



# OHIO RIVER CROSSING

## Public Involvement Plan

Prepared for

**Indiana Department of Transportation and  
Kentucky Transportation Cabinet**

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Prepared by



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# 1. Introduction and Goals

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## Introduction

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) are committed to improving the I-69 corridor by creating an I-69 Ohio River Crossing (I-69 ORX) between Evansville and Henderson.

The states have reinitiated a study of the corridor under the National Environmental Policy Act, which will help determine the route, structure(s) and financing solutions to move the project from conversation to construction. This study includes:

- Analysis of a range of reasonable alternatives
- Public involvement, including opportunities for participation and comments
- Coordination and consultation with local, state and federal agencies
- Assessment of the social, economic and environmental impacts
- Consideration of appropriate ways to reduce project impacts

While previous studies have identified possible solutions, this project considers the major investments both states have made over the past decade in construction of the I-69 corridor. The I-69 ORX project is re-engaging the region to develop a plan for this critical link that not only meets the purpose and need, but also is financially feasible.

## Public involvement goals

INDOT and KYTC are committed to a robust public involvement process during the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation process for the I-69 Ohio River Crossing study. The overarching goal of the Public Involvement Plan (PIP) is to proactively educate key stakeholders about the NEPA process and solicit their feedback during the process that will help lead to an informed decision. Through public involvement efforts, INDOT, KYTC and the Project Team seek to build relationships with key stakeholders throughout the life of the project.

**NEPA timeline and key milestones  
(tentative – for discussion purposes only)**

Public launch, media announcement, first round of stakeholder meetings, public open houses	April 2017
Screening report complete	July 2017
Preliminary alternatives and Screening Report Supplement	February 2018
Publish DEIS	December 2018
Publish FEIS/ROD	2020

## 2. Key Stakeholders

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### Property owners and homeowners

#### Contributing agencies

- Evansville Regional Airport
- Indiana Department of Environmental Management
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources
- Federal Highway Administration
- Henderson Area Rapid Transit (HART)
- Henderson City-County Airport
- Henderson County Riverport Authority
- Kentucky Division of Water
- Kentucky Department of Environmental Protection
- Metropolitan Evansville Transit System (METS)
- Streets and sanitation departments
- Traffic Management Center
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US Coast Guard
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- US Fish and Wildlife Service

### Local elected officials and agencies

- City of Evansville: mayor, councilors, street superintendents
- City of Henderson: mayor, councilors, street superintendents
- Evansville Emergency Management Agency
- Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Henderson Emergency Management Agency
- Henderson City-County Planning Commission
- Henderson County
- State and federal legislators
- Vanderburgh County

### Motorists

#### Business and tourism organizations

- Accuride
- Angel Mounds Historic State Park
- Audubon State Park
- Berry Plastics
- Downtown Henderson Partnership
- FedEx
- Gibbs Diecasting

- Growth Alliance for Greater Evansville (GAGE)
- Henderson County Tourist Commission
- Kyndle
- Southwest IN Chamber of Commerce
- UPS
- Visit Evansville

- Hoosier Voices for I-69
- Housing Authority of Henderson
- Indiana Motor Truck Association
- Keep Evansville Beautiful
- Kentucky Trucking Association
- River Cities Renaissance (RCR) Group
- Sierra Club
- United Neighborhoods of Evansville
- Valley Watch

### **Emergency responders**

- Cairo Volunteer Fire Department
- Deaconess Health System
- Evansville Fire Department
- Evansville Police Department
- Henderson County Sheriff
- Henderson Fire Department
- Henderson Police Department
- Indiana State Police
- Kentucky State Police
- Methodist Hospital
- St. Mary’s Health Center
- Vanderburgh County Sheriff

### **Indian Tribes**

- Absentee Shawnee
- Cherokee Nation
- Delaware Nation of Oklahoma
- Eastern Band of Cherokee
- Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma
- Miami Tribe of Oklahoma
- Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma
- Shawnee Tribe
- United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians

### **Non-governmental organizations and special interest groups**

- Audubon Society
- BridgeLink
- Civic organizations (Rotary Clubs, etc.)
- Ellis Park
- Henderson Area Arts Alliance
- Henderson Parks Department
- Historic Preservation Groups



## **Schools**

- Evansville Catholic Schools
- Evansville Christian Schools
- Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation
- Henderson County Schools
- Henderson Community College
- University of Evansville
- University of Southern Indiana

## **Reporters and other members of the media**

### 3. Education, Outreach and Engagement Strategy - Branding

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Branding and developing key messages for the I-69 Ohio River Crossing project is an essential part of public involvement. By branding the project up-front, developing clear and concise messaging, and creating several key collateral pieces, we hope to educate key stakeholders about the NEPA process and collect their feedback throughout the study. Branding and key messaging will ensure all communications from INDOT, KYTC and the Project Team are consistent.

#### Name and logo



The logo and identity for I-69 Ohio River Crossing were developed to quickly identify this bridge project and convey its differences from other bridge projects in the area at a glance. Additionally, the identity conveys other key qualities: safe, collaborative, unifying, confident, clear, future-minded and progressive.

The mark is derivative of an interstate shield. The shape and color are customized to give a more contemporary feel. The shield inherently conjures feelings of safety, stability, confidence and unity. The shield also links this project to I-69.

'ORX' is in the shield to provide a short-hand reference for the "Ohio River Crossing."

The typography in the logo type is bold, contemporary and clean.

## **Key messaging**

All messages to the public – including how and when they are stated – have significant impact on the public’s acceptance and support of the project. Clearly articulating the Purpose and Need, and the supporting points, is essential for effectively communicating with stakeholders in a variety of settings.

Key messages have been developed and continue to be refined by target audience, including the general public, elected officials, consulting parties, resource agencies and the media. These key messages are the basis for content on the website, fact sheet(s), PowerPoint presentations, speeches, social media and digital media assets.

## **Outreach materials**

The brand – including the name and logo – is articulated through design, which complements messaging and visually reinforces the tone and personality of the brand.

Branded materials for the project include, but are not limited to:

- Project website
- Business system and templates
- Fact sheets and handouts
- Maps
- Social media accounts
- Digital assets, such as e-newsletters and text messages
- Project signage
- Advertisements, fliers and/or postcards promoting public meetings
- Reports and NEPA submittals
- Meeting signage and display boards
- Project surveys
- PowerPoint presentation(s)

### **3. Education, Outreach and Engagement Strategy – Public Information Office**

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#### **Locations**

The project information centers serve as hubs for information and communication about the I-69 Ohio River Crossing project. A project of this size requires a tremendous amount of coordination with neighborhood and community groups, local agencies and regulatory bodies, and other stakeholders in the community. The project information centers allow members of the general public or representatives from organizations to stop by the office, view progress, ask questions and share their input on the project.

**The two project information centers are located at 320 Eagle Crest, Evansville; and 1970 Barrett Court in Henderson.**

Each office offers:

- Adequate free parking for 25 vehicles (onsite or within walking distance)
- ADA accessibility
- Secure vestibule area for greeting members of the public, with room for various public information displays
- Adequate number of tables, desks and chairs for vestibule, offices and conference rooms
- Public restrooms either within the office or conveniently available in the building
- Telephone, network and WiFi systems
- A multifunction color printer/copier
- Handouts, maps and other collateral
- A visitor's log, including contact information and their questions or concerns

#### **Staffing and hours**

The project information centers are open to the public one day per week at each location. Appointments are also available outside normal business hours. Standard office hours and additional information includes:

- Staffing: The project information centers are staffed by members of the Project Team.
- The project phone number – (888) 515-9756 – rings to both office locations and to a Project Team member's phone when the offices are closed.
- The project email – info@I69OhioRiverCrossing – is monitored throughout the work day.
- The office in Evansville is open Tuesday and the office in Henderson is open Wednesday .
- The hours of each office may be adjusted throughout the project to meet resident requests. The standard hours are 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- If/when office hours change, the information will be posted on the project website, on social media and at the project offices. Changes could include which days each office is open, and the days and/or hours the offices remain open.
- The offices are closed on State holidays.

### 3. Education, Outreach and Engagement Strategy – Outreach Tools

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#### Project website

Perhaps the most important outreach tool is the project website. A robust website allows stakeholders to access information about the project from anywhere at any time. The website layout reflects the project brand with the URL

[www.I69OhioRiverCrossing.com](http://www.I69OhioRiverCrossing.com).

The website was launched with several simple pages, but has evolved throughout the NEPA process. Sections or tabs on the website include:

- Project Overview: Facts about the project and the NEPA process, project schedule
- Surveys: This page houses open house, public and business surveys, and may present the results of the surveys once they're complete
- Maps: All project maps that have been presented at public open houses. They include:
  - Right-of-way lines
  - Proposed preliminary alternatives
  - Historic properties
  - Areas of environmental significance
  - Existing state roadways
  - Local landmarks
  - Waterways
- Information about meetings with key stakeholders, including:
  - Presentations
  - Handouts
  - Meeting summaries
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Graphics, videos and photographs documenting the studies
- Key contact information, including project office locations and hours
- Graphic on home page for stakeholders to sign up for the project e-newsletter and SMS text messaging
- Links to social media accounts

- A project documents page that links to all materials distributed to the public and links to previous studies
- A direct link to email the Project Team

The website is maintained by the Public Involvement Team, with access given to INDOT and KYTC staff and appropriate members of the Project Team. Individuals with access to the site can add, edit and remove content.

The Public Involvement Team works with INDOT and KYTC to assure emails received through the project website are managed in accordance with the Administrative Record procedures and guidelines outlined in the resident inquiry section of this plan. An analysis of resident inquiries and visitors to the website is presented to the Project Team at the beginning of each month.

### **Business system and templates**

To support the project name and brand, all internal and external documents are placed on branded templates. These items include, but are not limited to:

- Letterhead
- Business cards
- Fliers
- Comment cards
- Surveys
- Reports
- PowerPoint
- Name tags
- Table tents
- Display boards

### **Fact sheet(s) and project timelines**

After key messages are updated, we produce branded fact sheets/handouts. The fact sheet is an evolving document, with changes made after each key milestone is completed. The fact sheet includes the project timeline, support graphics and infographics, and contact information for the Project Team.

Fact sheets are available for download on the project website. Copies are also available at the project offices and distributed at public meetings and speaking opportunities.

## **Follow Our Progress cards**

Pocket-size Follow Our Progress cards are available. These branded cards include the website URL, social media accounts, project email address, and public information center addresses and phone numbers.

## **Maps and display boards**

Maps include the project area with key landmarks – such as interstates and state roads, parks, bodies of water and schools. These maps are printed and mounted for public open houses and available on the “Maps” page of the project website. These maps evolve throughout the NEPA process.

## **E-newsletters and text messaging**

Two inexpensive ways to proactively communicate with key stakeholders are e-newsletters and SMS text messaging. Both require that users opt-in and subscribe, so there will be a focus on promoting these options at public meetings, on the website, on social media and in the media. The plan for the e-newsletters will be coordinated with the social media plan, ensuring messaging is consistent across all outreach materials and the public is aware of the various ways to receive project updates. People can sign up for text messaging by texting “ORX” to 33222.

## **PowerPoint presentation(s)**

A branded PowerPoint template and a general slide deck for this project serves as the basis for all public presentations. The Public Involvement Team maintains the PowerPoint, updating and sharing it with key team members as milestones approach. Team members who schedule presentations should coordinate with the Public Involvement Team to customize the presentation without changing its core content. At least one week will be requested for the Public Involvement Team to review new presentation content.



### **3. Education, Outreach and Engagement Strategy – Media Relations Communications Protocol**

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A robust media relations plan is an integral part of the project. This Environmental Impact Study (EIS) will advance work on a much-anticipated portion of the I-69 corridor project, a transformational project that will affect numerous counties in Indiana and Kentucky.

A proactive, continuous flow of information through the news media is a highly effective, low-cost integral part of building awareness, understanding, engagement and support as the study advances.

The Project Team provides information that helps community leaders and citizens better understand the project's purpose, required elements, decision points and timeline.

The Project Team works closely with reporters and media outlets in Southern Indiana and Western Kentucky to provide information to keep stakeholders informed and engaged. This strategy relies on building strong relationships in the local market and providing accurate details and regular updates to newspapers, television stations, radio stations and online publications throughout the bi-state region.

#### **Reaching key stakeholders**

Media outlets (reporters, photographers and editors) will be the targets of communications efforts to help reach numerous key audiences and stakeholders, including:

- Motorists
- Residents
- Elected officials and local governments
- Business leaders
- Community leaders
- Affected property owners

Because the eventual I-69 bridge construction will have widespread impacts both locally and regionally, it is important to take a two-prong approach to media relations to reach both local and regional audiences in Indiana and Kentucky.

## **Local media**

Local media relations efforts focus on reaching outlets in the Evansville MSA, an area defined by the U.S. Census Bureau based on employment and commuting patterns in and around the city of Evansville. This area includes cities and towns in Vanderburgh, Warrick, Posey and Gibson Counties in Indiana and Henderson and Webster Counties in Kentucky. Because of its proximity to Evansville, the nearby Owensboro MSA is included in the local media market for this project.

Complete media databases have been compiled, one that includes local media for targeted communications and one that includes regional media for more broad-reaching communications. Databases will include preferred points of contact, phone numbers and email addresses.

Targeted local outlets include, but are not limited to:

- Evansville Courier & Press
- WNIN (PBS)
- The (Henderson) Gleaner
- WKOH
- Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer
- WKDQ-FM
- WFIE (NBC)
- WGBF-FM
- WEHT (ABC)
- WIKY-FM
- WEVV (CBS)
- WUEV (College)
- WTVW (FOX)

The planned I-69 crossing will have significant impacts on communities, citizens and businesses throughout the existing bi-state corridor. It's important to provide information to regional media in Indiana and Kentucky to raise awareness and build support for the I-69 crossing beyond the Evansville/Henderson area. For the purposes of this project, the region will be defined by areas outside the local media market along the I-69 corridor between Indianapolis, IN and Fulton, KY. These are areas that would be impacted by a new I-69 bridge completing the connection between Indiana and Kentucky.

## Regional media

Regional media outlets receive information about the EIS process through media pitches, advisories and news releases focused on the potential regional aspect of the project.

Key regional media outlets include, but are not limited to:

- Indianapolis Star
- Indianapolis Business Journal
- Inside Indiana Business
- Mayfield Messenger
- Princeton Daily Clarion
- The Paducah Sun
- Building Indiana
- Washington Times-Herald
- Bloomington Herald-Times
- The (Eddyville) Herald-Ledger
- WKMA (PBS-Madisonville)
- WKMU (PBS-Murray)
- WPSD (NBC-Paducah)
- WKPRD (PBS-Paducah)
- WDKA (Local-Paducah)

## Tactics and deliverables

The media relations approach is strategic and robust. By putting a focus on media relations from the start of the project, positive and trusted relationships are being built with media outlets. A steady stream of information will involve key community leaders and inform the public. A cohesive and consistent media relations approach builds stronger community understanding and support.

Tactics and deliverables include:

- Creating and updating local and regional media databases
- Developing a media relations plan, including a media relations calendar for the year
- Creating a news release template and standards for external communications
- Gathering visuals (photos, videos, etc.) to support media pitches
- Identifying and training a project spokesperson(s)
- Engaging with key media members to educate and build support
- Drafting key messaging for approval by leaders of the Project Team, INDOT and KYTC
- Providing media training for key Project Team members

- Drafting news releases and advisories
- Providing routine updates on the project, including regular media availabilities, when appropriate
- Drafting key messaging and talking points for all public and media events
- Marking key project milestones
- Monitoring and reporting on media coverage

### **Project spokesperson(s)**

Identifying a clear, consistent and trusted voice for the project is an essential part of developing trust, understanding and support of members of the local media, residents and community stakeholders.

C2 Strategic Communications' Mindy Peterson serves as the primary project spokesperson to proactively share project information, respond to media inquiries and requests and respond to the communications needs of the project.

C2 works with Project Team leaders to identify appropriate personnel for specific requests. Media training is provided, along with key, approved messaging for media opportunities and speaking requests.

All media requests should be directed to Mindy Peterson to ensure consistency in messaging. She will respond or identify the appropriate member of the Project Team to respond. All requests and responses are shared with leaders of the Project Team and communications directors for INDOT and KYTC in advance of the response.

### **Timeline and key milestones (tentative – for discussion purposes only)**

Ongoing, proactive media relations focuses primarily on sharing information regarding the project's milestones and public engagement opportunities. Project understanding and support are built through news releases, media availabilities and story pitches.

Although the following milestones have been identified as media relations opportunities, others are likely to be added throughout the project as a result of collaboration with the Project Team:

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Timing (approximate)</b>
Project launch (open office, launch website)	April 2017
Public involvement groups formed	April 2017
Public open houses #1	April 2017
Ribbon cuttings for project offices	June 2017
Traffic modeling begins	June 2017
Property owner letters	June 2017
Environmental studies begin (bats, mussels, historic)	June 2017
River navigation simulation	July 2017
Preliminary alternative alignments	July 2017
Public open houses #2	July 2017
Year-end progress update	December 2017
DEIS progress update, public open houses #3	February 2018
Preferred alternative identified	December 2018
DEIS published	December 2018
Public hearings	January 2019
Public comment period	February 2019
FEIS published	2020
ROD issued	2020
Construction plan announced	2020

### **3. Education, Outreach and Engagement Strategy – Social Media**

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Social media is an important part of public engagement in today’s rapidly changing communications world. More than 60 percent of people report getting news from social media, especially Facebook and Twitter, according to the Pew Research Center.

A strategic social media campaign keeps stakeholders informed and engaged. They will quickly and easily receive key project updates, and will also have an easily-accessible avenue for two-way communication. Social media is an important interactive forum that allows questions to be asked and voices to be heard.

Social media supports key partnerships and provides messaging that’s fast and easy for community and business leaders to share with their followers.

Social media channels are carefully monitored, with approved responses posted in a timely fashion.

#### **Social media channels**

The team has launched Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts. Those channels are:

- Facebook – I-69 Ohio River Crossing
- Twitter – I69ORX
- YouTube – I-69 Ohio River Crossing

#### **Reaching key stakeholders**

Social media is used to engage local and regional stakeholders throughout the EIS, educating them about the project, alerting them to public meetings and building support for the development and financing of the project.

- Motorists
- Residents
- Elected officials and local governments
- Business leaders
- Community leaders

- Affected property owners
- Members of the media

Key benefits include:

- Providing direct, timely and accurate information about the project
- Reaching people who are not engaged with traditional news outlets or interested in attending public meetings
- Creating a “listening” portal to gauge public concerns or frustrations before they bubble up through other channels
- Providing a low-cost, effective means of engaging with stakeholders

In addition to local stakeholders, social media will be helpful in reaching key regional stakeholders along the I-69 corridor, particularly those already engaged by construction or development of other interstate segments. Reaching these stakeholders will be included in the social media plan to build a strategic following for the project. The ultimate success of the project depends on building understanding and support throughout the I-69 corridor in Kentucky and Indiana.

## **Tactics and deliverables**

Facebook and Twitter are the primary channels for engagement with YouTube providing an important video portal for social media channels and the project website. Facebook is used by nearly 80 percent of all adults who spend time online, more than double any other social media platform, and allows text, photos, video and livestreaming. Twitter is more timely and is used more by highly influential individuals, including most media and political leaders.

Tactics and deliverables will include:

- Securing and developing social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube)
- Developing a social media plan, including a posting schedule/calendar
- Building followers among existing local and regional groups, with targeted posts, likes, etc.
- Preparing and posting content on a regular basis
- Monitoring and responding to relevant posts

- Developing visuals (photos, illustrations, video clips) to support posts and build engagement
- Providing social media analytics on a monthly basis to track progress and engagement

## **Content**

In addition to providing an overview of the project and outlining a timeline and expectations, social media will be used to promote and support public meetings and key milestones in the NEPA process.

Examples of additional content include:

- Project updates
- Media-produced content about the project
- Stories relating to infrastructure projects, especially those close to the region
- Stories published in Kentucky and Indiana media about the success of RiverLink tolling
- Videos, photographs and renderings produced during the project
- Posts promoting the value of the I-69 corridor
- General posts about regional successes and economic development

## **Protocol**

Prior to launching the social media channels, C2 developed the social media plan, which includes protocols for how posts are tracked and comments responded to. Posts and public comments are documented according to the procedures for the Administrative Record.

A social media calendar is provided for review by Project Team leaders each month. Messaging to answer expected and routine questions about the project is provided and updated monthly for team review.

Approved messaging is used to respond to posts on social media. Responses that are not included in the pre-approved messaging are shared in advance with identified project leaders for their approval.



Social media channels are closely monitored. Any posts that include profanity, nudity, depictions of violence, threatening language, inappropriate or indecent content will be removed.

## **Timeline and key milestones**

The Facebook and Twitter accounts were launched in March 2017 to introduce the project and support initial public meetings.

Timeline:

- March 2017: Launch project Facebook and Twitter channels
- April 2017: Develop detailed social media plan for team approval
- May 2017: Grow social media base and following
- August 2017: Launch project YouTube channel

Content for routine posts are developed and posts are made at least weekly according to the social media calendar approved at the beginning of each month.

### **3. Education, Outreach and Engagement Strategy – Property Owner Contact**

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#### **Letters**

The team proactively reaches out to residents at key milestones in the NEPA process. Prior to surveying, the team developed a current property owner database. The Public Involvement Team, in cooperation with the NEPA project manager, drafted and mailed certified “Notice of Survey” letters to all affected property owners.

Field crews carry the Follow Our Progress cards, which include contact information and direct them to the outreach materials that may answer their questions. If field crews are receiving several of the same questions, they should alert the Public Involvement Team so the Frequently Asked Questions section of the website can be updated.

Requests for information from property owners will be handled according to the policies outlined in the Internal and External Communications Protocols portion of this plan.

### **3. Education, Outreach and Engagement Strategy – Environmental Justice**

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The I-69 ORX project includes a multi-faceted outreach program designed to ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected environmental justice communities in the transportation decision-making process. The effort includes five primary strategies:

- Seeking out, building and maintaining a comprehensive database of mail and email contact information of environmental justice stakeholders and advocacy groups
- Inviting representatives of leading groups to be members of the project's River Cities Advisory Committee
- Establishing an Environmental Justice Subcommittee of the RCAC
- Partnering with environmental justice groups to disseminate information regarding the project and ensuring that public meetings are well advertised
- Making materials and meetings accessible to all stakeholders including those with physical disabilities, minorities, low-income, elderly, transit dependent and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individuals

#### **Stakeholder contact database**

A comprehensive database of property owners, stakeholders, and advocacy groups has been developed and maintained throughout the project. As described elsewhere in this PIP, properties that could be directly affected by the project will be identified and their owners added to the database. Included in this database will be any person that contacts the project via public meetings, the project offices, email or phone inquiries, or the project website and provides their contact information. Finally, the project team will proactively identify organizations and advocacy groups that may have an interest in the project for inclusion in the database. The database – which will include both mailing and email addresses – will be used to disseminate project updates and to notify all stakeholders of project-related events.

## **River Cities Advisory Committee**

As described in the next section of this document, the team has established an advisory committee, the RCAC, to discuss the project's progress and decisions. In addition to the civic, business and governmental groups represented, the team will identify organizations that specifically represent or advocate on behalf of minority or low-income populations.

## **RCAC Environmental Justice Subcommittee**

An Environmental Justice Subcommittee better ensures organizations representing environmental justice populations, which do not historically participate at high levels in many transportation projects, are part of in-depth discussions about the project. In addition to serving as full members of the RCAC, members of this subcommittee will meet with the project team separately to provide them the opportunity to discuss issues in greater depth.

Members include:

- City of Evansville – Steve Schaefer, Deputy Mayor
- City of Henderson – Maree Collins, City Clerk
- Henderson County – Bill Hubiak, Henderson County Engineer
- Audubon Area Community Services – Brandon Harley, Chief Operations Officer
- Community Action Program of Evansville (CAPE) – Gale Brocksmith, Director of Planning and Corporate Affairs
- Community Baptist Church – Dr. Tim Hobbs, Pastor
- Daviess County – David Smith, Government Affairs Director
- ECHO Housing Corporation – Stephanie Tenbarger, Executive Director
- Evansville Promise Zone – Silas Matchem, Director
- Gibson County – Gerald Bledsoe, Commissioner, Vice President of Commissioners
- Greater Norris Chapel Baptist Church – Rev. Charles Johnson, Pastor
- Green River Area Development District – Gina Boaz, Regional Transportation Planner
- HOLA Evansville – Daniela Vidal, President
- Housing Authority of Henderson – Bobbie Jarrett, Executive Director
- Latino Chamber Alliance – Brant Flores, Chairman

- McLean County Representative – Patricia Hayden, St. Sebastian Conference of St. Vincent de Paul
- Metropolitan Evansville Transit System (METS) – Todd Robertson, Evansville Dept. of Transportation and Services, Executive Director
- Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) – Pam Drach, Deputy Director
- NAACP, Evansville chapter – Rev. Gerald Arnold, President
- NAACP, Henderson chapter – Deborah Jackson Hoda, President
- Posey County – Brittaney Johnson, Posey County Economic Development Partnership, Executive Director
- United Neighborhoods of Evansville (UNOE) – Chris Cooke, Board Member
- Union County – Adam O’Nan, Judge/Executive
- Warrick County – John Johnson, Commissioner
- Webster County – Steve Henry, Judge/Executive

Meetings are held near the same times as RCAC meetings and whenever appropriate to provide these groups with:

- Material to be presented to the RCAC
- An opportunity to ask questions of the project team about the materials, process and technical studies
- A forum for discussing issues of particular interest to EJ communities

Meetings are held at times and places most conducive to the participation of these groups.

## **Partner Outreach**

The team partners with local organizations, including those that are represented on the RCAC Environmental Justice Subcommittee, to disseminate project information and provide outreach to their members. The team will work with these organizations to ensure that project-related meetings are well advertised; this may involve providing meeting notices to be handed out to member groups, placing meeting notices in the organization's newsletters or other means of communication, or making announcements at organization meetings. Through the project speakers bureau, the team will seek out opportunities to attend these organizations to speak about the project and answer any questions. In this manner, the team will take the project to these communities.

## **Accessibility**

The team takes all reasonable steps to ensure that the project and its materials are accessible to all stakeholders. All public meetings are held in facilities that meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and are located within proximity to public transit. Likewise, both project offices are in accessible buildings served by public transit.

All public meeting notices offer, upon prior notice, to address any reasonable request for accommodation, including foreign language translation. The project team will also gather feedback from stakeholders and monitor requests for translation to determine if select project materials should be translated to other languages. The project website includes messaging in Spanish for how Limited English Proficiency (LEP) residents can call or email to receive materials in Spanish.

### 3. Education, Outreach and Engagement Strategy – Advisory Committee Meetings

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#### River Cities Advisory Committee

A River Cities Advisory Committee (RCAC) has been established and will meet four to six times, as needed, to discuss issues of common concern and provide input about the project.

Founding members and their organizations include:

- City of Evansville – Steve Schaefer, Deputy Mayor
- City of Henderson – Russell Sights, City Manager
- Henderson County – Bill Hubiak, Henderson County Engineer
- Vanderburgh County – Bruce Ungethiem, County Commissioner
- Warrick County – Robert Howard, Highway Director
- Angel Mounds State Historic Site – Mike Linderman, Site Director
- Audubon State Park – Mark Kellen, Park Manager
- Community Action Program of Evansville (CAPE) – Gale Brocksmith, Director of Planning and Corporate Affairs
- Community Baptist Church – Dr. Tim Hobbs, Pastor
- Congregations Acting for Justice and Empowerment (CAJE) – Amy DeVries, Lead Organizer
- Deaconess Health System – Jared Florence, Vice President, Business Development
- Ellis Park Race Course – Jeff Hall, Mutuel Manager and Ellis Park Leadership Team
- Evansville Audubon Society – Niles Rosenquist, Treasurer
- Evansville Bicycle Club – Diane Bies, President
- Evansville – Vanderburgh School Corporation – Debbie DeBaillie, Chief Human Resource Officer
- Gibbs Die Casting/Koch Enterprises – Robert (Bob) Koch II, Chairman
- Growth Alliance for Greater Evansville – Ellen Horan, President
- Henderson City-County Planning Commission – Brian Bishop, Executive Director
- Henderson Community College – Dr. Kris Williams, President

- Henderson County Schools – Marganna Stanley, Superintendent
- HOLA Evansville – Daniela Vidal, President
- Housing Authority of Henderson – Bobbie Jarrett, Executive Director
- Indiana Motor Trucking Association - Gary Langston, President
- Kentucky Trucking Association - Guy Young, President and CEO
- Kyndle – Tony Iriti, CEO
- Latino Chamber Alliance – Brant Flores, Chairman
- Methodist Hospital – Jack Hogan, Vice President of Ancillary Services
- Metropolitan Evansville Transit System (METS) – Todd Robertson, Evansville Dept. of Transportation and Services, Executive Director
- Evansville Metro Planning Organization (MPO) – Pam Drach, Deputy Director
- NAACP, Evansville Chapter – Rev. Gerald Arnold, President
- NAACP, Henderson Chapter – Deborah Jackson Hoda, President
- Southwest Indiana Chamber of Commerce – Tara Barney, President and CEO
- United Neighborhoods of Evansville (UNOE) – Chris Cooke, Board Member
- University of Evansville – Shane Davidson, Vice President for Enrollment and Marketing
- University of Southern Indiana – Mark Bernhard, Associate Provost Outreach and Engagement
- US 41 Business Owner – Jeff Troxel
- Valley Watch – John Blair, President

The RCAC meets to gain stakeholder feedback, identify and resolve local concerns, and build community support during the NEPA decision-making process. It is an effective means of addressing specific issues and hearing a variety of stakeholder views.

The RCAC will meet up to six times at key project milestones, including:

- Public launch of project branding, goals
- Completion of the Screening Report and announcement of corridors carried forward for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)
- Completion of the Screening Report Supplement, with detail for the preliminary alternatives
- DEIS publication
- Final Environmental Impact Statement /Record of Decision



While not advertised as public meetings or presentations, non-RCAC members will be permitted to observe the meetings. Non-members will be given the opportunity to comment and ask questions at the end of the meetings.

A RCAC charter was signed at the first meeting, ensuring everyone acknowledges the roles and responsibilities of the RCAC. A RCAC handout will be distributed, which discusses the purpose of a RCAC, guidelines on how RCACs are established, requirements of RCAC members and any additional information pertinent to the formation of RCACs.

Meeting minutes are routed to RCAC members and more general meeting summaries are posted on the project website.

### **Section 106 Consulting Parties**

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) requires consideration of historic preservation for any project receiving federal funding. Federal agencies must give Consulting Parties – key stakeholders with a tie to historic preservation – an opportunity to comment on such projects prior to the agency’s decision on them.

Section 106 review encourages, but does not mandate, preservation. Sometimes there is no way to construct a project without impacting historic properties. If there is an impact to historic properties, the Project Team will work with the Consulting Parties on a Memorandum of Understanding about how impacts to those properties will be mitigated.

Consulting Parties are expected to meet four times before the Record of Decision.

## Interagency Advisory Committee

Conducting the NEPA process on a project the size of this requires coordination and cooperation with many state, local and federal resource and permitting agencies. Given the potential impact to the Ohio River, the environment, protected land and historic properties, these organizations will provide critical input on nearly every aspect of the project.

By forming the Interagency Advisory Committee, the Project Team seeks to secure early commitment to project and process, including:

- The Purpose and Need
- Range of corridors
- Alternatives screening process
- Preliminary preferred alternative
- Preferred alternative
- Mitigation plan

Members of the Interagency Advisory Committee include:

- Absentee Shawnee
- Cherokee Nation
- Delaware Nation of Oklahoma
- Eastern Band of Cherokee
- Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma
- Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organizations
- Federal Aviation Administration
- Federal Highway Administration
- Indiana Department of Environmental Management
- Indiana Department of Homeland Security
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources
- Indiana Geological Survey
- INDOT
- Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection
- Kentucky Department for Natural Resources
- Kentucky Department of Aviation
- Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources
- Kentucky Division of Forestry
- Kentucky Geological Survey
- Kentucky Heritage Council
- Kentucky Office of Homeland Security
- Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission
- Kentucky Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet
- KYTC
- Miami Tribe of Oklahoma
- National Park Service
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma

- Shawnee Tribe
- United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians
- US Army Corps of Engineers - Louisville District
- US Coast Guard District
- US Department of Energy
- US Department of Housing and Urban Development
- US Department of Interior
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Forest Service

The Interagency Advisory Committee will meet five times before the Record of Decision.

### **Technical Working Group**

Another important group of stakeholders that can have a significant impact on the project are local and state transportation officials. The Project Team will update these organizations on the project's progress at the Evansville MPO's Technical Committee meetings.

### **3. Education, Outreach and Engagement Strategy – Public Meetings**

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Educating residents and collecting public input is very important for the I-69 Ohio River Crossing project. The Project Team will host public meetings at key project milestones to keep the public engaged and to gather public feedback.

#### **Key milestones**

Public meetings are proposed for the following key milestones in the NEPA process:

- Public launch of project branding, goals, and Purpose and Need statement – April 2017
- Completion of Screening Report – July 2017
- Publishing of the Screening Report Supplement, with additional details for the preliminary alternatives – February 2018
- DEIS publication\* – December 2018
- Final Environmental Impact Statement /Record of Decision – Late 2019

#### **Meeting format**

Each round of public meetings is held in both Henderson and Evansville. The agendas and formats for these meetings are identical, assuring that the public receives the same information, regardless of which meeting they attend. Each meeting is held in a public space that is accessible, near a public transit route and provides free parking.

During each public meeting, the public has an opportunity to get project information regarding the project details to date, schedule and ask any questions. Spanish-language or American Sign Language interpretation is available upon request.

Opportunities to give input and comments are available at all public meetings. Both rounds of meetings have an open house format with various stations focused on topics or elements of the project. The goal is to provide interactive exercises to gain input while also allowing the public to directly talk and ask questions of the Project Team.

Public meetings could include the following stations:

- Welcome station – Sign in, collect handouts, information on how to stay informed (website, social media, project office, etc.) and place to provide general feedback
- Overview station – General information about the overall project including schedule, process, funding and next steps
- Context analysis station – Base map (existing conditions shown) exercise where attendees can identify areas of interest, community assets and other similar points of interest
- Route identification and alternative analysis station – Large base maps where attendees can identify and/or provide feedback about potential routes and crossing locations

### **Public involvement deliverables**

- Planning and logistics
- Agendas and run-of-show for the meetings
- Directional signage and parking signs, when necessary
- Display boards
- PowerPoint presentations
  - Note: Presentations will be posted to the project website the same day as the public meeting(s)
- Handouts/brochures
  - Note: Handouts distributed at the public meetings will be posted on the project website after the same day as the meeting(s)
- Comment sheets and surveys
- Interactive displays, whenever possible and appropriate
- Follow Our Progress cards that allow the team to sign residents up for the e-newsletter and text messaging program, and publicize the website URL and potential social media channels
- Preparation document for INDOT, KYTC and the Project Team, including updated key messages and answers to frequently asked questions
- Meeting attendance and sign-in coordination
- Meeting minutes, which will be posted on the public website

## **Public meeting notices**

In addition to using all tools supporting the project, the Public Involvement Team will work with INDOT and KYTC to promote public meetings via agency ListServes, social media accounts, media relations and websites.

Per federal guidelines, legal public meeting notices will be placed in local newspapers.

*\*In accordance with FHWA guidelines, a formal public hearing format was used to present and collect feedback about the DEIS.*

### 3. Education, Outreach and Engagement Strategy – Speakers Bureau

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#### Protocol

All communications on behalf of the I-69 Ohio River Crossing Project should be limited to approved, project speakers to ensure controlled, consistent messaging for the project.

Identifying a clear, consistent and trusted voice for the project is an essential part of developing trust, understanding and support of members of the local media, residents and community stakeholders.

C2 Strategic Communications' Mindy Peterson serves as the primary project spokesperson to proactively share project information, respond to media inquiries and requests and respond to the communications needs of the project.

Potential speakers include:

- Jim Poturalski, INDOT, Executive Project Manager
- Gary Valentine, KYTC, major project advisor
- Marshall Carrier, KYTC, project manager
- Steve Nicaise, Parsons, project manager
- Dan Prevost, Parsons, deputy project manager
- Andy Dietrick, INDOT, public affairs manager
- Mindy Peterson, C2 Strategic Communications, public involvement
- Erin Pipkin, Compass Outreach Solutions, public involvement lead
- Amber Schaudt, TSW Design Group, public information coordinator

## **Promoting the availability of Project Team members**

In addition to meetings with the advisory groups and the general public, the Project Team presents to small groups to help educate them about the project. These organizations include:

- Councils of elected officials
- Neighborhood associations
- Civic groups (Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.)
- Special interest groups
- Business and economic development organizations, chambers of commerce

The presentation content for these small-group meetings mirrors the most recent information presented at public meetings and on the website.

The availability of speakers is publicized through the website, general media, social media and the e-newsletter. It is also anticipated that several groups will reach out to the Project Team requesting similar presentations. Every effort is made to accommodate those requests, and in many cases, presentations may be grouped to minimize travel and printing expenses. The Public Involvement Team maintains a database of these presentations, including the day and time of the presentation, handouts that were distributed, and the presentation itself. Pertinent questions and comments at those presentations are added to the public inquiry log (PIL).



## 4. Internal and External Communications Protocols – Internal communications

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The I-69 Ohio River Crossing Project requires clear, continuous communications among members of the Project Team, including the Consultant, INDOT, KYTC and FHWA. To ensure the project stays on schedule and on budget, it's important for team members to stay informed, share pertinent information and participate in scheduled meetings and conference calls as required.

Project Team leaders are listed in the tables below. (A complete list of Project Team members is listed in Appendix of this Plan.)

### Project Team members

#### Agency Leaders

Name	Title	Employer
Jim Poturalski	Executive Project Manager	INDOT
Gary Valentine	Major Project Advisor	KYTC
Marshall Carrier	Project Manager	KYTC
Michelle Allen	Project Manager	FHWA-IN
Eric Rothermel	Project Manager	FHWA-KY

#### Consultant Leaders

Name	Title	Employer
Steve Nicaise	Project Manager	Parsons
Dan Prevost	Deputy Project Manager, Environmental Lead	Parsons
Erin Pipkin	Public Involvement Lead	Compass Outreach Solutions
Toby Randolph	Design Advisor	Parsons
Brian Aldridge	Traffic Forecasting/ Modeling Lead	Stantec
Kevin Thibault	Toll Studies/Procurement Lead	Parsons

Cory Grayburn	EIS Document Lead	Parsons
Dan Miller	Ecology/Waters Lead	Parsons
Phil Banton	Environmental Monitoring/Compliance Lead	Parsons
Tamar Henkin	Financial Planning Lead	High Street
Toby Randolph	Alignments and Interchanges Lead	Parsons
Martin Furrer	Bridges Lead	Parsons

**Tactics**

- Bi-weekly progress meetings/calls (Schedule through DEIS: Every other Tuesday, Evansville office, 8:30 to 11:30 CT)
- Weekly team coordination meetings/calls (Schedule through DEIS: Mondays, 3-3:30 p.m. CT)
- Email updates (as warranted)
- Monthly progress reports

**Protocol and file management**

- Administrative Record – All files will be stored according to the procedures defined for the Administrative Record.
- Documents – All preliminary documents for internal review should include the word “DRAFT” in the file name and document header along with a date.
- Email – Email will be archived according to the guidelines of the Administrative Record.
- Media inquiries – All media inquiries and requests should be directed to Mindy Peterson at C2 Strategic Communications to ensure consistency in messaging. Peterson will respond or identify the appropriate person to respond. Requests and responses will be shared with leaders of the Project Team and the communications directors for INDOT and KYTC.

## 4. Internal and External Communications Protocols – External Communications for Stakeholder Inquiries

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### Public involvement team contact information

#### Agency Leaders

Name	Title	Employer
Jim Poturalski	Executive Project Manager	INDOT
Gary Valentine	Major Project Advisor	KYTC
Marshall Carrier	Project Manager	KYTC
Andy Dietrick	Public Affairs Manager	INDOT
Naitore Djigbenou	Executive Director, Office of Public Affairs	KYTC
Jason Tiller	Customer Service, Vincennes District	INDOT
Keith Todd	Public Information Officer, District 2	KYTC

#### Consultant leaders

Name	Role	Employer
Erin Pipkin	Outreach strategy, deliverables and documentation	Compass Outreach Solutions
Chad Carlton	Outreach strategy and messaging	C2 Strategic Communications
Mindy Peterson	EJ, media relations, social media and messaging	C2 Strategic Communications
Amy Williams	Public information center, public meetings, website	Taylor Siefker Williams
Amber Schaudt	Project office coordinator	Taylor Siefker Williams
Steve Nicaise	Senior oversight	Parsons
Dan Prevost	NEPA documentation	Parsons

## **Routing and answering resident inquiries**

- Written requests (letters, comment forms or emails) – All written requests should be forwarded to Amber Schaudt in the project offices and Erin Pipkin at Compass Outreach Solutions to be logged into the inquiry database. Erin will route it to the appropriate team member to assist in drafting a response. All written inquiries will be acknowledged within one business day with either an answer or an estimate on when an answer will be provided. The team will make every effort to respond to all inquiries within three business days. All responses will be carbon-copied to Steve Nicaise, Gary Valentine, Marshall Carrier and Jim Poturalski, with additional team members copied according to the subject matter.
- Phone requests – Any Project Team member who fields a question – either at the Project Office or at another location – must fill out the Public Inquiry Tracking Template or route it to Erin Pipkin and Amber Schaudt. Amber will log the request, then route it for response. Whenever possible, the team will respond in writing so it can be properly tracked. The team will make every effort to respond to all inquiries within three business days.
- Requests at meetings or public information centers – Residents who approach team members with questions the team member cannot answer will be encouraged to fill out a comment form. Once complete, those forms should be routed to Erin Pipkin. She will log the request, then route it for response. Whenever possible, the team will respond in writing within three business days.
- All requests from reporters should be sent to both Mindy Peterson and Chad Carlton at C2 Strategic Communications.
- All written and documented correspondence will be filed according to the Administrative Record procedures.

Internally sharing answers to commonly asked questions in the form of FAQ or Tough Q&A documents will streamline responses and assure that everyone is receiving the same answers to their questions, especially when questions are asked in person.

When Erin Pipkin is unavailable for more than 24 hours, another team member will assume the role of managing inquiry responses. The inquiry database and Public Inquiry Tracking Forms are saved in SharePoint and part of the monthly Public Inquiry Report each month.

## **Tracking resident inquiries**

Collecting and maintaining an organized record of resident inquiries is imperative throughout the NEPA process. Managing resident inquiries quickly will promote confidence in the project.

Resident information will be gathered and submitted on an electronic template filled out by team members, via the “contact us” link on the website, on a sign-in sheet at the public information offices and on sign-in sheets at public meetings.

Information collected includes:

- Name
- Email
- Home address
- Question asked
- Team member who responded
- Response
- Date of correspondence

## **A – Glossary of terms and abbreviations**

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INDOT – Indiana Department of Transportation

KYTC – Kentucky Transportation Cabinet

FHWA – Federal Highway Administration

NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act

MPO – Metropolitan Planning Organization

DEIS – Draft Environmental Impact Statement

FEIS – Final Environmental Impact Statement

ROD – Record of Decision

EJ – Environmental Justice

PI – Public Involvement

PIL – Public Inquiry Log

## Appendix B – Public involvement protocol

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Public interest is high in this integral project and will increase as work advances on the Environmental Impact Study (EIS). Understanding the importance of public acceptance and support of the project, a clear, consistent message from the Project Team is vital from start to finish.

### Guidelines for communications

All media and public outreach requests should be directed to C2 to ensure consistency in messaging:

Mindy Peterson, [mindy@c2strategic.com](mailto:mindy@c2strategic.com), 502-595-8704

C2:

- Responds with approved, key messaging or identify the appropriate member of the Project Team to respond
- Shares all public outreach requests and inquiries with leaders of the Project Team:
  - Jim Poturalski, INDOT, Executive Project Manager
  - Gary Valentine, KYTC, major project advisor
  - Marshall Carrier, KYTC, project manager
  - Steve Nicaise, Parsons, project manager
  - Dan Prevost, Parsons, deputy project manager
  - Erin Pipkin, Compass Outreach Solutions, public involvement lead
- Shares all media inquiries and responses with leaders of the Project Team noted above and communications directors for the states:
  - Andy Dietrick, INDOT, public affairs manager
  - Naitore Djigbenou, KYTC, executive director, office of public affairs
  - Jason Tiller, INDOT, customer service, Vincennes District
  - Keith Todd, KYTC, public information officer
- Logs all media inquiries
- Logs all public outreach/speakers' bureau requests

## **Project speakers**

All communications on behalf of the I-69 Ohio River Crossing Project should be limited to approved, project speakers to ensure controlled, consistent messaging for the project.

Identifying a clear, consistent and trusted voice for the project is an essential part of developing trust, understanding and support of members of the local media, residents and community stakeholders.

C2 Strategic Communications will serve as the primary project spokesperson (Mindy Peterson) to proactively share project information, respond to media inquiries and requests and respond to the communications needs of the project.

In addition, Project Team leaders will provide support for specific needs, such as public meetings and River Cities Advisory Committee (RCAC) meetings. It's recommended the project spokesperson provide an overview of the project and introduce Project Team members at such events.

These communications needs include:

- Media inquiries
- On-camera interviews
- Public meetings
- Project presentations

Consistent, clear messaging will help to set realistic expectations, and build public understanding and support throughout the project.

Potential speakers include:

- Jim Poturalski, INDOT, Executive Project Manager
- Gary Valentine, KYTC, major project advisor
- Marshall Carrier, KYTC, project manager
- Steve Nicaise, Parsons, project manager
- Dan Prevost, Parsons, deputy project manager
- Andy Dietrick, INDOT, public affairs manager
- Naitore Djigbenou, KYTC, executive director, office of public affairs



Media training will be provided by C2, along with key, approved messaging for all media opportunities and speaking requests.

### **Key messaging**

Key messaging will have a significant impact on the public's acceptance and support of the project and is developed by the public relations team for Project Team review and approval. Clearly articulating the purpose and need and the supporting points is important for effectively communicating with all stakeholders. Key messaging will evolve with the project, for approval by the Project Team.

## Appendix C – Key messages

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### General Overview

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) are committed to providing a critical link between the two states' I-69 corridors and constructing a new I-69 Ohio River Crossing between Evansville and Henderson.

The purpose and need of the project is to complete the I-69 connection between Indiana and Kentucky, improve long-term cross-river mobility for the area, reduce congestion and delay, and improve safety.

The states published a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) as required by federal law.

On December 14, 2018, the DEIS was released for review by the public and local, state and federal agencies. It is posted on the project website ([www.I69ohiorivercrossing.com](http://www.I69ohiorivercrossing.com)) and placed at several public review locations on both sides of the river including:

- I-69 ORX Indiana Project Office: 320 Eagle Crest Dr., Suite C, Evansville, IN
- I-69 ORX Kentucky Project Office: 1970 Barrett Ct., Suite 100, Henderson, KY
- Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library (EVPL) – Central Library: 200 SE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Evansville, IN
- EVPL – East Branch: 840 E. Chandler Ave., Evansville, IN
- EVPL – McCollough Branch: 5115 Washington Ave., Evansville, IN
- Henderson Public Library: 101 S. Main St., Henderson, KY
- Henderson County Judge/Executive: 20 N. Main St., Henderson, KY
- Housing Authority of Henderson: 111 S. Adams St., Henderson, KY
- KYTC Central Office: 200 Mero St., Frankfort, KY
- KYTC District 2 Office: 1840 N. Main St., Madisonville, KY
- INDOT Central Office: 100 N. Senate Ave., Indianapolis, IN
- INDOT Vincennes District Office: 3560 S. US 41, Vincennes, IN

Notification of the DEIS's availability was shared with potentially affected and interested parties via Federal Register, legal notice and ORX project communications channels.

Public and agency comments on the DEIS were accepted through February 8, 2019, via:

- Participation in the public hearings
- The “contact us” page on the website ([www.I69OhioRiverCrossing.com](http://www.I69OhioRiverCrossing.com))
- Email ([info@I69OhioRiverCrossing.com](mailto:info@I69OhioRiverCrossing.com))

- Mail or in person at the project offices located at 320 Eagle Crest Drive, Suite C in Evansville, and 1970 Barrett Court, Suite 100 in Henderson.

Note: Comments made on Facebook (I-69 Ohio River Crossing) and Twitter (I69ORX) were considered informal feedback and not part of the DEIS transcript. Those who call the project offices who wish to make a comment were asked to fill out a comment form to ensure accurate records.

Public hearings were held:

- Monday, January 7, 2019, from 5 to 8 p.m. at Henderson Community College, Preston Arts Center, 2660 S. Green St., Henderson, KY
- Tuesday, January 8, 2019, from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Old National Events Plaza, Locust meeting rooms, 715 Locust St. in Evansville, IN

The Project Team presented information about the project at 6 p.m. A formal comment session followed. All verbal comments were recorded, and people also submitted written comments.

During the comment period the project office in Evansville was staffed Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. The Henderson office was staffed Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. The offices were closed from December 24 through January 1. The Project Team was available outside of the office hours by appointment.

After considering all formal comments, the states will confirm the preferred alternative in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). Final approval of the preferred alternative will come from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) through the issuance of a Record of Decision (ROD).

### **Preferred Alternatives**

The Central Alternative is the preferred route for the proposed I-69 Ohio River Crossing. There are two preferred alternatives with different tolling options. Central Alternative 1A would toll both the I-69 bridge and the remaining US 41 bridge. Central Alternative 1B would toll only the I-69 bridge.

The tolling options are the only difference between Central Alternative 1A and Central Alternative 1B. Both include a new 4-lane I-69 bridge and retain one bridge for local traffic. Both include 11.2 miles of new interstate, with the construction of 8.4 miles of I-69 on new location and upgrades to 2.8 miles of existing US 41 to meet interstate standards. New interchanges would be added at existing I-69 in Indiana, US 60 in Kentucky and at existing US 41 south of Henderson between Van Wyk Road and Kimsey Lane.

Central Alternatives 1A and 1B are the preferred alternatives for the following reasons:

- Fewest residential relocations
- No commercial relocations
- Fewest impacts to the following resources:
  - Wetlands
  - Linear feet of streams
  - Floodways
  - Forested habitat and potential habitat for the federally endangered Indiana bat and federally threatened northern long-eared bat
  - Managed lands
  - Section 4(f) resources including publicly owned parks, recreation areas, wildlife and water fowl refuges, or public and private historic properties
  - Sites with recognized environmental conditions, such as hazardous substances or petroleum products
- Cross-river route redundancy for the region
- Lowest total cost

By retaining one US 41 bridge, Central Alternatives 1A and 1B provide cross-river redundancy for the region, something that was mentioned frequently at open houses, meetings and other forums. There are similar engineering considerations and similar costs to rehabilitate and maintain either of the US 41 bridges. Because of its historic significance, the US 41 northbound bridge will be retained for two-way traffic.

Traffic forecasts indicate six lanes of cross-river capacity are needed through 2045. Providing more than six lanes of cross-river traffic would unnecessarily add to long-term operations and maintenance costs. Removing one US 41 bridge from service saves \$145 million in long-term costs. Although it would be striped for four lanes initially, the a new I-69 bridge will be wide enough to accommodate six lanes in the future, if needed.


If federal grants and traditional funding can be made available to fill the gap between the project's costs and the financial capacity of the toll revenue, then construction could begin in late 2021 and a new bridge could be open to traffic as soon as 2025.

## Financing and Funding

With a total cost estimated at \$1.497 billion (year-of-expenditure dollars), Central Alternative 1A or 1B is the lowest-cost option. This total cost includes roadway and bridge operations and maintenance for 35-years following completion of construction.

A preliminary financial plan will be developed based on the total cost of the project. Financial estimates indicate net revenue from tolling both the I-69 and US 41 bridges (Central Alternative 1A) would provide financing capacity of \$500 million or 40% of upfront capital costs. Tolling only the I-69 bridge (Central Alternative 1B) would provide financing capacity of about \$250 million or about 20% of upfront capital costs. At this time, the only source for funding the gap is from the states' traditional programs through direct funding and/or financing.

The decision on whether to recommend Central Alternative 1A or Central Alternative 1B (whether or not to toll the US 41 bridge) will be based on continuing financial analysis, federal grant availability and comments received on the DEIS. Once a decision is reached, the public and agencies will be notified prior to publication of the FEIS and ROD.

 OHIO RIVER CROSSING	Central Alternative 1A	Central Alternative 1B
<b>Net Toll Revenue</b> (over 35 years, year of collection \$)	\$2.6 billion	\$1.2 billion
<b>Financing Capacity</b>	\$500 million	\$250 million
<b>% of Upfront Capital Costs</b>	40%	20%
<b>Funding Gap</b>	\$750 million	\$1 billion

Tolling will be all-electronic tolling with no slowing and no stopping. Toll rates similar to the Ohio River Bridges Project were used by the Project Team for the purpose of analysis. Initial toll rates were \$2 for a passenger vehicle with a prepaid account and transponder.

The DEIS includes possible strategies to mitigate impacts on Environmental Justice (EJ) populations if both the I-69 and US 41 bridges are tolled. These include the option of transponder purchase via cash, cash-loading of transponders, widespread availability of transponders, a frequent-user/ commuter card and a reduced toll rate on the US 41 bridge for verified low-income users.

A bi-state body will be created to develop toll policy (including toll rates) before construction begins. The FEIS and ROD inform the bi-state body of impacts and commitments associated with the implementation of tolls.

## Appendix C – Frequently Asked Questions

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### General Overview

#### **What is the I-69 Ohio River Crossing Project?**

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) are committed to providing a critical link between the two states' I-69 corridors and constructing a new I-69 Ohio River Crossing between Evansville and Henderson.

#### **What is the proposed purpose and need of the project?**

The proposed purpose and need of the project is to complete the I-69 connection between Indiana and Kentucky, improve long-term cross-river mobility for the area, reduce congestion and delay, and improve safety.

#### **Has the preferred alternative been identified?**

Yes, the Central Alternative is the preferred route for the proposed I-69 Ohio River Crossing. There are two preferred alternatives with different tolling options in the DEIS published December 14, 2018. Central Alternative 1A would toll both the I-69 bridge and the remaining US 41 bridge. Central Alternative 1B would toll only the I-69 bridge.

### Preferred Alternatives

#### **What are the preferred alternatives from the DEIS?**

The Central Alternative is the preferred route for the proposed I-69 Ohio River Crossing. There are two preferred alternatives with different tolling options. Central Alternative 1A would toll both the I-69 bridge and the remaining US 41 bridge. Central Alternative 1B would toll only the I-69 bridge.

The tolling options are the only difference between Central Alternative 1A and Central Alternative 1B.

Both include a new 4-lane I-69 bridge and retain one US 41 bridge for local traffic. Both include 11.2 miles of new interstate, with the construction of 8.4 miles of I-69 on new location and upgrades to 2.8 miles of existing US 41 to meet interstate standards. New interchanges would be added at existing I-69 in Indiana, US 60 in Kentucky and at existing US 41 south of Henderson between Van Wyk Road and Kimsey Lane.

### **What factors determined that Central Alternatives 1A or 1B is the preferred alternative?**

Selecting the preferred alternative was a multi-step process that included leadership in both states, the community, and state and federal agencies. Central Alternatives 1A and 1B are the preferred alternatives for the following reasons:

- Fewest residential relocations
- No commercial relocations
- Fewest impacts to the following resources:
  - Wetlands
  - Linear feet of streams
  - Floodways
  - Forested habitat and potential habitat for the federally endangered Indiana bat and federally threatened northern long-eared bat
  - Managed lands
  - Section 4(f) resources including publicly owned parks, recreation areas, wildlife and water fowl refuges, or public and private historic properties
  - Sites with recognized environmental conditions, such as hazardous substances or petroleum products
- Cross-river route redundancy for the region
- Lowest total cost

### **What happens next?**

The public and resource agencies provided comments on the DEIS at public hearings and via several other communication channels. These comments suggested changes to the preferred alternatives presented, which requires additional analysis before reaching a decision on how to proceed. Once a decision is reached, the public and agencies will be notified prior to publication of the FEIS and ROD.

### **What's the timeline for the project?**

A preferred alternative was identified in December 2018 in the DEIS. Public hearings were held in Henderson on January 7 and Evansville January 8 to solicit feedback on the DEIS. Many comments received after publication of the DEIS suggested changes to the preferred alternatives, requiring additional studies and analysis. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) will likely be extended beyond late 2019.

### **When could right-of-way acquisition begin?**

Right-of-way acquisition would not begin until the environmental review is complete and funding is available, and dependent on the FHWA publishing a ROD.

### **What's the expected cost of the project?**



With a total cost estimated at \$1.497 billion (year-of-expenditure dollars), Central Alternative 1A or 1B is the lowest-cost option. This total cost includes roadway and bridge operations and maintenance for 35-years following completion of construction.

### **How will the project be funded?**

Currently, the only option to fund the project is through the financial capacity of toll revenue generated by the project and supplemented by the states' traditional programs. The states will continue financial analysis and seek federal grant opportunities to try to reduce the revenue needed from tolls and funds needed from the states' traditional programs.

### **Hasn't this process been completed before?**

A DEIS was completed in 2004, with a preferred alternative identified for a new I-69 Ohio River Crossing just east of Henderson. No funding source was identified and an FEIS and ROD were never issued. Since then, Indiana and Kentucky have improved more than 260 miles of the I-69 corridor to interstate standards. The new crossing will be the final connection.

## **NEPA**

### **What is NEPA?**

NEPA, the National Environmental Policy Act, requires evaluation of the project's potential effects before making a decision. Compliance with NEPA is required any time federal funds are used to support a project or federal agency approval is needed.

The NEPA process includes:

- Analysis of a range of reasonable alternatives for the proposed project, based on project's defined purpose and need
- Assessment of the social, economic and environmental impacts of a proposed project
- Consideration of measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate potential impacts
- Interagency coordination and consultation
- Public involvement, including opportunities to participate and provide input into the selection of the preferred alternative
- Documentation and disclosure
- A ROD from FHWA, which identifies the final preferred alternative

### **What are the steps involved in the environmental study?**

- Step 1 – COMPLETE – Determine the project’s purpose and need and identify conceptual alternatives that address those needs
- Step 2 – COMPLETE – Collect preliminary environmental and engineering data, reviewing results with the Project Team, resource agencies and the public
- Step 3 – COMPLETE – Develop a short list of potential corridors and begin detailed engineering, field investigations, agency coordination, public involvement and financial analysis
- Step 4 – COMPLETE – Identify a preliminary preferred alternative and present the DEIS for public review and comment
- Step 5 – IN PROGRESS – Address public and agency comments on the preferred alternative, publish an FEIS and receive a ROD from FHWA

### **Is there a way to expedite the project?**

The NEPA timeline approved by Indiana and Kentucky is aggressive, but realistic. Many comments received after publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement suggested changes to the preferred alternatives, requiring additional studies and analysis. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) will likely be extended beyond late 2019.

### **Did Kentucky and Indiana have equal influence over which alternative was selected?**

Yes. This is a bi-state project, and Kentucky and Indiana have and will continue to collaborate throughout the decision-making process.

### **What happens when the environmental process is over?**

The public and resource agencies provided comments on the DEIS at public hearings and via several other communication channels. These comments suggested changes to the preferred alternatives presented, requiring additional analysis before reaching a decision on how to proceed. Once a decision is reached, the public and agencies will be notified prior to publication of the FEIS and ROD.

## Financing and Funding

### How much is project construction expected to cost?


With a total cost estimated at \$1.497 billion (year-of-expenditure dollars), Central Alternative 1A or 1B is the lowest-cost option. This total cost includes roadway and bridge operations and maintenance for 35 years following completion of construction.

### Is tolling an option?

A new I-69 bridge will be tolled. The decision on whether to recommend Central Alternative 1A or Central Alternative 1B (whether or not to toll the US 41 bridge) will be based on continuing financial analysis, federal grant availability and comments received on the DEIS. Once a decision is reached, the public and agencies will be notified prior to publication of the FEIS and ROD.

### Why is tolling necessary to help fund the project?

Toll revenue is needed to cover debt service for the project, capital costs, and operations and maintenance of the project. Currently, the only funding source to fill the gap is from the states' traditional programs through direct funding and/or financing.

 OHIO RIVER CROSSING	Central Alternative 1A	Central Alternative 1B
<b>Net Toll Revenue</b> (over 35 years, year of collection \$)	\$2.6 billion	\$1.2 billion
<b>Financing Capacity</b>	\$500 million	\$250 million
<b>% of Upfront Capital Costs</b>	40%	20%
<b>Funding Gap</b>	\$750 million	\$1 billion

### How much money can be generated by tolls?

Financial estimates indicate net revenue from tolling both the I-69 and US 41 bridges (Central Alternative 1A) would provide financing capacity of \$500 million or 40% of upfront capital costs. Tolling only the I-69 bridge (Central Alternative 1B) would provide financing capacity of about \$250 million or about 20% of upfront capital costs. At this time, the only source for funding the gap is from the states' traditional programs through direct funding and/or financing.

**When will a decision be made on tolling rates and who makes that decision?**

A bi-state body will be created to develop toll policy (including toll rates) before construction begins. The FEIS and ROD inform the bi-state body of impacts and commitments associated with the implementation of tolls.

**Will free or reduced tolls be considered for low-income residents?**

The DEIS includes possible strategies to mitigate impacts on Environmental Justice (EJ) populations if both the I-69 and US 41 bridges are tolled. These include the option of transponder purchase via cash, cash-loading of transponders, widespread availability of transponders, a frequent-user/commuter card and a reduced toll rate on the US 41 bridge for verified low-income users.

**How will Indiana and Kentucky split the project costs?**

Indiana and Kentucky are evenly splitting costs for preliminary design and the environmental review. Construction funding will be based on work in each state and will be detailed in the initial financial plan prior to construction.

**What procurement process might be used? Will this project be built as a public-private partnership or design-build project?**

The type of procurement and project financing has not been determined, nor has the tolling policy. As the states develop the project further through preliminary design and the environmental review, Indiana and Kentucky will consider the project's suitability for different procurement methods and select a solution that works best for both states.

**Is there a tentative schedule for construction?**

If federal grants and traditional funding can be made available to fill the gap between the project's costs and the financial capacity of the toll revenue, then construction could begin in late 2021 and a new bridge could be open to traffic as soon as 2025.

**Public Involvement****How are local officials, stakeholder groups and the public involved?**

The Project Team has implemented a robust public involvement plan throughout the NEPA study process. Information is shared via e-newsletters, focus groups with local officials and key stakeholders, social media and media relations. Residents may provide feedback any time via the project website ([www.I69OhioRiverCrossing.com](http://www.I69OhioRiverCrossing.com)), email ([info@I69OhioRiverCrossing.com](mailto:info@I69OhioRiverCrossing.com)), phone (888-515-9756), or at the project offices in Henderson and Evansville. The Project Team has also hosted public open houses so residents could ask questions and provide feedback during the NEPA process.

The Project Team met at key points in the process with key stakeholder groups to solicit feedback throughout the NEPA process. These groups include elected officials, the project's River Cities Advisory Committee, the Interagency Advisory Committee, the Section 106 Consulting Parties and an Environmental Justice Subcommittee.

### **When can the public review and comment on the study?**

The DEIS is posted on the project website ([I69ohiorivercrossing.com/DEIS](http://I69ohiorivercrossing.com/DEIS)). It is available for review at several locations on both sides of the river.

Public and agency comments on the DEIS were accepted through February 8, 2019.

Public hearings were held:

- Monday, January 7, 2019, from 5 to 8 p.m. at Henderson Community College, Preston Arts Center, 2660 S. Green St., Henderson, KY
- Tuesday, January 8, 2019, from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Old National Events Plaza, Locust meeting rooms, 715 Locust St. in Evansville, IN

The Project Team presented information about the project at 6 p.m. A formal comment session followed. All comments were recorded, and people also submitted written comments.

All comments received at the public hearings and during the comment period were documented and are being considered by the Project Team before the FEIS and ROD.

### **US 41 Twin Bridges**

#### **Why is the future of the US 41 bridges being discussed as part of this project?**

Improving long-term cross-river mobility between Evansville and Henderson must include a discussion of the US 41 bridges. One bridge is more than 80 years old and the other is more than 50 years old, and maintenance costs are high. Indiana and Kentucky have spent more than \$50 million on maintenance costs on the US 41 bridges since 2005. A report on the US 41 bridges finds it would cost an estimated \$293 million to maintain the two bridges through 2062.

#### **Under Central Alternatives 1A or 1B, which US 41 bridge would remain in service?**

Due to its historic significance and serviceable condition, the northbound US 41 will be retained for two-way traffic.

### **What will happen to the southbound US 41 bridge that is removed from service?**

A marketing plan will be undertaken to determine if there is any group or agency that would be willing and able to maintain and preserve the bridge. If there are no such groups or agencies found, the bridge would be demolished after construction of an I-69 bridge.

### **Would the states consider using the old bridge for bicycle or pedestrian facilities?**

Because of the large expense to maintain the aging bridge, the small number of potential users and the lack of master planning for such facilities, current plans do not include maintaining one of the US 41 bridges for cyclists and pedestrians. During the development of the project, the City of Henderson and Henderson County were offered the opportunity to assume ownership and responsibility of the bridge for this purpose, but each declined. Letters were also sent to Vanderburgh County and the City of Evansville encouraging them to contact Henderson and Henderson County if they wanted to discuss a possible partnership about the bridge.

### **How many vehicles cross the US 41 bridges each day?**

The US 41 Twin Bridges carry approximately 40,000 vehicles across the Ohio River each day.

### **How old are the current US 41 bridges?**

What is currently the northbound bridge opened in 1932 to carry a single lane of traffic in each direction. The southbound bridge was opened in 1965, allowing each bridge to carry two lanes of traffic in a single direction.

## **Previous Question about the Preliminary Alternatives**

### **What were the preliminary alternatives for a new I-69 Ohio River Crossing?**

The I-69 ORX Project Team developed preliminary alternatives for each of the three corridors for a new I-69 bridge and interstate connections. Based on further engineering analyses and after completing the Screening Report Supplement, West Alternative 1, West Alternative 2 and Central Alternative 1 were identified as providing the best opportunity to be financially feasible and address the purpose and need of the project. A No Build Alternative was also carried forward for comparison.

#### **West Alternative 1**

West Alternative 1 included a four-lane I-69 bridge and retained one US 41 bridge for local traffic. West Alternative 1 would have kept traffic in the US 41 corridor while maintaining businesses in the area. It included a reconstructed US 60 interchange and new interchanges at Watson Lane and US 41/Veterans Memorial Parkway (north end).

### West Alternative 2

West Alternative 2 included a six-lane I-69 bridge and removed both US 41 bridges from service. This alternative would have kept traffic on the US 41 corridor, but businesses along the west side of US 41 would have been impacted. It included a reconstructed US 60 interchange and new interchanges at Watson Lane, Wolf Hills/Stratman Road, Nugent Drive and US 41/Veterans Memorial Parkway (north end).

### Central Alternative 1

Central Alternative 1 bypasses the US 41 corridor and includes a four-lane I-69 bridge and retains one US 41 bridge for local traffic. It includes new interchanges at US 41 (south end), US 60 and Veterans Memorial Parkway.