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U.S. 69 expansion project virtual public information open house

The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT), in conjunction with the Kansas Turnpike Authority (KTA) and the City of Overland Park, are hosting virtual meetings so the public can learn more about the U.S. 69 Expansion Project, which is an in-depth study of how best to reduce congestion, improve public safety and increase travel time predictability along U.S. 69 between 103rd and 179th Streets.

The U.S. 69 corridor is one of the state's busiest highways with heavy congestion peaking during rush hours and at other times. Previous studies indicate that U.S. 69 congestion will increase significantly in the future, doubling traffic volumes and tripling travel times, as well as increasing response times for emergency personnel. Transportation improvements are needed to reduce congestion, improve safety, increase travel time predictability and to keep the economy moving.

As part of the Project, an Environmental Assessment (EA) document will be prepared. Within the EA, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and KDOT will evaluate ways to modernize and expand U.S. 69. Alternatives being reviewed include ways to add a northbound and southbound lane as suggested by previous studies, including an express toll lane alternative. The study will evaluate the potential benefits of an express toll lane for north and southbound traffic to improve safety and manage congestion in the corridor. Drivers would have the option of driving in the existing "free" non-tolled lanes or could choose to drive in the new tolled lane.

Roadway and interchange configurations will also be evaluated throughout the corridor. Both alternatives will be compared to the 'no action, or 'do nothing', alternative as the baseline condition. The goals of the current proposed project on

U.S. 69 are to improve safety, travel time reliability and reduce congestion while minimizing or avoiding impacts to sensitive project environmental features within the project area.

There are three upcoming opportunities for the public to learn more about the project:

- A virtual informational open house will be available from January 18-31 on the project website at www.69express.org. People can attend this virtual open house at their convenience to view meeting materials and provide questions and comments through an online form that goes directly to the project team for review and response.
- A live virtual meeting will be held on January 20, 2021 from 4:30-6:30 p.m. at which project team members will provide a short presentation and the public will have the opportunity to submit questions for a response. You can join by visiting www.69express.org and following links at the time of the event. This will offer the same information as the informational open house, including project background, purpose and need for the project, study process, express toll lanes concept and schedule.
- The project website at www.69express.org also will include the latest information on the project and links to the virtual meeting opportunities and allow participants to provide comments and questions through online comment forms that will be addressed by the project team. After the conclusion of the meetings, a summary of questions and comments and meeting materials will be posted on the website.

If you need special assistance or accommodations for the meetings, would like to request a hard copy version or would like to discuss with a project team member please contact Kelsey Heavin at 816-527-2468 or kheavin@hntb.com.

The U.S. 69 Study, expected to conclude in late 2021, will involve extensive public outreach with residents, businesses, travelers, and others. To learn more and sign up for additional project updates, please visit www.69express.org.

KDOT urges all motorists to be alert and obey the warning signs when approaching and driving through a highway work zone. To stay aware of all road construction projects across Kansas go to www.kandrive.org or call 5-1-1. Drive safely and always wear your seat belt.

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This information can be made available in alternative accessible formats upon request. For information about obtaining an alternative format, contact the KDOT Office of Public Affairs, 700 SW Harrison St., 2nd Fl West, Topeka, KS 66603-3754 or phone 785-296-3585 (Voice)/Hearing Impaired – 711.

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