



March 19, 2019

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce, thank you for this opportunity to present testimony in support of HB 2369, AN ACT concerning transportation; relating to toll projects; authorizing the secretary of transportation to designate or construct toll projects; changing toll project financing requirements.

This legislation would authorize the Secretary of Transportation to designate toll projects on new and existing highways and would allow for certain projects to be funded by a mix of funding and revenue sources, including partially funding projects from toll revenue.

The Chamber stands in strong support of this legislation as we believe traditional and current funding mechanisms for transportation infrastructure projects are insufficient. Without question, the sweeping of sales tax revenue from the state department of transportation has diminished the state's ability to fund transportation needs. We applaud commitments by the governor and legislative leaders to stop these transfers over the next three to five years. Also, vehicles manufactured over the last several years continue to use less and less fuel; some use no fuel at all, decreasing the amount of fuel tax collected by the state.

With this in mind, the state must take an out-of-the-box approach to find acceptable revenue sources to fund the state's significant transportation needs. These needs are statewide. However, the dangerous and deadly North Junction in Sedgwick County best illustrates these needs. This major confluence of where I-135, I-235, K-254, and K-96 meet in North Wichita is a mecca of congestion and deadly accidents. I have attached the KDOT fact sheet for the North Junction from October 2018. As you can see, while almost everyone agrees this project is a major priority, the project remains unfunded and with no completion date.

A tremendous economic development opportunity in south-central Kansas is at best delayed and at worst lost due to the lack of funding for the west bypass, a project that would loop 96 highway around west Wichita and connect it with west 54 highway in Goddard. One has to look no further than the 96 expressway in east Wichita to see the enormous development that has occurred over the last 25 years. The state and local governments began buying right away 15 years ago for this project. However, the project is at a dead standstill due to lack of funding.

For these reasons and more, we urge the Committee to report HB 2369 favorable for passage.

Thank you, and I am happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Very truly yours,

Jason P. Watkins  
Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce





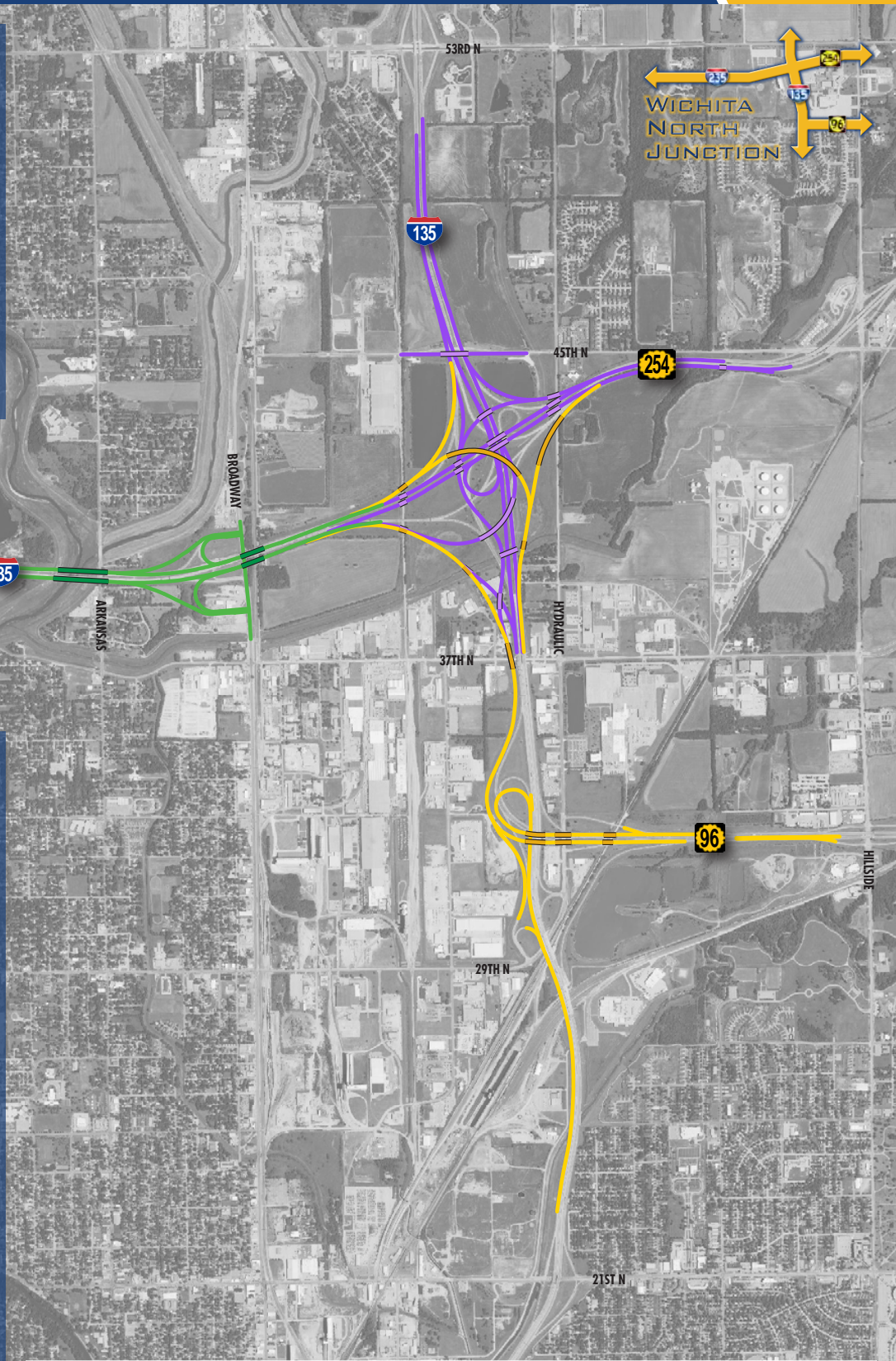
KDOT completed a concept study in 2015 for the Wichita North Junction; where I-135, I-235, K-254, and K-96 meet in North Wichita. View the study: [www.WichitaKDOT.org](http://www.WichitaKDOT.org)

The Study identifies the preferred Wichita North Junction Project and phasing plan that will address the following demonstrated needs:

- Enhance safety
- Improve traffic flow at existing bottlenecks
- Replace aging pavement
- Rehabilitate and/or replace deficient and obsolete bridges
- Enhance roadway geometry
- Efficiently accommodate traffic through the year 2050

KDOT's priority is to maintain the infrastructure while managing the state's transportation investment wisely. As proposed, the Wichita North Junction Project will be implemented in three phases to progressively improve the interchange in a manner that will:

- Enhance safety by upgrading the interchange to meet current design criteria and to address high crash locations within the study area
- Improve traveler mobility by eliminating or reducing existing and future expected areas of congestion
- Improve infrastructure condition and reduce maintenance costs by rehabilitating or replacing aging bridges and roadways that are in poor condition



### General Information about the North Junction

- I-135, I-235, & K-254 were constructed in the 1960s to early 1970s
- K-96 was constructed in the early 1990s
- Each day, over 96,000 vehicles (including over 9,400 trucks) use the Wichita North Junction
- By 2050, over 160,000 vehicles are anticipated to use the Wichita North Junction each day
- The I-235 bridges over the Little Arkansas River are in poor condition

More details provided on the back of this sheet

## Green Project (Phase 1)

The Green Project will replace aging pavement, the structurally deficient bridges over the Little Arkansas River, and the functionally obsolete bridges over Arkansas Avenue and Broadway Avenue. It will add continuous auxiliary lanes on I-235 and improve the ramp geometry at the Broadway Avenue Interchange. The project will improve local mobility by removing the Seneca Street Bridge over I-235 and connecting Meridian Avenue to Seneca Street via a new local roadway. The Green Project sets up I-235 to function with future phases of the Wichita North Junction Project.

The construction estimate is **\$65 Million** in 2018 dollars. Construction is anticipated to begin in the spring of 2019 and last approximately 3 years.

## Gold Project (Phase 2)

The Gold Project will improve safety and reduce congestion. The morning peak hour bottleneck causes major delays and operational failures on northbound I-235 from west of Broadway to southbound I-135 at K-96. This morning bottleneck will be alleviated by providing a two-lane direct connection from northbound I-235 to eastbound K-96 and an extended auxiliary lane along eastbound K-96 to the exit at Hillside.

The evening peak hour bottleneck causes major delays and operational failures on northbound I-135 from K-96 through the loop ramp and west of I-135 on southbound I-235. This evening bottleneck will be alleviated by replacing the existing loop ramp with a two-lane flyover direct connection. The Gold Project will also provide connections from northbound I-135 to eastbound K-254 and southbound I-135 to southbound I-235.

The Gold Project will replace the existing one-lane loop ramp from

westbound K-96 to southbound I-135 with an improved two-lane loop ramp for handling projected traffic far into the future. It will add a continuous auxiliary lane on southbound I-135 from the loop ramp to 21st Street North.

The construction estimate is **\$80 Million** in 2018 dollars. This project is under preliminary design.

## Purple Project (Phase 3)

The Purple Project completes the remaining major infrastructure improvements. It will relocate mainlines of I-135 and K-254/I-235 including removing the left-off / left-on ramps. The project completes interchange connections for all the major roadways (I-235 / I-135 / K-254).

The construction estimate is **\$110 Million** in 2018 dollars. This project is under preliminary design.

### High Priority

Alleviates existing evening bottleneck. Replaces low-speed loop ramp with two-lane direct flyover.

### High Priority

Alleviates existing morning bottleneck. Provides a direct connection from I-235 to K-96 without merging onto I-135.

### High Priority

Alleviates existing bottleneck during peak hours. Provides a two-lane loop ramp with improved geometry and an auxiliary lane on I-135.

