



Written Testimony in Favor of SB 375
Presented to the Senate Ways and Means Committee
Presented by Tim McKee, CEO
Olathe Chamber of Commerce
February 18, 2020

Chairman McGinn and Honorable Committee Members,

The Olathe Chamber of Commerce is the largest chamber in Johnson County and the second largest chamber in the Kansas City area. Comprised of 1,300 members and growing, it was the first chamber in the state to receive 5-Star Accreditation from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce – a designation obtained by less than 1 percent of the nation’s chambers. Its mission is to be the voice of business that advances the economic well-being and quality of life in Olathe.

SB 375 sets out the new statewide transportation program FORWARD and the members of the Olathe Chamber strongly support its passage. Commercial investment and job creation in Kansas have been, and continue to be, directly linked to infrastructure investment in Kansas. A key component to the success of Olathe is a viable transportation system. Previous partnerships with the state on funding transportation projects have contributed to significant development within the city limits of Olathe. For example, the funding of prior transportation projects helped fund three different interchanges within our city limits (119th, 135th & 151st St.) – each of which contributed to nearly \$1 billion in development.

Specific provisions within the FORWARD program supported by our members include that it is a multi-modal plan with a rolling 2-year project window where each of the six Transportation Regions can submit three projects into the pipeline. We believe this will allow for quicker response to emerging needs and afford flexibility throughout the length of the program while encouraging coordination in the regions. In addition, FORWARD is funded by a three-year restoration of the existing dedicated transportation sales tax transfer, bonding authority and an increase in the local match. The Chamber believes not asking for a tax increase to fund FORWARD is prudent and in the best interest of the State. Finally, the Chamber supports granting Secretary Lorenz authority to Alternative Delivery in projects where it will afford a more efficient and cost-effective project outcome.

A continued commitment and investment in the state’s transportation infrastructure is essential to the current and future well-being of Kansas and its citizens. If Olathe, as well as many communities in Kansas, are going to keep growing, there must be a coordinated, multi-modal transportation program that meets the needs of our thriving Kansas communities.

The Olathe Chamber respectfully requests your support of SB 375.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim McKee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tim McKee, CEO, Olathe Chamber of Commerce