

I-24 Southeast Choice Lanes

Frequently Asked Questions

The Tennessee Department of Transportation has selected DriveTN as the partner for the 24 Southeast Choice Lanes project following a competitive, best-value procurement. The project will add new capacity between Nashville and Murfreesboro while preserving the general-purpose lanes drivers use today.

TDOT is now working to verify commitments, complete the required reviews and finalize the agreement. Additional project information will be shared as details are finalized and can appropriately be released.

Project Overview

What is the I-24 Southeast Choice Lanes project?

The project will add two new Choice Lanes in each direction on I-24 between Nashville and Murfreesboro. The existing general-purpose lanes will remain available, giving drivers an additional travel option without removing the lanes they use today.

Why is this project needed?

I-24 between Nashville and Murfreesboro is one of Tennessee's busiest transportation corridors. The project is designed to address congestion, improve travel reliability, support the movement of people and freight and help meet Middle Tennessee's future transportation needs.

What are Choice Lanes?

Choice Lanes are additional lanes that drivers may choose to use for a fee when they want a more reliable trip. Drivers may continue using the existing general-purpose lanes at no cost. No driver will be required to use the Choice Lanes.

Are any existing general-purpose lanes being converted to Choice Lanes?

No. The project adds new Choice Lanes while preserving the existing general-purpose lanes available today.

Will drivers be required to use the Choice Lanes?

No. The key word is **choice**. Drivers may continue using the existing general-purpose lanes or choose the new lanes when travel time and reliability matter most to them.

Will the existing general-purpose lanes remain free?

Yes. Drivers will continue to have access to the existing general-purpose lanes at no cost.

How will the new lanes help drivers who do not use them?

The new Choice Lanes will add capacity to the corridor. By giving some drivers an additional travel option, the project is expected to improve mobility and traffic flow throughout the corridor, including for drivers who remain in the general-purpose lanes.

Project Delivery and DriveTN's Selection

Who is DriveTN?

DriveTN is the team selected by TDOT through the competitive, best-value procurement for the I-24 Southeast Choice Lanes project. The team includes:

- Cintra
- Transurban
- Tikehau Star/Infra/Capital
- Ferrovial
- Webber
- AECOM

How was DriveTN selected?

Four nationally competitive teams participated in TDOT's rigorous procurement. Proposals were evaluated based on technical performance and financial value through an established best-value evaluation process. That process resulted in DriveTN's selection as TDOT's partner for the project.

Was this a low-bid procurement?

No. This was a best-value procurement that evaluated both technical performance and financial value.

Has the final agreement been completed?

Not yet. TDOT is working to verify commitments, complete the required reviews and finalize the agreement. Certain proposal and project details remain confidential during this phase. Additional information will be released as details are finalized and can appropriately be shared.

What is a public-private partnership?

A public-private partnership, or P3, is a project-delivery approach that combines public oversight with private-sector financing, design, construction, operations and maintenance capabilities.

Subject to the final agreement, DriveTN will finance, design, build, operate and maintain the Choice Lanes. TDOT will establish the project requirements, oversee performance, coordinate governmental responsibilities, administer the agreement and hold the selected partner accountable.

Is Tennessee privatizing I-24?

No. TDOT will retain public oversight and accountability. The final agreement will establish the responsibilities, requirements, performance standards and protections that apply to the project and the selected partner.

What responsibilities will TDOT retain?

TDOT will continue to provide public oversight, administer the agreement, conduct technical reviews, coordinate governmental responsibilities, support appropriate environmental and right-of-way activities, engage stakeholders and hold the selected partner accountable for meeting the final agreement's requirements.

Project Cost and Concession Value

What is the estimated construction cost?

DriveTN's proposed construction cost is \$9.2B.

Why is the construction cost higher than the original \$4.5 billion estimate?

The original \$4.5 billion estimate reflected TDOT's base project concept. DriveTN's proposed construction cost of approximately \$9.2 billion reflects an enhanced project with additional features, improvements and benefits beyond the original concept.

The construction cost reflects a better project with additional features and benefits, not a higher cost for the same project.

What improvements are included beyond the original project concept?

Publicly released elements of the proposal include:

- Enhanced access and corridor connectivity.
- A design intended to reduce overall right-of-way impacts.
- Commitments for park-and-ride facilities.
- Commitments supporting future transit integration.
- Commitments to partner with workforce-development and training organizations.

What is concession value?

Concession value is the Proposer's offer based on their view of the potential value of the corridor after accounting for project and financing costs. It is not unrestricted cash available today and it is not secured until the final terms and protections are in place.

How much concession value is included in the proposal?

DriveTN's proposal includes approximately \$24.8B in total concession value.

Is concession value cash available to Tennessee today?

No. Concession value is not unrestricted cash available today. TDOT is working to verify commitments, complete the required reviews and finalize the agreement.

How will the concession value be used?

TDOT will work with the selected partner and the U.S. Department of Transportation's Build America Bureau to verify the proposal assumptions, complete the required reviews and finalize an agreement that protects Tennessee's interests and secures the proposed value. Future decisions will be considered through the Governor's Strategic Transportation Accountability Council, which will bring executive and legislative leaders together to provide transparency and accountability as concession value is secured and future decisions are considered.

Design and Community Benefits

How is DriveTN's proposed design different from TDOT's original concept?

DriveTN proposes to locate the Choice Lanes on the outside of the existing general-purpose lanes. This approach creates a tighter footprint in portions of the corridor and is intended to reduce additional impacts where possible.

What community benefits are included in the proposal?

Publicly released community benefits include:

- A net reduction in overall right-of-way impacts.
- Avoiding impacts to Noble Place Townhomes.
- A Bell Road redesign that avoids impacts to the Pan-Asia Supermarket.
- Eliminating the need to rebuild the Hickory Hollow Parkway Bridge.
- Commitments for park-and-ride facilities.
- Commitments supporting future transit integration.
- Commitments to partner with workforce-development and training organizations.

Does a net reduction in impacts mean that no properties will be affected?

No. A net reduction means DriveTN's proposal reduces overall right-of-way impacts across the corridor compared with TDOT's base project concept. It does not mean that every impact has been eliminated.

Because DriveTN's design differs from the base concept, some impacts may shift to different locations. TDOT is evaluating those impacts as the design advances.

Are all community benefits final?

The community benefits are commitments included in DriveTN's proposal. TDOT is working to verify the commitments, complete the required reviews and incorporate approved requirements into the final agreement.

Will the project include park-and-ride facilities?

DriveTN's proposal includes commitments for park-and-ride facilities. TDOT is verifying those commitments and will provide additional information as the design and agreement are finalized.

Will the project support transit?

DriveTN's proposal includes commitments supporting future transit integration. Specific details will be shared as the design and agreement are finalized.

Will the project create workforce opportunities?

DriveTN is committed to partnering with organizations focused on workforce training, skilled-trades development, educational opportunities, veteran employment, local workforce recruitment and pathways into construction careers.

Property and Right-of-Way Questions

When will I know if my property is affected?

DriveTN's proposal includes a net reduction in overall right-of-way impacts within the corridor. TDOT is evaluating the impacts of the proposed design as the DriveTN team advances the design.

More detailed information will be shared as the project progresses. Public meetings will provide project updates, and potentially affected property owners will be contacted directly as information becomes available.

Are property impacts final?

No. TDOT is evaluating the impacts of the proposed design. Individual impacts should not be considered final until the necessary design, environmental and right-of-way reviews have been completed.

Will TDOT contact affected property owners directly?

Yes. Potentially affected property owners will be contacted directly as sufficiently detailed and validated project information becomes available.

What happens if property must be acquired?

If property acquisition becomes necessary, TDOT and DriveTN will work with affected property owners in accordance with applicable requirements, including the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act, commonly known as the Uniform Act.

The Uniform Act establishes requirements for property acquisition and relocation assistance and is intended to ensure consistent and fair treatment of affected property owners and occupants.

Will property owners have an opportunity to ask questions?

Yes. TDOT will provide information through public meetings, official project communications, direct stakeholder engagement and property-owner outreach as the design and required reviews advance.

Why were some design changes not shared during the procurement?

Confidentiality was required to protect the fairness and integrity of the competitive procurement. Following DriveTN's selection, TDOT can share more information as it is validated and can appropriately be released.

Potential Future Corridor Enhancements

What additional corridor enhancements are being considered?

The Transportation Modernization Board authorized further development of three potential future enhancements:

- **Northern Enhancement:** Potential extension along I-24/I-65 through Downtown Nashville.
- **Eastern Enhancement:** Potential extension along I-40 a few miles past the Nashville International Airport.
- **Southern Enhancement:** Potential extension along I-24 through Murfreesboro and along I-840 toward U.S. 41.

The base project comes first. These potential enhancements create an opportunity to evaluate additional connectivity and congestion relief, but Tennessee will determine whether, when and how any enhancement advances.

Are these enhancements part of the approved base project?

No. The enhancements are separate from the base project and are not approved construction projects.

What did the Transportation Modernization Board approve for the enhancements?

The Board authorized further development of the potential enhancements. That action allows additional work and evaluation; it does not authorize construction.

Would the proposed enhancements be built by DriveTN?

DriveTN has the first right of refusal to propose on the development of the enhancements.

What must happen before an enhancement can move forward?

Each potential enhancement would require:

- Additional project development.
- Technical and financial evaluation.
- Environmental review.
- Public engagement.
- Agreement on applicable terms.
- Future approvals before construction could begin.

Will the public have input on the potential enhancements?

Yes. Public engagement and the applicable environmental review processes would be required before an enhancement could advance to construction.

Could one enhancement advance without the others?

Each enhancement is separate from the base project and from the other potential enhancements. Each would need to satisfy its own development, review, public-engagement, and approval requirements.

User Fees and Operations

How much will it cost to use the Choice Lanes?

Specific user-fee rates have not been publicly established. Additional information will be provided when it is finalized and available for release.

Will the fee always be the same?

Previous studies have modeled traffic and revenue impacts based on various user fee rates but assumed a minimum trip cost of \$1 (2024 dollars) for the length of the corridor. Keeping the lanes below approximately 1,650 vehicles per hour per lane would be needed to maintain the minimum speeds expected for a price-managed lanes facility. Drivers utilizing Choice Lanes would expect to incur greater costs during peak congestion hours; however, expected time savings relative to general-purpose travel would increase as well.

Will commercial vehicles be allowed to use the Choice Lanes?

Yes. Commercial vehicles and trucks (excluding multi-trailer trucks) are allowed to use the Choice Lanes.

Are there certain vehicles that can use the Choice Lanes for free?

Yes, there are specific vehicles that will be able to use the Choice Lanes free of user fee assessment. These are considered “exempt vehicles” and include: law enforcement and other Authorized Emergency Vehicles, multi-passenger vehicles operated by a public transit authority, school buses and over-the-road buses.

Will drivers need a transponder or special account?

Payment and account requirements have not yet been publicly finalized. Instructions will be provided well before the Choice Lanes open.

Who will operate and maintain the Choice Lanes?

Subject to the final agreement, DriveTN will operate and maintain the Choice Lanes for the agreement term. TDOT will retain public oversight and enforce the agreement’s requirements and performance standards.

Project Schedule and Construction

When will construction begin?

Construction timing depends on completion of the required reviews, design development, the final agreement and other project milestones. TDOT will release updated schedule information through official project channels.

When are the Choice Lanes expected to open?

Specific milestone and opening dates have not been finalized. Additional schedule information will be released through official project channels as project development advances and details are finalized.

How long will construction take

The detailed construction schedule and sequencing are still being developed. More information will be released as the design advances and project details are finalized.

How will construction affect traffic?

Construction impacts and traffic-management plans will depend on the final design and construction sequencing. TDOT and DriveTN will provide advance notice of major traffic changes, closures and/or detours through official project and traveler-information channels.

Will access to homes and businesses be maintained during construction?

Maintaining appropriate access and minimizing disruption will be important considerations as construction plans are developed. Property-specific and business-access information will be shared as the design and construction sequencing advance.

How will emergency-response access be addressed?

Emergency access and coordination with emergency-service providers will be incorporated into project planning and construction coordination. More detailed information will be provided as plans are finalized.

Contractors, Suppliers, and Local Businesses

Will Tennessee contractors and suppliers have opportunities to participate?

Yes. A project of this scale is expected to require significant participation from Tennessee contractors, consultants, suppliers, vendors and workers.

Is TDOT selecting subcontractors for DriveTN?

No. DriveTN and its delivery team are responsible for assembling and managing the contractor and supplier network, subject to the final agreement, applicable law, required programs and TDOT oversight.

How can firms learn about contracting opportunities?

Firms should monitor official TDOT project communications and DriveTN's announced outreach and procurement channels. Information about specific opportunities will be provided through the appropriate channels as it becomes available.

Will small and disadvantaged businesses have opportunities?

The project is expected to create opportunities across the delivery chain. Information about applicable participation requirements, outreach activities and contracting opportunities will be provided through official project and DriveTN channels.

Will TDOT continue delivering other projects in the region?

Yes. TDOT's statewide and regional programs will continue through the Department's established planning, programming and project-delivery processes.

Public Involvement and Next Steps

What happens next?

TDOT is now working to:

- Verify DriveTN's commitments.
- Complete the required reviews.
- Evaluate design details and potential impacts.
- Finalize the agreement.
- Continue public and stakeholder engagement.
- Release additional information as details are finalized and can appropriately be shared.

How can the public provide feedback?

TDOT will provide opportunities for public input through project meetings, official notices, stakeholder engagement, community-specific outreach and other appropriate project channels as the design and reviews advance.

Will there be additional public meetings?

Yes. TDOT will hold public meetings and conduct community outreach as the project progresses. Meeting information will be announced through official TDOT and project communications.

Where can I find the latest project information?

The public should use TDOT's official I-24 Southeast Choice Lanes project website for verified project information, meeting announcements, materials and updates.

Why are some details still confidential?

Certain proposal and project information remains confidential under the procurement process while TDOT verifies commitments, completes required reviews and finalizes the agreement. Additional information will be released as details are finalized and can appropriately be shared.