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Significant Gap In Funding For Transportation Plan Threatens To Stifle Economic Recovery In Kansas

Kansas requires a significant increase in funding in order to maintain and improve transportation infrastructure across the state.



According to a report released today, Kansas faces a significant transportation funding gap over the next 10 years, which will not only impede efforts to improve roads and other infrastructure, but will also limit the potential for economic recovery. A comprehensive state transportation program funds all modes of transportation, improvements to roads, bridges, and traffic safety. It also offers significant state revenue increases, job creation and other revenue that is vital to the economic recovery in the state.

The T-LINK task force projected that Kansas faces a \$6.4 billion transportation funding gap over the next ten years, which could hamper the state's economic competitiveness, hasten road and bridge deterioration, result in increased traffic congestion and impede efforts to improve traffic safety in Kansas. The state relies on a combination of state and federal funding for transportation-related projects, but a significant number of projects do not have adequate funding according to the new report released today by [TRIP](#), a DC-based non-profit transportation organization.

The report, entitled "Moving Kansas Forward: The Condition and Funding of Kansas" Roads, Highways & Bridges," outlines projects needed in Kansas that improve safety and infrastructure including the I-35/I-435/K-10 interchange in Kansas City and the I-235/Kellogg/Central interchange complex in Wichita. A comprehensive list of projects that cannot be completed is contained within the report. Also included in the report is information about "mega projects" such as US-69 from Pittsburg to I-44 at the Oklahoma state line, the Northwest Wichita bypass from K-96 to US-54, US-69 in Kansas City from 119th St. to I-435 and I-235 in Wichita at the US-54 and Central Avenue interchanges.

Other findings from the report:

- Nine percent of the state's bridges are functionally obsolete
- Driving on damaged roads cost each Kansas motorist \$318 annually.
- Motor vehicle accidents cost Kansas \$1.9 billion annually in lost productivity, travel delays, medical, workplace, insurance and legal costs.
- Kansas received \$4 billion in federal funding for road, highway and bridge improvements and \$278 million for public transit.
- The federal government provides 32 percent of the revenue used for road, highway and bridge construction and 36 percent of the revenue used for the operation of public transit systems.

The [American Recovery and Reinvestment Act](#) (ARRA) provides approximately \$348 million in stimulus funding for highway and bridge improvements and \$31 million for public transit improvements in Kansas, which is not enough funding to complete all necessary transportation projects in the state. The current federal transportation program expires on September 30, 2009, requiring Congress to authorize a new federal surface transportation program or extend the current program to allow federal funds to continue to be provided to Kansas.

"A fully-funded transportation program has the potential to revitalize the economy like no other program does. Each of the past two 10-year programs have generated \$1.5 billion in wages, over 100,000 jobs, and have produced a 3 to 1 return on investment. These programs were, essentially, the largest economic development mechanisms during that time period. In order to begin to mend the economic damage done during the economic downturn, it is essential that we support programs like this that are a win-win for the states bottom line as well as for the citizens of the state of Kansas," said Patrick Hurley, executive director of Economic Lifelines.

"Kansas has benefited tremendously from the federal surface transportation program," said Will Wilkins, executive director of TRIP. "While the state has put this combination of federal and state funds to good use in the past, in the coming years, many additional needed projects will remain stranded on the drawing board because of insufficient funding. It is critical that the state adequately fund its transportation system and that Congress produces a timely and adequately funded federal surface transportation program this year. Thousands of jobs and the state's economy are riding on it."

Moving Kansas Forward: The Condition and Funding of Kansas' Roads, Highways & Bridges

Executive Summary

Kansas' extensive system of roads, highways and bridges provides the state's residents, visitors and businesses with a high level of mobility. As the backbone that supports the Sunflower State's economy, Kansas' surface transportation system provides for travel to work and school, visits to family and friends, and trips to tourist and recreation attractions.

As Kansas looks to rebound from the current economic downturn, the state will need to modernize its surface transportation system by improving the physical condition of its transportation network and by enhancing the system's ability to provide efficient and reliable mobility for residents, visitors and businesses. Making needed improvements to Kansas's roads, highways, bridges and transit could

provide a significant boost to the state's economy by creating jobs and stimulating long-term economic growth as a result of enhanced mobility.

The federal government is an essential source of funding for the ongoing modernization of Kansas' roads, highways, bridges and transit. But recent declines in federal transportation revenues are making it more difficult for the state to maintain and improve its transportation system.

Approved in February 2009, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provides approximately \$348 million in stimulus funding for highway and bridge improvements and \$31 million for public transit improvements in Kansas. This funding can serve as a down payment on needed road, highway, bridge and transit improvements, but it is not sufficient to allow the state to proceed with numerous projects needed to enhance its surface transportation system. Meeting Kansas' need to repair, expand and maintain its system of roads, highways, bridges and transit will require a significant, long-term boost in transportation funding at the federal, state or local levels.

This year, Congress will deliberate over a long-range federal surface transportation program. The current program, the [Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users](#) (SAFETEA-LU), expires on September 30, 2009. The level of funding and the provisions of a future federal surface transportation program will have a significant impact on future highway and bridge conditions and safety as well as level of transit service in Kansas, which, in turn, will affect the state's ability to improve quality of life and enhance economic development opportunities.

Kansas faces a \$6.4 billion gap over the next 10 years in needed funding to allow the state to maintain the condition of its major roads, highways and bridges and to relieve traffic congestion and enhance economic development opportunities by expanding key sections of the state's roadway system and making improvements to the state's public transit system.

- The Transportation-Leveraging Investments in [Kansas Task Force](#) (T-LINK), which included business, government and industry leaders, concluded in January 2009 that over the next 10 years, Kansas will have an annual shortfall in surface transportation funding of \$640 million, based on the investment level recommended by T-LINK.
- Unless Kansas is able to close its transportation-funding gap, the task force concluded that the condition of the state's roads, highways and bridges will deteriorate, traffic congestion will worsen and economic development opportunities in the state will be lost.
- If Kansas is able to fully fund its transportation program at the level recommended by T-LINK, it would be able to maintain roads, highways and bridges in their current condition and fund approximately half of the road and highway capacity expansions recommended in the report to relieve traffic congestion and support statewide economic opportunities.
- At current investment levels, T-LINK found that traffic congestion in the state will worsen. By 2030, the miles of urban highways that are congested in Kansas will increase by two-and-a-half times, from 105 miles to 265 miles. And miles of rural highways in the state experiencing periodic congestion will more than triple during the same time, increasing from 535 miles to 1,725 miles.

The federal surface transportation program is an essential source of funding for the construction, maintenance and improvement of Kansas' system of roads, highways, bridges and public transit. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will further provide a helpful boost to surface transportation funding in the state.

- The current federal surface transportation program expires on September 30, 2009 and needs to be reauthorized by this date or funding under the program will cease.
- The level of funding and the provisions of a future federal surface transportation program will have a significant impact on future highway, bridge and transit conditions, levels of traffic congestion, and safety in Kansas. The future condition of Kansas' surface transportation system will have a critical effect on the state's ability to improve its residents' quality of life and to enhance economic development opportunities.
- From 1998 to 2008, Kansas received approximately \$4 billion in federal funding for road, highway and bridge improvements, and \$278 million for public transit, a total of approximately \$4.3 billion.
- Federal funds provide 32 percent of revenues used annually by the [Kansas Department of Transportation](#) to pay for road, highway and bridge construction, repairs and maintenance.
- Federal funds provide 36 percent of the revenue used annually to pay for the operation of and capital improvements to the state's public transit systems, which includes the purchase and repair of vehicles and the construction of transit facilities.
- The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provides approximately \$348 million in stimulus funding for highway and bridge improvements and \$31 million for public transit improvements in Kansas.
- Due to inadequate revenue being collected into the Federal Highway Trust Fund, federal funding for highways and transit in Kansas may be cut significantly starting October 1, 2009. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that Kansas' federal highway dollars will be cut by 38 percent in FY 2010 unless Congress takes steps to eliminate the shortfall in the Federal Highway Trust Fund.

Without a significant boost in federal or state transportation funding, Kansas will be unable to move forward with numerous projects needed to improve traffic safety, enhance economic development opportunities, relieve traffic congestion and maintain overall conditions. The rapid increase in the cost of key materials needed for highway and bridge construction also threatens the state's ability to fund needed projects. This report includes a list of needed transportation projects that cannot move forward unless additional transportation funding is secured.

- Unless additional funding can be secured, numerous projects to modernize and expand key segments and interchanges of the state's highway network can not proceed. These projects include the following: US-69 from Pittsburg to I-44 at the Oklahoma state line, the Northwest Wichita bypass from K-96 to US-54, US-69 in Kansas City from 119th St. to I-435 and I-235 in Wichita at the US-54 and Central Avenue interchanges. A full list of needed highway improvements that cannot move forward is included in this report.
- Unless the state can secure additional transportation funding, significant bridge repairs and replacements cannot proceed. These projects include the following: the I-70 Polk- Quincy Viaduct in downtown Topeka, the US-24 bridge over Huntress Creek in Clay County, and K-25 bridge over the North Fork of Sappa Creek in Rawlins County. A full list of needed bridge improvements that cannot move forward is included in this report.

- Needed “mega projects” in Kansas that are unlikely to proceed without a boost in federal, state or local funding include the I-35/I-435/K-10 interchange in Kansas City and the I- 235/Kellogg/Central interchange complex in Wichita.
- Further compounding Kansas’ transportation funding shortfall is the escalation of the cost of roadway improvements due to rapid increases in the price of key materials needed for highway and bridge construction. Over the five-year period from May 2004 to May 2009 the average cost of materials used for highway construction, including asphalt, concrete, steel, lumber and diesel has increased 37 percent.

Although overall pavement conditions in Kansas are relatively good, some deficiencies exist and must be repaired. This report identifies the sections of Kansas roads and highways that are most in need of repair or replacement.

- Of the 11,215 miles of state maintained roads and highways in Kansas, 74 miles (less than one percent) were in poor condition in 2009 and 665 miles (six percent) of state- maintained roads were in mediocre condition.
- While pavement surfaces in the state have generally been maintained in good condition through routine resurfacing, numerous sections of Kansas’ roadways are reaching an age when they will require more costly repairs and reconstruction.
- Driving on roads in need of repair costs Kansas’ motorists \$628 million annually – \$318 per driver –in extra vehicle operating costs, including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.
- Included in this report is a list of segments of deteriorated roadway in the state that are most in need of repair or replacement. The following are the top ten segments on that list.

	Route	County/City	From	To	Length	Work Needed
1	U-81	Sedgwick	6	8	2	Resurface
2	U-24	Osborne	31	34.1	3.1	Address Transverse Cracking
3	U-83	Seward	3	5	2	Resurface
4	L-70	Sherman	0	12	12	Heavy Rehab
5	K-31	Osage	16.2	22.9	6.7	Rehab
6	K-27	Stanton	13.1	24.1	11	Address Transverse Cracking
7	L-435	Wyandotte	0.4	4	3.6	Address Transverse Cracking
8	U-24	Leavenworth	0	9.3	9.3	Address Transverse Cracking
9	L-435	Johnson	13	16.1	3.1	Address Transverse Cracking
10	U-69	Crawford	10	12	2	Address Transverse Cracking

One in five bridges in Kansas are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. Deficient bridges impact commercial and personal mobility as well as safety. This report contains a list of bridges in the state with the lowest sufficiency rating.

- Eleven percent of Kansas’ bridges are rated as structurally deficient, showing significant deterioration to decks and other major components. A bridge is structurally deficient if there is significant deterioration of the bridge deck, supports or other major components. Bridges that are structurally deficient are often restricted to carrying lower weight vehicles or are closed if they are found to be unsafe.
- The classification of a bridge as “structurally deficient” does not mean the structure is unsafe. Kansas’ bridge safety inspection program ensures that each bridge is safe for vehicles weighing less than the posted weight limit. If the inspection determines a bridge to be unsafe for vehicles, the bridge is closed or posted for lower weight vehicles until repaired or replaced.
- Nine percent of Kansas’ bridges are functionally obsolete. Functionally obsolete bridges are those that do not have adequate lane widths, shoulder widths, or vertical clearances to serve current traffic demand. These bridges are not automatically rated as structurally deficient, nor are they inherently unsafe.
- Bridge deficiencies have an impact on mobility and safety. Restrictions on vehicle weight may cause many vehicles – especially emergency vehicles, commercial trucks, school buses and farm equipment – to use alternate routes to avoid these bridges. Narrow bridge lanes, inadequate clearances and poorly aligned bridge approaches reduce traffic safety. Redirected trips lengthen travel time, waste fuel and reduce the efficiency of the local economy.
- The overall rating for bridges is determined based on deck, substructure and superstructure conditions, as well as the amount of traffic carried by the bridge and the length of a detour that would be required if the bridge were closed.
- This report contains a list of Kansas’ most-heavily traveled structurally deficient bridges, with average daily traffic (ADT) of at least 1,000 vehicles. The following chart lists the ten Kansas bridges with the lowest overall ratings.

Rank	Route	Closest City	Route or feature intersected	ADT	Year built
1	56	Rural	110 MILE CREEK DRAINAGE	2,810	1926
2	77	Rural	BIG BLUE RIVER	2,630	1950
3	59	Atchison	MO RIV. MOPACRR,RD	9,020	1938
4	54	Rural	CLEAR CREEK	8,300	1969
5	24	Rural	UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD	8,600	1957
6	40	Lawrence	NB ACCESS TO KTA 59	29,200	1956
7	70	Kansas City	PACIFIC AVENUE	42,000	1959
8	400	Dodge	ARKANSAS RIVER DRAINAGE	14,200	1932
9	40	Lawrence	ACCESS KTA TO SB 59	26,400	1956
10	99	Rural	EAGLE CREEK	1,920	1934

Due to increases in population, economic growth and vehicle travel, Kansas’ system of roads and bridges is under more stress than ever.

- Kansas’ population increased 13 percent since 1990, from 2.5 million in 1990 to 2.8 million residents in 2008. Kansas’ population is expected to increase to 3.1 million residents by 2025.
- Vehicle travel on Kansas’ major highways increased 27 percent between 1990 and 2008, rising from 22.8 billion vehicle miles traveled in 1990 to 29 billion vehicle miles traveled in 2008.
- Vehicle travel in the state is expected to increase by 30 percent by 2025.

- Kansas has also experienced significant economic growth since 1990. From 1990 to 2008, Kansas' gross domestic product (GDP), a measure of the state's economic output, increased by 45 percent, when adjusted for inflation.

An average of 431 people were killed each year in crashes on Kansas' roads from 2004 to 2008. Improving safety features on Kansas' roads and highways would likely result in a decrease in traffic fatalities in the state. Roadway design is an important factor in approximately one-third of fatal and serious traffic accidents.

- A total of 2,156 people were killed in Kansas in traffic accidents from 2004 to 2008, an average of 431 fatalities per year.
- In 2008, Kansas had a traffic fatality rate of 1.33 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, slightly higher than the national average of 1.27.
- Where appropriate, highway improvements such as removing or shielding obstacles, adding or improving medians, adding rumble strips, widening lanes, widening and paving shoulders, upgrading roads from two lanes to four lanes, and installing better road markings and traffic signals can reduce traffic fatalities and accidents while improving traffic flow to help relieve congestion.
- Motor vehicle crashes cost Kansas \$1.9 billion per year, \$701 for each resident, in medical costs, lost productivity, travel delays, workplace costs, insurance costs and legal costs.
- The Federal Highway Administration has found that every \$100 million spent on needed highway safety improvements will result in 145 fewer traffic fatalities over a 10-year period.

Two congressionally appointed commissions and a national organization representing state transportation departments have recommended a broad overhaul of the Federal Surface Transportation Program to improve mobility, safety and the physical condition of the nation's surface transportation system by significantly boosting funding, consolidating the program into fewer categories, speeding up project delivery and requiring greater accountability in project selection.

- The [National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission](#) (NSTPRSC) and the [National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission](#) (NSTIFC) were created by Congress to examine the current condition and future funding needs of the nation's surface transportation program, develop a plan to insure the nation's surface transportation system meets America's future mobility needs and to recommend future funding mechanisms to pay for the preservation and improvement of the nation's roads, highways, bridges and public transit systems.
- The NSTPRSC concluded that it is critical to the future quality of life of Americans that the nation create and sustain the preeminent surface transportation system in the world, one that is well-maintained, safe and reliable.
- The NSTIFC found that the U.S. faces a \$2.3 trillion funding shortfall over the next 25 years in maintaining and making needed improvements to the nation's surface transportation system.⁷
- The NSTIFC found that the use of motor fuel fees is not sustainable as a primary source of funding for the nation's surface transportation system because of the shift to a variety of fuel sources and more fuel efficient vehicles.

Key recommendations of the Commissions and of the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) include:

Program format:

- Allocate funding through outcome-based, performance-driven programs supported by cost/benefit evaluations rather than political earmarking (NSTPRSC).
- Consolidate the more than 100 current transportation funding programs into 10 programs focused on key areas of national interest, including congestion relief, preservation of roads and bridges, improved freight transportation, improved roadway safety, improved rural access, improved environmental stewardship, and the development of environmentally friendly energy sources (NSTPRSC).
- Speed up project development processes to reduce the excessive time required to move projects from initiation to completion by better coordinating the development and review process for transportation projects (NSTPRSC).
- Develop a future federal surface transportation program that would be accountable for results, would make investments based on community needs and would deliver projects on time and on budget (AASHTO).
- Provide a federal surface transportation program that is based on state-driven performance measures and is focused on six objectives of national interest: preservation and renewal, interstate commerce, safety, congestion reduction and connectivity for urban and rural areas, system operations, and environmental protection (AASHTO).

Funding:

- Shift the collection of federal surface transportation revenues from fuel taxes to mileage-based fees, which would charge motorists a fee based on the number of miles driven, with full deployment of a comprehensive system in place by 2020 (NSTIFC).
- Ensure that once implemented, mileage-based fees were indexed to inflation and that they and any other federal transportation charges were set at a rate that would provide enough revenue to provide adequate federal funding to ensure that the nation achieve an integrated national transportation system that is less congested and safer and that promotes increased productivity, stronger national competitiveness, and improved environmental outcomes (NSTIFC).
- Failure to address the immediate funding shortfall and provide adequate long-term funding for surface transportation will lead to unimaginable levels of congestion, reduced safety, costlier goods and services, eroded quality of life and diminished economic competitiveness (NSTIFC).
- In the short term, significantly boost the current federal motor fuel tax and index it to inflation to support increased federal surface transportation investment (NSTIFC).
- Expand the ability to use additional surface transportation funding sources including tolling, state investment banks and public-private partnerships as a supplement to primary sources of funding such as motor fuel fees and eventually a mileage-based fee (NSTIFC).

The efficiency of Kansas' transportation system, particularly its highways, is critical to the health of the state's economy. Businesses depend on an efficient and reliable transportation system to move products and services. A key component in business efficiency and success is the level and ease of access to customers, markets, materials and workers.

- Every year, \$95 billion in goods are shipped annually from sites in Kansas and another \$87 billion in goods are shipped annually to sites in Kansas, mostly by truck.
- Seventy-three percent of the goods shipped annually from sites in Kansas are carried by trucks and another six percent are carried by courier services, which use trucks for part of the deliveries. Similarly, 78 percent of the goods shipped to sites in Kansas are carried by trucks and another 11 percent are carried by courier services.
- Commercial trucking in Kansas is projected to increase 30 percent by 2020.
- Businesses have responded to improved communications and greater competition by moving from a push-style distribution system, which relies on low-cost movement of bulk commodities and large-scale warehousing, to a pull-style distribution system, which relies on smaller, more strategic and time-sensitive movement of goods.
- Increasingly, companies are looking at the quality of a region's transportation system when deciding where to re-locate or expand. Regions with congested or poorly maintained roads may see businesses relocate to areas with a smoother, more efficient transportation system.

All data used in the report is the latest available. Sources of information for this study include the [U.S. Department of Transportation \(USDOT\)](#), [Federal Highway Administration \(FHWA\)](#), the [U.S. Census Bureau](#), the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\)](#), the [Texas Transportation Institute \(TTI\)](#), the [Reason Foundation](#), the [Bureau of Transportation Statistics \(BTS\)](#), the [Kansas Transportation Finance Commission](#) and the [Kansas Department of Transportation](#).

The full report is available at TRIP, www.tripnet.org, http://www.tripnet.org/Kansas_TRIP_Report_Sep2009.pdf