

Harvey County Stakeholders' Regional Economic Vision for Transportation

Executive Summary

Presented to the:

Highway 50 Coalition

Proposed System Enhancements

We are requesting two enhancements for our region:

1. **A Full Interchange at I-135 and US-50.** The current interchange does not provide a northbound exit on I-135 westbound from US-50 and it does not provide an eastbound exit on US-50 southbound on I-135.
2. **A Four Lane on US-50 from Walton to Hutchinson, Kansas.**

Overriding Economic Development Themes

10 major economic development themes emerged. The themes are not necessarily listed in level of importance but are divided into three major categories:

We Are Developing Into a Regional Center

1. Harvey County is the link between Wichita and the communities to the north.
2. There is an emerging economic development triangle between I-135, K-96 and US-50 highways.
3. We are already a growing and integrated regional community.

We Possess a Combination of Regional Growth Assets That Are Unique to Kansas

4. We have a strong industrial airport presence and network of airports.
5. We have a confluence of rail assets.
6. Amtrak provides the basis for a future transportation paradigm.
7. Healthcare is an emerging cluster and a regional draw for the State.
8. The fundamentals are in place for a major intermodal presence.

Highway and Transportation Safety Issues Are Inhibiting Growth

9. Highway 50 is simply dangerous the way it is.
10. Area growth necessitates a full interchange at I-135 and US-50.

Conclusion

Kansas is becoming increasingly “urbanized” as its citizens are gravitating towards metropolitan areas in the State. However, many Kansans prefer to live on the periphery of metropolitan centers while enjoying urban occupational opportunities and cultural and entertainment amenities. Living in smaller communities on the outskirts enables many to benefit from the best of both rural and urban lifestyles. This is generating tremendous economic development opportunities for the State.

This phenomenon has occurred and continues to occur in Johnson, Wyandotte and Douglas Counties near metropolitan Kansas City which is in Missouri. It is now occurring in Sedgwick, Harvey and their adjacent counties near Wichita, our largest city planted squarely in Kansas.

We already have critical infrastructure elements in place or in process that are driving this trend in central and south central Kansas:

- Major four lane highways
- Airports
- Rail assets
- Excellent and growing school districts
- High quality and growing health care infrastructure
- Local amenities such as golf courses, recreational complexes and convention centers
- Expanding utility networks
- Growing and emerging industrial networks within local communities

The State of Kansas is benefitting from its investments in northeast Kansas and now has an excellent opportunity to capitalize on a “second wave” of regional growth in central and south central Kansas. It is best stated by Steve Kelly, President of Newton Medical Center:

“This is our chance to design it efficiently and meet the needs rather than being reactive and build it without a plan. You don’t want the ram, jam and cram phenomenon. This should be a support for going forward, not an afterthought for what has already been done.”

The citizens of central and south central Kansas thank you for your consideration.