

KDOT conducts 5-county study

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The Kansas Department of Transportation plans to involve residents, community leaders and transportation representatives in a study of changing transportation needs in five northeast Kansas counties. The counties include Douglas, Johnson, Leavenworth, Miami and Wyandotte.

Study partners include the counties and cities in the area, KDOT, the Kansas Turnpike Authority, Mid-America Regional Council and the Lawrence-Douglas County Metro Planning Commission.

The five-county regional transportation study that began in September has three goals: Assess the multi-modal transportation needs, prioritize the needs and develop strategies to address them.

Phase one of the two-phase study will assess the multi-modal transportation needs. It includes identifying the significant developments in the counties and determining how the developments are affecting the regional transportation system.

The first phase also will examine the state and local road systems, traffic projections and the capacity of the system to carry the projected traffic. Freight, which is expected to more than double in the next 20 years, will be included in the study. It will be coordinated with other studies and projects that have been completed or are under way in the region.

The consulting firm of Parsons Brinkerhoff and a team of subconsultants will conduct Phase 1, which will cost \$1 million. Its expected completion date is the end of 2009.

Phase two will prioritize the needs and develop strategies to address them. An important part of Phase 2 will be for the study partners to broadly agree on the priorities that should be addressed.

This phase could include identifying corridors for future improvement, new corridors and potential right-of-way needs. It also will project the costs of possible improvements. However, no funds have been identified for Phase 2 or to build any recommended improvements.

“Many significant developments are changing travel patterns within this five-county area,

making a study of this size and scope important,” said Thomas Dow, state transportation planner for KDOT, in a release. “Several smaller corridor studies are already under way in the area. The five-county regional planning transportation study will help coordinate the priorities and needs of those projects and help lay the foundation for discussions about future projects.”

Stakeholder and resident input will be a critical component of this study. Opportunities for participation will include a transportation summit, community workshops in each of the five counties and an interactive Web site. For more information, call 785-640-9340 or 877-550-5368.