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Preliminary Alternatives for I-69 Ohio River Crossing

Preferred alternative expected this fall

Evansville, Ind. (Jan. 31, 2018) – The I-69 Ohio River Crossing (I-69 ORX) Project Team has developed preliminary alternatives for each of the three corridors being considered for a new I-69 bridge and interstate connections.

Based on further engineering analyses, West Alternative 1, West Alternative 2 and Central Alternative 1 provide the best opportunity to be financially feasible and address the purpose and need of the project. Each alternative is expected to require a combination of toll-backed financing, traditional funds and grant opportunities to move to construction. A preferred alternative is expected to be identified by this fall.

“This is the level of detail we know many people in the community have been anxious to hear,” said Janelle Lemon, Indiana Department of Transportation project manager. “After extensive engineering analyses and evaluation, our team has developed a range of preliminary alternatives to complete the I-69 connection between Indiana and Kentucky, improve long-term cross-river mobility, reduce congestion and delay and improve safety.”

Developing Alternatives

The project team considered many factors when developing the preliminary alternatives:

- Identified and evaluated interchanges for access, traffic performance and safety.
- Minimized or avoided impacts to sensitive resources.

- Considered US 41 corridor accessibility and visibility.
- Estimated life-cycle maintenance costs for I-69 and US 41 bridges.
- Adjusted cost estimates to year of expenditure.
- Used traffic models to evaluate cross-river capacity needs.

Traffic forecasts demonstrate six lanes of cross-river capacity are needed in the foreseeable future. Providing more than six lanes would unnecessarily add to the long-term operation and maintenance costs that are associated with major river crossings.

Each of the alternatives provides six lanes for cross-river traffic. As with all interstate highways, a minimum of four of these lanes are required on I-69. Reducing total project costs, which include long-term operations and maintenance expenses, provides the greatest opportunity for the project to be financially feasible.

West Alternative 1

West Alternative 1 includes a 4-lane I-69 bridge and retains one US 41 bridge for local traffic. It includes a reconstructed US 60 interchange and new interchanges at Watson Lane and US 41/Veterans Memorial Parkway (north end).

This alternative keeps traffic on the US 41 corridor while maintaining businesses in the area. The Project Team is working with the Henderson Planning Commission regarding the future of the US 41 strip and how to best serve the area. The alignment has been shifted to avoid Eagle Slough.

The preliminary estimated cost is \$1.47 billion, and includes bridge maintenance costs for both the I-69 bridge and US 41 bridge and inflation costs.

West Alternative 2

West Alternative 2 includes a 6-lane I-69 bridge and removes both US 41 bridges from service. It includes a reconstructed US 60 interchange and new interchanges at Watson Lane, Wolf Hills/Stratman Road, Nugent Drive and US 41/Veterans Memorial Parkway (north end).

This alternative keeps traffic on the US 41 corridor, but businesses along the west side of US 41 would be impacted. The alignment has been shifted to avoid Eagle Slough.

The preliminary estimated cost is \$1.49 billion, and includes bridge maintenance costs for the I-69 bridge and inflation costs.

Central Alternative 1

Central Alternative 1 includes a 4-lane I-69 bridge and retains one US 41 bridge for local traffic. It includes new interchanges at US 41 (south end), US 60 and Veterans Memorial Parkway.

This alternative bypasses the US 41 corridor. With through traffic on I-69, the Project Team is working with the Henderson County Planning Commission regarding the future of the US 41 strip and how to best serve the area. The alignment has been shifted to avoid a wetland mitigation site and historic properties at US 60.

The preliminary estimated cost is \$1.42 billion, and includes bridge maintenance costs for both the I-69 bridge and US 41 bridge and inflation costs.

Upcoming Open Houses

Two open houses are scheduled in early February to discuss the preliminary alternatives. Attendees will have a chance to talk one-on-one with leaders of the I-69 ORX team, hear more about the project and ask questions. A survey will be offered and comment cards will be provided.

Henderson Open House

Tuesday, Feb. 6, 4:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Henderson Community College
Preston Fine Arts Center
2660 S. Green St.

Evansville Open House

Wednesday, Feb. 7, 4:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Bosse High School
1300 Washington Ave.

Each open house will include project presentations at 5 and 6:30 p.m. The rest of the event is an open house format, with several information stations.

“We’re going to have stations to discuss each of the preliminary alternatives,” said Marshall Carrier, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet project manager. “We’re also going to have multiple work stations devoted to potential property impacts. Although the information is preliminary and could possibly change, we’ll be able to sit down with residents and business owners and tell them whether their property could be affected by a particular alternative.”

In addition to hearing more about the preliminary alternatives, fly-over video will offer residents a unique perspective of each alternative, including a better sense of traffic flow and proposed interchanges.

Next Steps

Refinement and evaluation of the preliminary alternatives will continue. Traffic modeling, field work and engineering analyses are all part of the process. A preferred alternative is expected to be identified and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published by this fall. After the DEIS is published, public hearings will be held in both Evansville and Henderson.

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) are expected by fall 2019. The ROD allows the states, with the help of available federal funds, to move forward with design, land purchases and construction.

Residents can visit one of two I-69 ORX offices for more information on the project.

Evansville Project Office

320 Eagle Crest Dr., Ste. C

Open: Monday, Tuesday and Thursday

Henderson Project Office

1970 Barrett Ct., Ste. 100

Open: Wednesday and Friday

The offices are open 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., and by appointment. Project information and updates are also available on the I-69 ORX project website (www.I69ohiorivercrossing.com), Facebook ([I-69 Ohio River Crossing](https://www.facebook.com/I-69%20Ohio%20River%20Crossing)) and Twitter ([@I69ORX](https://twitter.com/I69ORX)).

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Indiana and Kentucky are committed to improving the I-69 corridor by creating an I-69 Ohio River Crossing between Evansville and Henderson. The states have reinitiated a study of the I-69 corridor, required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The study is expected to be complete by fall 2019, and will identify the route, bridge location and funding solutions for a new I-69 Ohio River Crossing. Find more information at www.I69ohiorivercrossing.com.