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Gov. Beshear Announces School Safety Project To Break Ground in Madisonville
Work starts May 28 at James Madison Middle School

FRANKFORT, Ky. (May 23, 2024) – Gov. Andy Beshear announces work is set to begin on a more than \$2 million project near the James Madison Middle School Campus in Hopkins County to improve access and safety as part of the administration’s education-first and safety commitment to Kentuckians. New turn lanes and wider roads are the centerpiece of the project slated to begin next week.

By May 28, contractors expect to start widening Kentucky Highway 254 (Brown Road) in Madisonville, providing better traffic flow for nearly 600 middle school students and their parents as well as the 4,000 drivers who use it each day.

“As Governor and as a dad, assuring the safety of Kentucky’s students is a top priority,” said Gov. Beshear. “Ensuring students, parents, educators and staff have a safe path to and from school is a necessity, and we’re excited to see the project taking shape in Madisonville.”

In 2021, Gov. Beshear announced plans to invest \$24.5 million to improve highway safety near schools and protect families by funding more than 60 road projects across 43 counties. These projects range from new turn lanes and crosswalks to improved pavement markings and signage. To date, 38 projects have been completed, with 13 under contract for construction.

The James Madison project will include the widening of KY 254 to three lanes, with a new design that moves the main entrance of the parking lot from Patriot Drive, which JMMS shares with Jesse Stuart Elementary and the Hopkins County CTC, to Athey Airport Road that is currently the parking lot’s main exit. A southbound left-turn lane will be added to KY 254 that will include around 100 feet of lane space. And a new entrance road to the JMMS parking lot will be constructed off of Athey Airport Road, which will provide around 700 feet of additional space for afternoon car rider traffic.

This change will allow for less congestion on KY 254 during school pickup for all three schools in the afternoon, and improved safety for all motorists on the highway.

Construction will also include a 5-foot-wide sidewalk starting at Athey Airport Road and extending north to Sunrise Drive along the east side of KY 254.

“Team Kentucky is dedicated to fulfilling our promise to provide safe routes to work and school for all Kentuckians,” KYTC Secretary Jim Gray said. “Our team will continue to work tirelessly to see this project and others like it completed at schools across the commonwealth.”

Contractors expect to complete construction of the new school drive by the start of the school year, with overall project completion scheduled for Nov. 15.

The \$2.2 million earmarked for Hopkins County Schools also funded the construction of a safe entrance to Pride Elementary School, which was completed last year.

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