



Northern Kentucky Outer Loop Study Frequently Asked Questions

Study Overview

The Northern Kentucky Outer Loop Study (KYTC Item No. 6-458) was initiated by the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) to examine potential new conceptual transportation connections in the southern portions of Boone, Kenton, and Campbell counties and northern portions of Gallatin, Owen, Grant, Pendleton, and Bracken counties. The study evaluated possible roadway connections that would serve the growing need for east-west travel within the region, connecting communities to employment and other quality of life resources along the I-71 and I-75 corridors.

No decisions regarding specific roadway alignments were made and no preferred alternative was identified as a result of this study.

Q: What was the goal of the Northern Kentucky Outer Loop Study?

A: The purpose of the study was to identify potential roadway improvements that could stimulate economic opportunities by providing safer and more efficient east-west travel between I-71 and the AA Highway (KY 9).

Q: Why did KYTC identify this study area for potential improvements?

A: Northern Kentucky is one of the fastest growing regions in the Commonwealth. Significant commercial and residential development is occurring in Boone, Kenton, and Campbell counties. The region has excellent interstate access through I-71, I-75, I-275, and I-471. Major north-south routes such as US 27, US 127, and the AA Highway (KY 9) also are present. Missing, though, is adequate east-west access south of I-275.

Q: Was public feedback considered during the study process?

A: Yes. Recognizing the diverse geography, as well as the challenge of reaching both urban and rural audiences, public involvement was viewed as a critical component of study work to ensure stakeholders were able to review study information and provide feedback on study goals and potential roadway alternatives. A project website – NKYOuterLoopStudy.org – was established, proactive public outreach was conducted, and public feedback was solicited at various points during the study. Comments received helped to guide decision making throughout the course of the study.

Q: How does the Northern Kentucky Outer Loop relate to discussions regarding a potential Cincinnati Eastern Bypass?

A: A Northern Kentucky Outer Loop concept could ultimately become part of a future Cincinnati Eastern Bypass (CEB) if the two states jointly determine such a bypass is feasible. An Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) report on the proposed CEB was submitted to Ohio lawmakers on Dec. 31, 2019. That agency concluded that “when the costs and time associated with delivery of the CEB are evaluated with the known benefits identified in the KYTC [Brent Spence Strategic Corridor] study, it is ODOT’s opinion that no further expenditures of funding and staff time be put toward the CEB.” The report stated that “completion of the Brent Spence Bridge Corridor project [KYTC Item No. 6-17] should be the priority.”

Q: Would construction of an outer loop negate the need for a new additional bridge along the Brent Spence Bridge Corridor?

A: No. While the concept of an eastern bypass in Kentucky was considered based on potential transportation and economic benefits, such a route would not divert enough traffic from the I-71/75 corridor to postpone the need for a new additional bridge.

Q: What are the next steps as it relates to the Northern Kentucky Outer Loop?

A: No future phases of this project were funded in Kentucky’s current Highway Plan. Further funding would be necessary to advance an improvement concept to the design phase.

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