

Strategic Corridor Planning Study for I-69

Henderson to Eddyville, Kentucky

Phase II

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) has undertaken a planning study for a portion of a proposed new interstate route, I-69, which is proposed to travel from Indiana, through Kentucky, and on to Tennessee. The project area for the section of I-69 addressed in this study lies in Henderson, Webster, Hopkins, Caldwell, and Lyon Counties, following the existing Wendell H. Ford Western Kentucky (Ford) and Edward T. Breathitt Pennyryle (Breathitt) Parkways.

The first phase of the strategic corridor planning study for I-69 involved the preliminary evaluation of the two parkways for existing conditions and interstate characteristics. This second phase of study involves a more detailed analysis of some of the parkway characteristics, a master plan to upgrade the existing routes to an I-69 corridor, identification of potential design exceptions along the Parkways, and preparation of a Categorical Exclusion (CE) document.

Project History

The I-69 corridor is identified in the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) as Corridor 18 (I-69) and a High Priority Corridor on the National Highway System. A national study was completed in 1993, which concluded that construction of I-69 from Canada to Mexico was feasible. The Kentucky portion of this project would serve several purposes: 1) provide a connecting link for one of the Sections of Independent Utility (SIU) identified in the national I-69 study, 2) improve traffic flow between Henderson and Eddyville, and 3) enhance economic development in this portion of Western Kentucky.

The current study is meant to determine the next steps in implementing the recommendations to designate the corridor as future I-69. This study includes three primary elements, presented in the following chapters:

- A Master Plan for I-69 corridor improvements;
- A summary of recommended Design Exceptions (DE) to submit to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA); and
- A Categorical Exclusion (CE) document.

Additionally, this document contains supporting information on the existing conditions, technical analyses, and public involvement activities.

Master Plan

Based on the deficiencies identified through field measurement, a review of as-built plan sets, and analyses of capacity and safety along the parkways, a detailed listing of all recommended improvements has been developed and prioritized. This Master Plan document can be found in **Chapter 2**. To facilitate decisions during project programming, a spreadsheet-based tool has been developed which provides cost estimates for projects driven by user-selected parameters. A copy of this spreadsheet and a user guide are included in **Appendix B** of this report.

Design Exceptions

An overview of design exceptions and variances was prepared, identifying all features which do not meet current design criteria for interstates. **Chapter 3** presents tabulated field measurements for each of the deficiencies and preliminary cost estimates. This text also contains a list of justifiable design exceptions to request from FHWA.

Categorical Exclusion

An Environmental Overview of the study corridor was prepared and submitted to the KYTC in March 2005. Drawing from this document and Overview of Existing Conditions report (March 2005), a CE document was prepared to request FHWA acceptance of the proposed I-69 corridor location. This document is included in **Chapter 5**.