



July 7, 2021

PAYMENTS TO CITIES FOR HIGHWAY CONNECTING LINKS

Beginning in 1927, Kansas statutes have required moneys be set aside for the maintenance of connecting links of state highways within cities. This memorandum examines the statutory changes in the amounts dedicated to such maintenance.

In 1927, boards of county commissioners were required by what became KSA 68-416 to apportion and distribute \$250 for each mile or fraction of a mile of streets selected as connecting links in the state highway system from funds they received from vehicle registration. In 1929, the State Highway Commission (Commission) assumed responsibility for the \$250 payments; the Commission was authorized to maintain city connecting links in cities of the third class (*i.e.*, cities with no more than 2,000 inhabitants) in lieu of such payments and pay for the maintenance from the Highway Fund.

In 1949, the amount increased to \$1,000 per mile and, with the consent of the governing body of the city, the statutory amendments allowed the Commission to maintain city connecting links in any city. According to information provided by a representative of the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT), as of June 1, 2021, KDOT maintains 679 centerline miles of city connecting links, and cities maintain 255 centerline miles.

Comparisons with current payments begin with provisions enacted in 1959 that changed the basis of the payments from “miles” to “per lane per mile” and defined “lane.” The table below summarizes amounts since “per lane per mile” was adopted. KDOT reported it maintains 2,362 lane miles as of June 1, 2021, and cities maintain 816 lane miles. Because discussion on city connecting links payments frequently references inflation, the table also includes each statutory amount inflated to April 2021 amounts using the U.S. Department of Labor’s Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) Inflation Calculator and rounded to the nearest dollar (https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm). References also are made to enactment of comprehensive transportation programs.

Year	Statutory Amount, per lane per mile	Amount if inflated by the CPI-U to April 2021
1959	\$500	\$4,573
1967	\$750	\$5,997
1978	\$1,250	\$5,081
1989, as part of the Comprehensive Highway Program	\$2,000	\$4,293
1999, as part of the Comprehensive Transportation Program	\$3,000	\$4,806

2020, as part of the Eisenhower Legacy Transportation Program	\$5,000	\$5,153
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Inflation rates specific to highway construction are more difficult to determine. In 2009, the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Highway Administration released the National Highway Construction Cost Index (NHCCI) “intended to measure the average changes in the prices of highway construction costs over time and to convert current-dollar highway construction expenditures to real dollar expenditures” and using information from winning bids with state transportation agencies. The index uses March 2003 rates as the baseline (at 1.00) and listed the quarter 3 2020 NHCCI at 1.89, meaning \$3,000 in highway construction costs in March 2003 would be approximately the same as \$5,670 in that quarter of 2020.¹

Additional statutory changes affect the scope of work allowed with such payments. Other than requiring the amounts be used for “maintenance,” Kansas statutes did not further circumscribe how the money was to be spent until 1978, when maintenance was first defined in KSA 68-416. That definition was removed in 1979, but provisions regarding maintenance were added with KSA 68-416a. Those provisions limit the Secretary of Transportation’s maintenance obligations on city connecting links in cities in which KDOT maintains the city connecting links by exempting:

- Installation and maintenance of parking meters and pavement markings for parking lanes;
- Maintenance of sidewalks except on structures;
- Installation and maintenance of the street illumination system;
- Maintenance of automated traffic control devices;
- Enclosed lengths of storm drainage systems that parallel the street or highway; and
- Snow removal where parking is permitted.

1 For more information on the NHCCI, see <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/otps/nhcci/>