

LCDMPO SLT LAND USE COMMITTEE
COMMITTEE ACTION SUMMARY &
MAJORITY AND MINORITY OPINION STATEMENTS
OCTOBER 4, 2001

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PURPOSE STATEMENT: The charge given by the Lawrence Douglas County Planning Commission to this special land use committee was to review the proposed alignments for the SLT/K10 connecting link with respect to their individual impacts on the future land use/growth of Lawrence and its urban fringe areas – focusing on the no-build, 32nd and 42nd Street alignments.

This charge was the foundation for the committee's goal, which was expanded to include a review of all fourteen potential scenarios [thirteen alignment alternatives and the no-build alternative].

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION: The SLT Land Use Committee, an ad hoc committee of the Lawrence Douglas County Planning Commission, included three planning commissioners appointed by the Chairman on the LDCPC. The three planning commissioners were: Jane Bateman, committee chairperson; David Burress, and John Haase. The Planning Commission also solicited participation on this committee from the City and County Commissions and from USD #497's Board of Education. The other three members of this six member committee were: Bob Johnson, County Commissioner, Marty Kennedy, City Commissioner, and Mary Loveland, School Board member.

COMMITTEE WORK SUMMARY: The Committee met five times between September 11th and October 2nd to arrive at a recommendation for a preferred alignment. The first meeting was an organizational meeting, with the focus given to determining the types of information needed to evaluate the impacts of the different alignments on the land use futures in Lawrence and the urban fringe area. The next three meetings [9/18, 9/20/& 9/24] were spent collecting data from: KDOT; HNTB, their consultants; planning staff; and, the 31st Street corridor consultant [TranSystems] (working for the City and County).

Information received and reviewed by the committee prior to their vote on October 2nd included: a presentation by KDOT on their goals for the SLT/K10 and their priorities in development of this connecting link SLT/ K10 project; a review & explanation of the criteria used by HNTB in the formulation of each alternative alignment; the planned transportation projects and projected funding costs identified in the MPO's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) – a composite document of the transportation elements of the State, City, and County's Capital Improvements

Programs –providing a perspective on anticipated public costs and planned road improvements; land use impacts and the future land use scenario proposed by staff for the Transportation 2020 (T2025) master plan update; 1998 and 2025 traffic projections for arterial and collector roads based upon assumptions given with each SLT/K10 alignment alternative; infrastructure service delivery possibilities and constraints based upon adopted city master plans and the T2025 future land use assumptions; traffic projections based upon the committee identified additional local access points between S. Iowa| Hwy 59 and E. 23rd St|K10;and, a school board perspective on the critical need for east–west connectivity along 31st Street to serve the existing primary and secondary schools located along Louisiana Street. ¹

Commissioner Haase provided the committee with an outline of suggested factors/criteria for reviewing, processing and analyzing the information they would gather based on the Multiple Criteria Evaluation (MCE) method. As part of this process, the committee elected to use a matrix process to refine and condense their thought processes in their individual evaluation and decision-making process. Between the 4th and 5th meetings, committee members had the opportunity to fill out their own matrix to help identify criteria that was significant in each of nine categories. Planning staff also participated in the matrix exercise.

At the October 2nd meeting of the SLT Land Use Committee, the committee received a presentation from representatives of the Baker University Special Wetlands Committee; individually presented to the committee what they found to be significant factors or criteria in making an alignment selection, voted on which alignments to eliminate from further consideration, and voted on a preferred alignment. The vote was 5-2 with members Burress and Haase on the dissenting side. It was agreed that both majority and minority opinions be prepared and presented to the full Lawrence Douglas County Planning Commission for their consideration on October 8th, 2001. What follows in Committee Action Summary are the majority and minority opinions:

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¹ The notebook of information kept by each committee member and the information distributed at each meeting is intended to accompany the Committee’s recommendation and function as a record of the decision-making process

MAJORITY OPINION ON SELECTION OF PROPOSED ALIGNMENT 32B AS THE PREFERRED ALIGNMENT FOR THE CONNECTING LINK OF THE SLT/K10 FREEWAY.

Nine Criteria were selected for consideration in the analysis and decision-making process. These criteria were: 1. KDOT highway objective; 2. Impact on local traffic; 3. Floodplain implications; 4. Environmental implications; 5 Historical & Cultural Implications; 6. Land Use, Growth & Cost; 7. Economic Implications; 8. Local Roadway funding; and 9. Army Corp mandated review.

The majority opinion was that alignment alternative 32B was the most responsive of all possible alignments, including the do-nothing alternative, based on the weighted value put on the following points, which were identified by committee members as significant to the decision-making process:

- Of the five possible 32nd street alignments, 32B provided the best response to State and local transportation needs.
- This alignment provides a clear separation of local traffic flows from regional traffic flows. [*A unanimously agreed upon positive point.*] ;
- It preserves the critical east-west connection of 31st Street in the local transportation network. [*A unanimously agreed upon positive point.*] ;
- The closer proximity of the limited access highway to Lawrence's growth base, on the north side of the river, means that it will not promote growth (urban sprawl) beyond the current Urban Growth Boundaries;
- The alignment, while infringing on floodplain and other environmentally sensitive areas - wetlands & hydric soils - limits the intrusion into these areas to the northern fringe, thus minimizing detrimental impacts on these areas. All alignments cross or traverse both the floodplain and other environmentally sensitive areas;
- In weighing the options, intrusion into environmentally sensitive areas, specifically the designated Baker Wetlands is unfortunate but an acceptable measure based upon the (potential) relative gain to the entire county in contrast to the objections of one segment of the community. As a community, Lawrence/Douglas County has the opportunity to enlarge and enrich the existing designated Baker Wetlands by 60% or greater, through the creation of repatriated wetlands areas from identified hydric soils areas now under the ownership of KDOT along the south side of 31st Street, west of Louisiana Street. Through mitigation efforts proposed by KDOT in association with a north of the river route, not only would the existing designated wetlands be enlarged greatly, but also the community would gain a teaching/research center on the edge of the enlarged wetlands area. KDOT would provide an endowment to Baker University for the maintenance and development of these hydric soils area

into additional wetlands. This is a plus not only to the Douglas County but to the State and perhaps it could be of national significance;

- This significant community advantage was not offered by KDOT if a south of the river alignment was chosen. Such improvements might be possible through negotiation for excess highway right-of-way once the project is complete –no guarantees.
- The opportunity this alignment and the relocation of 31st Street provide to fulfill a commitment by the State to the BIA to make the HINU campus whole by relocation of 31st Street to the south of its existing alignment would address the historical and cultural concerns identified as problems with the previous 31st Street alignment.
- There is the ability to avoid intruding upon potential Indian burials sites, considered to be along the banks of the Wakarusa River, by staying to the northern edge of the floodplain.
- The realization that whatever alignment is chosen, impacts upon the local street network, specifically relieving traffic along 23rd Street, are significantly less than was originally anticipated, making all alignments north of the river more or less equal on this point.
- In selection of this alignment, there is an elimination of the potential for additional costly county road improvements [primarily to Haskell and to N1100], which would be borne by Wakarusa Township and Douglas County. By selection of an alignment north of the river, required local connecting road improvements are included in the project and are, therefore, a local cost assumed by the State.
- Greater control over land use speculation by the location of local interchanges at areas where land use patterns of non-residential development are already established [along Haskell Avenue] or where urban land use patterns are planned but not established [between E1650 (Franklin Road) and E1700].
- Minimizing the negative impacts on Louisiana Street traffic volumes by recommending no interchange be planned or built at this location with the SLT/K10 addresses concerns expressed by the adjoining neighborhood and the school board. *(The State indicated no at grade intersections would be built with this project so only above grade interchange locations were considered by the committee.)*
- The necessity to provide for connections to local roads at two specific locations only – Haskell Avenue and in the vicinity of E1700 Rd – works well with the chosen alignment with minor modifications required.
- The agreement by committee members that an expressway, providing no local access between Hwy 59 and K10, is not in the community's best interests. Interchanges should be provided only at the two points identified by the committee. *[A unanimously agreed upon point.]*

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In conclusion, many of the points cited can and were reviewed and evaluated in respect to the thirteen different alignments proposed by KDOT. The weight given to each of these points was analyzed through the individual matrix process. Six matrices were developed. Six alternatives were deleted from consideration prior to filling out the matrices [no-build, 35 A & B, 38A & B, and 42B]. Seven alignments were evaluated using the matrices: 31A, 32A-B-C-D-E, and 42A. Using the cumulative values for each alignment of all six matrices, Alignment 32B received [uncontested] the highest total point count. Of each individual matrix, 32B received the most points on three matrices, 31A received the highest on one, and 42B received the highest point count on two.

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