

To:

Charles Soules – Lawrence Public works Director
David Woosley- Traffic Safety Advisory Committee Staff
Tarik Khatib – Lawrence Police Chief
Keith Browning – Douglas County Public Works Director
Ken McGovern - Douglas County Sherriff
KU Office of Public Safety
KU Bicycle Advisory Committee
City Commission
County Commission



CC:

Mike Press- Eudora City Manager
Chris Lowe-Baldwin City Administrator
Bicycle Advisory Committee Members

Dear Local Officials,

Members of the Lawrence-Douglas County Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) send this letter to ask you to work with the BAC and the Lawrence-Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to improve the safety analysis of our region's transport system. Additional safety analysis is needed for our region in the foreseeable future, to meet US Department of Transportation (USDOT) guidelines and fulfill requirements of the new Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21).

Knowing where, when, how and what types of traffic crashes occurred throughout Douglas County, and using that information to improve transportation safety will be expected soon by the USDOT. In the near future, the use of federal aid for transportation improvements will rely upon local and state governments meeting performance safety targets and other parameters; having improved data and analysis will help us determine if we actually can meet those targets and maintain the flow of federal transportation funding to our region. It may also save some lives and limbs.

BAC members understand that regional law enforcement officials collect accident data and use it for police work and reports; we know public works officials can design roads which are potentially safer, and we know that some accidents result from people making poor choices and human errors. We also know that all of the data gathering and analysis has to fit into tight department budgets where enhanced data research may be a low priority. However, that will not change the new way of doing business prescribed by the USDOT in upcoming MAP-21 regulations. We will be asked to develop databases and performance measures that demonstrate improved road safety, and we will be expected to build projects with safety improvements in mind. That will include safety improvements for all roadway users, and not just motorists.

As part of this effort to improve safety measurements, the BAC would appreciate your cooperation in analyzing the safety of the region's transport system for non-motorists, and specifically for bicyclists. The BAC would like to identify common crash locations where improvements using the 5-E's (enforcement, engineering, education, encouragement and evaluation) of roadway safety can lead to projects that increase cyclist safety. We would like to start identifying locations where such projects are needed in

Douglas County. Studying bike safety issues in our region will help the City and County meet federal regulations under MAP-21, but could also help Lawrence maintain its bike-friendly city designation from the League of American Bicyclists.

The performance of our transport system (congestion, safety, road and bridge conditions, air quality impacts, etc.) and measures we use to document that performance must be reviewed and possibly changed to meet MAP-21 standards. In the near future we will have to develop safety reports that show our baseline condition and track improvements in safety performance measures over time. We must demonstrate that projects using federal transportation funds are designed to address and correct safety issues for all travel modes, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and motor vehicles. We will need to show USDOT and KS Department of Transportation (KDOT) partners that we are identifying problem areas for crashes and doing something to make those locations safer. That is simply good regional multimodal transportation planning. That effort is also consistent with the recently approved Complete Streets Policy for Lawrence and the MPO's Transportation 2040-Metropolitan Transportation Plan (T2040).

The BAC would like to work with you and your agency to determine how we can improve our safety data and analysis, to not only meet the coming MAP-21 requirements but also have a better picture of traffic safety in our region. This we can use to create improved planning documents (e.g., safety sections of T2040) and to help improve safety impacts of project designs (e.g., safety and access management changes to major arterials like 23rd and 6th Streets in Lawrence and sections of rural roads with high accident occurrence in unincorporated parts of Douglas County). We would like to meet with you at an upcoming BAC meeting to discuss how we can work together to improve roadway safety for bicyclists and all other roadway users. Please contact me at (785) 418-6221 or wirely.lisa@gmail.com to make arrangements for putting this discussion on an upcoming BAC agenda.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Lisa Hallberg", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Lisa Hallberg
BAC Chairperson