

February 12, 2025

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF NAMING A FUTURE INTERCHANGE AFTER KRIS NORTON
AS PROPOSED IN HOUSE BILL NO. 2263

PRESENTATION TO THE KANSAS HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
BY JORDAN K. HERBERT, PE

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and esteemed members of the Kansas House Transportation Committee.

My name is Jordan Herbert. I am a life-long Kansan, born and raised in the northeast part of the state. I attended the University of Kansas (KU) where I earned my Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering. I met my future wife at KU. We are now married and have two beautiful little girls (6 and 4) and reside in Johnson County. I am a licensed professional engineer in the state of Kansas. I work for a consulting firm, HNTB Corporation, and have focused my nearly 15-year career serving the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT), Kansas Turnpike Authority (KTA), and municipalities throughout the state on transportation infrastructure projects. I also serve as the design consultant project manager for KDOT's South Lawrence Trafficway (SLT) Project in Lawrence and Douglas County, KS. And this is why I am before you today providing proponent testimony regarding House Bill 2263.

Kris Norton was the project manager or lead KDOT representative for the SLT Project. As the design consultant project manager, I worked closely with Kris in advancing the project. I got to know Kris both professionally and personally and like to think we were not only colleagues but friends. It was a privilege working with Kris in advancing the SLT Project. His professionalism, intimate knowledge of the corridor, passion for advancing the project, interaction with the public, were all truly admirable. The SLT Project has been ongoing for decades but during Kris's leadership on the project, the much-needed improvements have come to fruition and construction is in process.

<<<Advance slide>>> In Kris's 33 years with KDOT, he led or contributed to over 270 projects across the state, touching 86 out of 105 counties. He touched so much of Kansas' infrastructure. Not only will his impact to the physical infrastructure last decades, but Kris mentored a generation of KDOT leaders and designers. He ALWAYS took the time to mentor others in the right way of project development – most notably his attentiveness and collaboration with those most impacted by the projects. Through my time on the SLT Project, Kris represented all of KDOT's best qualities in his technical knowledge and passion for transportation. But what will always stick with me is his commitment to engagement with the public, especially those most impacted by the projects he managed. He would spend hours across kitchen tables, on the

phone, responding to emails, etc. to understand concerns and try to address those concerns to the best of the team's abilities.

<<<Advance slide>>> And the SLT has and will impact the Lawrence community significantly. The Orange shaded areas highlights safety, operations, and improvements along the SLT that leads to better operations on the turnpike, and future growth opportunities in the immediate vicinity of the SLT.

The yellow areas highlight how the SLT improvements relieve congestion and operational issues along 23rd Street, the main E-W route in Lawrence, providing a better quality of life and travel times along local routes.

And the SLT has allowed for the possibility to reconnect with areas of the county south of the SLT to promote connectivity between recreational areas, better access emergency services, etc.

Kris was tied to the Lawrence community beyond projects as he was instrumental in promoting KU's Innovation Campus, helping KDOT become a founding tenant. He also served seniors through Meals on Wheels helping support some of Lawrence's most vulnerable citizens.

<<<Advance slide>>> Lawrence was Kris's home, his community. And while Kris's project experience reaches far across Kansas, the SLT was of particular importance to Kris for most of the people impacted, Kris called neighbors, as he lived within the project study area, played and took his children to the nearby sports complexes, and his children attended the elementary and middle schools where many of the public meetings were held given its proximity to the project.

<<<Advance slide>>> Kris had a tremendous impact on the design of the K-10 and Wakarusa interchange. Kris personally experienced the challenges of the existing intersection and was committed to the urgent need for a safer interchange. Recognizing the original interchange design's potential impact on nearby residents, Kris took the initiative to advocate for a more community-friendly approach. His leadership and dedication were instrumental in ensuring the interchange's final design met the needs and concerns of the public. Throughout the SLT Project's history, there were many KDOT project managers, but Kris's influence on the project improvements is unmatched. He single-handedly addressed a primary public concern regarding the interchange's design.

As you will likely glean from both written and verbal testimony, Kris's impact to transportation in Kansas is admirable. And fittingly, as we approach the national recognition of engineers during Engineers Week (or E Week), the week of February 16th, I urge you to support this legislation dedicating the future K-10 and Wakarusa interchange because of Kris's direct impact to the improvements at the K-10 and Wakarusa interchange and his unmatched commitment and dedication to serving his community and the public's interest on his work throughout the state.

I am honored to stand before you and provide proponent testimony on this bill to honor and memorialize a man and engineer who served his community and the state of Kansas beyond expectation. Thank you for your time today and your consideration for this bill.