

TOLLING AS A FUNDING OPTION FOR KANSAS

In recent years, funding for Kansas transportation projects has been limited and many important projects have been on hold awaiting funding. There are more transportation needs than available funding. The Kansas Department of Transportation must look at a variety of ways to fund projects and KDOT needs the tools necessary to do so.

The tolling legislation, recently signed by Governor Kelly, provides greater opportunity for collaboration between KTA, KDOT and local government. As competition for federal funds intensifies, having tools like tolling allows Kansas grant applications more opportunities to succeed.

If the State does not have enough funding to pay for an expansion project that the local community wants within their desired time frame, the community could request KDOT partner with them to conduct a feasibility study.

Who and what would be tolled

- No existing lane of any state highway could be tolled.
- Only new lanes could be tolled. A new lane added on an existing four lane highway could be tolled as a 'hot lane' to allow traffic willing to pay the toll to use the lane for a more premium service. There would still be two additional lanes in each direction available without a toll.
- All classes of vehicles using the new capacity improvements would be tolled.
- Toll revenue collected from a specific road would only be used on that road.
- The new legislation would allow toll revenue to cover a portion of the project costs. It no longer is required to cover 100 percent of the design, construction and maintenance of a road.



If tolling were implemented it would be All Electronic Tolling, which requires no stopping, no tickets and no toll booths that you may experience on other toll roads. It would look and feel like a typical freeway. All-Electronic Tolling is part of the future vision for tolling across the country, and if implemented, is a method of collecting tolls using electronic transponders (K-TAGs) or license plate images.

Steps of a toll feasibility study

- *Traffic counts would be evaluated to determine if a more detailed study makes sense.*
- *If so, KDOT would first determine how many vehicles would choose to use a tolled road and how many would divert and choose an alternative route.*
- *The feasibility study would also include a public involvement process to determine public support for implementing a toll.*
- *At the end of the study, the community and KDOT could submit a joint proposal supporting tolling to the KTA Board.*
- *If the KTA Board approves the project, the proposal could be provided to the State Finance Council for consideration.*

TOLLING THE SOUTH LAWRENCE TRAFFICWAY

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KDOT has not made any decisions on how to pay for any improvements to the SLT. The SEIS will evaluate a broad range of funding sources based on their potential feasibility, the amount of money they would generate, and other social, economic and environmental impacts and benefits.

The preliminary cost estimates for the SLT indicate as much as \$250 to \$300 million would be needed to widen and improve the corridor. This is a major project when compared against other transportation improvement needs across the state. As part of the SEIS process, KDOT is exploring different funding options. Tolling is one of those options being explored because:

- The SLT has a significant project cost; tolls could be used for part of the funding in combination with other funding sources.
- Tolling is a revenue option that could allow KDOT, KTA and local transportation stakeholders to deliver SLT improvements more quickly.
- Tolling does not need to cover 100% of the costs to construct and maintain the road.
- Improvement projects are more likely to be completed sooner when communities can identify ways to partner with KDOT for project funding.

A viable funding source(s) must be identified as part of the SEIS process. If tolling is ruled out too early, the SEIS process would need to be repeated, wasting valuable time and effort.

IF the SLT were tolled...

- No lane that exists today would be tolled.
- Tolling could only be collected on new construction to add capacity, such as a new lane or lanes.
- Tolls collected on the SLT could not be used for any other state purposes, but the SLT.

KDOT will not actively pursue tolling on a project if the community does not want it. If a community is interested in exploring tolling, they need to contact KDOT and request that a feasibility study be done. Based on that study, along with the results of a public outreach process, the community and KDOT would discuss with the Kansas Turnpike Authority Board. Ultimately, the State Finance Council would decide if a project could be tolled.

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To learn more about the SEIS and its progress, please visit www.slt-ks.org

To request a presentation or to provide project comments, please email info@slt-ks.org