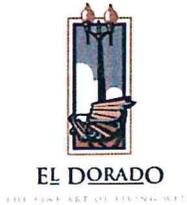


2018 Commission Priorities

Water Sales • Community Image • Industrial and Business Parks • Parks and Recreation • Public Safety

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TO: Joint Legislative Transportation Task Force
FROM: David Dillner, City Manager
SUBJ: City of El Dorado Transportation Priorities
DATE: October 1, 2018

Honorable Members of the Joint Legislative Task Force:

On behalf of the City of El Dorado, Kansas, I am providing this memorandum of testimony to the Joint Legislative Transportation Task Force outlining important transportation priorities of El Dorado. The City of El Dorado appreciates the Task Force's time and effort in hearing and gathering input from stakeholders throughout the State of Kansas concerning the State's transportation network.

The City of El Dorado wishes to demonstrate its support for other transportation projects in the South Central Kansas Region. The City is a member of the Regional Economic Area Partnership (REAP) of South Central Kansas and participated in the development of the Blueprint for Regional Economic Growth (BREG). The City continues to align itself with the Greater Wichita Region, which is especially important as it relates to transportation.

A transportation network may only be considered successful if it enables the free flow of marketable goods and people to wider markets. The quality and interconnection of our transportation system provides the means with which the Wichita region and the State of Kansas may grow. Investment in the State's transportation network will allow Kansas to remain competitive in a globalized world. Failure to invest, however, will detrimentally affect the State's economy as goods and services will be unable to efficiently connect to markets and the people needing them.

Presently, there continue to be unmet transportation needs in the ten-county South Central Kansas Region that discourages trade and commerce along major interstate thoroughfares. The City of El Dorado respectfully submits the following transportation priorities and projects to the Task Force for consideration in developing a transportation program for the State of Kansas.

Local Transportation Funding Assistance Initiatives:

El Dorado's local transportation system consists of two segments: the State Highway System (US 77, US 54, and K-254) and local roads. El Dorado currently maintains about eighty-eight miles of local roads to an acceptable standard for the welfare of our citizens and other travelers. The City strives to maintain the highest standards in our transportation network with the resources available for this purpose. Of the miles maintained by the City of El Dorado, about thirty-three miles (38%) are part of the State Highway System inside our corporate limits. The City cannot express how critically important it is to continue Local Project programming through KDOT. The City's tax base cannot continue to support sustainable, perpetual maintenance of the State Highway System while simultaneously maintaining our own local roads.

Recently, KDOT had approximately \$14 million for programmed **Connecting Links Projects**, also known as KLINK, in local communities for FY 2020 and 2021. Statewide, KDOT received sixty-nine applications requesting a total of \$38.5 million (\$48.2 million in total project costs). KDOT was only able to select twenty-seven projects for funding for these

programmatic years. The \$14 million in available funds for the entire state is not near enough to meet the rehabilitation and improvement needs of the State Highway System within the corporate limits of the many cities required to maintain portions of the State Highway System.

With recent changes to KDOT's local project criteria, the City of El Dorado has experienced three consecutive years without receiving KLINK funds necessary to assist the City with the cost of maintaining that portion of the State Highway System running through our community. El Dorado has counted on those funds for many years, and in most instances matched local and state dollars on a one-to-one ratio.

El Dorado understands that highway funds are being diverted to projects with more extensive scopes such as full-depth replacement. These types of projects would not have fit within the programming scope of prior versions of the KLINK program. The City feels that both full-depth replacement as well as mill and overlay projects are of great importance to the overall quality of the State Highway System. Funding for both of these types of projects should be increased since the longer we put off maintenance, the more it will cost the citizens of Kansas in the long term.

The City of El Dorado also supports the continuation of the **Geometric Improvement Program** that provides funding toward improvements in intersections, widening narrow roadways, adding lanes, storm sewers, and curb and guttering.

Another program of importance to the City of El Dorado, and presumably many other communities in Kansas, is the **Federal Fund Exchange Program**. This voluntary program allows cities to trade all or a portion of its federal fund allocations in a specific federal fiscal year with KDOT in exchange for current state transportation dollars for local projects. The City supports the continuance of this program, and requests the continuation of the prior exchange rate of \$0.90 per \$1.00 of federal funds.

El Dorado also supports the continuation of the **Transportation Alternatives Program**. Some of the most important forms of transportation are sidewalks and bike paths. These basic forms of transportation cater to a wide audience seeking to access local amenities. Walking and biking not only provide enhanced quality of life opportunities in a community, but also provide a means for less fortunate citizens to access critical amenities such as grocery stores, hospitals, and schools. KDOT has been a partner on projects that provide alternatives to vehicular transportation. The City of El Dorado supports continuation of programs that invest in biking and pedestrian accessibility.

The City of El Dorado supports the creation and adoption of a new multi-year, multi-modal transportation plan to replace the expiring T-Works program, the **Kansas Airport Improvement Program (KAIP)**, with the inclusion of funding specific to airport infrastructure. Municipal airports are dependent on funding from KDOT and the FAA to make large-scale improvements and maintenance to runways and taxiways. In 2017, KDOT conducted an Aviation Economic Impact Study that showed the El Dorado/Capt. Jack Thomas Memorial Airport, and the industries located adjacent to the airport employ over twenty people with an annual total payroll over \$841,800. The total annual economic output for these industries and the El Dorado/Capt. Jack Thomas Memorial Airport is upwards of \$6.1 million. Transportation should not only include vehicular transportation; investment in airports is essential for general aviation and provides one more way for people to access Kansas and its many opportunities.

The City of El Dorado also relies on the **KDOT Local Bridge Improvement Program** for funds to local jurisdictions to replace or rehabilitate locally-owned, deficient bridges in order to improve the overall transportation system. This program has provided 90/10 matching funds to the local jurisdiction, with priority given to bridges that are structurally deficient, followed by those that are functionally obsolete. The City of El Dorado does not have any bridges that meet the criteria for eligibility for this program, although we have bridges that will eventually require rehabilitation.

El Dorado supports the continuation of KDOT's Economic Development Programs, including the **Transportation Economic Development Loan Program (TEDL)** that provides loans for transportation projects that have a direct tie to economic growth, and the **Transportation Revolving Fund (TRF)**. These programs provide essential funding for communities to capitalize on economic opportunities that seek to invest in Kansas. Often, economic projects require

considerable public sector investment on infrastructure to serve a particular site. The City of El Dorado was a finalist last year in a significant economic development project that would have invested over \$1 billion if El Dorado was selected. The project would have required substantial capital investment, some of which would have been for roads to access the site. The project would also have likely required investment by the Kansas Turnpike Authority to possibly relocate an interchange. These economic development programs help keep KDOT, and the State of Kansas, competitive when it comes to economic prospects and also provides assistance when a Kansas company needs to expand.

Regional Initiatives:

As previously mentioned, the City of El Dorado is part of the ten-county South Central Kansas Region. As such, the City supports regional efforts to enhance transportation throughout South Central Kansas. The BREG Transportation Map, included with this memorandum, outlines many regional transportation projects that will better connect South Central Kansas to various state, regional, and global markets. El Dorado supports these projects, with the understanding that a transportation network performs only as well as the weakest link in the network. Not only will transportation investments in South Central Kansas strengthen the region, but they will also facilitate economic opportunities throughout the State of Kansas.

The North Junction Interchange Project, connecting I-135, I-235, K-96, and K-254, is an essential transportation project serving the Greater Wichita Region. This project is greatly needed to improve accessibility, reduce congestion, and enhance safety. In addition, improvements to the North Junction Interchange will require “downstream” improvements to further enhance the region’s transportation opportunities. In El Dorado, this means improvements to the K-254/I-35/Boyer Road interchange. K-254 is an important transportation corridor along the east side of the Wichita metropolitan region. The corridor moves people and freight to destinations in Wichita and beyond. The City of El Dorado will require assistance from the State of Kansas to address accessibility and safety issues at this critical interchange in the region.

