

# Executive Summary

The K-7 Corridor Management Study began in January of 2004 in response to a decision by the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) and the local communities that a more comprehensive study of the corridor was needed. The study needed to address more areas than just the technical elements of K-7, it needed to address local concerns and identify necessary improvements for the total transportation system well into the future. Since that time study team partners which included KDOT, Kansas Turnpike Authority (KTA), Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) and the communities of Miami County, Spring Hill, Johnson County, Olathe, Lenexa, Shawnee, Bonner Springs, Unified Government, Basehor, Leavenworth County, Lansing, and Leavenworth worked together in a collaborative effort to arrive at recommendations for an achievable K-7 Corridor Plan.

Unlike previous studies, this new study focused on (1) the K-7 mainline and the local street network, (2) more community involvement, and (3) concrete recommendations and implementation responsibilities through Memorandums of Understanding (MOU). Specifically, the primary objectives of the study were as follows:

- **Determine Facility Type (freeway vs. urban arterial)**
- **Develop Access Requirements and Street Network System**
- **Determine Right-of-Way Preservation Needs**
- **Develop a Phased Implementation Plan Given the Lack of Current Funding**
- **Execute Memorandums Of Understanding**

Through development of a comprehensive travel demand model and future land use plan crafted through input from each community, traffic forecast information was developed. From this information, a recommendation was made for a freeway facility type along the entire corridor. Given the communities vision for future land use, an arterial facility would ultimately be unable to accommodate the anticipated traffic resulting in significant congestion and unacceptable levels of service for the corridor. While not every community agreed in total with the recommendation of a freeway, every community did agree that it would be prudent to preserve the right-of-way needed for a freeway with interchanges in order to not preclude the ability to build a freeway in the future. As a result, a series

of meetings were held to determine the future locations of interchanges and overpasses as well as to layout the local street system to ensure the total transportation system worked together in the future. Conceptual interchange configurations and local street requirements were then used to establish a conceptual right-of-way preservation footprint for the entire corridor. While additional design will be performed to refine the improvements. The right-of-way footprint is a good first step.

It was also recognized that given the lack of funding to build the freeway today, interim improvements would be needed to accommodate the growing traffic demand. Examples of interim improvements included adding traffic signals and turn lanes at future interchange and overpass locations knowing that these would need to be converted into interchanges and overpasses in the future. Other examples of interim improvements included reducing access to K-7 and preserving important tracts of land for future improvements. Given the uncertainty of the timing of future development, it was impossible to predict the priority and order of implementation of the interim and ultimate improvements over time. The report's purpose was to provide guidelines for interim improvements that could occur and the expectations for what would ultimately need to occur.

Finally, Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) were developed with each community to establish roles and responsibilities for KDOT and the local communities in implementing the K-7 Corridor Management Plan. These MOU's formalized the continued collaborative environment initiated by the study and created a moral framework for implementing the recommendations of the study. The MOU's also established a K-7 Corridor Review Committee made up of representatives from KDOT and the local communities. The committee's purpose will be to meet periodically to review the corridor plan, assess development issues, and evaluate compliance with the K-7 Corridor Management Plan.

In summary, this study was just the first step in what will be a long term effort to ensure effective development along the K-7 Corridor through safe and efficient management of traffic and access. With the K-7 Corridor Management Plan and MOU's in place, it will be up to KDOT and the local communities to collaboratively work together to implement the Plan and carry out the "next steps".