US 51 Bridge Replacement Project Advances to Final Design

FINAL DESIGN

Project Advances to Final Design

The project team is preparing to transition to the Final Design phase of the project.

In this phase, we'll take what we've learned throughout Phase 1, including Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Considerations, and use that to complete the engineering design of the project. Crews are actively working to complete additional geotechnical testing, prepare environmental permits and develop detailed plans for the bridge.

Once completed, the new US 51 bridge will be the longest single span network tied arch bridge in the United States!

Maintaining the Existing Bridge

Under National Bridge Inspection Standards, all bridges are inspected at least once every two years, including the existing US 51 bridge. These inspections help identify areas that may need attention, allowing timely maintenance to support safe and reliable travel for everyone.

You may recall seeing repair work on the existing US 51 bridge earlier this year. This was part of KYTC's ongoing dedication to maintaining the current structure while planning and building a new one. The repairs were necessary after deterioration was discovered in some of the rail posts—a potential safety concern.

In response, a thorough evaluation of the entire railing system was conducted and the affected sections and their connections were replaced. These efforts were made with the well-being of the traveling public in mind, ensuring that the bridge remains safe and dependable for all who rely on it.

Wider Lanes, Shoulders Coming to New Bridge

The new US 51 Bridge is expected to be a two-lane bridge, with 12-foot lanes and 8-foot shoulders.

The wider lanes and shoulders will allow the new bridge to accommodate more vehicle types, including consideration for farm equipment. This two-lane bridge will also allow for bicycle traffic.

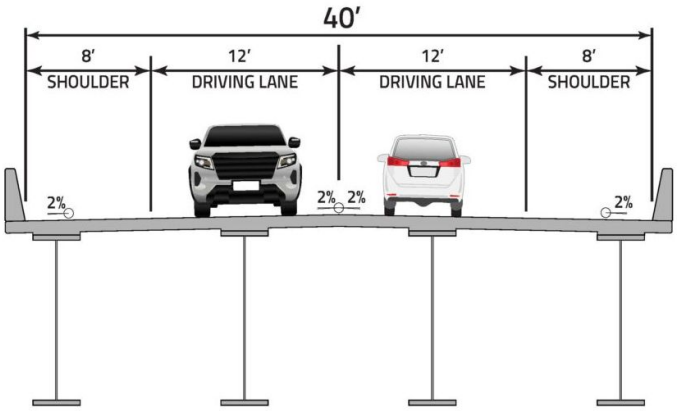
Wide shoulders provide a safe area for vehicles to pull over in case of breakdowns or emergencies.

The new bridge's total width of 40 feet is **nearly twice as wide** as the existing

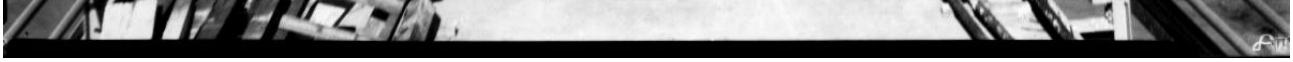
bridge's width of 22.5 feet!

Why not four lanes?

An analysis was completed by the project team to determine how many lanes were warranted on the new US 51 bridge. Given the 2045 Average Daily Traffic (AADT) forecasts, the limited ability to accommodate agricultural traffic and stopped vehicles, and the higher construction costs, it was determined that a two-lane, 40-foot-wide bridge best meets the project's purpose and need.



Existing Bridge Fun Facts



Did you know that when the bridge was first opened, a toll was charged to cross it? If you look carefully, you may spot The Ohio River Bridge Toll House nearby. In 1948, the Cairo Bridge Commission was able to repay all of the construction costs from tolls, and the Highway Departments of Illinois and Kentucky jointly accepted the bridge as part of the state highway systems to be maintained as a toll-free facility.

Don't worry, tolling is not being considered in the US 51 Bridge Replacement Project!

See the New US 51 Bridge Renderings

The US 51 Bridge Replacement Project website has a new destination to show what the future bridge will look like. The **New Bridge Design** page even includes a video drive-through of the future bridge and roundabout! Check it out now!

See the New Bridge Design

About the Project

The purpose of the US 51 Bridge Project is to improve cross-river mobility between Wickliffe, Kentucky and Cairo, Illinois, by addressing the safety and reliability issues caused by the narrow lane widths, lack of shoulders and tight curve of the existing bridge and its approaches.

US 51 Bridge Replacement

US 51 BRIDGE
REPLACEMENT

For more information on the US 51 Bridge Replacement Project, please visit our project website at **www.US51Bridge.com**.