

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Gary Hayzlett at 1:30 p.m. on March 20, 2003 in Room 519-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

- Representative Barbara Ballard
- Representative John Ballou
- Representative Jerry Henry
- Representative David Huff
- Representative Bruce Larkin
- Representative Don Myers
- Representative Valdenia Winn
- Representative Jim Yonally

Committee staff present:

- Bruce Kinzie, Revisor
- Hank Avila, Legislative Research Dept.
- Mary Galligan, Legislative Research Dept.
- Betty Boaz, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

- Gary Goodheart, Greensburg City Council & SPIRIT Board
- Paul Poczobut, Jr., City Administrator, Greensburg
- Doyle Conrad, Highway Superintendent, Kiowa County
- Curtis Freeland, City Manager, Arkansas City
- Kenneth Bernard, Mayor, City of Lansing
- Butch Felker, Mayor, City of Topeka
- Don Seifert, City of Olathe
- John Perdry, LRM Industries
- Ron Norris, Director of Public Works, City of Lenexa

Others attending:

See attached list

Chairman Hayzlett called the meeting to order. Most of the conferees are members of Economic Lifelines and are here to discuss the importance of maintaining the Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

The Chairman introduced the first speaker who was Gary Goodheart, Greensburg City Council & SPIRIT Board. ([Attachment 1](#)) Mr. Goodheart said there seems to be little difference between their views and those of KDOT on the need for a four-lane highway between Wichita and Liberal. However, he said there is a big difference in the time line for the project, the design concept and the amount of money required to complete the project. According to Mr. Goodheart there needs to be drastic changes in the time line and the design concept. He said they do not need an interstate highway with bypasses and interchanges. He said what they do need from Pratt to Liberal is a four-lane expressway with limited access.

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The second speaker was Paul Poczobut Jr., City Administrator for the City of Greensburg. He began with a couple of quotes from the Secretary of Transportation. (Attachment 2) He said the CTP is a true guideline to doing things right and commitments were made to follow those guidelines. Those that make commitments and promises and then break them loose enough of their integrity that they can no longer be trusted. According to Mr. Poczobut, the City of Greensburg relies very heavily on Highway 54/400. The report of the study on the US 54/400 highway developed a concept that would take the highway around Kingman, Cunningham, Pratt and Greensburg. Many of the businesses feel the bypass would slow, stop or even contract the economy of these cities. He concluded by asking the Committee to help their community grow by not reducing the funding for the KDOT and ensuring US 54/400 expansion is funded.

The written testimony of Thomas V. Corns, President and Chairman of Greensburg State Bank was handed out. Mr. Corns was unable to appear in person. (Attachment 3)

Doyle Conrad, Sr. Road Supervisor, Kiowa County Highway Department was the next speaker. (Attachment 4) According to Mr. Conrad as far back as 1962 a study showed the need for a four-lane highway from Wichita to the Oklahoma border. Mr. Conrad gave several reasons for the purpose and need for the US 54/400 improvements. He concluded that everyone involved in the decisions and projects needs to be accountable for their actions, and the risk of not following through on funding promises would really damage the economic future of the area. He urged the Legislature to avoid cutting into the highway program fund.

Curtis Freeland, City Manager of Arkansas City stated that we are a mobile society that has increasingly come to depend on the safe, reliable and expedient transportation of goods and services on a daily basis. (Attachment 5) According to Mr. Freeland public works construction programs, and particularly highway construction programs, have been an economic stimulus that has been used by federal and state governments to offset the effects of recessionary cycles many times in the past. He said the fact that we have difficult times now is not a good excuse for abandoning Kansas' progressive commitment to our state's future generations in the 1999 Comprehensive Transportation Program. He encouraged the Committee to continue the work of finding solutions to the revenue problems that are necessary to support the 1999 CTP.

The Chairman introduced Mayor Kenneth W. Bernard, City of Lansing. Mayor Bernard came to testify on behalf of a project to widen US Highway 7/73 which serves as Lansing's main street. (Attachment 6) This was the number two project in the State in 1999. Mayor Bernard said this project was not only an economic project but also a safety project as the current highway has no turn lanes, limited signal lights and unlimited access which has resulted in numerous accidents. He also encouraged the Committee to include some funding for the revolving account which would allow cities to borrow monies from the State for local projects at a low interest rate.

Mayor Harry "Butch" Felker, representing a coalition of Shawnee County, the City of Topeka, the Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority, the Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority and the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce, was the next speaker. (Attachment 7) Mayor Felker said, "Today, we find

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ourselves wondering about the future of our state and local transportation systems and the effect it will have on our citizens if projects are not completed, jobs are not created, cities and counties are left without the promised dollars to take care of our streets, roads and bridges, our most vulnerable citizens lose public transportation headways made through the '99 plan, and, our local airports are denied funding that once again relegates Kansas to the only state in the U.S. not providing state dollars for airports." He concluded with a request that the Committee carry forward the message to the other members of the Legislature and the Governor, that the consequences of not following through on transportation funding promises will have a dire effect on the entire state.

The next speaker was Donald R. Seifert, Policy Development Leader for the City of Olathe. (Attachment 8) Mr. Seifert said the reason this issue is so important to them is that the Olathe citizens have consistently stated that transportation and traffic issues are at the top of the city's priority list as they accommodate the rapid growth of their community. He said their biggest concern is preservation of the Local Partnership Grade Separation Program, a new component of the 1999 program. He said Olathe is literally split into thirds by the BNSF Railroad and their railroad headaches rank with the worst anywhere in the state. With 100 train movements daily passing through 24 intersections in Olathe, railroad grade separations are vital to more efficient and safer traffic flow. He said they can not afford to lose their funding commitments.

John Pendry, Sales Manager, Lawrence Ready Mix, said the CTP is vitally important for the over 250 member companies represented by the Kansas Ready Mixed Concrete Association. He listed several reasons for staying the course with the CTP. (Attachment 9) Mr. Pendry concluded by urging the Committee to keep the CTP solvent by opposing any attempt to remove any further funds from the program and by taking action to replace those already lost.

The next speaker was Ron Norris, Director of Public Works, City of Lenexa. (Attachment 10) His remarks were primarily focused on the System Enhancement Projects, however, they strongly supported the entire CTP including the Major Modification Program. He said it was the classic "pay me now or pay me later," except in this case, pay a lot more when you ultimately pay later. He said one has to look only a little way to the east to understand how quickly and how deeply a state can fall into a highway transportation trap that will take many years and billions of dollars to correct. He then briefly discussed his specific enhancement project in Lenexa.

Written testimony from Dean Mann, President of the U. S. Sixty-Nine Highway Association, was handed out to the Committee. (Attachment 11)

After questions and discussion, Chairman Hayzlett thanked Pat Hurley and all the other Economic Lifeline members for making their presentations. He then adjourned the meeting. The next meeting will be on Monday, March 24, 2003.