

FASTLANE 2017 GRANT APPLICATION

I-555 (I-55 TO JONESBORO, SYSTEM PRESERVATION)



Interstate 555 National Freight Corridor Improvements

Project Name	Interstate 555: Interstate 55 to Jonesboro
Was a FASTLANE application for this project submitted previously?	No
If yes, what was the name of the project in the previous application?	N/A
Previously Incurred Project Cost	\$0
Future Eligible Project Cost	\$108.7 million
Total Project Cost	\$108.7 million
FASTLANE Request	\$65.2 million
Total Federal funding (including FASTLANE)	\$87.0 million
Are matching funds restricted to a specific project component? If so, which?	No
Is the project or a portion of the project currently located on the National Highway Freight Network?	Yes
Is the project or a portion of the project located on the NHS? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the project add capacity to the Interstate system? • Is the project in a national scenic area? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Highway System – Yes • Interstate Capacity – No • National Scenic Area – No
Do the project components include a railway-highway grade crossing or grade separate project? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If so, please include the grade crossing ID. 	No
Do the project components include an intermodal or freight rail project, or freight project within the boundaries of a public or private freight rail, water (including ports), or intermodal facility?	No
If answered yes to either of the two component questions above, how much of requested FASTLANE funds will be spent on each of these project components?	N/A
State(s) in which project is located	Arkansas
Small or large project	Large
Urbanized Area in which project is located, if applicable	Not in terms of the FASTLANE grant
Population of Urbanized Area	N/A
Is the project currently programmed in the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TIP • STIP • MPO Long Range Transportation Plan • State Long Range Transportation Plan • State Freight Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TIP – JATS TIP, within planning area • Arkansas STIP – Yes • LRTP – JATS MTP, within planning area • SLRTP – The Arkansas Long Range Plan is not project specific. • Arkansas SFP – SFP is in development. This project will be included.

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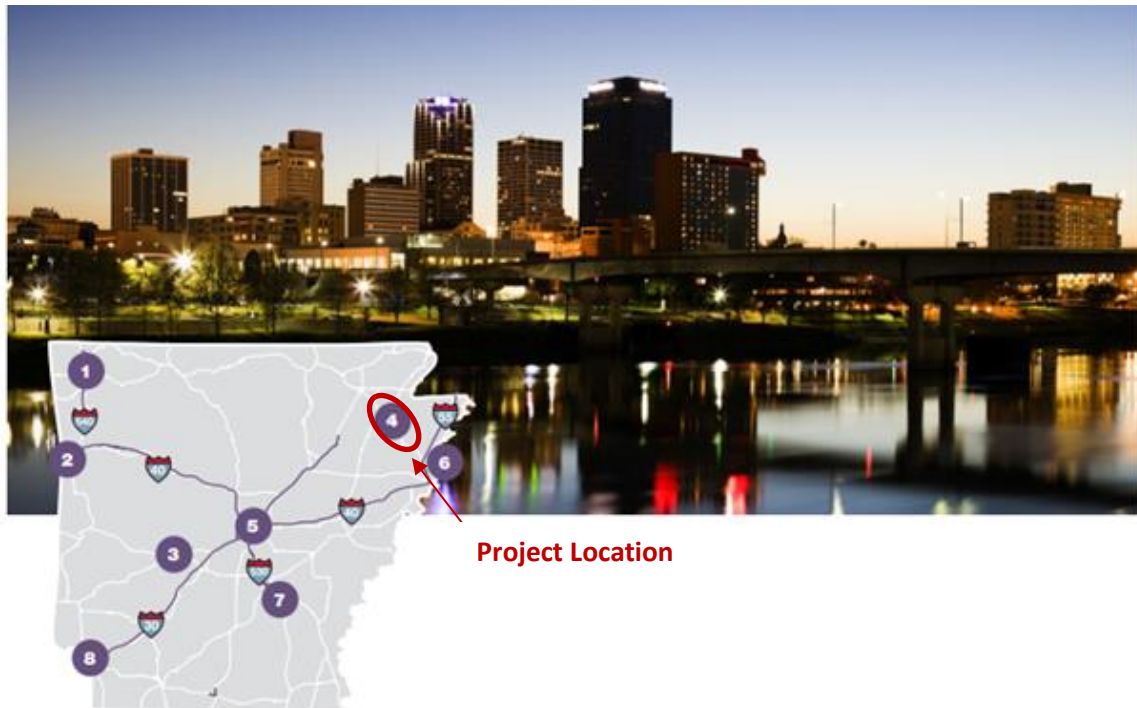
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I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Recently designated Interstate 555 (I-555) on the National Highway Freight Network (NHFN) is a 44-mile regional freight corridor that connects Memphis, Tennessee to Jonesboro, Arkansas via Interstate 55 (I-55). This corridor, formerly known as U.S. Highway 63, is a lifeline for trade and commerce in the region – providing a conduit for agricultural and manufactured goods between Memphis and Jonesboro and points beyond.

Figure 1: Major Urban Centers in Arkansas



MAJOR URBAN CENTERS (2015)

1 Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR - MO MSA 513,559	5 Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway, AR MSA 731,612
2 Fort Smith, AR - OK MSA 280,241	6 Memphis, TN - MS - AR MSA (includes West Memphis) 1,334,127
3 Hot Springs, AR MSA 97,177	7 Pine Bluff, AR MSA 93,696
4 Jonesboro, AR MSA 128,394	8 Texarkana, AR MSA 149,769

Source: Arkansas Economic Development Commission

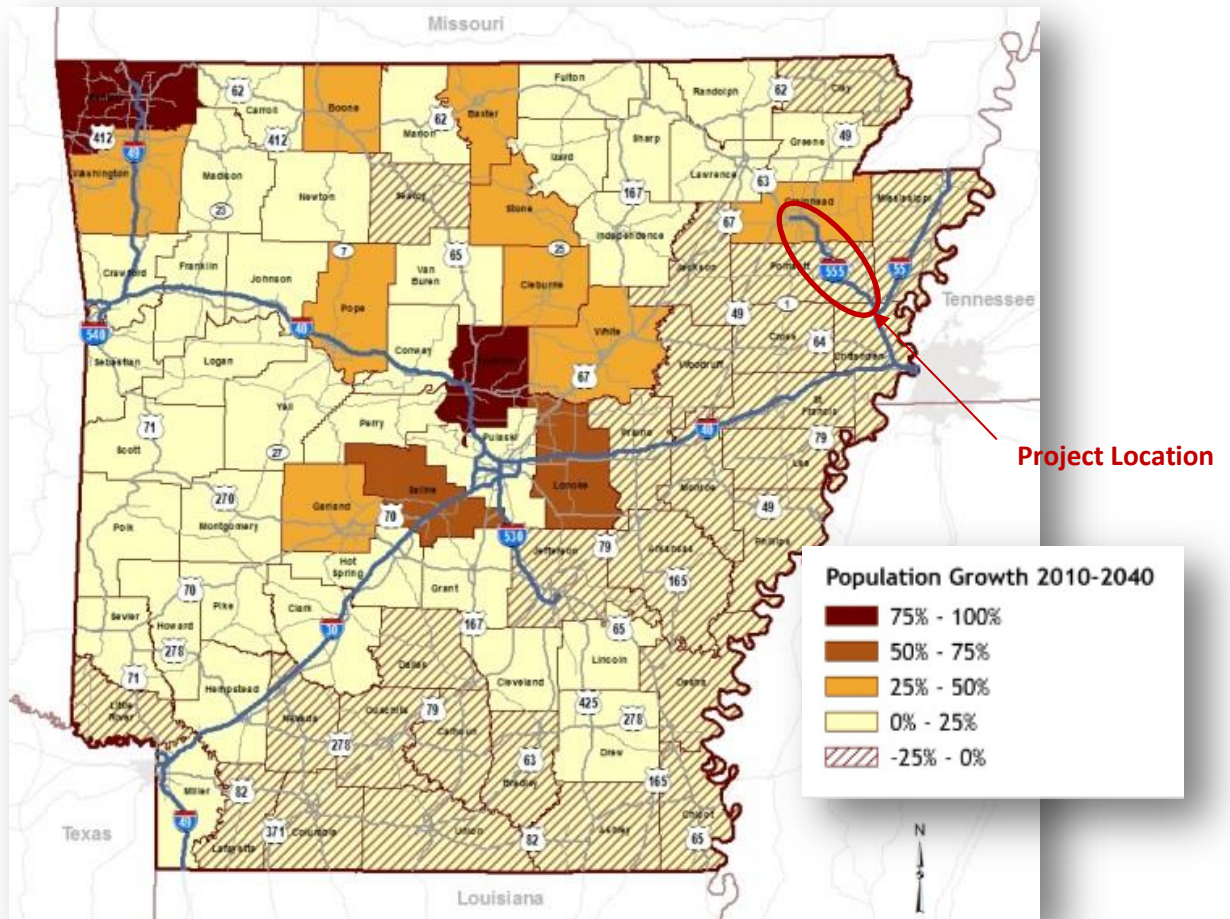
In 2013, two million tons of agricultural freight began its journey on I-555 and traveled not only nationally, but globally; nearly seven million tons of non-agricultural freight was trucked along this route. This number is expected to grow significantly by 2040.

Figure 2: I-555 – Craighead County



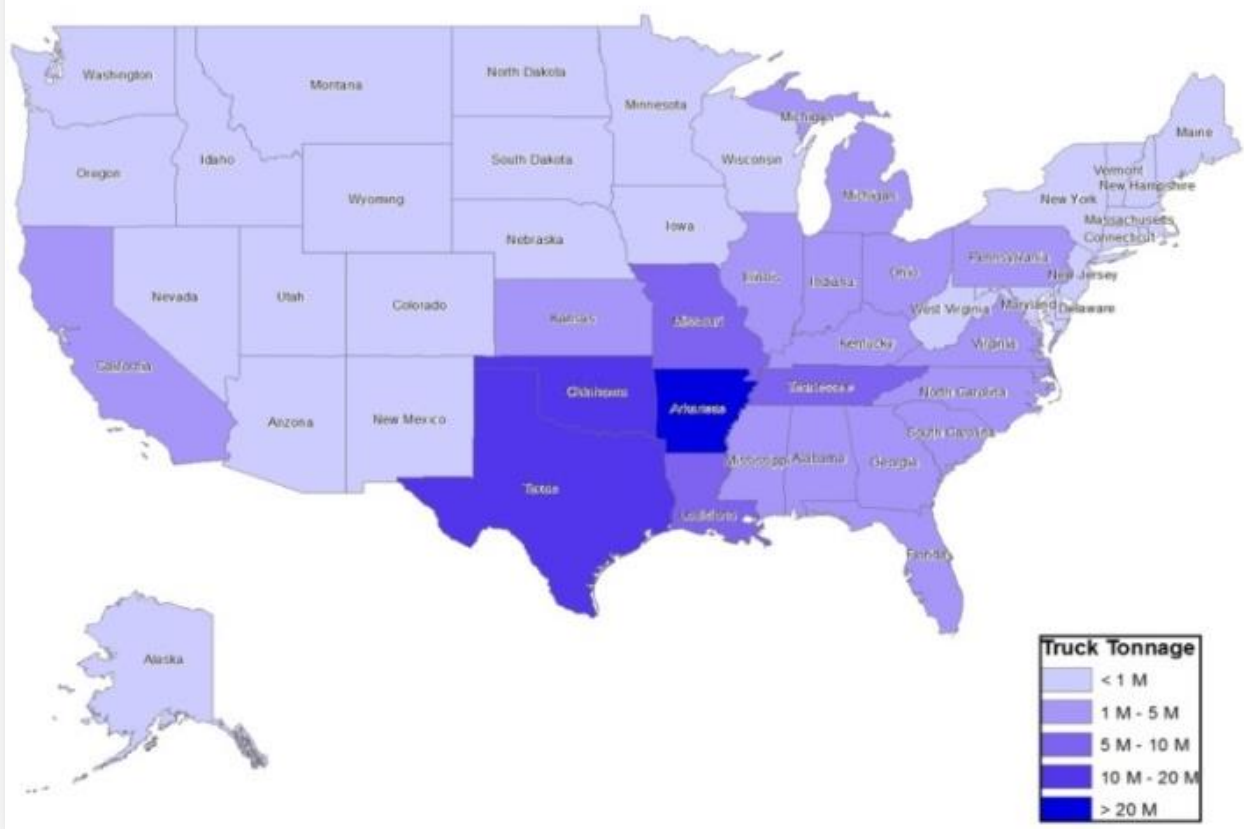
Jonesboro, located in Craighead County, is the largest city in Northeast Arkansas. Traffic volumes are modest and the cost of living is low, which makes this area competitive for various industries. Recently, Jonesboro has benefited from a rapidly-growing industrial and manufacturing sector. **Figure 3: Arkansas Counties - Population Growth 2010-2040** displays the change in county population densities as provided by the Arkansas State Data Center. Craighead County is expected to continue to add population while surrounding counties will experience a decline in population density. As industries in the region continue to grow, the infrastructure needs of the region will continue to grow as well. With the projected increase in freight shipments, regional routes such as I-555 will experience an accelerated rate of deterioration without adequate preservation.

Figure 3: Arkansas Counties – Population Growth 2010-2040



To further highlight the importance of well-maintained freight corridors, seventy percent of goods in Arkansas are moved by truck while seventeen percent are moved by rail. I-55 makes the important connection from the commercial hub of Jonesboro to I-55, Interstate 40 and the nationally critical intermodal hub of Memphis.

Figure 4: Top Trading Partners



The work to upgrade U.S. Highway 63 from I-55 to Jonesboro began in 1968. Over the years, a total of approximately \$285 million were invested to upgrade U.S. Highway 63 to Interstate standards from I-55 to Jonesboro. The current pavement condition on I-555 is rated predominantly as fair to poor. Several segments of I-555 experience higher crash rates than other similar facilities of the same type in the State. However, this Interstate facility from Jonesboro to I-55 remains in need of repairs, ranging from minor preventive maintenance to full depth reconstruction.

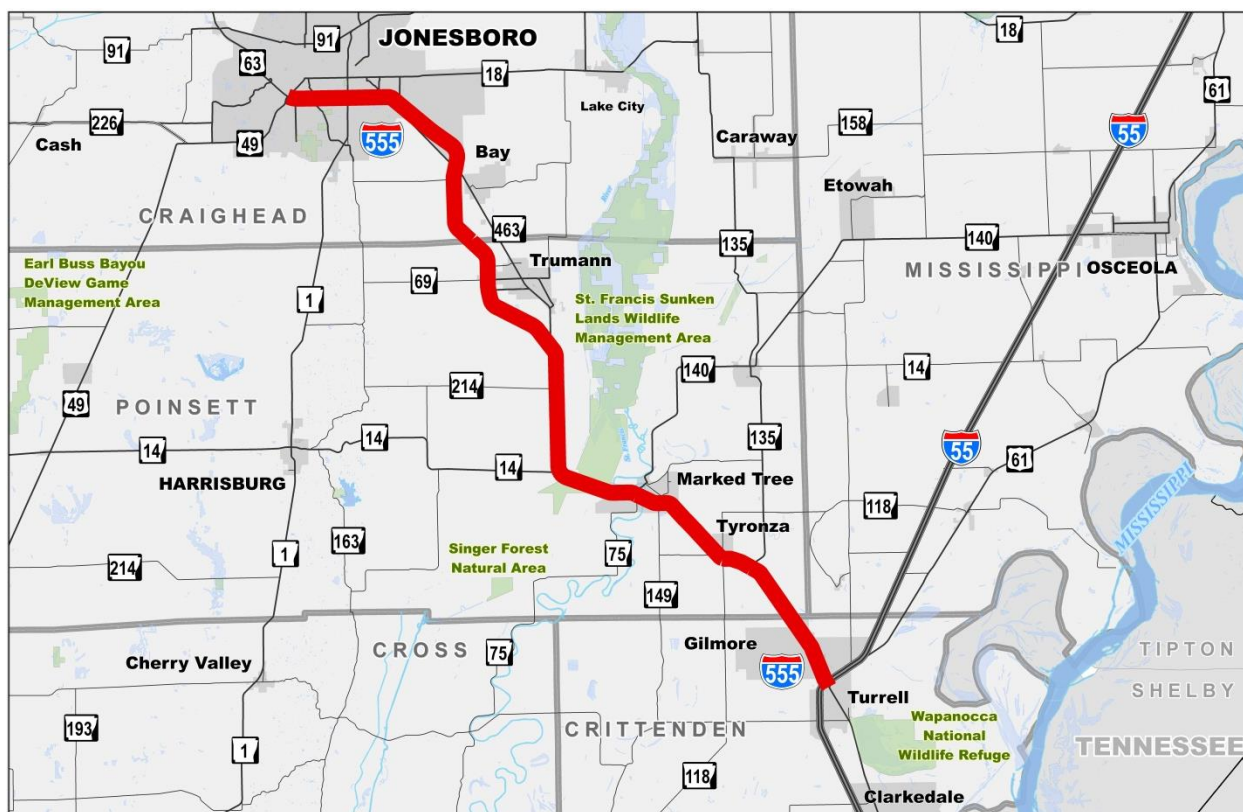
To demonstrate the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department's (AHTD) commitment to this corridor, \$50.1 million has been programmed for I-555 in the 2016-2020 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). As substantial as this amount is, it will not be enough to bring the entire Interstate and National Freight Highway Network corridor to a state of good repair. For this reason, we are seeking additional funding for the much needed improvements. The estimated total cost to address the needs of this important Interstate corridor is \$108.7 million.

Any FASTLANE funds received from this application will be used to advance projects to contract beginning in calendar year 2017. An improved I-555 means an improved artery to provide more economical and reliable movement of people and goods to this important region of Arkansas.

II. PROJECT LOCATION

Interstate 555 connects the city of Jonesboro to I-55 north of Memphis in rural northeast Arkansas (**Figure 5**). A mostly rural route, I-555 serves the small town of Trumann, the community of Payneway, and the city of Marked Tree as it joins the Memphis area. This route covers 44 miles in Craighead, Poinsett, and Crittenden Counties in Arkansas. This should be considered a rural project for this application.

Figure 5: Project Area



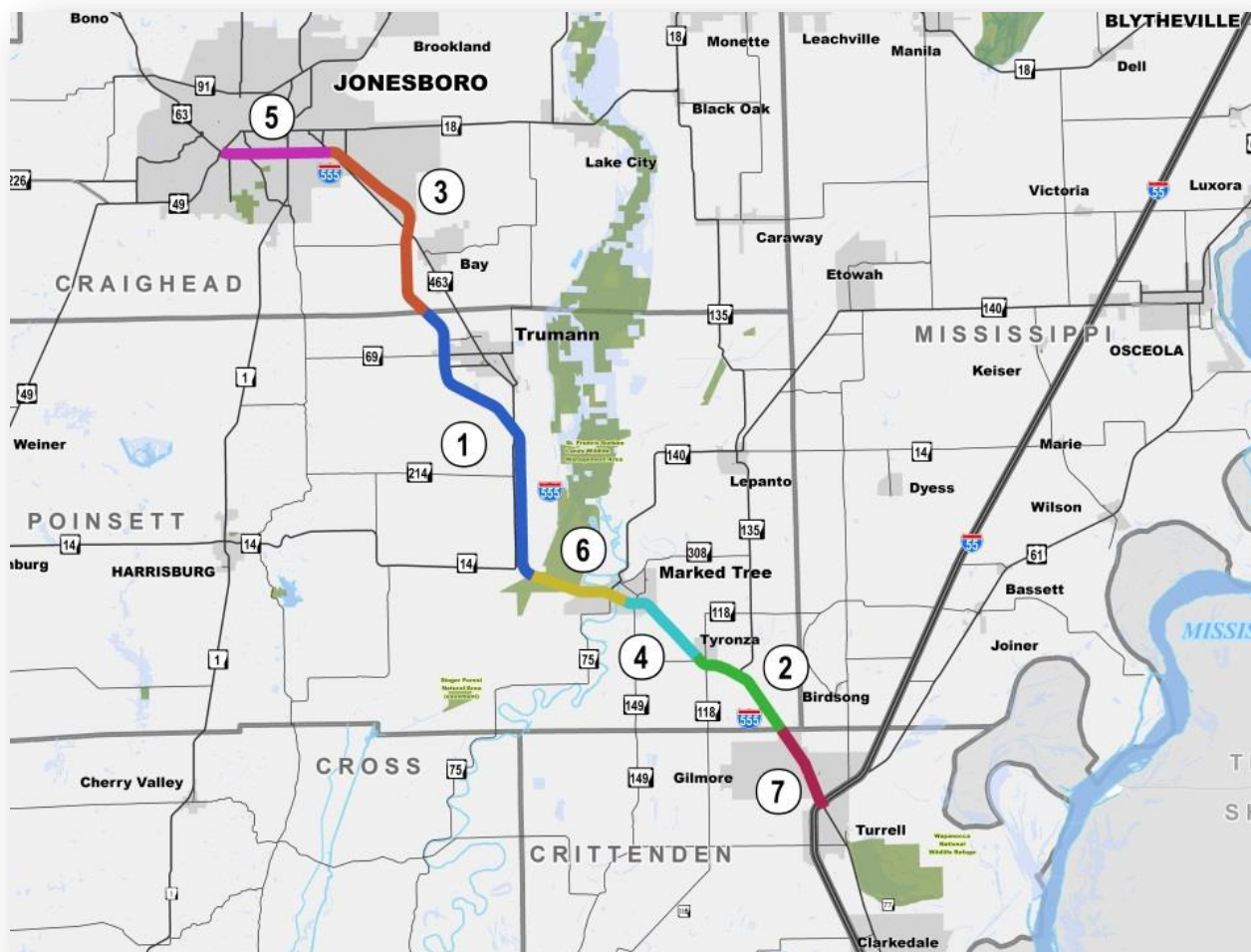
III. PROJECT PARTIES

The primary party in this Project is the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department.

IV. GRANT FUNDS, SOURCES, and USES OF PROJECT FUNDS

As shown in **Figure 6**, seven projects to improve the condition of the corridor are planned. These projects will be implemented as funding becomes available. Each project represents a segment of independent utility. A brief description of each project including location, treatment type, and cost estimate are detailed in the table below. FASTLANE funding will be used to fund each project and all eligible work types until the funds are fully obligated. The remaining projects will be funded with regular Federal-aid and state money when these funds become available. If FASTLANE funding is not received, portions of the work listed in **Table 1** will not be performed.

Figure 6: Project Segments



AHTD is requesting \$65.2 million in FASTLANE funding to fully fund the improvements for I-555. Necessary state match for the grant and other Federal-aid funding will be provided by AHTD at 20 percent using State Motor Fuel Tax revenues. Although a portion of the Project lies within the Jonesboro Metropolitan Area, for the purposes of the FASTLANE grant opportunities, this Project is not located within an urbanized area (population greater than 200,000). With the

exception of Project Segments 3 and 5, the projects listed below are all located entirely within a rural area. Project Segment 3 lies partially inside the urban area of Jonesboro and Project Segment 5 lies entirely within the urban area.

Table 1: I-555 Proposed Improvements (by Segment)

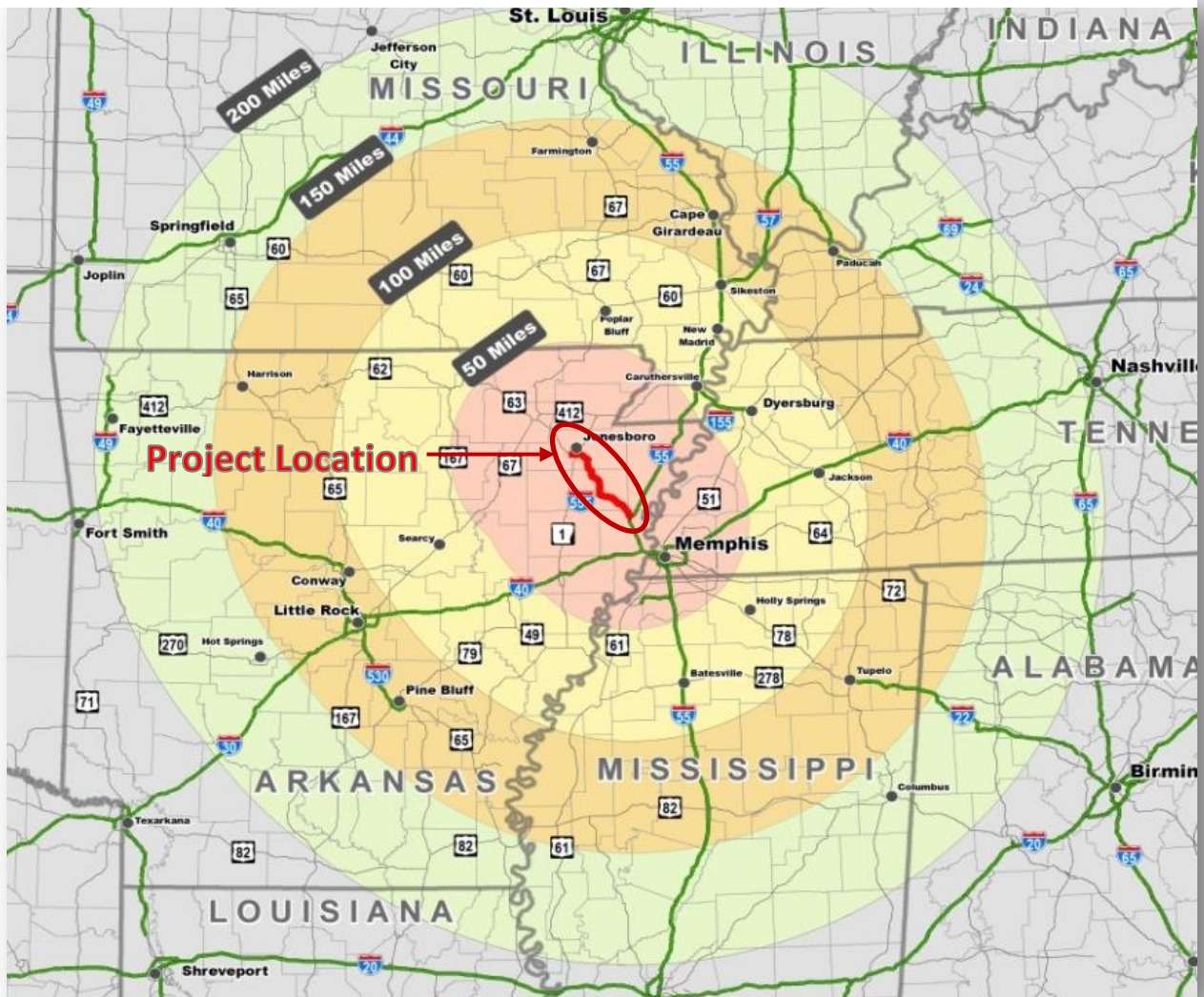
Segment/Project Description	Length (miles)	Cost (X \$1,000)	Segment Information
1: Payneway – Craighead County Line	13.47	\$4,200	<u>Current Pavement Condition:</u> Fair <u>Safety:</u> The fatal and serious injury crash rates are 40% higher than the state average. <u>Recommendation:</u> Ultra-Thin Bonded Wearing Course (UTBWC) and fog seal the shoulders. This will help preserve the structurally sound segment of pavement and provide a surface with increased friction to reduce the number of crashes.
2: Crittenden County Line – Tyrnza	5.07	\$4,000	<u>Current Pavement Condition:</u> Fair to poor <u>Safety:</u> The fatal and serious injury crash rates are 40% higher than the state average. <u>Recommendation:</u> Mill and inlay with a two-inch overlay for the poor section (2.28 miles) and an Ultra-Thin Bonded Wearing Course for sealed shoulders and the fair section (2.79 miles). These improvements will help preserve the pavement.
3: Poinsett County Line – Highway 463	8.94	\$9,100	<u>Current Pavement Condition:</u> Fair with some minor structural issues. <u>Safety:</u> The fatal crash rate is 70% higher than the state average and the overall crash rate is 40% higher than the state average. <u>Recommendation:</u> Three-inch overlay.
4: Tyrnza – Highway 75 (Marked Tree)	4.04	\$4,100	<u>Current Pavement Condition:</u> Fair with some minor structural needs. <u>Recommendation:</u> Two-to Four-inch overlay.
5: Highway 463 – Highway 49 (within the City of Jonesboro)	4.72	\$34,700	<u>Current Pavement Condition:</u> Fair <u>Safety:</u> The fatal and serious injury crash rates are 40% higher than the state average. <u>Recommendation:</u> Rubblize and overlay <i>This segment carries the largest traffic volumes within the proposed project limits.</i>
6: City of Marked Tree - Payneway	4.21	\$46,000	<u>Current Pavement Condition:</u> Poor <u>Recommendation:</u> Full-depth reconstruction of the asphalt pavement.
7: I-55 – Poinsett County Line	3.87	\$6,600	<u>Current Pavement Condition:</u> Poor <u>Recommendation:</u> Five-inch overlay.

V. MERIT CRITERIA

ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

Regional stakeholders have, for the last 40 years, worked to secure an Interstate along U.S. Highway 63 from I-55 to Jonesboro to promote economic development in the northeast region of Arkansas. The recent conversion of the 44 miles of U.S. 63 to I-555 has positioned the region for better economic competitiveness. Investors are, without question, attracted to areas connected to the Interstate System. Regionally this corridor is the primary artery that provides access to the nationally significant freight hub of Memphis, Tennessee. Over 1.6 million people live within 50 miles of the I-555 corridor, which is more than one-half the total population of the entire state of Arkansas.

Figure 7: Economic Impact Area



The state's transportation infra-structure plays a critical role in attracting and retaining businesses, while connecting people to jobs, healthcare, education and re-creation. Studies have shown that there is a link between highway improvements and economic growth, especially when such improvements are combined with other positive economic factors. These factors include a strong industry base and population growth.

Jonesboro, the largest city in northeast Arkansas, has seen a 26 percent increase in its population since 2000. Major employers that have contributed to the growth in northeast Arkansas include Riceland, Nestle, Frito-Lay, Hytrol, Post Foods, Unilever, Arkansas State University, St. Bernard's Healthcare, and Northeast Arkansas (NEA) Baptist Health System.

Major employers rely on a transportation system that can provide reliable and efficient movement of goods and services. Accessibility of highly skilled and low cost labor is important to employers. The majority of the population base in the region is situated within 50 miles of I-555, making northeast Arkansas attractive for prospective industries.

In 2013, approximately 8.6 million tons of freight moved through this corridor. According to AHTD's freight models, this number is expected to grow by over 62 percent by 2040, which is a 15 percent faster growth than the state as a whole.

MOBILITY OUTCOMES

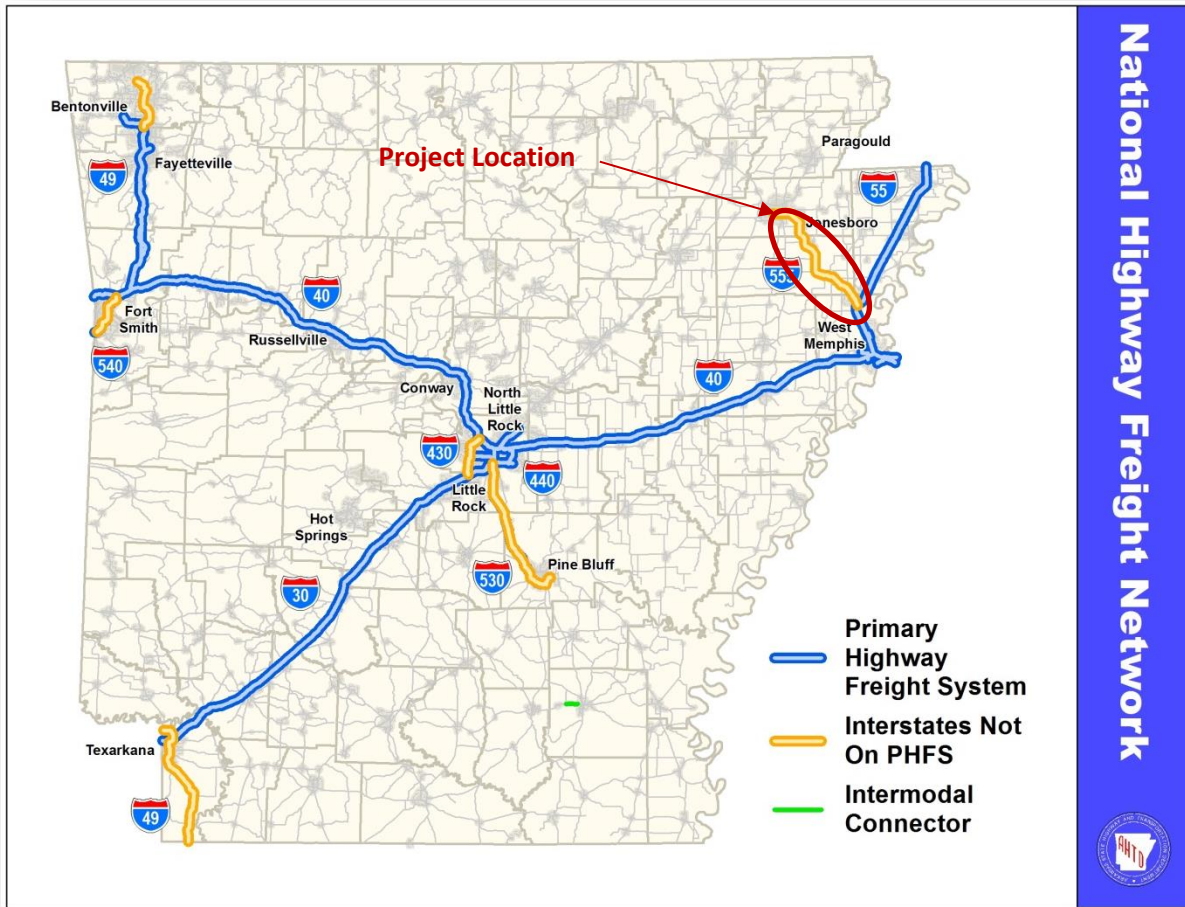
A robust freight network would provide enhanced services to all areas of the nation's population. As shown in **Figure 8**, the Arkansas portion of the National Highway Freight Network – specifically the Interstate network – provides connectivity for goods and services from Arkansas to regional and national markets.

Combined with the critical rural freight corridors, I-555 is essential in moving goods from farm to market (see **Figure 9**). These routes serve the rural parts of Arkansas by providing mobility to the regional and national economy.

Over the years the pavement condition on segments of I-555 has deteriorated. The current pavement condition of the corridor is fair to poor.

Due to the condition of the facility, the annual maintenance cost for I-555 averaged \$16,300 per mile over the past 10 years. This is 33 percent higher than I-55, a similar corridor in this region, which averages \$12,300 per mile. It should be noted these two facilities (I-55 and I-555) have surfaces close in age and serve a similar volume of commercial vehicles. It is reasonable to expect these maintenance costs along I-555 to continue to grow as traffic volume increases and the corridor conditions continue to deteriorate. If improvements are not made in the next 3-5 years, adverse economic impacts are likely, ranging from higher vehicle maintenance costs, more expensive shipping costs, and decreased mobility. Additional FASTLANE funding will allow AHTD to invest in this existing infrastructure to accomplish the rehabilitation work in a shorter time frame.

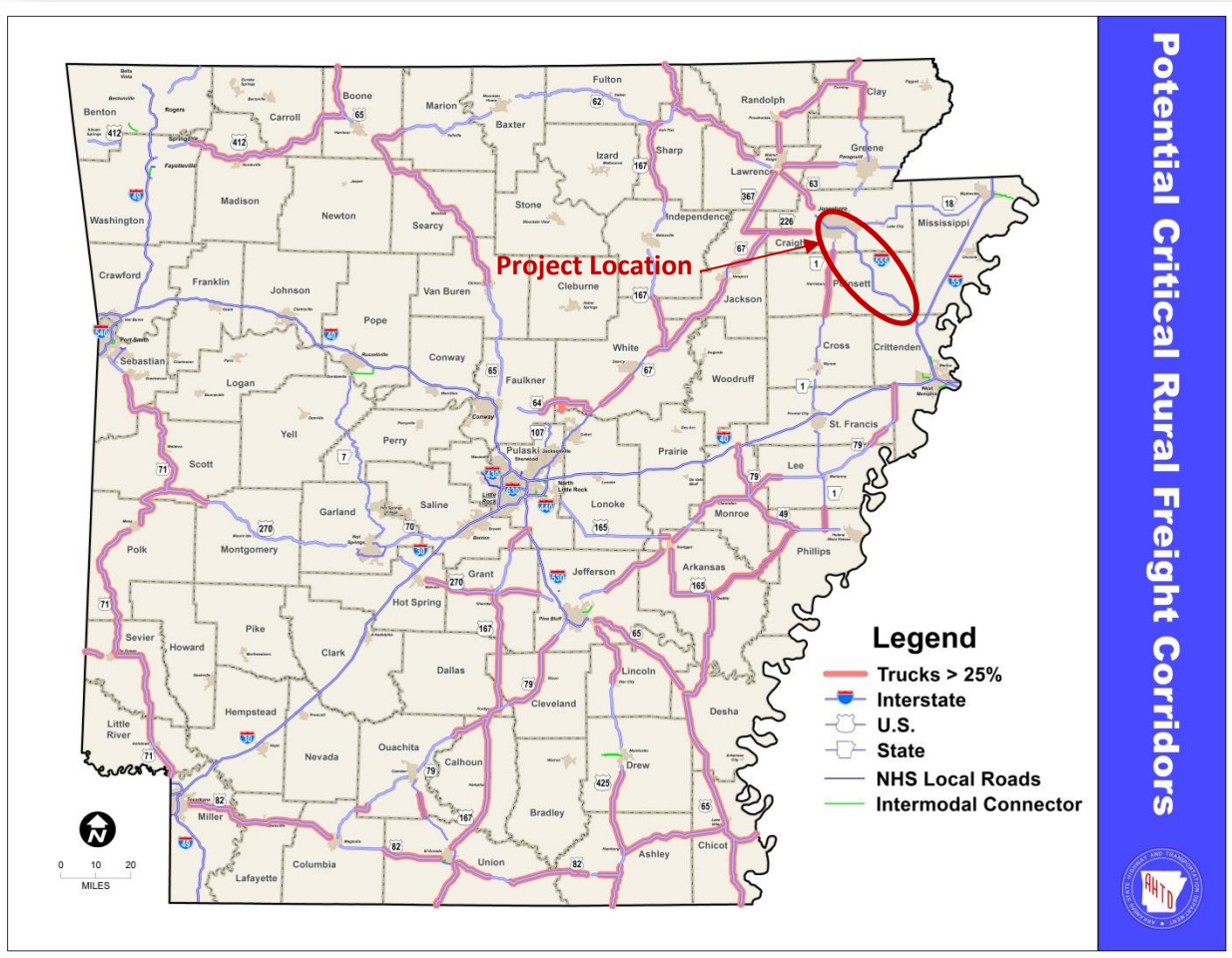
Figure 8: National Highway Freight Network – Arkansas



SAFETY OUTCOMES

As stated earlier in **Table 1**, several segments of I-555 have crash rates that are higher than the statewide average rate for facilities of similar types in the state. Some segments exhibit high frequencies of wet-weather crashes. The planned projects will improve safety and reduce fatalities and serious injuries by simply improving the driving surface.

Figure 9: Potential Critical Rural Freight Corridors - Arkansas



A pooled fund study by FHWA in 2005 showed that Ultra-Thin Bonded Wearing Course (UTBWC) can be expected to reduce wet pavement related crashes by 31 percent. An overall decrease in dry weather crashes was also noted. AHTD has used Ultra-Thin Bonded Wearing Course surface treatments to successfully reduce crash rates in several locations across the state. The same results are expected along the area. Resurfacing has also been proven to improve pavement friction; therefore safety improvements are expected throughout the corridor.

COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

The Delta Region served by this project has a rich history in the development of not only Arkansas but the region and the nation. Eastern Arkansas has many small communities over 100 years old. The communities are closely tied to the agricultural economy of the region while also answering the call for providing labor for manufacturing endeavors. With the modernization of agriculture production, there has been a downward trend for employment

opportunities in the immediate vicinity of the region. When local residents leave the region for employment opportunities – either on a temporary or permanent basis – the whole community is impacted.

Improvement of the I-555 corridor will provide both short-term and long-term employment opportunities related to the construction of the project and then the continued manufacturing and distribution growth in the region. More important though, is the role the ultimate facility will serve in linking this region to the nation. Providing competitive manufacturing and distribution opportunities that often locate along an Interstate facility in good condition will have a positive impact on communities either through direct or indirect employment.

This project will also have a positive impact on the environment in the region. Smoother driving surfaces will allow for a more efficient drive cycle with lower emissions as well as lower wear on the vehicles themselves.

PARTNERSHIP AND INNOVATION

The recognition of the need for freight-related improvements demonstrates the understanding of the importance of efficient freight movement by various members of private and public sectors as well as locally-elected officials and transportation planning professionals in the region.

COST SHARE

AHTD has proactively and aggressively pursued numerous funding options in an effort to promote the completion of this corridor as a whole. As show in the current STIP, AHTD has committed \$50.1 million for improvement at selected locations within this corridor. As substantial as this amount is, it will not be enough to bring the entire corridor to a state of good repair. If full funding of this FASTLANE grant request is received, AHTD has committed to matching the total project at 80 percent Federal-aid and 20 percent State funds. The estimated total cost to address the needs of this important interstate corridor is \$108.7 million. As with all available funding, AHTD has made it a priority to guarantee matching funds for all Federal-aid funds received.

VI. LARGE/SMALL PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

The Project satisfies each of the requirements for eligibility as a large project, as summarized below and discussed at length elsewhere.

1. Does the project generate national or regional economic, mobility, or safety benefits?

Yes, this project will generate regional and national economic, mobility, and safety benefits by restoring a state of good repair to 44 miles of the Arkansas Interstate Highway System and the National Freight Highway Network.

2. Is the project cost effective?

Yes, the BCA is between 1.43 and 2.40. Please see **Table 2: Summary of I-555 Pavement Restoration Benefit-Cost Analysis** for further details.

3. Does the project contribute to one or more of the Goals listed under 23 USC 150?

Yes, this project contributes directly to the efforts to improve the infrastructure condition by improving the entire roadway cross-section in some locations and by improving only the driving surface in other areas. Additionally, by improving this corridor, the AHTD will be working to improve the overall system reliability to ensure consistent and competitive travel times.

4. Is the project based on the results of preliminary engineering?

Yes.

- 5a. With respect to non-federal financial commitments, does the project have one or more stable and dependable funding sources to construct, maintain, and operate the project?

Yes. The state match for the project is mainly derived from the state motor fuel tax revenue, which is considered to be a stable and dependable funding stream. Funds for maintenance and operations are derived from annual Federal-aid and State revenue streams.

- 5b. Are contingency amounts available to cover unanticipated cost increases?

Yes.

6. Is it the case that the project cannot be easily and efficiently completed without other federal funding or financial assistance available to the project sponsor?

Yes, this is the case. If full funding is not received from this grant application the risk is that further deterioration of the facility will occur at an increased rate. Pavements currently in good condition will fall to fair and those segments in fair condition will deteriorate to poor. Delay of funding will delay surface improvements, which will lead to more damage and ultimately more expensive treatments such as full-depth reconstruction instead of overlay projects.

7. Is the project reasonably expected to begin construction not later than 18 months after the date of obligation of funds for the project?

Yes. All of the projects referenced in this application are either included in the 2016-2020 STIP or will be upon full funding of this application.

VII. COST EFFECTIVENESS

This summary describes the approach used for conducting the benefit-cost analysis (BCA) for I-555 from Jonesboro to I-55 resurfacing/reconstruction project. **Table 2: Summary of I-555 Pavement Restoration Benefit-Cost Analysis** summarizes the project matrix for the I-555 resurfacing/reconstruction. The economic benefits of implementing this project include cost savings for users due to reduced operating costs, reduced travel delays, and safety benefits. The summary of the BCA analysis yields a current ratio of 2.40, a three percent discounted BCA ratio of 1.83, and a seven percent discounted BCA ratio of 1.43. Additional details for the BCA are provided in Appendix A.

Table 2: Summary of I-555 Pavement Restoration Benefit-Cost Analysis

Benefit/Cost Category	Present Value	Discounted at 3%	Discounted at 7%
Vehicle Operating Cost Savings	\$250,850,406	\$175,646,512	\$118,532,232
Travel Time Cost Savings	\$13,864,999	\$9,708,331	\$6,551,511
Emissions Reduction Cost Savings	\$19,928,653	\$8,690,817	\$6,655,796
State-of-Good Repair Benefits	\$5,816,096	\$4,399,030	\$3,252,043
Sum of all Benefits	\$290,460,154	\$198,444,690	\$134,991,582
Project Life Cycle Costs	\$121,070,204	\$108,155,266	\$94,689,332
B/C Ratio	2.40	1.83	1.43

VIII. PROJECT READINESS

TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY

Technical feasibility of the project is demonstrated by the following schedule which indicates the anticipated completion dates of the final Roadway Design and Environmental activities. Due to the relative simplicity of these proposed improvements and that they occur within the existing right-of-way, there are no anticipated roadblocks to project readiness. Additionally, surface treatment strategies and cost estimates are based on current roadway conditions. The following table displays the project segments with the anticipated preparation schedule.

Table 3: Technical Feasibility

Project Sequence	Project Termini	Design Survey	Roadway Design	Environmental	Right of Way	Utilities
1	Payneway – Poinsett County Line	N/A	Nov-16	Jan-17	N/A	N/A
2	Crittenden County Line – Tyronza	N/A	Nov-16	Jan-17	N/A	N/A
3	Poinsett County Line – Hwy. 463	N/A	Nov-17	Jan-18	N/A	N/A
4	Tyronza – Marked Tree	N/A	Nov-17	Jan-18	N/A	N/A
5	Hwy. 463 – Hwy. 49 (Jonesboro)	N/A	Sep-17	Nov-17	N/A	N/A
6	Marked Tree – Payneway	Jan-19	Apr-19	Jun-19	N/A	N/A
7	I-55 – Poinsett County Line	Jan-19	Apr-19	Jun-19	N/A	N/A

PROJECT SCHEDULE

A schedule of the various milestones for the proposed project segments is provided in **Table 4: Project Schedule by Component**. This project will be shovel-ready when FASTLANE awards are announced in 2017, and matching funds will be secured under the dedicated revenue streams of the motor fuel tax revenues. If full funding is received, these dates will be accelerated to ensure that all FASTLANE funds are obligated well in advance of the statutory obligation deadline for large projects (September 2020). Likewise, construction would begin well in advance of the construction start deadline (March 2022).

Table 4: Project Schedule by Component

Project Sequence	Project Termini	Project Obligation	Let to Contract	Mobilization of Project	Project Substantially Complete	Open to Traffic
1	Payneway – Poinsett County Line	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	Sep-18	Sep-18
2	Crittenden County Line – Tyronza	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	Sep-18	Sep-18
3	Poinsett County Line – Hwy. 463	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	Sep-19	Sep-19
4	Tyronza – Marked Tree	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	Sep-19	Sep-19
5	Hwy. 463 – Hwy. 49 (Jonesboro)	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Aug-20	Aug-20
6	Marked Tree – Payneway	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Sep-22	Sep-22
7	I-55 – Poinsett County Line	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Sep-22	Sep-22

REQUIRED APPROVALS AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

As mentioned previously, all of the work proposed in this project will be conducted within the existing right-of-way. It is anticipated that any environmental approvals will culminate in a categorical exclusion due to the low impact of the type of work involved. All necessary permitting is expected well in advance of the FASTLANE obligation deadline.

There has been extensive public and stakeholder input along this corridor beginning with a long tradition of working to secure funds to upgrade the facility to Interstate standards and recently through the designation of the facility as I-555. Previous expenditures to upgrade the corridor to Interstate standards total over \$285 million. Previous, current, and future investments in this corridor are necessary to ensure a high standard of service that is expected by the constituents in the region as well as for meeting transportation performance requirements. The funds requested in this grant application are critical to the delivery of these improvements to this important freight corridor.

ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT RISKS AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Risk management and prevention are on-going activities when considering infrastructure condition. With the low impact of the anticipated projects, there is limited risk assumed. However, there are risks with NOT moving forward with the proposed projects. **Table 5** displays the risks associated with these projects.

Table 5: Risk Register

Functional Area	Potential Risks	Scope (Impact/ Likelihood)	Schedule (Impact/ Likelihood)	Estimate (Impact/ Likelihood)	Overall Risk (High, Med, Low)	Outcomes and Mitigation Activities
Construction Impacts						
Planning, Environmental, and Permitting	No Permitting anticipated	Low/Low	Medium/Medium	Low/Low	Medium	Ensure that all work can be completed under a Categorical Exclusion
Roadway Design	Delay of Funding	High/ Medium	High/ Medium	High/Medium	Medium	If funding is delayed, pavement design may change to account for additional deterioration.
Bridge Design	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Construction	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other Project Impacts						
Right of Way	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Utilities	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Railroad	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other (Funding Availability and Inflation)	Directly related to funding availability	High/High	High/High	Medium/High	High	Pursue all opportunities for funding of improvements.

**WAGE RATE CERTIFICATION
FOR
FIXING AMERICA'S SURFACE TRANSPORTATION ACT**

Pursuant to the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (Pub. Law 114-94), I, Scott E. Bennett, Director of Highways and Transportation for the State of Arkansas, certify that all laborers and mechanics employed by contractors and subcontractors on projects funded directly by or assisted in whole or in part by and through the federal government pursuant to the Act shall be paid wages at rates not less than those prevailing on projects of a character similar in the locality as determined by the Secretary of Labor in accordance with subchapter IV of Chapter 31 of Title 40, United States Code, the [Davis-Bacon Act](#).

I understand that the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department may not receive FASTLANE 2017 funding unless this certification is made and posted.



Scott E. Bennett, P.E.
Director of Highways and Transportation



Date