

MINUTES

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON A NEW COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

January 8, 2009
Room 545-N—Statehouse

Members Present

Senator Dwayne Umbarger, Chairperson
Representative Gary Hayzlett, Vice-Chairperson
Senator Karin Brownlee
Senator Laura Kelly
Senator Janis Lee
Senator Derek Schmidt
Senator Ruth Teichman
Senator John Vratil
Representative Elaine Bowers
Representative Mike Burgess
Representative Terrie Huntington
Representative Margaret Long
Representative Julie Menghini
Representative Don Myers
Representative Jene Vickrey
Representative Vince Wetta

Staff Present

Hank Avila, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Aaron Klaassen, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Jill Shelley, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Mike Corrigan, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Mary Jane Brueck, Committee Secretary

Others Present

See attached list.

Morning Session

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Dwayne Umbarger at 10:00 a.m. He welcomed those attending and then called on Gene Ramsey, Mayor of Ottawa ([Attachment 1](#)).

Lisa Johnson, Franklin County Administrator, spoke on behalf of Ottawa City Manager Richard Nienstedt. Among her points was support for improvements on K-68 ([Attachment 2](#)).

Tom Weigand, Director, Ottawa Chamber of Commerce, reiterated the importance of funding a new highway plan for the next ten years. He said a plan is needed to help local governments continue to maintain roads and highways in the Ottawa area, thereby helping the economy of the area.

Chairperson Umbarger asked the Committee to review the preliminary minutes of meetings in Wichita, Overland Park, Garden City, and Pittsburg.

Gary Scoby, Nemaha County Commissioner and a member of the Executive Committee of the Kansas County Commissioners' Association, spoke on behalf of the Kansas Association of Counties. The Association's 2009 legislative policy statement makes legislative enactment of a new multi-year comprehensive transportation program a priority in the 2009 Session. He also said improvements to US-75 and US-36 are critical ([Attachment 3](#)).

Dennis Lauver, President/CEO of the Salina Area Chamber of Commerce, representing Salina and Saline County, spoke of the importance of a well thought out highway plan. A question was asked regarding a two-mile grid for county roads. Neil Cable, Saline County Engineer, said the county closed many bridges, but no roads were closed. This made less traffic and therefore less maintenance on those roads. Most people living or farming, or both, in the area have accepted the change ([Attachment 4](#)).

The Committee heard testimony on transportation priorities from representatives of the Greater Fort Riley Communities: Geary County, Pottawatomie County, and Riley County plus Junction City, Manhattan, and Wamego ([Attachment 5](#)). Those speaking were Mark Hatesohl, Mayor of Manhattan, who said the critical needs are the K-18 link between Manhattan and Fort Riley; Scenic Drive in Manhattan; Manhattan Regional Airport; and transit to help meet residents' needs. Karen McCulloh, Riley County Commissioner elect, said that Riley County has extra needs because of the growth of Fort Riley. Corwin Seamens, Chairperson, Pottawatomie County Commission, said county officials and residents want to improve quality of life in their area as well as transportation and highways. Christina Cook, City Engineer of Junction City, listed the highway needs for both Junction City and Geary County. Dennis Cox, Geary County Public Works Administrator, said that county's main concerns are US-77 and K-18.

Joe Nold, Dickinson County Commissioner, brought a joint resolution signed by county commissioners and officials of the county's nine municipalities in support of a long-range transportation plan. He spoke in favor of the KDOT revolving loan program, in support of low-cost bridge construction alternatives, and in opposition to imposition of a two-mile road grid. He also discussed the cost of quarry traffic on county roads ([Attachment 6](#)).

Dudley R. Feuerborn, Anderson County Commissioner, discussed five specific transportation needs of Anderson County, including improvements to US-169 ([Attachment 7](#)).

Daniel Holub, Marion County Commissioner, said that area needs improvements on US-50, county roads, and K-15. He also said that transportation needs a revenue source based on usage ([Attachment 8](#)).

Randy Dallke, Marion County Commissioner, spoke of the great need for improvements to the stretch of US-50 between Emporia and Hutchinson, for safety reasons ([Attachment 9](#)).

Crosby Gernon, Mayor of Hiawatha, listed that community's priorities: completion of four lanes for US-75 from Holton to the Kansas/Nebraska line, and completion of US-36 from the Kansas/Missouri line west as a four-lane highway ([Attachment 10](#)).

Steve Roberts, Brown County Commissioner, told the Committee the county needs funds to maintain roads in Brown County. He would like to see smaller projects funded without the requirements to meet all the federal standards and specifications. Senator Umbarger noted that federal requirements must be met to receive federal funds. There is current dialogue in Washington regarding Brown County's concern ([Attachment 11](#)).

Chairperson Umbarger announced a break for lunch.

Afternoon Session

Chairperson Umbarger called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Roy Hallauer, Jackson County Commissioner, spoke of the needs in Jackson County to make the highways safer, including making US-75 four lanes north of Holton ([Attachment 12](#)).

Glen Tyson, Osage County Road Supervisor, spoke on behalf of Osage County and as president of the Kansas County Highway Association ([Attachment 13](#)). He stated that counties maintain approximately 109,000 miles of roads, 87 percent of the total, and 19,650 bridges, 77 percent of the total. Mr. Tyson also spoke of the need for good highways in Osage County to accommodate county residents who work in other counties. He suggested restoring the demand transfer withheld in 2002. He recommended widening US-75 two miles north of Lyndon to the US-56 intersection to four lanes. He also suggested turn lanes on highways at key intersections with rural areas and lengthening a runway at Osage City Municipal Airport.

Shelly Buhler, Chairperson of the Shawnee County Commission, gave information on priorities for the Topeka and Shawnee County area ([Attachment 14](#)). These include replacing the elevated portion of I-70 through downtown Topeka.

Shelby Smith, founder of Economic Lifelines, recommended the Legislature delay the Kansas Comprehensive Highway Plan for a year for funding and other reasons. He supports long-distance passenger rail service in Kansas, and said he thinks a plan for it needs to be included in the Comprehensive Plan in order to receive federal funding ([Attachment 15](#)).

Larry Uri, Concordia City Manager and representing Cloud County and Cloud County Economic Development Council, discussed the transportation needs of Cloud County and the City of Concordia ([Attachment 16](#)).

Joe Mitchell, Mayor of Seneca, discussed the need for programs to increase economic development and growth of the communities in Nemaha County ([Attachment 17](#)).

Sharon Brown, Mayor of Clay Center, expressed concerns about the deteriorating viaduct bridge on US-24 in Clay Center (Attachment 18).

Rick Koch, Sabetha City Commissioner and President of Sabetha Industrial Development, told the Committee the stretch of US-75 between Holton and Sabetha (about 35 miles) needs to be widened to four lanes due to the traffic to and from the casino, and to attract more traffic into northeast Kansas by linking I-80 and I-70.

Matt Zimmerman, Emporia City Manager, wanted the Committee to know that only certain operations at the Tyson plant in Emporia were closed and that many employees remain working there. He continued by presenting the transportation improvements Emporia and Lyon County officials think are critical to their area, including rail projects (Attachment 19).

Written testimony was received from the City of Lawrence regarding needed transportation improvements (Attachment 20).

The meeting was opened to Committee discussion. *Senator Vratil moved that the Committee report include a recommendation that the standing transportation committees of the House and Senate develop a new comprehensive transportation plan, and that any developed plan be presented to the House and Senate. He added that such a plan should provide for implementation as soon as funds are available. Representative Myers seconded Senator Vratil's motion.*

During discussion, Chairperson Umbarger said part of the dilemma is that the Committee does not know what the Governor will recommend in her State of the State address, nor what the goals of the new administration in Washington may be.

Senator Vratil explained that "adequate funding" could include federal money that might be available as early as February of this year or any other available funding; the important thing would be to have a transportation plan ready to go as soon as money is available.

Chairperson Umbarger called for a vote. The motion carried.

Representative Myers moved that the Committee adopt a statement and recommendation regarding the mining of sand, gravel, and aggregate, which had been distributed to the Committee. Representative Hayzlett seconded the motion. Chairperson Umbarger called for a vote. The motion carried.

Senator Schmidt moved the Committee endorse the direction of the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) regarding "practical design," such as adding two to three feet of shoulder to less-traveled roads rather than shoulders eight to ten feet wide that would meet federal design standards when complete redesign would be cost prohibitive. He added that the recommendation also should encourage KDOT to consult with local units of government in the area when these design options are being considered. Representative Menghini seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Representative Menghini moved that Committee recommendations to the standing transportation committees include a request that any comprehensive transportation plans they pass include provisions to ensure equity between rural and urban areas for transportation projects chosen for economic development reasons. The motion was seconded by Senator Teichman. Chairperson Umbarger called for a vote on the motion. The motion carried.

Representative Burgess moved that Committee recommendations to the standing transportation committees include a request that any comprehensive transportation plans they pass include a process by which a legislatively appointed body including the KDOT Secretary could

choose additional or special transportation projects when the Legislature is not in session. Senator Kelly seconded the motion. Seeing no questions on the motion, Chairperson Umbarger called for a vote. The motion carried.

Senator Teichman moved approval of the minutes of the Wichita, Overland Park, Garden City, and Pittsburg meetings. The motion was seconded by Representative Menghini. Motion carried.

With no further questions or comments, Chairperson Umbarger closed the meeting. There are no future meetings scheduled at this time.

Prepared by Mary Jane Brueck
Edited by Jill Shelley and Hank Avila

Approved by the Committee on:

February 3, 2009

(Date)