

Live Virtual Public Meeting #2 and Virtual Open House #2 Summary April 2021

Virtual Public Meeting and Informational Open House #2 Overview

The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT), the Kansas Turnpike Authority (KTA) and the City of Overland Park hosted a Live Virtual Public Informational Meeting and a Virtual Informational Open House for the U.S. 69 Modernization and Expansion Project (69Express). Keeping health and safety in mind, the Live Virtual Public Information Meeting #2 and the Virtual Informational Open House #2 were both held virtually. This was the second series of Virtual Public Meetings for 69Express held. The Virtual Informational Open House was from April 16, 2021 – April 30, 2021 via KDOT’s Public Information Management Application (PIMA) website and posted to the Project website. The Live Virtual Public Informational Meeting was held on Tuesday, April 20, 2021 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m..

The Project is an in-depth study of how best to improve public safety, reduce congestion and increase travel time reliability along U.S. 69, including evaluating if an express toll lane option is a solution for the corridor. The purpose of the virtual meetings was to inform participants about the Project and gather stakeholder feedback. Both opportunities provided the same content. Two-hundred thirty (230) participants signed into the live virtual public meeting and two-hundred fourteen (214) signed into the virtual informational open house.

The Live Virtual Public meeting started with a presentation from the Project team and then followed up with a question and answer session. The content of the presentation included the alternatives being considered, the environmental screening process, a comparison between traditional widening (toll-free) and express toll lane alternatives, express toll lane (ETL) pricing, and the engagement process. [Here is a link to the recorded presentation.](#)

Members of the public also attended the Virtual Informational Open House at their convenience to view meeting materials and provide questions and/or comments through an online form that went directly to the Project team.

Understanding participants’ concerns and questions will help the Project team make decisions moving forward. The Live Virtual Public Meeting and Virtual Informational Open House were promoted to the public through media releases and social media posts from KDOT, the City of Overland Park and Advisory Group members.

The summary below captures common themes noted by the public during both the Live Virtual Public Meeting and Virtual Informational Open House:

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- **Express Toll Lanes.** A significant number of participants submitted comments inquiring about how tolls would be collected on U.S. 69 and why Overland Park could be the first in the state to have a toll system added to a highway.
 - **Environmental Justice & Equity.** Participants asked questions about how the price of a tolled lane would affect underserved, or low-income populations and what would be done to mitigate impacts.
 - **Road Design.** Many of the participant’s questions and comments centered around the traditional-widening scenario impacting businesses and the logistics of using the ETLs.
 - **Funding Options.** Questions and comments regarding funding focused on what the generated toll revenue would be used for and why a tolled option is being considered when Johnson County residents pay taxes.
 - **Traffic.** Questions came up about how the proposed alternative would help lessen bottlenecks along the corridor.
 - **Access.** Many of the participants expressed concern about entrance and exits to and from the express toll lanes from various points along the corridor.

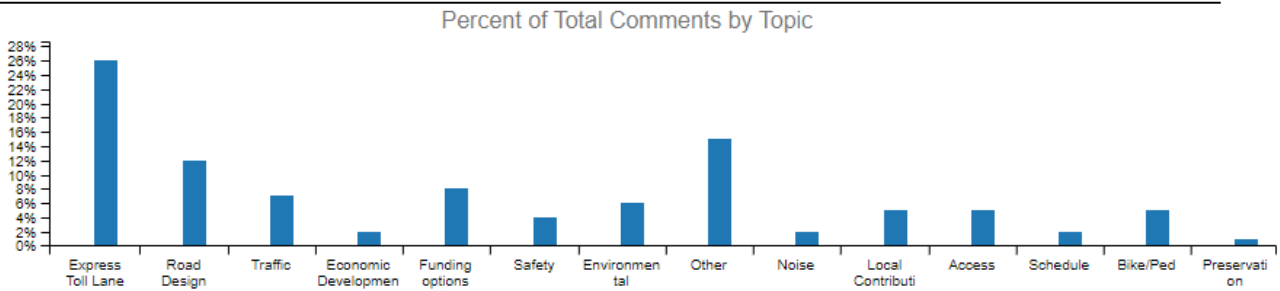
Public Input Statistics from Live Virtual Public Meeting and Virtual Informational Open House

There were a total of 81 questions and comments submitted during the Live Virtual Public meeting and Virtual Informational Open House. When submitting a question or comment, participants were able to choose the category that best fit an overarching topic of their submission and to select their level of favorability for the proposed project.

Participants were also given the opportunity to select a category that best fit overarching topic of their question or comment. Categories included access, bike/ped, economic development, economic concerns, express toll lanes, funding options, local contributions, noise, preservation, road design, schedule, traffic and other. These categories with corresponding submissions are labeled below in *Figure 1*. The most common category submission during the meetings was ‘Express Toll Lane’. Questions and comments from the participants can be seen in **Attachment 1** of this document.

Figure 1 - Categories of Questions and Comments Submitted

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In addition to those that attended and signed into the Live Virtual Public Meetings and Virtual Informational Open House, over 1,100 people are also signed up to receive newsletters and updates about the Project.

Attachment 1

Questions and Comments Submitted at the Live Virtual Public Meeting

Participants were able to choose the categories that went along with the submissions. The primary topics are shown below. Questions and comments submitted during the Live Virtual Public Meeting are verbatim below. Topics are in alphabetical order.

Access

- Will I be able to access 69N from Blue Valley Pkwy, and access Blue Valley Pkwy from 69S?
- Does the toll express lane have access for entry/exit to all current access points? If not, how limited? Seems safety would be major concern in moving from Express Lane to many exits.
- Looking at larger highways, it's been demonstrated that adding lanes has regressive returns. Traffic generally is most affected when there is a flow interruption such as lane changes to avoid traffic, and merges causing following drivers to slow in a recursive cascade. Specifically, this is exaggerated on the blue valley parkway to 135th exit where 69 south's right lane ends and BV Pkwy require 2 merges. Why is a plan that omits a 3rd lane that focuses on correcting interchanges and creation of collector/feeder not submitted?

Bike/Ped

- Is a new bridge on 127th Street over the highway included in the project? Is the 132nd bridge to be rebuild and if so, how long will it be closed. Is the walking

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trail between 127th and 132nd on the west side of the highway going to be usable during and after construction?

- Since the opening of 159th Street exit/entrance to 69 the traffic has expanded a lot in a short amount of time south of 151st. Why is 151st the southern cut off? This seems short sighted.
- There exists a bike trail just south of 135th Street that passes under US 69. The bike trail runs alongside Tomahawk Creek that also passes under US 69 at the same location. Deer, coyotes, bob cats, turkeys, and other wildlife roam within this area. Will the bike path and a pathway for the wildlife be accommodated by the widening that is contemplated? If that has not yet been determined, are these considerations likely to be prioritized in the environmental impact study?

Environmental Concerns

- What measures, if any, will be taken to mitigate increased sound pollution in communities near the affected portions of Route 69?
- You keep mentioning that lower income people won't be at a disadvantage because they don't have to use an express lane every day. However, this is close-minded. First, if there's an emergency and they need to travel faster, it's unethical to make someone pay, especially if they can't afford it. Second, you're talking about theory, and theory never plays out as expected in practice. The express lane will undoubtedly cause more problems than it will solve, and it's a short-term solution at best.
- You give an example of the cost for a user that would make 5 one way trips a week. People who live south of this project and work north of it would be making two trips a day. Does that mean that such individuals using the express option would have an annual cost of over \$700??
- Will locals be required to pay toll?
- I am not in favor of an expressway because it does not treat low-income people equally, allowing people who are willing to either pay more or who have higher income to take advantage of the benefits of an express lane more than someone who does not have that disposable income. What is the best way for me to express my opposition to this plan and preferring building general lanes for all forms of traffic to use?

Express Toll Lanes

- Marketing on social media is making it sound like the Express Toll Lanes option is the only way to reduce congestion. But as presented here, the Traditional Widening option would reduce congestion as well. If cost isn't a reason as to why the Express Toll Lane option is being pushed, why not proceed with the

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Traditional Widening option first, and if congestion isn't good enough, then implement Express Toll Lanes?

- Mechanics of money collection? toll booths? credit card vs exact change? Same speed limit on express lane as regular lanes?
- HOV or bidirectional lanes considered? Speed limit on Exp Lane? How will tolls be collected? What method of separating Exp Lane from normal lane? How many Express lanes possible?
- I35 has never put in a toll lane, it has more traffic. Why does 69 need a toll?
- According to the speed of traffic slide you showed, with traditional widening all traffic goes at 40 MPH. Under the toll option, some (those paying) go 55 MPH while others (those not paying) go 35 MPH. So, if you have money, you'll get there faster. It seems all drivers benefit by traditional widening. Tolling seems to favor the wealthier that are price elastic.
- It sounds like a foregone conclusion that KDOT/OP Council is moving towards Express Lane instead of Traditional Widening. How can ALL citizens of Overland Park (instead of the limited subset selected for a survey) voice opinion on both options? Will results/surveys be made publicly available? (Personally, in favor of Traditional Widening)
- Who gets the toll money? What are the administration costs related to toll collection vs. collections?
- The only toll road I know of in the area / State is I-70. Area taxpayers pay a ton of money in taxes for roads. And now we'll have to pay more in tolls. We successfully used traditional widening to expand I-435 and could work for 69 as well. It seems we're charging tolls because the legislature said KDOT could and this wealthy area is ripe for charging tolls.
- Do you anticipate the toll revenue eventually completely paying off the costs for the infrastructure upgrades? Or, do you foresee the revenue chasing ongoing costs for the original projects plus future upgrades/repairs forever? I assume the latter is true, but what happens with the revenue if it outpaces the costs for the project?
- Express Toll Lanes and lane widening are short term solutions at best (there's plenty of research to back). My question is, why haven't you looked into actual solutions that will address the root cause and/or be long term solutions that will not need to be addressed in the next 2-5 years after completion such as the current proposed solution? Express toll lanes are already outdated ways of thinking, so more future looking solutions should be considered. They would be more expensive, but the potential gains in the future would be far greater.
- Will there be a place for the public to post questions/concerns and get a response after this meeting?

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- What happens to the cost of the toll lane, when there is an accident, or disabled auto in one of the two standard lanes?
- Has the train left the station on express lanes? Under what conditions would express lanes not move forward?

Funding Options

- Aren't you fixing problems that KDOT designed? Example 435 exit and entrance ramps and Blue Valley Parkway merge to south 69? Why should we pay to fix your mistakes through express toll lanes?
- Do the tolls cover maintenance of the roads long-term?
- It's obvious the express toll lane is because of lack of funding, due to diverting of funds from KDOT to general fund. How do we stop the legislature and governor from stealing tax dollars from KDOT?
- Has the legislature weighed in on this project and the method of funding? KDOT funds have been raided over many, many years to balance the state budget, is this a reason Express Toll Lanes are being considered?
- It feels like Johnson County and the KC metro area is a source of a lot of the state's income/funding. Why should local residents pay all the same taxes as other Kansas residents and still not have our highways provided without additional tolls/taxes? We do more than our share already.

Local Contributions

- The public survey done by ETC at the end of last year revealed that only 24% of residents approved of tolling. The follow up survey which was done in January by Zoom with a moderator adding context only raised the approval percentage by 10 points or so. The website states that the tolling lane needs to have community approval. Approximately 2 of 3 residents do not approve of a toll lane. It appears that the only approval that counts is if the City Council approves. Why will the Council Members be forced to approve something the residents don't want? (KDOT knows Overland Park does not have tens of million dollars to fund a local contribution.) In light of these facts, shouldn't KDOT withdraw the tolling proposal and proceed without a local contribution?
- Most residents believe that the only source of revenue for KDOT is the gas tax. However, here in Kansas the Department of Transportation also receive revenue from the Kansas Sales Tax, which is charged on all purchases. KDOT receives approximately 1 percentage point of the 6.5% charged on purchases. That translates to 1 cent of every dollar that is spent in the State of Kansas. This means that KDOT receives revenue of every dollar spent on groceries. Overland Park receives 1 percentage point of sales tax. This means that Overland Park

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and KDOT receive approximately the same amount. In 2019 Overland Park received approximately \$49 Million Dollars for the general fund. KDOT also received this amount from purchases in Overland Park also. KDOT is asking for a local contribution. It would seem that the residents of Overland Park provide a very large contribution already. What can't Overland Park tax remittances be considered as the local contribution?

- Taxes are paid for roads. Patrons should not be charged to use this road. O.P. wanted to annex most of southern Johnson County and now there are traffic issues. Plans should have been made for congestion a long time ago. I agree with a previous comment. Just because a person can afford to pay extra or chooses to pay extra for a faster lane, doesn't make it right. Not everyone can afford it, but we all pay taxes for the roads. We all have a right to get somewhere in a timely manner, not just those who have more funds. Also, how can emergency vehicles access the toll road? I am against a toll road. Thank you.

Noise

- As you are aware, many thousands of residents live along or near the 69 corridors. North of 435, there exist sound barriers on each side of 69 Highway. What, if any plans exist for sound barriers for the 69 corridors?
- There are many homes between 129th Street and 159th Street which not only border US 69 but actually about the right of way. These homes are represented by HOAs that have been included in the Advisory Group are some distance away from US 69 and will not be as significantly impacted as many other homes. Will other HOAs that have a greater interest in the US 69 Corridor project be included in the Advisory Group? Our HOA, that is close to US 69 and I suspect other HOAs that will be similarly impacted, would like to be included in the Advisory Group, will this happen? We would like to provide input before the study is completed and reported in the fall.

Preservation

- What happens when the issue comes back in the near future? This is a short-term solution as collective human behavior adapts to changes and will very quickly go back to being an issue exactly like it is today. Atlanta is a perfect example of how Express toll lanes were a short-term solution. Places where they are "working" are only because they haven't seen the adaptation yet. They will eventually be back to where they were. Another improvement project will be needed in the near future. More long-term solutions should be considered.

Road Design

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- Right now, to get into Missouri, you can take 199th Street to state line which is in horrible repair. If state line and 195th Street were improved to Holmes Road, some of the 69 congestion would go away.
- You showed one building impacted under the non-toll option. It appeared to be impacted because of parallel exterior lanes (like the Nall, Roe lanes). Why would those lanes be needed at that interchange?
- 1-Has there been any consideration for 2 lanes in the same direction? North in the am and South in the pm. St. Louis has this and seems to work well. 2-What if pay for the express lane and someone drives at slower speed. I'm stuck 3-You mentioned the Ks Turnpike Authority will oversee if a toll road. Will traffic enforcement be the same as today; City, County and State?
- On the original design that was shown in the first public house, the lines highlighted in orange represented what needed to be done now and blue represented what could be done in the future. Is there a chance that the improvements highlighted in blue (I-435, College Blvd, and 135th Street interchange improvements) could be included in the first phase of US-69 improvements?
- If you're trying to use Express Toll Lanes so you don't have to expand the corridor in the future, wouldn't it be more expensive now, but cheaper overall, to expand the highway by 2 lanes in each direction now?

Safety

- It looks like this may be considered for any plan? There are a significant number of accidents as a result of the following traffic flow of those attempting to enter 69 and exit @ 135th. (right lane) Southbound entry of Blue Valley Parkway into/on Southbound 69 (127th Block) enters into the innermost lane that merges with traffic approaching 132nd St. Bridge. Now that you've opened up the space (west end) under 132nd Bridge with recent lane extensions. If you would consider an overpass to enter S-69 to the outermost lane for traffic to merge in a (normal) right to left ingress. I truly feel this would cease the resistance of vehicles cutting across 2 lanes of traffic in such a short span of roadway and lessen the vehicular interaction friction and number of accidents as a result. *(keeping in mind this was first built to farmland and a sports complex @ 135th Street at the time of engineering)

Schedule

- Can you expand on what happens with regard to the [quote]construction pipeline announcement[quote] and what specifically needs to be done to launch the alternative delivery procurement? More specifically what is driving the start

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of the alternative delivery procurement and when do you see that starting? (i.e. environmental approvals, funding available, etc.)

Traffic

- The other extreme bottleneck (and accident prone) is the northbound clover leaf from I435 Eastbound to enter US 69 to go northbound, because the clover leaf brings cars into the right lane of US 69 but these want to move to the left lane in the very same lane where cars are trying to exit from US69 to go west on I435. This must be fixed no matter whether toll or no toll is done.

Other

- Should the project be pushed back in order to collect more data regarding traffic post-pandemic? Not only does the current data not support your projections (at best it's on par with pre-pandemic levels) your traffic projections are guesses at best considering no one knows how things will change after COVID-19. I would think waiting to collect more data would be wise.
- Why is there no option to control the overdevelopment of Southern Johnson County which is a significant cause of the increased congestion?
- Putting a fast lane on Highway 69 is a tollway, is that tied to house bill 2296?
- What is the thought on continuing it down through Miami County? 2 full lanes from Louisburg rush hour.
- Will you address the social class issue around charging people for using the "faster" lane? Society as a whole will change after COVID-19, and it's important to understand that social class issues will be more prevalent, especially if this project goes forward as planned. For example, the majority of people able to work from home after the pandemic will be higher earners that can more easily afford to pay. Obviously, they won't need to travel as they are working from home. The majority of people driving post-pandemic will be lower income blue collar workers that cannot as easily afford to pay toll. The people that will be paying toll will be higher earners that still need to drive, relegating the lower income earners to slower moving lanes. This project will exacerbate social class issues. Just because people are willing to pay doesn't mean they should. The solution being proposed is a short term one at best, but it will have lasting effects on exacerbating larger societal issues.
- On traditional widening, how many lanes?

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Attachment 2

Questions and Comments Submitted During the Virtual Informational Open House #2 from April 16 through April 30.

Participants were able to choose the categories that went along with the submissions. The questions and comments are organized in the corresponding categories of access, bike/ped, economic development, environmental concerns, express toll lanes, funding options, local contributions, noise, road design, schedule, traffic and other. Questions and comments submitted during the Virtual Informational Open House are verbatim as follows:

Access

- No express toll lane on US 69.

Bike/ Ped

- I'm support the express toll option and frankly wouldn't mind seeing the entire facility be a toll road. (People who use the road should pay for the road.) I also think supporting multimodal options is important and KDOT could play an important role in bringing the various impacted communities and government entities to the table.

Economic Development

- I am in favor of the toll lane. Go big now or later. The tolls only affect those who use them and provides some ongoing revenue.
- Go ahead with the Express Toll Lane Alternative for U.S. 69 because adding an Express Lane will reduce congestion on U.S. 69 by giving drivers a choice.

Environmental Concerns

- I don't really understand the difference between this screen and the previous one.
- I prefer the ETL option (inside) with a bus lane (outside). I also prefer the interchange option with the smallest footprint. We don't need to waste money building out huge footprints with generous loops so we can drive without any reduction in speed.
- So, better roads for those that will pay the extra. Are you people nuts? Find the state and federal funds and make it happen. Trillions and trillions in federal funds in the past 12 years. Figure it out. But stop coming to the public with new and never-ending ways to tax people. And don't create federal luxury roads for some of the public. This is just wrong.

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Express Toll Lane

- Traditional widening is preferable vs toll. Toll may relieve pressure on the road short term, but if traffic increases as indicated, widening is inevitable. I don't see any benefit from the toll option.
- Hi, KDOT! You and your partners/fellow stakeholders in the Project should also consider making the proposed US Route 69 Express Lanes free for HOV 2+ or HOV 3+. If you consider HOV 3+, you should consider half-price (or other reduced-price) tolls for double-occupant vehicles. Thank you, -Mike.
- Billing users according to tag number is a good idea as we have experienced on the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Seems like some people will not pay their bills. How will the authority insure payment?
- I support a toll lane but ONLY if it's dynamic pricing. So, it would be \$0 in low traffic, up to \$0.20/mile in the heaviest traffic, but always at a price that is intended to attract sufficient users at any given time. Please use a nationally universal system like EZ Pass.
- ETLs place higher speed traffic next to lower speed traffic and this seems more dangerous than traditional widening.
- ETLs do not have access to on and off ramps without crossing ALL lanes of traffic. This seems more dangerous and the terrible drivers in this region rarely let people in a lane, so it is going to be nearly impossible to cross all lanes of traffic to enter or leave ETLs.
- ETLs seem like an elitist, hate filled, democrat party idea. Where only those that can afford to travel in it can reach the higher speed. That is not fair. Something we have come to expect from the democrat party - lack of fairness.

Funding Options

- Recent studies found that toll roads/lanes are the least economical and are notorious for over charging commercial vehicles and siphoning off revenues for non-toll road and/or non-highway needs. This should never be an option, because higher cost for transportation to get goods and services to the consumer = higher cost to the consumer. Higher cost to the consumer and tolls, tend to impact the marginalized population, proportionally higher, than others.
- I find the comparison between traditional lane additions and express lanes to be highly disingenuous. Express toll lanes require more footprint and more development costs for separated ramps and lanes, not less. Further, Johnson County is the wealthiest in the state contributing far greater tax receipts than is being received, express tolls lane(s) are just another form of use taxation. The traffic does not magically disappear because a toll tax is being imposed, it is just penalizing those who cannot afford it. This will push those who cannot afford the

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[quote]Lexus Lanes[/quote] to sit in traffic or move to local roads. How about the state figure out how to give the county its fair share of roadway development dollars back and support the economic engine that contributes an outsized number of jobs and growth to the region and stop trying to spin toll lanes as a "benefit". Alternatively, the county should limit growth along the corridor to sustainable levels that can be supported by the current infrastructure growth and funding plans.

- I am against a toll road or toll lanes in Johnson County. As a former resident of Dallas, there are toll roads everywhere, and they do nothing to help. I am also curious as to why this particular stretch was suddenly ripe for consideration when 35 in Olathe, 435 in Overland Park, and the 435/35/10 interchange projects were both redone without tolls. I am concerned that this toll project is already going to move forward as you all have marketing and branding for it. If 69 needs to be widened, then widen it. But do so without tolls. The state should do a better job of managing its money to expand the roads as needed without further imposing costs on locals who travel the road.

Local Contribution

- It is unclear why the traditional widening requires more of a footprint than the toll alternative. In both cases, an additional lane is added (both directions). In both cases, if additional capacity is needed, it appears more lanes will be needed. what is the difference.

Noise

- Traditional widening means more traffic can pass by any given point at one time. This is the goal, to carry more volume. And to share the cost equally among those that use it.

Other

- The traditional widening approach seems fair and equitable for all tax payers.
- The traditional widening approach seems safer since you do not have higher speed traffic next to lower speed traffic. All drivers operate with the same speed limits.
- If the State needs more tax revenue, then tax the electric vehicles more since they avoid the fuel tax. Tax battery replacements in electric vehicles more. Tax the purchase or sale of electric vehicles more.

Preservation

- I am confused, I already commented previously on another screen. I prefer the ETL (inside protected lane) option with a bus lane on the outside. I don't think

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we need to expand the I-435 to US 69 interchange. It was just upgraded and should be sufficient for some time to come.

Road Design

- I enjoyed the virtual tour, thank you. My 2 cents are that the express toll lane option is best because it minimizes the impact to the surrounding environment while providing a solution with options for users. I like the idea of using the center of 69 for the majority of the expansion.

Safety

- Add non-toll lane.
- How is traffic flow to be maintained during high congestion if the (high-speed) inside lane wishes to use an exit ramp (slow to cross 2 lanes of slow bumper to bumper traffic as they near)? Can traffic exit the center toll lane at any point right up to the exit ramp or will there be restrictions (like 1/2 mile before all exit ramps). If departing the center toll lane is restricted will there be plenty of room to exit the center lane or will the cars that need to exit be required to use a small section that might tend to increase congestion). How to encourage out of area (I-29 & Missouri) drivers to stop to pick up a K-Tag upon entering US-69? (Will we be able to pick one up (visitors station / vending machine) along the road way?) I can see a lot of study has gone into the toll option and from the funding part of the presentation how it is being promoted. I could see this working on I-70 or I-35 where the goal was to keep traffic bypassing the city moving, but much of the traffic entering/exiting the highway appears to be local (actively using the exit ramps based on traffic counts and according to the study).

Schedule

- I'm a proponent of ETL. If I need to move more quickly, then I can pay. I know the arguments on both sides. However, you don't have to pay more if you stay in the free lanes. Each person has the opportunity to use the lane that works best for their budget and travel time. I assume the ETL will always remain ETL in order to assist with traffic flow. I'd like future information to explain what happens with the funds collected, who gets them and how they will be allocated. (Sorry if I missed this somewhere on the site, I'll look around a little more)
- In the analyses presented, don't think the functionality of the Express Lane is being adequately characterized in terms of
 - 1. limited access to current on/off ramps
 - 2. number and location of access points to the Express Lane
 - 3. how effectively Express Lane's users will be identified without physical barriers to access

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- Furthermore, I don't see the following safety concerns of the Express Lane being fully recognized/addressed:
 - 1. Required Lane changes - limited locations and length available for lane changes will be challenging for drivers.
 - 2. With no physical barrier, attempted Express Lane entries/exits at unauthorized locations are a safety issue.
 - 3. Driver confusion over Express Lane access/ tolling/ and traffic flow are hazards to safe vehicle operation.
 - My perception is that the Project Team is promoting the Express Lane toll option. The team presentation says [quote]we are excited[quote] about this option, as if it is a new toy. The media has already adopted [quote]the US 69 toll road improvements[quote]. in its reporting.

Traffic

- I am all for expanding us 69 highways, I am NOT in favor of toll lanes, I live on 199th Street and travel is 69 at least twice a day to my business in Lenexa and home after work. Sometimes multiple trips.