

In October and November the study team conducted a series of community interviews with stakeholders who would have interest in the study of I-435/I-35/K-10. We talked with businesses, commuters, regional interests, transit providers, chamber of commerce in order to gather information and feedback on issues and concerns regarding this study. The purpose of the community interviews was to get a sense of the community sentiment regarding the study.

Generally, most people did not think the interchange functioned too badly today. They identified that it was congested at peak times in the morning and early evening, but the duration of that congestion was short-lived. A few people noted that Kansas has a good highway/road system and we are “spoiled with the roads we have” and compared to other metropolitan areas, we don’t have congestion issues. The top three issues and concerns with this area are:

- Safety—improving access to I-35 ramps and reducing congestion delays.
- Funding—identifying funding to support such a large project.
- Construction delays and management.

The following summarizes the main points and general themes from the discussion during the interview process.

Project Understanding

Perception of the study area: Safety is a primary concern. It is a bit of a bottleneck. It’s congested at peak times, but overall not that bad. Truck traffic is able to manage through this area—mostly traveling at off-peak times. There are some particular areas that need to be addressed, but other options for reducing congestion need to be considered beyond adding more pavement. It is good to be doing the study now, in advance of severe problems.

Biggest problems: I-35 ramps from westbound/eastbound I-435. The weaving movements from K-10 to I-35 (through I-435).

Biggest issue: Funding. It is going to be expensive to fix any of the problems.

Areas to avoid: The undermined areas to the north of K-10/435 area. Park area (Cottonwood Park).

Development plans for the area: Renner and Ridgeview are experiencing a great deal of growth and more is planned for both areas. Growth at K-7 and K-10 will impact traffic on K-10 into the interchange area. The Olathe School District anticipates a 500-600 student enrollment increase in the next 10 years. Johnson County Community College anticipates a 2% increase in the next 3 years with numbers growing even more after that.

What happens if we do nothing: Now is the time to plan for the future. If we do nothing, then congestion will just get worse and the opportunity to find alternatives will take longer and be more expensive.

Would you be supportive of revised/reduced local access to improve safety and mobility through this area: While some were supportive of this, recognizing the issues with the Lackman Road being awkward, business interests were concerned about the economic impact that changing

access could have. Most people discussed where truck traffic might go if they couldn't use the Lackman Road exit and what impact that might have on the other local roads and interchanges.

(Please note: From the T-LINK process we know there will be additional scrutiny on how changes to this area will be tied to economic benefit, specifically how access and transportation are linked to jobs and job creation. It potentially will be as important as system efficiency.)

Community understanding

Expectation about construction schedules: generally people wanted good information ahead of time if they needed to make alternative route plans. Overall, most people thought that KDOT has done a good job with managing traffic on the US69/I435 work and that despite some delay it has worked relatively well.

Project controversy: No big controversy was identified. There could be controversy around routing and potential access changes in the Lackman area. Additionally, funding may become an issue.

Biggest concern about transportation: Safety and moving efficiently through the area. As well as having a system that supports economic vitality of the region.

Project opposition: No one in particular. Kansans against tax increases.

Project success and funding

Regional/Statewide or National Trends:

- Less federal and state funding for transportation.
- Fuel prices.
- Sustainability.
- Considering more transit options.
- Looking at alternatives funding options.
- Changing priorities away from the single occupancy vehicle.
- Change in land use planning—less encouragement of sprawl.

How do we enhance the success: Early information, inclusion and transparency. Providing more mobility options for people in the future beyond just the automobile.

What funding options should be considered: All of them. TDD, a business tax, Johnson County—Olathe, Lenexa, OP tax.

Innovative approaches that should be adopted: Looking at short-term low cost options. Incentives for local businesses to move trucks at off peak hours.

Communications

Overall, people thought the outreach efforts seemed thorough. Most liked the electronic outreach approach. Some would prefer to get some mail about this. Radio spots are also a good way to get information out to commuters.

Most were interested in helping us get the word out about the study.