FAST TRACKING THE I-69 OHIO RIVER CROSSING NEPA PROCESS

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KAMM 2019
Project Context

- 2004: Draft Environmental Impact Statement
  - Preferred Alternative
  - Not financially feasible – Suspended in 2005
- I-69 Corridor investment to date: $3.7 billion
- Critical link
  - US 41 is only crossing in the region
  - Two aging, historic bridges
  - Can’t meet demands of I-69
Build Alternatives

- Three Build Alternatives
  - “West” alignments: US 41 Corridor
  - “Central” alignment: new corridor

- Region only needs 6 lanes of cross-river capacity
  - Remove one or both existing bridges

- Toll Scenarios
  - Tolling I-69 is a given
  - US 41 tolls on the table
Coordination

- Two State DOTs
- Federal Agencies
- Two sets of State Agencies
- Two local communities

Schedule:
NTP to Record of Decision in 3 years
**Practice, Policy or Law?**

- State DOTs – and even State agencies (!!!) – have flexibility

**Methodology Memos**

- Regulatory Environment
- Methodology Sources

**Example: Threatened and Endangered Species**

**Regulatory Environment**

**AGENCY**

- Federal
  - U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service – Bloomington Field Office
  - U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service – Frankfort Field Office
  - Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources
  - Indiana Department of Natural Resources – Division of Fish and Wildlife
  - Indiana Department of Natural Resources – Natural Heritage Program

**STATE**

- Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources – Division of Fish and Wildlife
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources – Natural Heritage Program

**KEY ELEMENTS OF STATE METHODOLOGIES**

**INDIANA**

- **Mussels**
  - Mussel survey area size: 4,500 m
  - Study area = 45 transects
  - Minimum of 3 transects within Direct Impact Area (no buffer area surveys requested)
  - Mussel survey period: May 1 – October 15
  - Survey visibility requirements: None listed – may use ORVEMS protocol
  - Mussel survey transect spacing: 328 ft (100 m) apart
  - Search Time: 10 m segment of transect
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  - Diver minutes: 5

**KENTUCKY**

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**Recommendation**

Early coordination about the project with State and Federal Agencies is very important to determine a final list of species for the project corridor, and to determine which USFWS Field Office will take the lead on Section 7 Consultation under the Endangered Species Act. Determination of species specific protocols and strategies can also be discussed.

Since most of the Ohio River within the project area is on Kentucky’s side of the State boundary, and because Leroy Koch, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Malacologist, is in the Frankfort Field Office, it is very likely that field investigations for listed mussels will follow the methods outlined in the Draft protocol for mussel surveys in the Ohio River where dredging/development activity is proposed prepared by the Ohio River Valley Ecosystem Mollusk Subgroup (ORVEMS) in 2004.

As determined from online distribution maps of known northern long-eared bat roost trees and hibernaculum, the project area in Kentucky doesn’t contain any known sites, thus under the 4(d) rule, no effects to this species is expected in Kentucky. We will contact the USFWS - Bloomington Field Office to determine if any known roost trees and/or hibernaculum are present within the project corridor on the Indiana side of the Ohio River. Most of the proposed project corridor in Kentucky is located within a five-mile buffer of “Known Summer 1 Habitat” for the Indiana bat. As a result, USFWS will assume Indiana bats are present. If the USFWS – Bloomington Field Office is agreeable and the entire project corridor is located within 20 miles of Kentucky, the Imperiled Bat Conservation Fund (IBCF) could be used to mitigate impacts to the Indiana bat for the entire project.
Planning for Success

- FHWA Project of Division Interest (PODI) ➔ Early HQ Coordination
- NEPA Strategic Planning Workshop ➔ Streamlining Opportunities and Risk Mitigation
- Detailed Project Schedule ➔ 360° Accountability
- Coordination Meetings – Project Team, FHWA, DOT Central Offices ➔ Constant monitoring
- Customized and Compartmentalized Document Management System with Review Workflows ➔ Collaboration and Streamlined Reviews
Ohio River Navigation

- More than 6,000 vessels per year
- Challenging navigation area
- Early outreach to USCG
- Seaman’s Church Institute
- Two approved span arrangements
  - Two 650-foot spans
  - One 850-foot span
  ➔ Bridge Type flexibility
Tolling and Financing

• Establishing the Need
• Dispelling Misconceptions
  – Through traffic volumes
  – Project financing

Expected Toll Revenue

Estimated net toll revenue over 35 years (Year of collection dollars)

Central Alternative 1A
$2.6 billion = $5 billion

Central Alternative 1B
$1.2 billion = $2 billion

I-69 Ohio River Crossing Regional and Through Traffic

Total Crossings

- 2015:
  - 41,000 AADT
    - 20% Trucks
    - 80% Local traffic

- 2045:
  - 50,000 - 55,000 AADT
    - 35% Trucks
    - 65% Local traffic
Environmental Justice

• Analysis
  – Qualitative/Quantitative Analysis

• Outreach Plan
  – Constantly talking about tolling and mitigation
  – EJ Subcommittee
  – Survey
  – Community Conversations
  – Speakers Bureau
## Existing Corridor vs. New Alignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>West Alternative 1</th>
<th>West Alternative 2</th>
<th>Central Alternative 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>Residences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Businesses</td>
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<td>64</td>
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- Coordination, Coordination, Coordination
  - Business community (chamber, etc.)
  - Elected Officials
  - Business Survey (door-to-door)
- Design Modification – southern interchange
The DEIS and Two Preferred Alternatives

• Draft EIS: December 2018 – 23 months!!!
• One Alignment - Two Tolling Scenarios
  – Central Alternative 1A – Tolls on both crossings
  – Central Alternative 1B – Tolls on I-69 only
• Basis for selection
  – Fewest relocations
  – Fewest impacts to most resources
  – Cross river route redundancy
  – Lowest total cost (including life-cycle)
Keys to Success

- Constant Project Team Coordination
- Agency Coordination
- Aggressive schedule management and accountability
- Coordination with stakeholders and decision-makers