

Kansas Department of Transportation

Bureau of Public Involvement
700 SW Harrison
Topeka, KS 66603-3754



NEWS RELEASE

January 4, 2006

#07-001

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

News Contact: Corky Armstrong, KDOT Road Design Engineer, 785-296-3901

Comment Period Extended for Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation

In response to public interest, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has extended the review and comment period for its Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation of the South Lawrence Trafficway (SLT) to January 19, 2007. The review and comment period opened November 14, 2006. The document examines the potential impacts of two alternate alignments for the eastern leg of the SLT – 32nd Street Alignment B and 42nd Street Alignment A – on historic properties and publicly-owned natural areas. Two properties are addressed – the Haskell Agricultural Farm Property, which includes the Baker Wetlands, and the William Meairs Farmstead south of the Wakarusa River. The Evaluation also discusses measures to mitigate possible impacts on the properties.

Copies of the document are available for review and comment through January 19, 2007 at the following locations during their normal business hours:

- Federal Highway Administration, 6111 SW 29th St., Suite 100, Topeka
- Kansas Department of Transportation, Bureau of Design, 11th Floor, Eisenhower State Office Building, 700 SW Harrison, Topeka
- Haskell Indian Nations University Library, Tommaney Hall, Haskell Indian Nations University, Lawrence
- Anschutz Library, University of Kansas, 1301 Hoch Auditoria Drive, Lawrence
- Lawrence Public Library, Local Document Collection, 707 Vermont, Lawrence

- Douglas County Public Works Department, 1242 Massachusetts, Lawrence
- Lawrence/Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Office, 1st Fl., City Hall, 6 East 6th St., Lawrence
- Baker University Collins Library, 606 8th Street, Baldwin

All comments on the Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation now must be submitted in writing on or before January 19, 2007 to Wendall L. Meyer, Assistant Division Administrator, FHWA, Kansas Division Office, 6111 SW 29th Street, Topeka, KS 66614. Anyone who has questions may contact Mr. Meyer at 785-228-2544. The FHWA will consider all comments received as it develops the Final Section 4(f) Evaluation.

The FHWA hosted an informal open house on December 14, 2006 so the public could participate in the Section 4(f) Evaluation process. About 140 visitors attended and were able to learn about potential impacts on the two properties and possible mitigation measures, talk with the project team, and provide comments in an informal setting.

FHWA Role in the Project

The FHWA became involved with the SLT in November 2005 because of a \$1.5 million federal appropriation to resume development of the project, which is estimated to cost more than \$120 million to build. The funds will not be sufficient to start construction of the project. No other federal or state funding has been identified, so no construction is scheduled.

Another federal agency, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, released its approved Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the SLT in January 2003. In its Record of Decision in December 2003, the Corps selected 32nd Street Alignment B as its preferred alternative. On April 10, 2006, the FHWA announced its intent to adopt the Corp's approved FEIS and also announced it would prepare and coordinate the distribution of a Draft and Final Section 4(f) Evaluation for the project. After considering comments, the FHWA will release its own Record of Decision and the Final Section 4(f) Evaluation in Spring 2007.

The Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation is also available at www.southlawrencetrafficway.org. The South Lawrence Trafficway Final Environmental Impact Statement released by the U.S. Army

Corps of Engineers is available in CD-ROM format by contacting the KDOT Bureau of Design at 785-296-3901 or 1-877-550-5368 (toll-free).

BACKGROUND

Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (as amended) applies specifically to projects involving federal funding for transportation improvements. It is intended to protect publicly-owned land of a publicly-owned park; recreation area; wildlife and/or waterfowl refuge of national, state, or local significance; or land of a historic site of national, state, or local significance from conversion to transportation use unless two provisions are met:

1. There is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of the land from the property; and
2. The action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from such use.

The SLT project consists of building a new section of K-10 Highway beginning at the K-10/ US-59 Highway interchange in southwest Lawrence extending approximately six miles north and east to the existing K-10 near the eastern edge of the city of Lawrence. The No-Action alternative and five roadway corridors with a total of twelve reasonable-build alternative alignments were evaluated and discussed in the Draft and Final EIS. The preferred and selected alternative in the Corp's approved FEIS would build a limited access freeway along the southern edge of the city on an alignment identified as 32nd Street Alignment B.

###

This information can be made available in alternative accessible formats upon request. For information about obtaining an alternative format, contact the Bureau of Transportation Information, 700 SW Harrison St., 2nd Fl West, Topeka, KS 66603-3754 or phone 785-296-3585 (Voice) (TTY).