improvements could be made to parallel and supporting arterial roadways.

**Technology** – Kip Strauss, HNTB Technology and Operations, discussed strategies for using technology to help congestion on the roadway. Transportation System Management (TSM) could be used on the roadway through ramp metering, queue warning systems and other technologies. Transportation Demand Management (TDM) could be utilized by means of carpooling (HOV lanes), staggering work shifts or telecommuting. Kip discussed that when considering any alternative, the long-term potential must be examined for the entire transportation system.

**Automated Vehicles** – Kip also discussed how KDOT has been working on testing some programs and technologies that automotive manufacturers are implementing in vehicles. This will set KDOT up for success in the future and ensure the roadway system retains its flexibility and adaptability of new technologies.

**Non-tolled Alternative** – Gretchen Ivy, HNTB Environmental, discussed multimodal options to the corridor. The corridor has the potential to increase effectiveness of transit and other multimodal operations as well as improve roadways or shoulders for better multimodal connections. The number of transit routes moving through the corridor could be increased in number and frequency as well. Typical strategies to increase transit in a corridor are bus-on-shoulder, light/heavy/commuter rail, bus rapid transit/micro transit/transit on demand and park-and-ride locations.

**Tolling Legislation**--Lindsey Douglas discussed current bills (HB 2296 & SB 186 Cleanup to KSA 68-20, 120) on the floors of the Kansas House and Senate. The bills center on the Clear Partnership Authority, transit operations and revenue use. The proposed bill would apply any future revenue, once a local contribution is reached, to new and future improvements on the corridor.

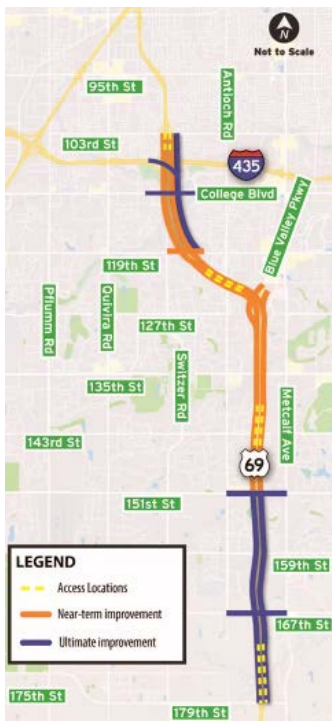
**Add Capacity – General-Purpose Lanes** – Gretchen Ivy then discuss the Add Capacity – General Purpose Lanes alternative. This alternative would add a one new lane in each direction for all motorists, reconfigure the I-435 interchange, reconfigure the Blue Valley

Parkway interchange, improve local and supporting cross streets and reconstruct existing pavement and bridges.

**Add Capacity – Express Toll Lanes** – The Add Capacity – Express Toll Lanes alternative was then discussed. This alternative would add an express toll lane in each direction, provide congestion management, reconfigure the I-435 interchange and reconfigure the Blue Valley Parkway interchange.

5. **ETL Alternatives** – Cameron McGown discussed the ETL roadway alternative.

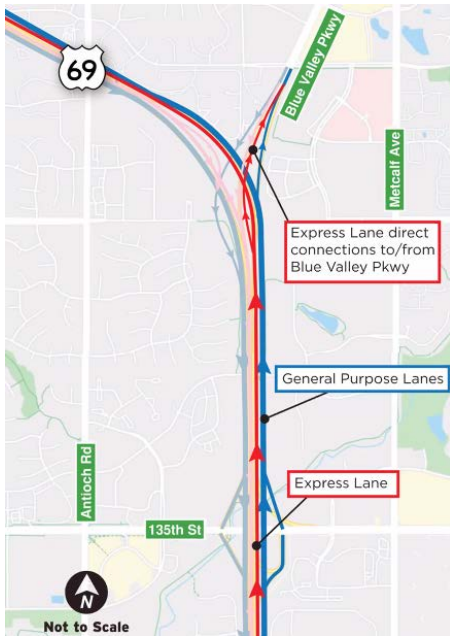
**Figure 1** – ETL Access Points



**Access Points** – Access point locations have been further studied and were presented to the Advisory Group. The access points to the ETL can be seen in **Figure 1**. The Project Team studied where to put entry and exit points based on where it was safe and efficient to enter and exit an ETL. New traffic data was used in the analysis of the new access points.

**Access Types** – Craig Cogan, HNTB, discussed potential lane configurations and access points between Blue Valley Parkway and proposed toll lanes on U.S. 69. **Figure 2** shows the potential northbound configuration of the ETL exiting to Blue Valley Parkway. This adds direct access to Blue Valley Parkway from the northbound ETL on U.S. 69. **Figure 3** shows the southbound interchange configuration from Blue Valley Parkway with direct access to the southbound ETL on

U.S. 69. These ramp configurations allow the ETL to service more users safely and efficiently. The ETL ramps also reduce weaving in the general-purpose lanes to access the toll lanes. Adding the ETL ramps is estimated to be similar in price to the original construction costs.



**Figure 2 – NB ETL Ramp Configuration**



**Figure 3 – SB ETL Ramp Configuration**

**Q:** Are both ramps going to be flyovers? Are they combined or separate structures?

**A:** The ETL ramps may be able to share a structure. The southbound U.S. 69 flyover may have to be separate. These structures will be consolidated as much as possible to reduce costs.

**Comment:** From a safety standpoint alone, this seems to be a huge improvement over the current configuration - the weaving of cars to get to 135th from 69H south is dangerous.

**Toll Policies and Initial Costs –** Scott Cooper, HNTB Tolling, discussed buses being able to utilize the toll lanes. Buses take around 50-60 cars out of the general-purpose lanes and help alleviate congestion. Bus services typically have accounts set up with the ETL services to quickly and efficiently be charged and get through the toll lane. Scott Cooper discussed emerging toll collection technologies, such as companies providing multiple services for toll lanes and the ability to take pictures of license plates for billing purposes. Mobile billing can be on an app or an account can be set up with a card for payment. There are also available third-party accounts (Best Pass, National Pass and Plus Pass). Many companies are also piloting toll technologies. Initial tolling costs are being studied.

6. **Screening Criteria** – Brandon Yarbrough, HNTB Environmental, discussed the screening criteria for assessing the different proposed alternatives for the U.S. 69 corridor.

**Purpose and Need Factors** – The purpose and need factors are:

- Improve Safety
  - Reduction in number and severity of congestion-related crashes
  - Improved bicycle and pedestrian safety
- Reduce congestion
  - Change in the travel Level-of-Service (LOS) on U.S. 69
  - Change in travel speed
  - Change in corridor throughput (number of vehicles traveling through the corridor)
- Promote sustainability
  - Change in the roadway and bridge condition
  - Change in travel time reliability
  - Support environmental sustainability
- Provide flexible choices
  - Needs of all users and all modes
  - How well does the alternative provide flexible choices and congestion management?
  - Access and connections to bike and pedestrian facilities
  - Reliability for transit riders
- Support local and regional growth
  - Compatibility with local (city and county) planning
  - Compatibility with regional (MARC) planning
  - Employment equity

**Social/Environmental Factors** – Social/Environmental (natural and human/environmental) factors include:

- Park and recreational area impacts (acres of parks and rec facilities impacted by alternatives)
- Community facilities impacted (churches, schools, etc. impacted)
- Environmental justice impacts (low-income and minority populations)
  - Direct impacts at the Census block group level, relocations or right-of-way need, funding mechanisms that impact populations and indirect impacts

- Noise impacts – how close homes and businesses are to the roadway. A noise screening will not be conducted at this level but will be conducted later in the process.
- Natural resource impacts (wetlands, floodplains, critical habitats, threatened and endangered species)
- Hazardous materials impact
- Cultural and historical sites
- Air quality, emissions and energy impacts

**Engineering/Costs/Funding Factors** – The engineering/costs/funding factors are:

- Roadway and interchange geometrics
- Right-of-way impacts
- Residential or business displacements
- Timing of construction
- Ease of project phasing, maintenance of traffic and constructability
- Estimated construction costs
- Estimated life-cycle costs
- Funding confidence – how confident is KDOT in obtaining state and local funds for maintaining the project

**Public Input** – This factor gauges if there is an overall positive, neutral or negative reaction to the proposed alternative.

Qualitative ratings will be assigned to each of the above factors with tangible numbers being assigned to the impact.

**Q:** The funding is primarily for the toll lane, is that correct?

**A:** The tolling is one tool to help manage the congestion. It is also a way for the city to contribute local contribution for the project.

**Q:** Would surrounding improvements or enhancements be paid for by the toll?

**A:** The Project is estimated to be in the \$300 to \$500 million range. The Project could not be completely funded by tolls. A significant amount of state funding would go into building this. Overland Park's contribution is only a part of this project. We know there will be needs on the corridor as we continue to see growth in the

community. No matter the alternative, it will have to be funded with a combination of state and local dollars to make improvements on the corridor.

Engagement Update – Cameron McGown discussed the U.S. 69 Project engagement update.

**Public Meeting Feedback** –438 people attended the Virtual Open House and 209 people attended the Live Public Meeting on Jan. 20. Over 60 questions and 115 comments were submitted.

**Focus Group Summary** – Focus groups were conducted via Zoom between January 19 and 21. Participants were recruited from the random sample of respondents of the November 2020 survey. 76 people attended seven meetings. All groups were represented. 94% indicated they were familiar with the concept of ETLs. Participants were asked questions about use of an ETL if it was added to the road structure. One-third said they would be happy with the decision to add ETLs, while half said they would be okay with the decision. Another round of surveys will be conducted around April 2021. Results of the focus groups will be analyzed before making a recommendation to City Council.

**Initial Travel Survey Responses** – The purpose of the survey was to understand typical trips from likely users in the region and help the Project Team understand how people value their time and what they would pay for a toll for a more reliable travel time. There were approximately 2,400 valid responses (fully or partially completed survey). The survey closed last week, and the team is analyzing the data. At the next Advisory Group meeting, the data from this survey will be discussed in detail.

**Social Media Conversations** – The Project utilized Nextdoor, Facebook and Twitter to share project information or news. There have been over 288 comments or responses on these platforms.



The U.S. 69 engagement campaign consists of the Advisory Group, stakeholder briefings, community presentations, public information meetings, focus groups, surveys, project website, social media, media relations, visualizations/simulations and electronic newsletters.

7. **Open Discussion** –

**Q:** I have been getting feedback about we don't need expansion because of COVID, and everyone is working at home and we'll never go back to work. Is this being considered?

**A:** We do have to acknowledge that COVID has an impact, but the data shows the traffic is rebounding. If the Project moves as quickly as possible this would be complete by the end of 2025 (traffic should rebound by then and grow). Cell phone traffic shows that JoCo traffic is back to normal levels, but not all types of trips are back to normal (work trips are down by 5-6% now). KDOT has a continuous counter on U.S. 69 that we've been monitoring. The population over south Overland Park is not static; it's growing. MARC is predicting a 22% increase in population in the next 10 years. If there's a COVID impact it could be swamped by the growth of southern JoCo.

**Q:** Why can't the state or federal government pay the entire price and why is there a proposed toll?

**A:** U.S. 69 serves more than the state. It serves local traffic and that's why the development of the Project has been a partnership with Overland Park. When looking at trips on the corridor, when people remain in Overland Park, even though they take a state highway, KDOT looks at that as a local trip. U.S. 69 runs right through the heart of Overland Park.

**Q:** Has there been much conversation about the potential of increased litter?

**A:** This is something we've been hearing a lot. At one point, we were offering overtime to KDOT crews to pick up trash along the corridor. We have talked with some of the trash haulers to see if they could secure their loads differently (work



trucks, pick-up trucks, trash haulers). We have figured out a contract service per mile per month for people to come out and pick up trash.

**Q:** During this public engagement process, have there been questions posed around a possible "sunset" of the tolls once a certain funding goal is reached? I understand the tolling lane would provide funds for future maintenance, but just curious whether the question about continuing to charge the toll once the match has been met has been a concern or raised questions.

**A:** This is something to consider. We caution that if the toll is a solution to manage congestion, then you lose the functional managed lane utility. This can be discussed further if there's additional community support. We definitely have heard questions around this. We are pursuing legislature changes right now so the community can bank those funds from the corridor with growth and development. Additional improvements in the future could be used and improvements could be paid for quicker.

### **Attendees**

A screenshot of attendance follows:

A screenshot of a Microsoft Teams meeting grid. The grid is organized into two main sections. The left section contains a 6x3 grid of participants, with the top-left cell being a larger video tile for Michael DeMent. The right section contains a 6x3 grid of participants, with the top-left cell being a larger video tile for Wendy Reynolds. Each tile includes a name, a profile picture, and a red microphone icon. Some tiles also feature logos for UCS and KDOT.

Participant Name	Participant Name	Participant Name
Michael DeMent...	Teona Jerman...	fred spears
Wendy Reyn...	skubal	david lindstr...
Wendy Reyn...	Gretchen Ivy	Lindsey Douglas
Wendy Reyn...	Kip Strauss - HN...	Craig Cogan
Wendy Reyn...	Clinton Robinso...	Robyn Arthur...
Wendy Reyn...	John Neuberger	Adam Hamit...
Wendy Reyn...	Bryan Dehner	Mary Birch
Wendy Reyn...	Wendy Reyn...	Steve Hale, KDOT
Bryan Dehner	Bryan Dehner	Mary Birch
Bryan Dehner	Bryan Dehner	Mary Birch
Bryan Dehner	Bryan Dehner	Mary Birch
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