

Introduction

Kentucky has long been world-renowned for its beautiful horse farms and stunning natural scenery. In addition, Kentucky's location in the center of the eastern United States bordered by seven states, several major waterways (Ohio, Big Sandy, Mississippi), and within 500 miles of most major industrial centers in the central and eastern United States has made Kentucky a true "crossroads" state. Kentucky is served by nine interstates and is located along the nation's major highway, rail, inland water and air transportation routes. Many have discovered that Kentucky offers the ideal location for industry, business, tourism, and major transportation hubs.

While Kentucky's geographic location presents wonderful opportunities and connectivity for industry, economic development, and tourism, its diverse geographic land area of over 39,000 square miles also brings a multitude of challenges for a transportation system serving one of the most diverse areas in the eastern United States. The Eastern Region is rugged and mountainous, covered with forests, dissected by streams, plagued by spring flooding and rockslides and in need of safe transportation systems to provide improved connection to the urban centers and interstate highways. The Western Region, bordered by the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, is a rural, low plains area, subject to frequent flooding. While its beautiful lakes provide recreation and tourism opportunities, it needs improved connections to regional centers for increased economic opportunities. The Central Region boasts a combination of small mountains, rich horse farms, and urban areas presenting a mixture of economic and population growth, urban sprawl, air quality and congestion issues coupled with a desire to preserve the natural beauty of the region.



Kentucky's unique geographic challenges are then combined with the quickly changing transportation systems and demands of the 21st century: just-in-time deliveries, changing technologies, security concerns, congestion and safety issues, smart growth, coordinated land uses, limited funding challenges, and escalating costs. To meet the challenges of today and provide a safe and reliable transportation system for the next twenty-five years, state and regional transportation planning must be extremely comprehensive.

Our planning efforts must consider and integrate data-based systems, land-use planning, accurate identification of problems, thorough analyses, creative solutions and community involvement in a way that promotes optimum economic, social, and environmental health for both rural and urban communities. A safe and reliable transportation system is vital to



By Air....

By Land....

By Rail....

By Water....

Kentucky is a
Crossroads



Kentucky's future economic growth, national competitiveness, and overall quality of life. To that end, Kentucky has chosen a new path in developing the 2006 Update of the *Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan*.

The *2006 Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan* is the third, multimodal, long-range plan produced by the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet. The first plan was developed in 1995 and the first update was completed in 1999. The 1995 and 1999 plans included both policy direction and specific projects for each transportation mode in two phases, a short-range element (one to six years) and a long-range element (generally fourteen to fifteen years beyond the short-range element).

Kentucky's statewide transportation planning process has continued to develop and evolve. This continued development includes enhancing the public input and participation process, refining the project purpose and need process, finding ways to further incorporate and address the SAFETEA-LU planning factors, and incorporating the state's economic development goals. As we develop and grow our planning process, we must also face the challenges of limited resources, applying improved technology to our transportation network, and meeting the demands of future transportation users.

For the *2006 Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan* (STP) Kentucky elected to solicit input from its customers (residents and business partners) to ascertain the most prominent needs for the Commonwealth of Kentucky over the next twenty-five years and produce a policy-based Statewide Transportation Plan. This Plan will establish long-range goals specifically developed to address those needs and set the direction for those challenges facing Kentucky's transportation system over the next twenty-five years. The STP goals will be addressed through Kentucky's planning process, utilizing specific analytical tools, and an extensive public involvement process to select projects which best meet the objectives of the *Kentucky Statewide Transportation Plan* and the needs of the Kentucky transportation network. Although the 2006 Plan is primarily a policy plan for Kentucky, this Plan also incorporates by reference the Long-Range Transportation Plans for the nine Metropolitan Planning Organizations which include both projects and policy, and are fiscally constrained.

The Cabinet cannot foresee all challenges which Kentucky's transportation system will encounter over the next twenty-five years. However, this Plan represents the Cabinet's policy, priorities, and direction for addressing, within our funding limitations, the major issues and obstacles the Cabinet may face through this time period. Kentucky's *Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan* will be periodically reevaluated to address the changing needs of Kentucky and its citizens, and will be updated as needed.

