Topeka – Lawrence – Kansas City (Corridor H)

Corridor Description
This corridor, identified in the previous report as Corridor H, extends west from Kansas City paralleling the Kansas Turnpike/I-70 through Lawrence to Topeka. The West Wyandotte Transit Center, identified in the MTI-DA report, is on the corridor whose other features include the Capital, University of Kansas, Bland Airport, Spencer Museum of Art, Lawrence Memorial Hospital, Philip Bilard Municipal Airport and Haskell Indian Nation University. The former Sunflower Ammunition Plant, which may be available for redevelopment, is located alongside a rail spur that connects with this route.

While the corridor extends to Topeka, ridership estimates conducted during the Initial Corridor Screening indicated that the initial potentially-feasible segment would be between Lawrence and Kansas City, a distance of about 39.9 miles. It is that segment that is addressed below, and the corridor is hereinafter described as the Lawrence Corridor or Corridor H.

Most of the potential commuter rail route is owned and operated by Burlington Northern Santa Fe. Two BNSF Subdivisions would be used. Between Lawrence and Holliday, Kansas a distance of 26.5 miles, commuter service would operate over the Topeka Subdivision. The line consists of one main track, over which train movements are governed by an Automatic Block Signal (ABS) system, wherein train movement is authorized verbally by the dispatcher and block occupancy is conveyed by wayside signals, supplemented by Automatic Train Stop, a safety feature. Maximum speed is 79 mph for passenger and 70 mph for freight.

Between Holliday and Santa Fe Junction, 11.7 miles of the busy Emporia Subdivision would be used. The segment consists of a mixture of two, three and four main tracks controlled by a CTC signal system. Maximum passenger train speed over the subdivision is 70 mph, however allowable speeds are less in the vicinity of Argentine Yard and Santa Fe Junction. Commuter trains would utilize KCT track for approximately the last mile into Union Station. Running time between Lawrence and Kansas City is estimated at about 62 minutes.

UP’s Kansas Subdivision also serves the corridor, connecting Topeka, Kansas with Kansas City. However, this line lies north of the Kansas River and does not serve the populated portions of the corridor nearly as well as the BNSF line which was selected as the basis of this analysis.

Stations
Station Locations

Stations at Lawrence, Eudora, DeSoto, Edwardsville and Kansas City, Kansas are included at startup, as detailed below.
Lawrence (77,488 2000 pop.) The Amtrak station at the northeast corner of 7th and New York Streets can accommodate passengers using commuter rail trains. Some enhancement of facilities and amenities in the station would be desirable and has been anticipated in the capital cost estimates. Access to the site from Iowa/K-10 is poor, however access via Massachusetts Street is good. City of Lawrence and Douglas County Government Offices are only blocks from this location. The University of Kansas is located approximately one mile distant. Development around this site should follow Prototype #1 - Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Within Established Communities.

Only minor route modifications would be needed in order to put the commuter rail station close to the center of the existing local bus system, which serves local areas southeast, southwest, and west of downtown, on about eight or nine local routes, Monday through Saturday.
Eudora (3,754 2000 pop) A potential station location is at the northern edge of town. On the south side of the railroad tracks, west of Maple Street and north of 6th Street, there is a vacant parcel that would be suitable for a station. Abutting the site is a mixture of residential, commercial and industrial uses. Areas to the north and west along the track are under cultivation. Downtown Eudora is two blocks to the south on Main Street with residential development surrounding downtown to the east, west and south. No transit service is available at this station.

Although land is available for the development of a park and ride facility, development under Prototype #1 - Transit Oriented Development Within Established Communities is tentatively recommended for the area near the Eudora commuter rail station. This recommendation is due both to the proximity of this station to downtown, and to indirect access to major arterial highways.
DeSoto (4,561 2000 pop.)- A potential station site is located on the north side of Beecroft Road at the foot of Ferry Road. Currently the site is developed with several residences, a baseball field and an industrial use. In the northeast section of the town low-density residential development with a mixture of small commercial uses are the primary land uses. The Future Land Use Plan denotes the proposed site for light industrial uses with low to moderate density residential uses to the west and southeast and higher density residential uses to the south of the site. Future commercial development is projected along Lexington Road and to the east along 83rd Street.

Access to and from Highway K-10 to this location is average. But accessibility to K-10, via the interchange at Kill Creek Road, should be enhanced with the designation of the latter for improvement to an arterial.

A second potential station location would be just to the east on the east side of Kill Creek Road, on the north side of West 82nd Street. The area is currently vacant and offers similar access to K-10. However, flood plain constraints may restrict development in this area.

At local discretion, the development of the land around the DeSoto commuter rail station could follow either Prototype #1 - Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Within Established Communities, or Prototype #2 - Fringe Area Park and Ride.