

## Overview

During September 2000, ETC Institute conducted a series of interviews with leaders who influence transportation decisions in the State of Kansas. A total of sixty interviews were completed with representatives of a variety of organizations including city managers, city/county public works directors, consulting engineers, environmentalists, lobbyists, contractors, airport operators, rail operators, public transportation managers, chambers of commerce, and many others. The interviews were conducted by phone and took approximately 15 minutes to complete.

## Purpose

The purpose of the interviews was to gather input from representative of special interest groups on a wide range of transportation issues. The information gathered from the interviews will be used to develop a survey instrument that will be administered to residents throughout the State of Kansas during the Fall of 2000. The survey will be designed to measure customer satisfaction with the State's transportation system.

## Organizations Participating in the Interviews

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|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Concrete Pavement Assoc. | <input type="checkbox"/> Coffey County Road and Bridge       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anderson & Coffee County          | <input type="checkbox"/> Coffeyville Municipal Airport       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> APAC - Kansas - Reno Division     | <input type="checkbox"/> Cook, Flatt & Strobel               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Atchison/Amelia Earhart Airport   | <input type="checkbox"/> Cowley County                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> B&W Electrical Contractors        | <input type="checkbox"/> Doniphan County Highway             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ballou Construction Co., Inc.     | <input type="checkbox"/> Evans-Bierly-Hutchinson & Assoc.    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bayer Construction Co.            | <input type="checkbox"/> Federal Highway Administration      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bemis Construction Co.            | <input type="checkbox"/> Geary County Public Works           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BG Consultants                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Greater Kansas City Chamber         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blosser Municipal Airport         | <input type="checkbox"/> Hall Brothers Construction Co.      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bryant & Bryant Construction      | <input type="checkbox"/> J & R Sand Co., Inc.                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bucher Willis and Ratliff         | <input type="checkbox"/> Johnson County Transit              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City of Bonner Springs            | <input type="checkbox"/> Kansas Highway Patrol               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City of Chanute                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Kansas Asphalt Association          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City of Edgerton                  | <input type="checkbox"/> KS Chamber of Commerce and Industry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City of Prairie Village           | <input type="checkbox"/> King Construct                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City of Roeland Park              | <input type="checkbox"/> Kirkham, Michael & Associates       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City of Wellington                | <input type="checkbox"/> Klaver Construction Company, Inc.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City of Oberlin                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Martin Marietta                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City of Abilene                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Mid America Regional Council        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City of Greensburg                | <input type="checkbox"/> Oakley Municipal Airport            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City of Norton                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Pratt Airport Authority             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City of Kingman                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Russell Municipal Airport           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City of Hutchinson                | <input type="checkbox"/> Schwab-Eaton                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clark County Highway              | <input type="checkbox"/> Shetlar, Griffith, Shetlar          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clarkson Construction Company     | <input type="checkbox"/> Smith & Oakes                       |

*External Customer Survey - Stakeholder Interview Executive  
Summary*

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- Sprint
- Taylor & Assoc
- TranSystems Corporation
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Unified Government-Wyandotte County
- Union Pacific
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- Venture Corporation

## **Overall Ratings of the State's Transportation System**

Each of the stakeholders interviewed was asked to rate the State's overall transportation system as excellent, good, average, or poor. Thirteen (22%) rated the system as "excellent," thirty-four (57%) rated the system as "good," twelve (20%) rated the system as "average," and one (1%) rated the system as "poor." Some of the reasons those interviewed gave as the basis for their rating are provided below.

### ***Reasons stakeholders rated the transportation system as "excellent" included:***

- Quality of highways in Kansas is better than other states ∅ I-35 road base is better than in Nebraska ∅ this means roads last longer. Kansas has packed dirt, chemical treatment, stone base, and concrete. Nebraska uses packed dirt and concrete.
- Compared to other States I have traveled in, Kansas has very good road system.
- Our roads are much better than other states.
- It is a good transportation system. The highways are well maintained.
- Compared to other states (e.g., MO, OH, PA, CO) our roads are in better shape.
- Investment decisions are based on needs, not politics.
- Compared to other states, our primary and secondary highway systems are better.
- KDOT explores more new technology and builds intelligent transportation systems.
- There's a great network of clear connections.
- In comparison to other states, we have excellent interstate highways, bridges, & secondary roads.
- Kansas has better road conditions (smoother surfaces, no potholes) than other states.

### ***Reasons stakeholders rated the transportation system as "good" included:***

- The last 10-year program was a real help ∅ in our area roads/shoulders were widened
- I think we have a very good system.
- They have done some significant improvement over the last 10 years ∅ □99 legislature approved latest highway plan - that was important.

## ***KDOT External Customer Survey - Stakeholder Interview Summary***

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- It's being handled reasonably well; we ship and receive a lot of freight and don't have delays; my personal needs to travel are met by the current system.
- Highways are in reasonably good condition.
- I travel the roads throughout Kansas and other states <sup>o</sup> Kansas roads better than average.
- It's getting better
- The states I travel in are not as good as Kansas
- KDOT has a fair record of safety.
- Roads and bridges as a general rule are good.
- I travel a little bit; our roads are better than most.
- It is improving compared to what it was. Roads are well maintained. Certain roads have shoulders that are too steep, shoulders too narrow, no shoulders, or deteriorated shoulders.
- There is opportunity to improve in SE Kansas.
- There's room for improvement (e.g., US169 from KC to OK border needs to be four lanes). Roads need to be upgraded from two to four lanes and roads with low shoulders need to be fixed. It is better than it was ten years ago and is better than other states now.
- KDOT's Comprehensive Highway Program was very well executed. However, there is still room to improve the highway system.
- Our system, compared to adjacent states, is better. There is a higher percentage of federal dollars given to Kansas counties for their use compared to Nebraska and Missouri.
- In comparison to other states, (smoothness of surface, lack of potholes, presence of shoulders) our roads are better.
- Highways are well maintained.
- The interstate system is in poor condition, especially in Eastern Kansas, but other highways are good.
- In comparison with surrounding states, the transportation system is good.
- Kansas has an excellent highway system, but an inadequate air transportation system.

## ***KDOT External Customer Survey - Stakeholder Interview Summary***

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- Road and bridge conditions are fair to good. Most desired routes have acceptable capacity.
- The maintenance of roads is good. There's no vibration of the car like in MO or AR. Also, there is good signage along the roads.
- The condition of the road pavement is superior to other states.
- Conditions of the highways are good. There are few delays at construction sites.
- Given our current situation, the transportation system in Kansas City is diverse enough.
- There is a good "repair/replacement" program in place for the future.
- Given limited funds, KDOT does a good job maintaining most highways.

### ***Reasons stakeholders rated the transportation system as "average" included:***

- There is a lack of air service or rapid rail to small towns in Kansas. It is very inconvenient to drive to small towns in Central and Western Kansas.
- There needs to be improved warning signals at railroad crossings. Grade separation also needs to be corrected at over/under passes.
- Relative to NE, KS lacks adequate funding for small airports in rural areas.
- We do some things right and some things wrong.
- Inadequate rail service in state (passenger & freight)
- Oklahoma has a better system than KS; roads in Oklahoma that need repair get fixed faster than KS
- Highways & county roads are in good condition but I would like to see more diverse transportation promoted.
- Our system is no better than any other system.
- There are a lot of congestion problems.
- Too many communities do not have access to good transportation.
- KDOT is not responsive to citizens' needs. KDOT is not cooperative.
- Other states make travel easier by using traffic signs and carpool lanes to adjust traffic

## ***KDOT External Customer Survey - Stakeholder Interview Summary***

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flow.

- Areas outside metro areas don't get enough attention. There is a lack of upgrading of concrete paving comparable to "superpaving" with asphalt. Concrete and asphalt pavements should be held to comparable standards.

***Reasons stakeholders rated the transportation system as "poor" included:***

- There is poor maintenance on an expensive interstate system.

## **Satisfaction with the Diversity of Transportation Services**

Each of the stakeholders interviewed was asked to rate their satisfaction with the diversity of transportation services in the State of Kansas. Fourteen (23%) indicated they were “very satisfied,” thirty-four (57%) indicated they were “somewhat satisfied,” six (10%) gave a “neutral rating,” and six (10%) said they were “not satisfied.” Some of the reasons those interviewed gave as the basis for their rating are provided below.

### ***Reasons stakeholders were “very satisfied” with the diversity of transportation services in Kansas included:***

- The correct mix exists between highway, air & bus & public transit isn’t needed outside of Wichita and KC. Truck transport has taken place of rail.
- Highways are in excellent condition. That’s what we have to rely on out here.
- I find it easy to travel when & where I need to go.
- The highways are above average- the airports are very accessible commercially.
- Given the degree of demand for various transportation services, KDOT does a good job
- Given the demands for various transportation services, we have adequate facilities.
- With the exception of air service, Kansas has excellent transportation services.
- All my personal choices for transportation are currently available.
- Personal experience shows there’s a variety of transportation services and facilities available in Kansas.
- Kansas doesn’t need a lot of mass transit. We are a rural state. Wheels for elderly are needed- we should develop the bus systems in Kansas City, Topeka, and Wichita.
- Since I live in the Kansas City metro area, it is easy to get to where I want to go when I want to go.
- Metropolitan areas probably lack enough public transit.

## *KDOT External Customer Survey - Stakeholder Interview Summary*

*Reasons stakeholders were “somewhat satisfied” with the diversity of transportation services in Kansas included:*

- Inadequate public transportation: intra/inter city bus, interstate bus, and rail, inadequate air service.



## ***KDOT External Customer Survey - Stakeholder Interview Summary***

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- Air transportation is very good in urban areas ♂ would like to see more funding for rural areas.
- Given the distribution of population, size of state, population, and the demand for various transportation services, the current transportation services seem adequate.
- Inadequate rail (freight, passenger) and interstate bus services.
- I wish we had better rail and air service. Rail service is horrendous.
- Variety of service is adequate statewide but western KS lacks adequate public transportation
- We lack adequate air service in Salina and what we have is very expensive.
- My needs for transportation are adequately met.
- We need some improvements in public transit.
- I would like to see more highways.
- Diversity programs, such as hiking/biking trails, may start taking funds from other programs.
- My needs for highways are met. I don't need other modes. However, other people with different needs may not have their needs met.
- My individual needs are addressed. Areas of attention include (1) Increased use of rail to reduce truck traffic, (2) Rural areas lack adequate air service, and (3) Ease of access to passenger rail.
- You can get anywhere you want to go.
- Funding for mass transit and rail might be inadequate relative to the need for such services.
- Air and bus service is not available and hard to access in rural areas.
- There is a need for public transit but it is difficult to support in our sparsely populated area.
- Public transportation is lacking over most of Kansas due to low population in small towns.
- Rail should be better utilized to remove more large trucks from our highways.
- There is a lack of meaningful options to car transportation.
- There is a need for a light rail system.
- I personally have no problems ♂ getting around.” However, some people in metro areas lack the public transit they need.



## ***KDOT External Customer Survey - Stakeholder Interview Summary***

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***Reasons stakeholders gave a “neutral” rating for the diversity of transportation services in Kansas included:***

- They need to put more dollars toward general aviation airports.
- KDOT is doing a ‘lousy’ job regulating railroads
- Inadequate communication of information regarding decisions about railroads
- We need some way to protect small railroads to prevent abandonment of rail lines
- There is a lack of convenient air service to most of state.
- Diverse services are not available in Norton, but they are not needed either.
- Personally, it is not a big concern to me

***Reasons stakeholders were “not satisfied” with the diversity of transportation services in Kansas included:***

- I would like to see increased promotion/development of bicycle paths in urban areas, increased marketing of public transit in urban areas, and use of light rail where appropriate.
- Too little resources are invested in none-highway modes of transportation.
- We don’t have the airline service needed in western Kansas.
- Air service is limited. The bus system is nonexistent in Overland Park.
- There is room for improvement in public transit, air service, and rail (freight, passenger).
- From Central and Western Kansas, access to major airports is not good. There is also minimal AMTRACK and bus service in these areas.

### **The State’s Most Important Transportation Problems/Needs**

Each of the stakeholders interviewed was asked to identify the most significant problems or needs for the State’s transportation system today. The most frequently mentioned needs included:

- maintenance and repairs to existing highways and bridges
- more transportation funding

## *KDOT External Customer Survey - Stakeholder Interview Summary*

- relief of traffic congestion in certain areas
- expanded public transportation
- better freight and passenger rail service
- improved air service for rural areas

Some of the specific problems and needs that were mentioned are listed below.

- Create more 4-lane highways to encourage economic development
- Widen more highways especially in NW, SW and SE Kansas to make roads safe
- Maintain existing highway and airport facilities
- Keep maintaining the good road system we have.
- Restructure the interstate system because it is unsafe and too old
- Maintain/expand highway system
- Better maintenance of highways in western KS
- Earmark a constant source of revenue to keep roads in good shape
- Small communities are hurt when limited access highways bypass them; involve the public more in decisions where to route highways - ask residents for their opinions.
- More funding for repair and maintenance of existing highways.
- Begin considerations for additional funding.
- We need a continuation and funding of a comprehensive highway program - continue to fund at the max level the CHP passed by legislature in 1999.
- Increase the highway funding and keep current levels from the last bill that was passed in 1999.
- Bridges are the biggest problem on highway - we need more funding allocated to fixing, maintaining and building new bridges.
- We need better signs on major highways because signs are too small and too close to intersection.

## ***KDOT External Customer Survey - Stakeholder Interview Summary***

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- Need to keep maintaining what is already built.
- We need to build shoulders on narrow roads.
- Fix the faltering railroad system. Find ways to save short-line railroads. KDOT has “proforma” public forums that do not really involve the public. KDOT doesn’t seem to care; they are dictatorial. Manufacturers who depend on railroads will move out. Fewer employment opportunities in small cities where economic growth is already a serious issue.
- Continue to expand current level of maintenance and improvement of highways. Highways are and will continue to be the main mode of transportation because Kansas is so rural.
- Upgrade and maintain facilities to attract air freight and passenger service to rural areas.
- Obtain funding from the legislature for projects and for KDOT employee compensation to keep good employees
- Don’t let the legislature reduce funding for the current 10-year transportation program. KDOT’s suppliers/ partners need to be involved in maintaining a high priority for KDOT funding.
- Revise current decision making process to look for opportunities to improve weight /importance of local public involvement on issues such as bypasses.
- Improve inspection or design specs for roads to assure road quality
- Urban sprawl. We need a comprehensive plan to address growth in traffic volume in metro areas. Better growth management involving state, county, and cities to better manage growth including funding mechanisms for additional infrastructure and land use zoning.
- Rail freight service needs more support to move agricultural products to market and to take vehicle traffic off highways.
- We need more transit to relieve congestion/improve air quality in Kansas City and Wichita.
- Maintain current system in current condition: Protect investment & prevent deterioration.
- Maintain current level of funding. Continue the political & legislative efforts to lobby the legislature every year; collaboration between KDOT, local government, & private organizations needs to continue.

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- More law enforcement presence plus motorist assistance service.
- Maintain road conditions at current level to prevent damage to vehicles:
- Assess the impact of economic and lifestyle changes on the community:
- Continued funding of the few highways we have: It's too easy for the legislature to divert these funds - once highway systems deteriorate, it's very difficult to play catch-up.
- Expand system where needed- add bypasses.
- Enhance commercial air transportation to support economic growth/development.
- Kansas must continue its success maintaining & upgrading highways so roads don't become so deteriorated that they have to be rebuilt: Avoid falling behind like MODOT:
- KDOT & local governments should collaborate to identify and create ways to increase funds for the purpose of creating new highways to bypass metro areas and to link metro areas.
- Tighten restrictions on allowable passing locations. Hwy 75 south of Lyndon is a prime example of an unmarked highway that is extremely hazardous.
- Improve runways & taxiways at smaller airports.
- Improve short-haul rail service to agri-industry.
- Increase interstate maintenance funds.
- KDOT needs to obtain funding to increase compensation packages to be competitive with other organizations who seek to hire away KDOT employees
- Keep rural airports alive to attract business to rural KS
- Lack of rail service to small farm towns; farmers must pay truckers more if crops moved by truck rather than by rail. Encourage & support with funds the creation of short-haul lines owned by private companies.
- Inadequate air passenger service in small towns. General public is inconvenienced by longer time spent traveling to major airports in KC & Wichita; provide needed funding to maintain/upgrade airports; attract and keep air service providers.
- Inconvenient and lack of comprehensive mass transit system.
- Replace outdated and unsafe bridges.

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- Determine if any highways could be obliged to counties. Collect & analyze data. (I.e. accident frequency, traffic count) and identify which roads could be assigned to counties and which continue to be the responsibility of KDOT.
- Not enough four-lane expressways. It inhibits travel between towns which effects us economically.
- Reduce traffic congestion in selected cities (i.e., Lawrence, Johnson County, and Wichita). We need better cooperation /coordination in planning roads/development between KDOT cities and counties.
- Prevent the reduction of KDOT staff size. There are an inadequate number of people, but work volume has increased leading to delays in review process.
- Reduce political influence on project selection process; enhance project selection process and give recognition to safety, population (current, future), and other factors.
- Get the “Kansas Road Projects” up and running on <http://www.marc.org>.

## ***KDOT External Customer Survey - Stakeholder Interview Summary***

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- We have been shorting the number of engineers available at KDOT for years & we need to increase incentives to keep good people.
- Ensure the population has adequate transportation facilities to meet their needs. Prevent bottlenecks and congestion. Given growth patterns (people, traffic) decide what facilities are needed, include public involvement, then build them.
- Review employee compensation in relation to private sector; revise compensation as needed so KDOT is competitive to private sector.
- Protect existing infrastructure to prevent deterioration. Continue to assign system maintenance a high priority.
- & There needs to be a total transportation approach taken. All modes need to be considered, airports, light rail, and waterports.”

### **Geographic Areas and Transportation Corridors that Stakeholders Think Should Receive the Highest Priority Over the Next 20 Years**

Each stakeholder was asked which geographic areas or corridors in the State of Kansas they thought should receive the highest priority over the next 20 years. Specific areas that were mentioned by those interviewed are listed below:

- I-70 KC to Denver.
- Highway from Hutchinson to I-70 at Hays.
- I-35 (Olathe to KC).
- SW Kansas (Wichita to Liberal & US 54).
- Highway 36 needs to be 4-lane due to increased truck traffic.
- US-54 Wichita to Oklahoma line.
- NW corridor from Hays to Hutchinson.
- US-54- It is federal priority #3, but KDOT has it as #10.
- Southeast Kansas lacks good highway connection to rest of Kansas.
- Wichita to Hutchinson to I-70 corridor.



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- I-70 (esp. KC to Topeka).
- Overland Park I-69.
- 4 lanes needed from I-70 in central Kansas to the southwest.
- Southeast Kansas to Wichita because Highway 54 is still unsafe in many areas and lacks safe access from the south.
- Topeka to KC corridor.
- Johnson County area.
- K-10 bypass around Lawrence.
- US-69 from KC south.
- Good connections between cities like Hutchinson-McPherson and Liberal-Garden City.
- Hutchinson to Hays will relieve congestion on I-35 and I-70 west of Salina.
- Highway 77 (Manhattan KS to Lincoln, NE).
- US-83 Oklahoma line to Interstate 70.
- Links between I-70 & I-80 (ex: Topeka, Salina).
- Enhance corridors in heavily congested urban areas.
- Wichita.
- US 75, 54, 50 are important for trade with Oklahoma and Texas.
- US 169, US 69 have high traffic volume/congestion and high accident rates.
- 81 corridor.
- US 69 ♂ 4 lanes to OK border.

## ***KDOT External Customer Survey - Stakeholder Interview Summary***

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- Need a more direct route from Hays to Wichita.
- Great Bend to I-70.
- US 50 Garden City to Dodge City.

### **What Stakeholders Think KDOT is Doing Well and Why**

Each of the stakeholders was asked what they thought KDOT was doing well. Some of the items that were mentioned are provided below:

- They are distributing funds to local entities; there are plenty of opportunity to compete for funds.
- They are very good at design engineering and building highways.
- Highway 81 converted to 4 lanes from Wichita to NE has made travel in this corridor more convenient and safer; it's a smoother road than what we had before.
- KDOT does a god job planning future improvements.
- KDOT is good at providing service and they spend their money wisely.
- They do a great job informing us about political issues.
- They have done a good job with assistance to local government.
- Their information network has improved greatly.
- Good job prioritizing highway needs.
- Excellent job of managing last highway bill.
- They maintain what they have with the funds available.
- Great highway maintenance.
- Secretary Carlson does a good job of trying to involve the public in decisions with public meetings and surveys of residents.
- Mike Armour has done a great job of getting airport projects underway very quickly; within 3 months of funding being available Mike had contractors working on a job nights at airports.

## ***KDOT External Customer Survey - Stakeholder Interview Summary***

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- Maintenance and snow removal are excellent.
- Geometric Improvement Programs (KLINK) has been done well.
- Presence at public events (state fair) is good.
- They have a good project selection and supplier selection process; they use objective criteria that minimize political and subjective factors.
- They have enforced standards on driveway access to state highways.
- They do what they say they will do.
- They do a good job in all they do.
- Quality of roads and bridges is praiseworthy.
- Winter maintenance is very good. KDOT is quick to respond to inclement conditions.
- The comprehensive highway program was well executed and adequately funded.
- Good upper management.
- Great maintenance of highways and right of ways. Weeds are kept mowed, no major stretches of deteriorated pavement.
- They take good care of interstates.
- KS roads are smoother than MO.
- KDOT is fiscally responsible. They get a lot done on their budget.
- Good contractor assurance program helps weed out bad contractors.
- Projects completed on time, under budget, and with minimal inconvenience to public.
- KDOT experiments a lot with new approaches.
- They have a super aviation division.
- KDOT ensures safety of drivers in repair zones.
- Good training programs. I have been to some of the programs & training is very good.

## ***KDOT External Customer Survey - Stakeholder Interview Summary***

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- They keep the public informed.
- KDOT has done an excellent job managing its funds.
- KDOT is firm but fair with their suppliers.
- Winter maintenance is quite good.
- Good identification of work zones.
- KDOT collaborates well with its suppliers and avoids legal problems with suppliers.
- KDOT's priorities agreed with this chamber and its members.
- Local KDOT personnel easy to work with.
- KDOT staff is very cooperative to the Highway Patrol. When patrol asks KDOT for a service, KDOT responds appropriately.
- Good leadership. KDOT makes decisions in a timely manner and makes good decisions.
- KDOT responds quickly to hazardous deficiencies.
- Great local project management/coordination.
- KDOT is willing to try new ideas.

### **What Stakeholders Think KDOT Could Do Better**

Each of the stakeholders was asked what they thought KDOT could do better. Some of the suggestions that were made are provided below:

- Districts differ in interpretation of KDOT standards.
- Too much maintenance on I-70 so it is always reduced to a 2-lane road.
- Have a better solution process to determine how highway funds are distributed.
- KDOT should congratulate themselves - KDOT should take credit where credit is due.
- Hold contractors more accountable.
- Establish a pre-approved process for highway lighting jobs.

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- Avoid and minimize impacts to streams and wetlands.
- Increase support of airports.
- Better focus on areas of the state where roads need improvement outside metro areas. Too often it appears that metro areas get most/all of available funding for maintenance & improvement of highways; central and western KS have roads that have long been inadequate to handle growth in traffic volume and these roads are long overdue for improvement
- Change hiring practices of engineers. Last 10-15 years KDOT can only hire back 3 for every 4 that leave.
- Just keep doing what they're doing.
- A lot of waste replacing several miles of guard fence that was just put up two years ago.

## ***KDOT External Customer Survey - Stakeholder Interview Summary***

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- Better communication with it's public. I've been a city manager for three years and I'm still learning about services KDOT provides; KDOT lacks a service orientation program for its customers.
- More emphasis on regional planning by KDOT.
- Improve relations with consulting engineers. Have more open lines of communication; greater informal, individual communication, not just the formal, scheduled meetings.
- KDOT personnel too often decline to make a decision and defer to a superior; empower employees.
- Citizens get upset when they see their tax dollars wasted digging up a road that recently was constructed or resurfaced.
- Be more receptive/responsive to public ideas. Suggestions are sometimes ignored/not used ♂ even though they would help public.
- Be more flexible, more open to change.
- Design Dept. of KDOT is more concerned about the smallest details of drafts; the cost of conformance to rigid drafting details is greater than benefit to contractors. The blue prints/plans KDOT gives to contractors do not benefit in proportion to time and money spent producing plans that meet every small detailed specification.
- Put more decision making authority into field positions.
- Clean-up debris on I-35; it's a terrible introduction to the state.
- Work with communities to correct hazardous intersections. It took 3-4 years to come up with a possible solution to a hazardous US77 crossing in Junction City, KS.
- Accelerate construction; highway 75 in this area is taking too long to complete improvements.
- Retain ♂ real quality employees." Loss of first and middle level managers risk future leadership of KDOT. Treat employees better when they relocate.
- Be more responsive to local issues and concerns that are reasonable; better management of public hearings ♂ don't be swayed by a handful or critics.
- Keep better administrative records. KDOT took 10 years to request Roeland Park to pay money owed on a project.
- Improve warnings at railroad crossings.

## ***KDOT External Customer Survey - Stakeholder Interview Summary***

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- More public involvement; get ideas vs. public reaction to a proposed project plan.
- Reduce employee turn over & retain experienced people.
- Order system is too slow to get to final payment. It takes years for KDOT to make final payment to contractors for work performed.
- Keep paying engineers/staff well to keep quality workers and keep them from going into private sector.
- Give more decision making power to local offices.
- Listen and respond better to public. Public hearings are a sham & KDOT has "deaf ears," KDOT does not respond well to public comments.
- KDOT district and area interpretations of agreements with cities are sometimes inconsistent.
- Improve directional signage to parks and other tourism areas.
- Become more conservative with passing lanes.
- Communicate better with the public during construction. One or two sentence press releases written in engineer-speak don't cut it. People cooperate much better when they understand what is going on.
- Design manual for drainage is 10 years overdue for revision.
- K-14 issues were handled poorly by KDOT personnel; KDOT did not answer some questions, were rude to others.
- Improve how quickly they make decisions & especially when KDOT gives a city only a short time period to make a submission ("hurry up and wait").
- Learn how to work in an urban environment. KDOT personnel work very well on rural highways. In urban setting on a reconstruction project involving the public, encountering unforeseen conditions, they often stumble.
- Omit fees for downloading information standards from website. It's a nuisance factor & not the amount of fee, just the fact of fee.

### **Funding**

Each of the stakeholders interviewed was asked how satisfied they were with the current level of

## ***KDOT External Customer Survey - Stakeholder Interview Summary***

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funding for transportation in Kansas. Thirteen (22%) indicated they were “very satisfied,” thirty (50%) indicated they were “somewhat satisfied,” five (8%) said they were “not satisfied.” The remaining 12 (20%) did not have an opinion. Some of the reasons those interviewed gave as the basis for their rating are provided below:



## ***KDOT External Customer Survey - Stakeholder Interview Summary***

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### ***Reasons stakeholders were “very satisfied” with the current level of funding for transportation in Kansas included:***

- We just passed a new 10-year highway improvement program and the last 10-year comprehensive highway program benefited this area.
- I have seen a lot of highway and airport improvements in recent years.
- Funding has been fairly good & I am amazed about the amount of funding KDOT gets.
- I think it is very well funded.
- The highway bill that was passed should provide sufficient funds for improvements.
- Our city is fortunate in gaining funding for projects we submit.
- A lot of needed new construction, enhancement, and maintenance has been completed.
- I see orange barrels everywhere.
- \$10 Billion over the next 10 years is a major commitment; it will go a long way to meeting the state’s needs for transportation services.
- Kansas is unique in having multi-year programs compared to year to year as in other states.
- Current level of funding is adequate for needs of state transportation system.

### ***Reasons stakeholders were “somewhat satisfied” with the current level of funding for transportation in Kansas included:***

- Little towns in central and western KS still need a lot of help improving local streets; KDOT should be authorized to provide funding to small towns where the tax base is too small to fund needed road maintenance/improvement.
- It could be higher but is probably at the limit of what taxpayer and economy can handle.
- Current 10-year plan excluded a very large local project that might have created work for people in our area.
- Transportation needs to be funded at a higher level and I fear that funding for the current CHP will be raided in following years.
- The counties and cities could always use more & I understand we can’t always get what we

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want.

- I feel it could be higher.

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- KDOT does a good job of getting adequate funding for transportation facilities that are needed ♂ but I would prefer more funding for trails.
- We have a new program that was passed so we know the work is coming but just haven't seen it yet.
- I think the amount of funding is appropriate.
- We need a reliable source of funding so planning can count on a given amount of funding each year.
- Maintain current level of funding.
- There's room to improve including rail-freight, passenger-rail, and air service to rural areas.
- There are always more needs than funding available.
- It's impossible to fund everything.
- Given limited dollars, I'm satisfied ♂ KDOT is doing what's reasonable.
- There is always a need for more.
- I'm not aware of critical projects that have been delayed due to lack of funding.
- The general public probably does not know the amount of funding required for the transportation system to meet their expectations.

### ***Reasons stakeholders were ♂ not satisfied" with the current level of funding for transportation in Kansas included:***

- There's not enough funding now to provide the transportation system we need.
- More dollars are spent in Eastern part of Kansas and need to appropriate more funding to Western Kansas.
- Maintenance of pavement and bridges had funding cut by Governor a year ago in order to cover budget loss deficit.
- Municipal projects are going unfunded.

## Concerns About KDOT's Project Selection Process

Each of the stakeholders was asked if they were satisfied with KDOT's project selection process. More than half of those interviewed indicated that they did not know enough about the process to have an opinion. Of those who did have an opinion, nearly two-thirds indicated that they were not satisfied with the process. Some of the concerns stakeholders had about the project selection process are listed below:

### ***Reasons stakeholders were *not satisfied* with the current project selection process:***

- The guy with the most numbers (traffic counts, population) wins; the process works against areas with flat numbers.
- I just don't think it's fair.
- The process seems somewhat slanted.
- The project selection process is too political - too much political influence.
- Sometimes, people on a project selection board have a conflict of interest & they evaluate proposed projects from their own city/town relative to other proposals.
- Too many communities left out & US 54 got 8 miles which is not even close to what should have been & should have been at least 75 miles.
- Small cities bid against big cities & When KDOT requires contributions of funds from cities, wealthier cities will out-bid poorer cities and get their projects funded. KDOT should create a process that does not pit poorer cities against wealthier cities.
- It appears that certain design firms are favorites and other firms are shut out of business.
- Politics definitely has the appearance of taking precedence over real need.

### ***Reasons stakeholders were *satisfied* with the current project selection process:***

- I think it is fair and not as political as other states.
- They generally make good selections.

## Concerns About KDOT's Long Range Planning Process

Each of the stakeholders was asked if they had any concerns about KDOT's long range planning process. Of the sixty persons interviewed, only nine expressed any concerns. Most were not familiar

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with the process. Some of the concerns that were mentioned are listed below.

- I think they will need to look at it closely every 10 years and add additional funding when and where needed.
- Plan ahead before roads, bridges and airport runways break down; maintenance of structure in sound condition is less expensive than replacing a structure that is so deteriorated it cannot be saved.
- I'm worried that there will not be a new comprehensive highway program when the current program expires.
- The trucking industry seems to be subsidized heavily while railroads are not; are they looking at this?
- To the public, KDOT does not appear to have a long range planning process; they need to tell people about it.
- KDOT should meet w/city managers, engineers, & others to review the long range planning process more often - ask for our input.

### **Concerns About the Way KDOT Communicates with Stakeholders**

Each of the stakeholders was asked if they had any concerns about the way KDOT communicates with their organization. About one-third of those interviewed had some concerns. Some of the specific comments that were made by stakeholders in response to this question are listed below:

- The federal government gives KDOT information about federal funds available to maintain and upgrade airports, but this information is not sent by federal government to airport owners/operators. KDOT does not share the information and consequently, airport owner/operators don't know what federal funds they can apply for.
- KDOT is very slow getting information out on the Internet but they are improving.
- We need more open line of communication with KDOT at the project level-they need to ask our opinion about a solution when the problem first arises. KDOT needs to be more aware of what each level in KDOT is doing at upper and lower levels and from department to department.
- KDOT district offices should give the rationale for project selections.
- KDOT should do a better job identifying the kinds of information city managers need and create methods of providing that info.
- There are inconsistencies in how well KDOT employees apply KDOT's own standards to design documents.

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- Standards for approving design documents vary in the rigor of application.
- KDOT is inconsistent from area to area; areas differ in interpretation and/or enforcement of KDOT specifications.

## **Perceived Role for Non-Automobile Transportation**

Stakeholders were asked their opinions about the role of non-automobile transportation, such as public transit, bicycle/walking trails, intermodal facilities, airports and other modes will have in the State's transportation system over the next 20 years. Specific comments from those interviewed are listed below:

- Higher priority for public transportation, including; rural air service, inter-city intra state bus, inter-state bus service, rail passenger services (inter/intra state).
- All non-highway modes should be continued but highways should be the highest priority mode.
- Increased importance/priority of airports to provide local economic development, emergency medical transportation.
- All are important and should be considered by how they impact lifestyles, economy, aging, and community needs.
- Increase role for air service, especially passenger service.
- Increase role for rail freight.
- Increase role for air service and public transit.
- Encourage public to use modes of transportation other than private car.
- Increase the role of bus, rail and air service, both passenger and freight.
- We need to utilize abandoned railroad right of way as trails.
- I think there should be some effort put into educating the drivers in & around the state. They need to toughen the laws on drunk driving & substance abuse on the roads.
- Improve the airports we already have.
- Airports should be very high priority. Bicycle/walking trails should be local projects.
- Promote use of public transportation.
- KDOT has responsibility for public transportation, air service, rail service, & intermodal facilities; however, KDOT should focus on highways & provide support when requested by local governments.
- Devise a process to assess demand for other modes & act accordingly.

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- Maintain & expand rail freight services to help cut extra traffic & extend road life.
- Give increased priority to airports and biking trails.
- Each mode warrants funding.
- Increase availability of public transportation.
- Increased public transit & bicycle lane networks.
- Biking/walking trails are not areas for KDOT concern.
- Would like to see a greater emphasis placed on public transit in and around our cities and large towns.
- We need alternatives to driving private vehicles everywhere.
- Public transit should be given a high priority.
- As timeliness of freight becomes more important, air service and intermodal modes will become more important.
- Traffic issues on highways could be reduced if other modes of transportation of people & freight were used.
- Airports are going to become more important.
- Intermodal facilities will become more important as trucks become bigger & heavier
- All modes should be included, however, focus on safety of traveling public - #1 priority!

### **Other Comments**

At the end of each interview, the stakeholders were given an opportunity to make other comments as desired. Some of the closing comments are provided below:

- Thanks for soliciting our views – too often, it seems as if no one listens to those of us who represent the airport point of view.
- Thank you for safe highways.
- KDOT did a remarkable job administering the past CHP & they are off to a good start with the current CHP – keep up the good work!



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- KDOT needs to improve how well it communicates & cooperates with city managers: make it clear who is the final decision maker on a given issue instead of dealing w/ multiple people none of whom have the say on the final decision.

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- KDOT is one of the best DOT's in the country-yet most Kansans do not know that!
- KDOT services would benefit from greater use of external suppliers including contractors & consulting engineers.
- KDOT needs to improve safety in construction zones.
- I appreciate the opportunity for other comments.
- I am very pleased with KDOT.
- KDOT does an excellent job and other states look to KDOT for leadership.