

# HOUSE BUDGET REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

## Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the 2026 Regular Session

January 29, 2026

### Call to Order and Roll Call

The first meeting of the House Budget Review Subcommittee on Transportation of the House Standing Committee on Appropriations and Revenue was held on January 29, 2026, at 12:00 PM in Room 131 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Ken Upchurch, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

### Present were:

Members: Representatives Ken Upchurch, Chair; Randy Bridges, Vice Chair; Representatives John Blanton, Josh Branscum, Mary Beth Imes, Tom Smith, and Ashley Tackett Laferty.

Guests: Jim Gray, Secretary, KYTC; Mike Hancock, Deputy Secretary, KYTC; Ron Rigney, Transportation Engineer and Director of Program Management, Dept. of Highways, KYTC; Jason Siwula, Deputy State Highway Engineer, Dept. of Highways, KYTC; and, Shaun McKiernan, Budget Director, KYTC.

LRC Staff: Justin Perry, Jeremy Simpson, and Spring Emerson.

### Capital Projects and Highway Plan

Jim Gray, Secretary, KYTC; Mike Hancock, Deputy Secretary, KYTC; Jason Siwula, Deputy State Highway Engineer, Dept. of Highways, KYTC; and Shaun McKiernan, Budget Director, KYTC, presented information on Capital Projects and the Highway Plan.

Chair Upchurch expressed his appreciation for their response to the recent winter weather event. Secretary Gray commended the service of the KYTC snow and ice teams as they have been dealing with the aftermath of an unusual winter storm for the past five days, and their efforts continue. There are more than twenty-three hundred front line and support crew members and contractors with fifteen hundred plows and trucks that have driven more than 793,000 miles since Friday, through some of the worst weather, to keep our roads passable. He also recognized and thanked John Moore, Executive Director, Office of Project Delivery and Preservation, Dept. of Highways, and James Ballinger, State Highway Engineer.

Chair Upchurch also mentioned the crews that have worked very hard on the electric lines throughout the state. Secretary Gray said there were also utility workers from other states that came to assist.

Capital Projects - In response to Representative Smith, Mr. McKiernan said projects can only be reauthorized once. Many of the projects take longer to get started than expected, which is caused by various factors. An example would be the process of property acquisitions.

In response to Representative Blanton, Mr. McKiernan said the expected 1.5 percent reduction in revenue receipts next year as compared to last year is largely due to the assumption made by the Consensus Forecasting Group that the motor fuels tax would decrease by 1.6 cents next fiscal year. Chair Upchurch commented that it would be based on the wholesale price of gasoline.

In response to Representative Branscum, Mr. McKiernan said a breakdown of the line items would be provided, along with the original cost of the project and additional information. Many of the costs are inflationary in nature. Additional federal funds will be used for the commercial truck parking. Secretary Gray added that Public-Private Partnership (P3) funding has been used in the past and could be considered. The interstates are more traveled now by heavy commercial traffic nationwide than ever before, and we are working to address that where we can within our region.

Highway Plan - Deputy Secretary Hancock provided information on the 2026 Recommended Highway Plan, which is largely driven by bridge and pavement data alongside Strategic Highway Investment Formula for Tomorrow (SHIFT) rankings. It looks at every project and seeks to prioritize those by sorting out the quality projects. The 2026 Recommended Highway Plan addresses five distinct focus areas, which are Asset Management, the High-Growth Counties program, regular state and federal funding investments, the Zvarious program, and the County Priority Projects program.

In response to Chair Upchurch, Deputy Secretary Hancock said the estimated increase in costs was reflected in the Governor's Recommendation. Secretary Gray said the additional \$125 million in General Fund was for the Brent Spence Bridge, and negotiations with Ohio and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are underway, as other Ohio River bridges are also undergoing improvements.

Representative Tackett Laferty commented that within the past eight years she has seen tremendous improvement on the Mountain Parkway, which she travels daily, and expressed her appreciation. Chair Upchurch echoed this sentiment and Secretary Gray commented that it is a team effort.

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business before the subcommittee, the meeting was adjourned at 1:02 PM.