



March 19, 2019

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce, thank you for this opportunity to present testimony in support of H.B. 2373, AN ACT concerning transportation; providing for a transportation-planning program; amending K.S.A. 68-2316 and repealing the existing section.

H.B. 2373 would authorize and direct the Secretary of Transportation to initiate a Transportation Planning Program to plan, develop and operate or coordinate the development and operation of the various modes and systems of transportation in the state. The plan would provide for the construction, improvement, reconstruction and maintenance of the state highway system. The plan also would provide for the selection of projects, allowing for flexibility to meet emerging and economic needs.

Of significant note is that the plan additionally would assist cities and counties in meeting their responsibilities for the construction, improvement, reconstruction and maintenance of roads and bridges not on the state highway system.

Kansas has a proud history of providing and maintaining for a strong transportation system. The continuation and improvement of such system is vital to economic development and commerce within the state. A new comprehensive transportation plan is critical to our continued success as a state. Kansas currently has significant transportation infrastructure needs; a fact we're reminded of daily at the dangerous and deadly North Junction in Sedgwick County. This major confluence of where I-135, I-235, K-254, and K-96 meet in North Wichita is a mecca of congestion and deadly accidents. I have attached the KDOT fact sheet for the North Junction from October 2018. As you can see, while almost everyone agrees this project is a major priority, the project remains unfunded and with no completion date in sight.

In addition, a tremendous economic development opportunity in south-central Kansas is at best delayed and at worst lost due to the lack of funding for the northwest bypass, a project that would loop 96 highway around west Wichita in Maize and connect it with west 54 highway in Goddard. The project is at a standstill due to lack of funding.

The Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce stands in strong support of H.B. 2373 for the reasons stated above and many more. We urge the Committee to report H.B. 2373 favorable for passage.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and I will be happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Very truly yours,

Jason P. Watkins  
Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce





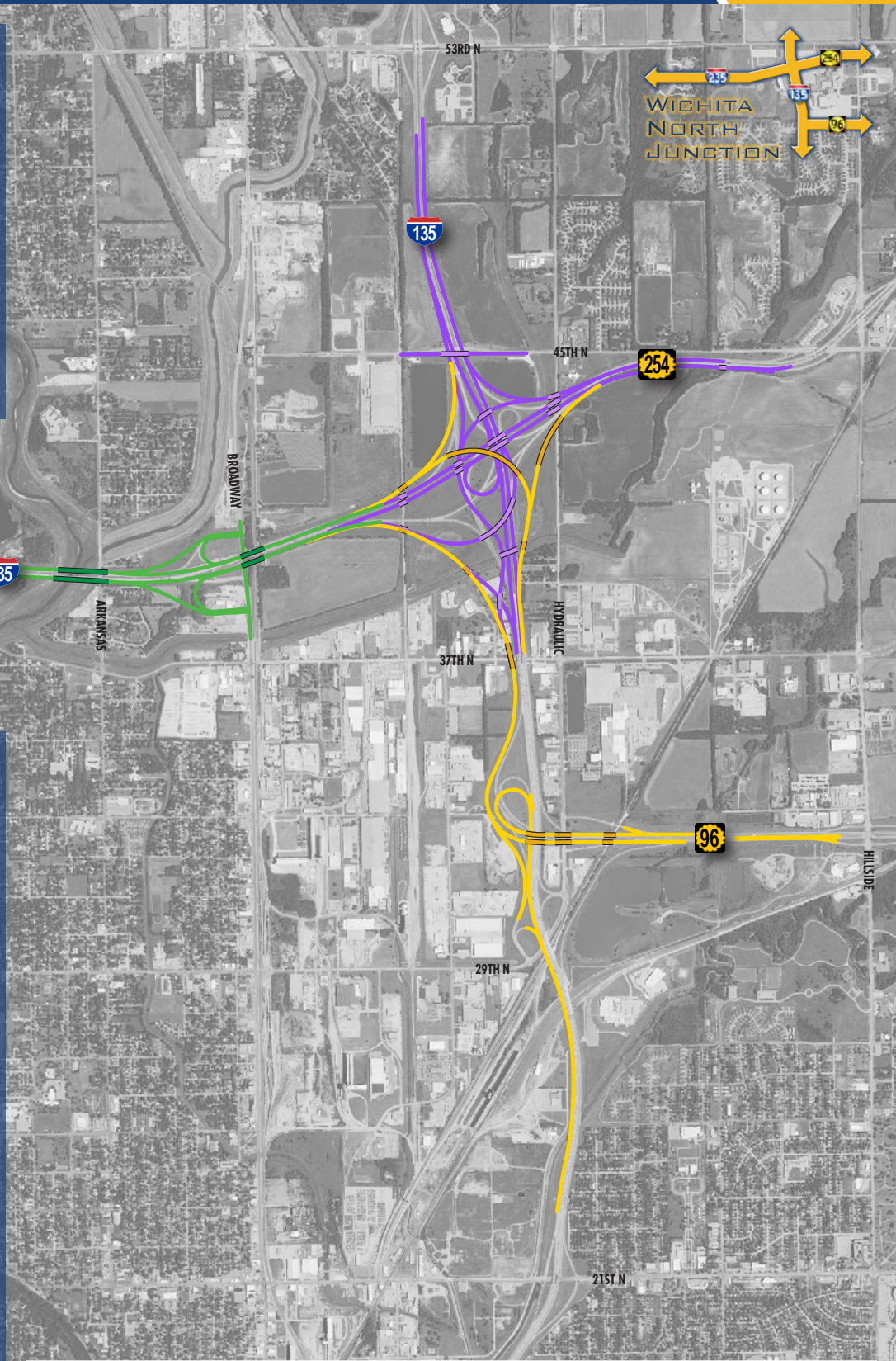
KDOT completed a concept study in 2015 for the Wichita North Junction; where I-135, I-235, K-254, and K-96 meet in North Wichita. View the study: [www.WichitaKDOT.org](http://www.WichitaKDOT.org)

The Study identifies the preferred Wichita North Junction Project and phasing plan that will address the following demonstrated needs:

- Enhance safety
- Improve traffic flow at existing bottlenecks
- Replace aging pavement
- Rehabilitate and/or replace deficient and obsolete bridges
- Enhance roadway geometry
- Efficiently accommodate traffic through the year 2050

KDOT's priority is to maintain the infrastructure while managing the state's transportation investment wisely. As proposed, the Wichita North Junction Project will be implemented in three phases to progressively improve the interchange in a manner that will:

- Enhance safety by upgrading the interchange to meet current design criteria and to address high crash locations within the study area
- Improve traveler mobility by eliminating or reducing existing and future expected areas of congestion
- Improve infrastructure condition and reduce maintenance costs by rehabilitating or replacing aging bridges and roadways that are in poor condition



### General Information about the North Junction

- I-135, I-235, & K-254 were constructed in the 1960s to early 1970s
- K-96 was constructed in the early 1990s
- Each day, over 96,000 vehicles (including over 9,400 trucks) use the Wichita North Junction
- By 2050, over 160,000 vehicles are anticipated to use the Wichita North Junction each day
- The I-235 bridges over the Little Arkansas River are in poor condition

More details provided on the back of this sheet

## Green Project (Phase 1)

The Green Project will replace aging pavement, the structurally deficient bridges over the Little Arkansas River, and the functionally obsolete bridges over Arkansas Avenue and Broadway Avenue. It will add continuous auxiliary lanes on I-235 and improve the ramp geometry at the Broadway Avenue Interchange. The project will improve local mobility by removing the Seneca Street Bridge over I-235 and connecting Meridian Avenue to Seneca Street via a new local roadway. The Green Project sets up I-235 to function with future phases of the Wichita North Junction Project.

The construction estimate is **\$65 Million** in 2018 dollars. Construction is anticipated to begin in the spring of 2019 and last approximately 3 years.

## Gold Project (Phase 2)

The Gold Project will improve safety and reduce congestion. The morning peak hour bottleneck causes major delays and operational failures on northbound I-235 from west of Broadway to southbound I-135 at K-96. This morning bottleneck will be alleviated by providing a two-lane direct connection from northbound I-235 to eastbound K-96 and an extended auxiliary lane along eastbound K-96 to the exit at Hillside.

The evening peak hour bottleneck causes major delays and operational failures on northbound I-135 from K-96 through the loop ramp and west of I-135 on southbound I-235. This evening bottleneck will be alleviated by replacing the existing loop ramp with a two-lane flyover direct connection. The Gold Project will also provide connections from northbound I-135 to eastbound K-254 and southbound I-135 to southbound I-235.

The Gold Project will replace the existing one-lane loop ramp from

westbound K-96 to southbound I-135 with an improved two-lane loop ramp for handling projected traffic far into the future. It will add a continuous auxiliary lane on southbound I-135 from the loop ramp to 21st Street North.

The construction estimate is **\$80 Million** in 2018 dollars. This project is under preliminary design.

## Purple Project (Phase 3)

The Purple Project completes the remaining major infrastructure improvements. It will relocate mainlines of I-135 and K-254/I-235 including removing the left-off / left-on ramps. The project completes interchange connections for all the major roadways (I-235 / I-135 / K-254).

The construction estimate is **\$110 Million** in 2018 dollars. This project is under preliminary design.

### High Priority

Alleviates existing evening bottleneck. Replaces low-speed loop ramp with two-lane direct flyover.

### High Priority

Alleviates existing morning bottleneck. Provides a direct connection from I-235 to K-96 without merging onto I-135.

### High Priority

Alleviates existing bottleneck during peak hours. Provides a two-lane loop ramp with improved geometry and an auxiliary lane on I-135.

