



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
TRANSPORTATION CABINET
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Andy Beshear
GOVERNOR

Jim Gray
SECRETARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Naitore Djigbenou
502.782.7829
Naitore.Djigbenou@ky.gov

Recommended Highway Plan is a responsible approach to improving highway safety and reliability while accelerating funding for key regional projects

Plan includes record \$100 million investment in Highway Safety Improvement Program, \$367.5 million for high-profile bridge and parkway projects, debuts new guardrail program

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Jan. 30, 2020) – The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) presented the 2020 Recommended Highway Plan to lawmakers that prioritizes safety and fast-tracks major regional access projects to improve the quality of life for Kentucky families and boost economic development. The Plan features a historic biennium investment of \$100 million to improve safety conditions on rural roads through the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), infuses \$8 million in the biennium to install more than 100 miles of life-saving guardrail across the state, and invests \$367.5 million to accelerate progress on the Mountain Parkway and I-69 Ohio River Crossing projects.

“This plan delivers on our commitment to invest in long-awaited regional access projects that can open up economic opportunities in rural regions while providing a responsible approach to improving our highway infrastructure statewide,” said Governor Andy Beshear. “The plan also focuses on highway safety programs and projects designed to make our rural roads and school access safer for our children and families who use these roads every day.”

Safety driven priorities

The Recommended Highway Plan supports the Beshear Administration’s focus on rural road safety by providing additional state funding to boost federal HSIP activities to \$100 million over the next two years. This is made possible by adding \$23 million in state funding to the HSIP effort. The HSIP uses existing safety data to identify eligible projects to make travel safer on Kentucky roadways. The Plan also supports the Governor’s education emphasis by advancing five school safety projects in the biennium. These five projects provide \$10.7 million to build new turn lanes that address traffic congestion and improve access in and out of schools in Warren, Bullitt, Trimble, Carter, and Floyd Counties. In addition, a new Guardrail Program invests \$8 million each biennium above and beyond the Cabinet’s maintenance fund to aggressively address over 400 guardrail projects in the state’s 3,400 mile backlog of guardrail needs. Sixty-percent of traffic-related deaths result from highway departures making guardrail installation a practical step to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries if fewer vehicles leave the roadway.

“Kentucky has one of the nation’s highest highway fatality rates and these highway and guardrail investments will go a long way toward make our roads safer across the Commonwealth,” said Secretary Jim Gray.

The Plan continues to invest \$80 million annually in the repair and replacement of critical bridges across the Commonwealth, and also invests up to \$200 million annually in the improvement of pavement conditions statewide.

Advancing regional access projects

Significant progress is ahead for the Mountain Parkway project to revitalize eastern Kentucky and create a safe and modern corridor for residents, businesses and tourism. The Recommended Highway Plan includes a six-year total of \$97.3 million to complete the gap between Campton and Salyersville plus \$3.2 million to begin the design phase to widen Parkway east along the existing KY 114 corridor toward Prestonsburg. Once completed, the Mountain Parkway will run more than 90 miles between Interstate 64 and U.S. 23 in eastern Kentucky and complete a four-lane, high-speed route across the length of the state – from Paducah to Pikeville.

The Plan includes a total of \$77 million in design, right of way, utilities and construction funding in the biennium (a total of \$267 in the next six years) to build a portion of the I-69 Ohio River Crossing in western Kentucky. The section from the Henderson Bypass (KY 425) to U.S. 60 in Kentucky is the southern portion of the project which is expected to move to construction in late 2022. While the development of the southern section is underway, KYTC will work with the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) to develop a plan for completing the Ohio River crossing connecting Henderson, Kentucky and Evansville, Indiana. The \$1.1 billion Ohio River crossing portion of the project will likely require innovative financing using a combination of tolls, potential federal INFRA grants, and bi-state dollars from each agency. Kentucky's share of the project is approximately 65% of the total project cost.

Constructing the Recommended Highway Plan

The 2020 Recommended Highway Plan is based on revenue forecasts of \$6.1 billion in traditional state and federal highway dollars during FY 2021 - FY 2026. Of that total, \$3.6 billion is dedicated to highway projects, \$1.1 billion is used to address the backlog of bridge and pavement needs, \$0.9 billion is dedicated federal program funding (such as the Transportation Alternative Program and Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Program), and \$0.5 billion is required for federal GARVEE debt service payments.

For more information about the 2020 Recommended Highway Plan, please visit <https://transportation.ky.gov/Program-Management/Pages/2020-Recommended-Highway-Plan.aspx>

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