

KELLOGG AVENUE (U.S. 54) FREEWAY IMPROVEMENTS



Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas

City of Wichita

Completed 1998

Project Type: Urban Freeway Reconstruct

DESCRIPTION

Kellogg Avenue is the major east-west transportation corridor through Wichita which provides a major link between the turnpike, downtown, and Wichita airport. The project improved Kellogg Avenue from a major arterial to a limited access freeway. In the downtown area, the freeway becomes a fly-over structure to carry through traffic, thus relieving congestion on streets in the Central Business District (CBD).

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The design process included many work sessions with city agencies, the public, residential groups, and the Kansas Department of Transportation. In addition to roadway and bridge design plans, The study included extensive agency/public participation and sensitivity to aesthetic, environmental, socioeconomic impacts, and economic revitalization opportunities.

CONTEXT SENSITIVE SOLUTIONS APPROACH

Historically, the urban freeways throughout Wichita created a negative image. A company looking to relocate rejected Wichita in the early 1980s described the view from Wichita's freeways as "depressing." The Mayor and City Council recognized this as a challenge for the City. The Kellogg Freeway became an opportunity for the city to reverse this image and create a project that reflected the rich history and heritage of Wichita. A major component of this project was a public art component that centered around the people and places of Wichita. The project includes the famous sundial *bas-relief*, a timeless representation of the city, its people and significance in the history of Kansas. This piece is one of the nation's best and most frequently cited examples of the incorporation of public art into a highway corridor. The art has a scale and character appropriate to a freeway condition. The art also provides a great example of "low cost – high impact" design that utilizes the economy of form liners while providing a quality art piece. The incorporation of hike/bike trails with connections to adjacent neighborhoods also enhanced the values of adjacent properties.

CHALLENGES Major opposition arose regarding expenditure for architectural treatments, urban design elements, and public art used on the project. The Mayor and City Council, recognizing that the quality of the visual quality of the city’s urban freeway system was directly related to economic investment and future vitality, convinced a doubting public of the purpose and need for public art on freeways. The city has continued to use this project as an example of investment in public infrastructure that has enhanced the city’s quality and attracted commercial and residential investment.

OUTCOME It is the goal for the improved Kellogg Avenue to meet the transportation needs of Wichita well into the 21st century, and provide an aesthetically pleasing amenity that is consistent with Wichita’s urban growth. The project involved development of final landscaping, irrigation design, and plans for special lighting and architectural treatments for bridges and walls.

FUNDING Construction Cost: \$70 Million

LESSONS LEARNED One of the major factors discussed and debated was the expenditure of dollars for urban design, architecture, and art. Many individuals within KDOT and the general public proposed to remove these amenities and move the dollars to roadway projects that were unfunded. The Mayor and City Council strongly resisted this approach as “short-sighted.” The mayor used the example of a Fortune 500 company that had considered relocating to Wichita but did not because the city had two debilitating problems with its public infrastructure. The first significant problem was that it lacked good air transportation. The second significant problem was that it lacked a sense of community as perceived from Wichita’s major freeways.

By using this real life example of how standard highway construction can adversely impact investment in the community and its economic development, the Mayor was able to garner support for delivering a project that used the principles of CSS.

KEY WORDS *Applicable Project Delivery Stages:* Administration, Planning, Design

Applicable Transportation Professionals: Highway Engineers, Structural Engineers, Landscape Architects, Historians, Artists

Applicable Transportation Modes: Highway, Transit, Bicycle, Pedestrian

Transportation Topics: Visual Quality, Environmental Justice, Safety, Mobility, Public Art



WEB LINKS <http://www.kcmo.org/kcmo.nsf/web/home?opendocument>

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