

E V A N S V I L L E  
**TRAILS**  
C O A L I T I O N

September 29, 2020

Governor Eric Holcomb, State of Indiana  
Office of the Governor, Statehouse  
200 W. Washington St., Rm. 206  
Indianapolis IN 46204-2797

Governor Andy Beshear, State of Kentucky  
700 Capitol Avenue, Suite 100  
Frankfort KY 40601

RE: I-69 Bridge ORX Project/Highway 41 Bridges

Dear Governor Holcomb and Governor Beshear:

We have witnessed unprecedented increases in outdoor activities by Indiana and Kentucky community members, since the Covid-19 pandemic quarantine period. Urban hikers/pedestrians and bicyclists have found solace and comfort on trails, bicycle routes, and alternative pathways for physical, mental and emotional health.

Active transportation and recreation ways are important community infrastructure resources for health, wellness, and alternative travel means, but has often been overlooked when infrastructure improvements are planned, or designed. Pedestrians and bicyclists use active transportation as a way to get from one place to another. A prime example of this is community members and trail and bike route tourists who move easily over the Ohio River at Historic Madison, Indiana to Milton, and Kentucky on separated and protected multi-use pathways, side-by-side with the U.S. 421 bridge area.

At Jeffersonville, Indiana to Louisville, Kentucky, pedestrians and bicyclists have the opportunity to cross over the Ohio River on the separated and protected multi-use pathways at the Lewis and Clark, East End Bridge and the beautiful Big Four Bridge, now being utilized by community members and visitors alike, as it has become a travel destination and tourist attraction. It is a different scenario west of the Louisville to Indiana, Clark, Floyd counties metro area and the Mississippi River, there is no existing Ohio River crossing that is safe for pedestrians and bicyclists, except for a small ferry option between KY 91 and Southern Illinois. The dozens of popular recreation areas, travel destinations and tourist attractions in Southwest Indiana and Northwest Kentucky attract tourists and visitors from across the nation, including local and national hikers and touring cyclists that utilize the local, regional and national trails and bicycle routes that intersect and converge in the area.

The U.S. Bicycle Route #76, currently mapped, Virginia-Colorado, is a visionary east to west transcontinental route and intersects through Kentucky south of Evansville and Henderson. Several U.S. Bicycle Route System corridors are expected to intersect nearby, such as The U.S. Bicycle Route System #37, which travels south from Chicago to Indianapolis to Evansville, #35 from Indianapolis to Louisville, and #25 from Cincinnati to Louisville, serve as

a combined corridor leading to the Gulf of Mexico. Preventing pedestrians and bicyclists from crossing the Ohio River at Evansville and Henderson not only disrupts active transportation and recreation of local community members, but also disrupts national trails and bicyclists networks.

Important to note, is that those of us who advocate for separated and protected pedestrian and bicycle lanes on the I69 ORX Bridge will utilize the crossing by bringing the U.S. Bicycle Route #37 from Chicago to Evansville, to Henderson and southward to connect with United States Bicycle Route #76 at Sebring, KY—this route currently provides a base pedestrian and bicyclist accommodation eastward, to Virginia to the Atlantic, and westward to Kansas, planned to the Pacific. In addition, The American Discovery Trail is mapped through the southside of Evansville, IN, connects eastward from Cincinnati and Delaware to Atlantic, connecting westward from St. Louis and California/Pacific and currently provides a base pedestrian and bicyclist route north of the Ohio River.

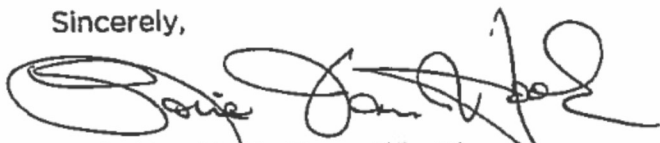
By means of the east to west foundations and the north to south I69 ORX link, establishing this route will attract the United States Bicycle Route System #35 from Louisville through the I69 ORX Junction to the Mississippi River and to the Gulf of Mexico. This will draw The ACA Underground Railroad Route prospectively from the Gulf of Mexico through the I69 ORX Bridge, advancing on to Detroit and Canada. The United States Bicycle Route System #25 is within the list of attractions from Cincinnati and Louisville this way. The United States Bicycle Route Systems will be approved by local governments, as will the American Discovery Trail through Southern Indiana, and likely the Underground Rail Road. As a result, the I69 ORX accommodation for pedestrians and bicyclists is IMPERATIVE in providing safety and convenience for hike and bike passage.

Currently, in the Evansville, Indiana to Henderson, Kentucky area, there exists a present opportunity to prevent this unnecessary barrier to active transportation, recreation, and tourism development over the Ohio River. Design planning is in progress for the new Interstate 69 Bridge, meant to replace one or both of the U.S. Highway 41 bridges.

We call on you, Governor Holcomb and Governor Beshear, to advocate on behalf of pedestrians and bicyclists, active transportation and environmentally-friendly access to the Ohio River bridges at Evansville and Henderson, by advocating for and requiring that physically separated, protected, and safe multi-use pathways be incorporated into Interstate 69 Bridge structure design plans at Evansville and Henderson. This is not a new concept, as mentioned above, and is in fact in existence around the U.S. at many major prominent bridge locations—there are many examples available upon your request.

I appreciate your attention to this very important issue concerning pedestrians and bicyclists in the Indiana and Kentucky area, as well as, regional and national adventure visitors and tourists. If you have questions, or comments, please contact me directly at (812) 319-3496.

Sincerely,



Lorie Van Hook, Executive Director  
Evansville Trails Coalition