



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
TRANSPORTATION CABINET
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gov. Beshear Cuts Ribbon on New, Transformational Russell Bridge
\$24 million 'flyover' bridge design will be 'gateway' for generations of travelers

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Nov. 2, 2021) – Today, Gov. Andy Beshear ceremonially cut the ribbon on a new bridge into downtown Russell, which opens this month. The transformational project provides a signature gateway to the community, in addition to making much-needed improvements in traffic flow and safety for Kentuckians who travel through the corridor.

The \$24 million structure replaces a 1930s-era viaduct and complements an adjacent Ohio River bridge linking Russell and Ironton, Ohio.

“This project, together with the recently constructed Ironton-Russell bridge, will provide a gateway for generations of travelers and thousands upon thousands of drivers and tons of cargo that flow through this region,” said Gov. Beshear. “To build a better Kentucky, we need modern transportation infrastructure, and this new road and bridge project is a prime example that will keep our people safer.”

The new bridge, a state-of-the-art “flyover” design, will greatly ease congestion at the Kentucky approach to the Ohio River bridge and the intersection of heavily traveled U.S. 23 and Kentucky Route 244, the main road into and out of downtown Russell.

The project, which began in April 2020, effectively relocates KY 244. Instead of branching off U.S. 23 at the intersection, the KY 244 turn has been moved northward and will be carried by the new bridge in a loop over U.S. 23 and adjacent railroad tracks. It will join with Bellefonte Street in downtown Russell at the same place the old bridge was connected.

“This new ‘flyover’ bridge will serve generations of motorists and provide a new, eye-catching gateway into downtown Russell,” said Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Secretary Jim Gray. “In addition to improving traffic and driving conditions for travelers, the construction of roads and bridges creates jobs and pumps money into the economy.”

The turn at U.S. 23 and the Ironton-Russell bridge will be reconfigured as a T-style intersection that will reduce traffic signal wait times and improve traffic flow for 18,000 vehicles a day.

“This transformative project has been ten years in the making, and I’m grateful that this signifies the kind of good we can accomplish when government remembers it works for the people,” said Representative Danny Bentley, of Greenup County. “It also represents the shift in philosophy that Kentucky has with approaching transportation funding. We now take a fundamentally conservative approach to ensuring the projects we identify as priorities stay priorities until completed. We no longer overpromise and under deliver, which is our duty as elected officials.” “I want to personally thank Gov. Beshear, Secretary Jim Gray, and our good friend Rocky Adkins. The completion of this viaduct will help facilitate the continuing growth and development of not just Russell, but all of Greenup County,” said Greenup County Judge/Executive Bobby Carpenter. “The bridge project is vital to our area and will be utilized for years to come.”

“What a difference this is going to make to our city. It’s unique and beautiful and will attract people from all over,” said Russell Mayor Ron Simpson. “From the flyover bridge you can see the heart of our city where we have a movement, a revitalization going on to be become a destination city so people will visit and explore our area. The city has changed, going from an old bridge and old viaduct to a new bridge and a new viaduct but one thing hasn’t changed: the best place to live, work and raise a family is in a small town, just like our City of Russell. So today we celebrate new things while holding fast to our traditions and our small town values!”

The new KY 244 and flyover bridge are scheduled to be fully opened the week of Nov. 15, when contractors close the old viaduct and all traffic is switched.

The project caps an overall \$110 million bi-state investment in regional transportation that began in 2012 when then-Ohio Gov. John Kasich – accompanied by former Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear – broke ground on the \$80 million Ironton-Russell bridge, which opened five years ago this month.

To learn more about the project and view flyover diagrams, link to District 9’s “Russell Viaduct Project” at <https://transportation.ky.gov/DistrictNine> or bookmark the web page at <https://transportation.ky.gov/DistrictNine/Pages/RussellViaduct.aspx>.

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