



Commonwealth of Kentucky Transportation Cabinet

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KYTC proposes balanced plan of transportation priorities to General Assembly

Recommended Highway Plan budgets record amount for asset management to repair bridges, preserve roads

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Jan. 17, 2018) – Putting “safety first,” the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) today presented the 2018 Recommended Highway Plan for the next six years that includes a record \$1 billion in funding to repair bridges and pavements in the FY 2018-FY 2020 biennium.

“This is an unprecedented year for the proposed Highway Plan. The balanced Plan identifies projects that we are currently able to fund and offers a list of additional priority projects that should be addressed if additional revenue is available,” said KYTC Secretary Greg Thomas. “Another milestone is that we are investing more than ever in asset management to fulfill our mission of providing a safe and reliable transportation system for Kentuckians. I am pleased with the collaboration between our team and local transportation leaders to craft a dependable plan that will move Kentucky’s infrastructure forward in the next six years.”

The KYTC “Safety First” approach addresses bridges in poor condition and pavement in need of repair across Kentucky. KYTC has identified more than 1,000 bridges in deteriorating condition that need to be replaced or repaired within six years. More than one-third of the bridges would be addressed in the Recommended Highway Plan during the FY 2018-FY 2020 biennium. A record increase in annual funding of nearly 50 percent would boost investment to repair bridges from \$122 million to \$179 million.

“For every year repairs are delayed, 150 bridges drop into the poor condition category, further adding to the backlog of aging bridges and roads. When critical bridges are out of commission, it affects direct routes for school buses, emergency services, motorists and businesses moving freight,” said Thomas. “Devoting dollars to invest in asset management removes transportation barriers, preserves our infrastructure and supports the economy.”

Improving Kentucky’s roadways is another safety priority in the Plan. Annual funding to repair pavement would increase from \$175 million annually to \$324 million. Without a funding increase, an estimated 6,000 miles will be added to the current \$1 billion backlog of pavement repairs in the next six years.

Shifting the process for prioritizing projects

The Cabinet delivered on a directive by Gov. Matt Bevin to implement a data-driven process to prioritize limited federal and state funding for critical infrastructure projects. The Plan contains projects to address pressing bridge and pavement needs, as well as roadway safety improvements, road widening, reconstruction, new routes and interchanges. The balanced Plan is based on revenue projections of \$6.6 billion in traditional state and federal highway dollars during the next six-year cycle (FY 2018-FY 2024). Of that total, \$2.6 billion is dedicated to SHIFT priority projects, \$2.3 billion for bridge and pavement needs, \$1.1 billion in federally dedicated programs

(such as the Transportation Alternative Program and Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Program) and \$0.6 billion for federal GARVEE debt service payments.

For the last 18 months, KYTC evaluated and scored more than 1,200 projects across the state using the new Strategic Highway Investment Formula for Tomorrow (SHIFT) as a guide. The formula is an objective approach that uses data on safety, congestion, asset management, economic growth and cost-benefit ratios. The SHIFT process significantly reduced the inventory of priority projects from \$14.6 billion to \$8.6 billion based on input from state and local transportation leaders.

The balanced Plan includes \$2.6 billion dollars for SHIFT priority projects that can be funded based on anticipated available state and federal funding for FY 2018-FY 2024. An additional \$490 million per year in new funding is needed to address the \$6 billion of unfunded projects (see appendix A in Recommended Highway Plan).

“While the SHIFT process has helped us identify a list of priority projects, the reality is that not all of them can move forward based on available funding,” said KYTC Deputy Secretary Paul Looney. “We need more revenue to complete more of these needed projects.”

In the pilot year for transitioning to a data-driven process, the SHIFT model was a helpful guide in prioritizing projects to identify how far down the priority list limited transportation dollars could go. Other factors were also considered in the prioritization process, such as fulfilling previous commitments, completing significant corridors and evaluating impacts to communities.

KYTC mega projects

The I-69 Ohio River Crossing connecting Henderson, Kentucky, and Evansville, Indiana, requires additional funding to complete. The Plan includes funding of \$500,000 in FY 2019 to continue work on the design phase of the project, \$19 million of funding in FY 2021 for the right-of-way phase and \$8 million of funding in FY 2022 for the utility phase of the project. A likely combination of tolls, federal grants and bi-state dollars will be required to complete the \$1 billion project with Kentucky’s share being approximately \$600 million.

Commissioned by Gov. Bevin, the KYTC completed the Brent Spence Bridge Strategic Corridor Study in December 2017, which concluded that the Brent Spence Bridge Project, improvements to the I-275 interchange and widening I-71/I-75 are needed to relieve critical congestion in the Northern Kentucky/Greater Cincinnati region. Currently, the Plan does not include funding for any phases of the project. Kentucky’s share of the estimated cost of the Brent Spence Bridge Project is estimated at \$1.3 billion in current year dollars. The Plan does include funding for painting the existing Brent Spence Bridge in FY 2019 and \$2 million to conduct a detailed study of an eastern bypass concept focused on economic development from I-71 in Gallatin County to the AA Highway in Campbell County.

For more information about SHIFT and to view the 2018 Recommended Highway Plan, visit <http://transportation.ky.gov/SHIFT>.

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