

Chapter 11: Intermodal, Freight, and Other Transportation

The economic success of a region depends to a large degree on its connections to the rest of the world and its ability to facilitate the movement of people and goods across and within its boundaries. Increased competition in today's global economy rewards those regions that actively plan for and pursue seamless transportation systems, which depend on efficient connections between all modes of travel. Transportation facilities and service levels are important elements that companies consider when locating to a new area because of the cost savings and increased economic competitiveness these regions provide.

Set between the Topeka and Kansas City metropolitan areas, Lawrence and Douglas County fulfill a role as an important link in the regional, statewide, and national transportation system. Beyond the basic travel needs of Lawrence and Douglas County residents, there are additional travel considerations for moving freight on rail and truck and for personal inter-regional travel via bus, rail, and plane. The sections that follow outline the existing elements of the intermodal system, freight transportation, and passenger movement, as well as the actions required to further develop these.

Intermodal Facilities

Intermodal Facilities refer to facilities where people or goods transfer between modes (e.g., combined commuter rail and bus stations, rail/truck freight transfer facilities, etc.). Intermodalism is the concept that binds the modes together so that people and freight movements can be made in the most efficient manner possible.

Although none currently exist in the local area, intermodal freight facilities in Kansas City and Topeka provide Lawrence with connections to the outside world. At the local level, intermodal planning activities and ongoing improvements that



address freight and other needs will help to maintain the region's economy and competitiveness.

Air, rail, truck, and inter-city bus industries are essential components in the local economy and play a fundamental role in the Lawrence/Douglas County transportation system. *T2030's* individual modal system plans represent a comprehensive effort to build a multimodal transportation system. Additional efforts are needed, however, to link these individual modes in one connected and seamless system that further supports the efficient movements of people and goods and helps the region maintain its economic competitiveness and attractiveness of the region. Since many of these planning elements involve private sector entities, it is imperative to involve them in the planning process.

Freight Movement

Coordination with private freight transportation providers, either through a task force or some other means, can provide the MPO with a wealth of information if done properly. Private companies are often hesitant to provide government entities with proprietary information. However, through their involvement they may see the virtue in sharing data, especially if it results in improvements to the transportation system that increases freight movement potential.

Freight providers tend to be very knowledgeable about bottlenecks in the systems that hinder truck and other vehicle movements. In addition, they may be aware of signal timing, signage, or geometric (e.g., turning radii) deficiencies in the system. With their involvement, the MPO can develop a detailed list of improvement needs and incorporate them into the transportation improvement program (TIP) for implementation. While long-range freight planning is necessary, short-term results are also important in engaging and maintaining interest from freight providers.

Freight movements invariably impact land uses, especially along the corridors utilized by truck and rail traffic. The level of impact is often intensified when sensitive receptors, such as neighborhoods, schools, parks, and so forth, occur along these high traffic routes. Proper long range planning and coordination with



appropriate land use planners can serve to alleviate these impacts. This may include periodic designation and update of truck routes, implementation of additional limited-access roadway facilities, and other techniques.

Gardner Intermodal Facility

The BNSF Railroad is developing an intermodal facility near the City of Gardner in Johnson County, east of the Lawrence-Douglas County planning area. The facility will provide for the transfer of freight between rail and trucks. The facility is set to open in 2010 and will initially result in 1000-2000 trucks in and out per day. Truck traffic is estimated to grow to 10,000 or more vehicles per day as the facility expands. There is also the potential for growth in warehouse facilities and other freight related development in the Gardner area.

The Gardner Intermodal Facility creates the potential for increased truck traffic traveling through the Lawrence-Douglas County area. Routes that may experience an increase in trucks include US-56 through Baldwin City, US-59 from US-56 through Lawrence, and K-10 through Eudora and Lawrence.

What we've heard...

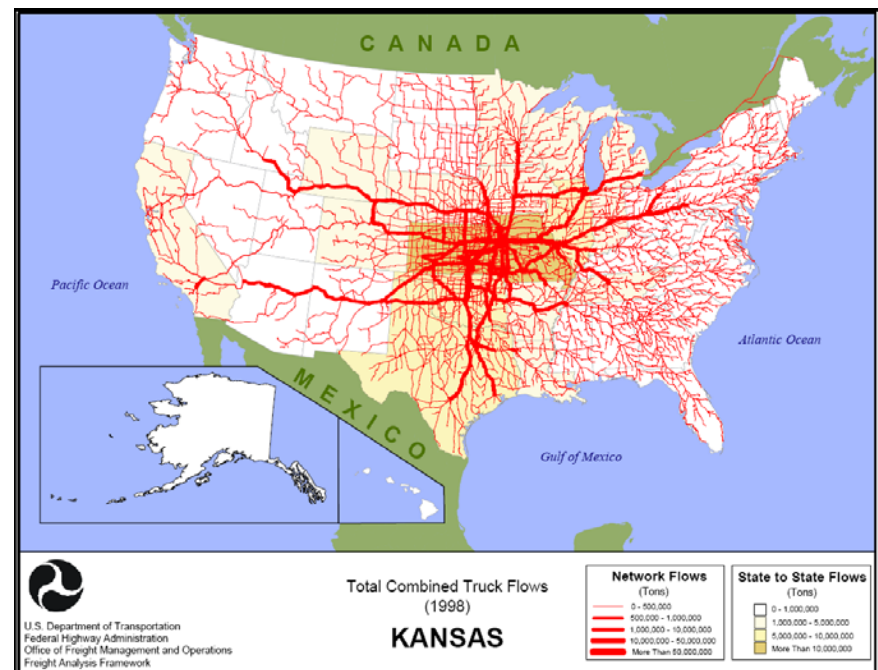
There is a concern for potential increase in truck traffic with the completion of the Gardner Intermodal Facility.

Statewide Freight Plan

The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) is initiating the development of the "Kansas Statewide Freight Plan" to address the impacts of the growth in freight traffic by motor-carriers, rail, air-cargo, and inland waterways.

Kansas is seen as a prime area for the development of freight distribution centers due to its location on the interstate highway and major rail systems and as the northeast part of the state is located within a 24-hour drive of 70% of the continental United States.

Growth in freight traffic will impact the traveling public as more trucks will be using highways, city streets, and county roads



adding to congestion as well as more and longer trains leading to greater delays at rail/roadway crossings.

The Lawrence/Douglas County MPO should take an active role in the development of the Statewide Freight Plan; working closely with KDOT to determine the impacts on the region.

People Movement

Passenger Rail

Limited passenger service exists at the Lawrence Santa Fe depot through Amtrak, but this service is not conducive to commuter travel. The long distance Amtrak Train serving Kansas, the Southwest Chief, operates between Los Angeles and Chicago with daily service in each direction.

Boarding/deboarding takes place at six points in the state: Lawrence, Topeka, Newton, Hutchinson, Dodge City, and Garden City. Service in Lawrence is provided daily at 12:32 a.m. for the westbound train and 5:49 a.m. for the eastbound train. The Amtrak station is located at 413 E. 7th Street, near downtown.

The most recent Kansas Rail Plan notes that 3,347 riders boarded Amtrak's Southwest Chief in Lawrence during Fiscal Year 2005; an increase of 348 riders over the previous year. This represents about 10% of the total ridership in Kansas.

There is some interest in exploring the potential of extending the existing AMTRAK route that serves Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma north into Kansas. This route could serve Wichita, Topeka, Lawrence, and Kansas City.



Intercity Bus Service

Greyhound bus provides service Monday through Saturday with a stop at the STOP 2 SHOP, 2447 W 6th Street. The Greyhound website notes that the Lawrence hours of operation are subject to change.

Regional Commuter Service

During the stakeholder and public participation process, the community expressed a strong desire for transportation alternatives to serve commuters traveling to and from the Topeka and Kansas City metropolitan areas. The Johnson County Connector bus service that provides a route between the KU campus and Johnson County is the first step in providing this service. Intercity bus service along the Kansas Turnpike (I-70) to the east and west is a logical next step. The ultimate option would be a commuter rail system that serves the Topeka, Lawrence, and Kansas City areas.

Intermodal Passenger/Commuter Hub

There is a desire in the community for the development of a passenger/commuter intermodal hub to provide connections between rail, intercity bus, and local bus services.

Aviation

The Lawrence airport will be expanding to meet an ever growing demand. With this expansion, efforts must be made to maintain and improve the surrounding roadway systems and promote airport friendly development in the outlying areas.

The Airport Master Plan outlines the orderly expansion of existing facilities, and the replacement of older facilities to meet needs over the next 20 years. While the plans are phased through the short (0-5 year), intermediate (6-10 year), and long term (11-20 year) planning horizons, the plans are demand based. Facilities will not be constructed until they are needed for capacity or to replace obsolete facilities. The master plan has identified \$16 million in capital needs over the 20-year planning period. To date, about 33% of this work has already been constructed.

Recommended Actions

The following actions outline the efforts needed to further develop the intermodal system for the Lawrence/Douglas County area.

Intermodal Action 1: Coordinate Freight Issues

The MPO should work with freight transportation companies operating in the region to identify specific deficiencies in the transportation system that hinder freight movements and to incorporate design elements for large trucks in roadway planning and design. In addition, coordination with KDOT on freight issues could provide increased information regarding freight flows and improvement needs. It may be desirable to establish a freight task force for this purpose.

Intermodal Action 2: Participate in the Development of the Statewide Freight Plan

The Lawrence/Douglas County MPO should be an active partner with the Kansas Department of Transportation in the development of the Statewide Freight Plan.

Intermodal Action 3: Consider Adjacent Land Use

To the extent possible, heavy truck traffic should be separated from light vehicle traffic and sensitive land uses (e.g., neighborhoods, schools, parks, etc.). Industrial land uses should be isolated from residential and commercial areas. Land use planning activities for areas near the airport should carefully consider noise and other impacts so that only compatible uses occur.

Intermodal Action 4: Consider Needs of Trucks in Roadway Design and Access Management

Due to their large size, trucks and buses have special needs for moving through the transportation system. Roadway and access requirements for these vehicles should be considered in the design of intersections and interchanges. Roads in and around industrial areas should be designed specifically for the movement of large trucks.

Intermodal Action 5: Designate Truck Routes

Truck routes provide freight haulers with a network of the most efficient and least impacting locations for traveling through Lawrence. Designated truck routes can have a positive influence on traffic safety if properly planned, implemented, and enforced. Hazardous materials traffic should be carefully considered in this analysis and routed accordingly. These should be updated periodically, especially as land use changes and roadway improvements occur.

Intermodal Action 6: Pursue Commuter Rail

The Lawrence/Douglas County MPO should establish partnerships with the MPOs in Topeka and Kansas City, KDOT, and other entities and participate in any dialogue concerning commuter rail feasibility and options. The MPO should participate in discussions with the Northern Flyer Alliance regarding the potential for passenger rail service.

Intermodal Action 7: Establish a Multimodal Passenger Hub

The identification of a strategic location where multiple modes can come together is an important step in establishing intermodal passenger connections to other regions. Ideally, this facility will be located in close proximity to downtown Lawrence and the airport. Close coordination with the Lawrence Transit System, Greyhound, Amtrak, other jurisdictions, and freight railroad companies is necessary to make the hub a success.

Intermodal Action: 8: Implement the Recommendations of the Airport Master Plan

Implement the improvements recommended in the Airport Master Plan including:

- Extension of Runway 15/33 by 400 feet,
- Extension of Taxiway A by 400 feet,
- Construction of additional aircraft hangars,
- Expanded vehicle parking,
- Lighting improvements, and
- Sanitary sewer improvements.

An additional consideration of airport improvements is the protection of the airport's approaches and air space from encroachment through height and land use restrictions.



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