

MINUTES

Project Team Meeting

KY 32 – Rowan and Elliott Counties – Item 9-192.00

Fleming County Library
Flemingsburg, Kentucky
September 29, 2008
10:30 a.m. EDT

A project team meeting for the KY 32 Alternatives Study in Rowan and Elliott Counties was held at 10:30 a.m. EDT on Monday, September 29, 2008, at the Fleming County Library in Flemingsburg, Kentucky. The purpose of the meeting was to provide information on progress to date, present preliminary corridor concepts and a Level 1 evaluation of those concepts, make decisions on final alternatives to be carried forward, and to present preliminary information on proposed spot improvements along existing KY 32. A copy of the agenda is attached.

Participants in the meeting represented the FIVCO Area Development District, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) District 9 and Central Office, and the consultants, Wilbur Smith Associates (WSA) and HMB Professional Engineers. Attendees included the following:

Russ Brannon	FIVCO Area Development District
Decilia Mullins	Gateway Area Development District
Thomas Witt	KYTC Central Office, Planning
David Tipton	KYTC Central Office, Planning
James Simpson	KYTC, Central Office, Design
Darrin Eldridge	KYTC District 9, Project Development
Phil Mauney	KYTC District 9, Planning
Brent Wells	KYTC District 9, Planning
Karen Mynhier	KYTC District 9, Environmental
Danny Mineer	KYTC District 9, Right-of-Way
Rachel Catchings	KYTC District 9, Design
Robyn Ramey	KYTC District 9, Right-of-Way
Carl D. Dixon	Wilbur Smith Associates
Samantha Wright	Wilbur Smith Associates
Amanda R. Spencer	Wilbur Smith Associates
Len Harper	Wilbur Smith Associates
John Brown	HMB Consultants
Todd McDaniel	HMB Consultants

A summary of the key components and discussion items for this meeting is provided below, following the agenda outline.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Darrin Eldridge began the meeting by welcoming the participants and asking for formal introductions from all attendees. Darrin also discussed the recent District reorganization and introduced Phil Mauney as the new Planning Engineer, replacing Deanna Miller who is now the District Branch Manager for Construction.

2. Purpose of Meeting

Thomas Witt briefly explained that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss and make recommendations on proposed improvement alternatives for KY 32.

3. Project Update

Carl Dixon briefly reviewed the tasks completed to date, including the local officials/stakeholders meetings, public meeting, resource agency coordination, environmental and geotechnical overviews, development and Level 1 evaluation of preliminary corridor alternatives, and the development of potential spot improvements. He summarized the input from the local officials/stakeholders meetings and resource agencies, as well as the information from the overview research on noise, historical/archaeological, and geotechnical issues.

4. Summary of Environmental Overview

John Brown from HMB reviewed the aquatic and terrestrial resources in the project area. Big Caney Creek and Laurel Creek are the biggest concern with various agencies. There is habitat for the Virginia Bat, the Big Eared Bat, and various mussels in the study area. There are 2 or 3 hazardous materials sites (gas stations), but no major concerns. John also noted that air quality is not an issue for the project.

Carl provided a summary of other environmental resources. There are a few noise receptors, including homes and the Laurel Gorge trail. The Concord School is likely a historic resource. There is a National Register historic site in the study area, the Hogtown Voting House at Elliottville, but it is outside the boundary of the proposed corridors. There are several known archaeological sites on the western end of the corridor. The predominant land use is farmland.

Geotechnical issues include some karst areas and the Little Sandy Fault. There are some wells in the area, and abandoned mine sites may be encountered during construction. Soils are suitable for construction, but there is no source for rock in the area.

From local and resource agency input, the biggest issue appears to be potential impacts to Laurel Creek and Big Caney Creek, both recognized as exceptional waters. Other major issues in the corridor include homes, farmland, numerous cemeteries, scenic areas, the potentially historic Concord School, known and potential archaeological sites, Laurel Gorge Hiking Trail, the Little Sandy Fault Line, karst areas, and utilities along the existing roadway.

From some of the input, there is also a perceived need for improved safety and travel time, as well as improved access for emergency services, economic development, and tourism, including local craft outlets and events. However, some local interests would like to preserve the existing route for tourism, perhaps as a scenic byway. KY 32 is attractive to motorcyclists for recreational rides, including the annual Keith Whitley Memorial Motorcycle Ride. There is also a local tourism group that is considering marketing a drive along KY 32 and KY 173 as the 80-Curve Loop.

Carl noted that a scenic byway application had been submitted a few years ago, but it had been turned down. Russ Brannon, FIVCO ADD, said that he had recently been contacted about helping with a new application to designate KY 32 as a scenic byway. When told that a local sponsor group or organization would have to accept responsibility for submitting the application, getting support, and monitoring the corridor to try to protect it as a scenic route, the person who contacted him was not willing to make that commitment at this time.

The project team agreed that preserving or constructing KY 32 as a scenic byway should not be included as a project goal; however, context-sensitive design principles should be used, where feasible, to protect the character and context of the corridor.

Russ Brannon, FIVCO ADD, provided an update on environmental justice. The 2000 census does not show any ethnic enclaves in the county, and the local judges confirmed this. The census also shows about 33% disability in the region. There appear to be no major negative environmental justice impacts. Incomes are well below the poverty level, so improved access could lead to economic development and jobs, which could in fact provide a positive impact for local residents.

WSA ACTION: Darrin Eldridge asked WSA to make sure that maps are updated to show all resources identified by the public and environmental groups. WSA will review the maps from the public meeting to make sure all these have been included.

5. Summary of Public Meeting

Samantha Wright provided a summary of the input received from the public meeting held on July 31, 2008. A handout was provided showing tables and charts that represented this input. Of 100 survey forms received, 86% of those surveyed indicated that KY 32 needs to be improved. The top problem is the sharp curves on the road, followed by limited passing opportunities. Other significant issues are narrow shoulders, school bus safety, steep hills, and poor visibility. Approximately 60% of the respondents drive the road daily or 3 to 4 times per week. The most often identified sensitive areas to avoid were churches, schools, and cemeteries; homes and personal property; natural areas and wildlife habitats; scenic areas; and farmland.

6. Proposed Improvement Alternatives

Carl Dixon discussed the process and principles used to develop the preliminary alternatives, noting that 14 "corridor concepts" have been identified for evaluation. A handout was provided showing a map of the proposed corridor concepts. The "Corridor Concepts" map presented is attached for reference. Len Harper gave a more detailed explanation of how WSA developed the alternatives and briefly discussed each of the concepts.

Before developing the alternatives, WSA first looked at all the obstacles. The terrain, environmental data, traffic data, crash history, alternatives proposed by the local officials, alternatives proposed by the public, and most importantly, the purpose and need, were all carefully considered.

The terrain in the study is mountainous, which is typical for this part of eastern Kentucky. There are lots of water resources within the study area. Two water resources of major importance are Laurel Creek and Big Caney Creek, which are classified as "Exceptional" waterways. Every attempt was made to minimize the impacts to Laurel Creek and Big Caney Creek.

WSA developed 14 independent "corridor concepts." These include improvements to the existing alignment (Concept 1), three new northern alignments (Concepts 2, 3, and 14), six new southern alignments (Concepts 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, and 13), and four new alignments that cross KY 32 (Concepts 4, 5, 8, and 9). Following is a brief description and issues related to these 14 corridor concepts.

1. Improvements to the existing alignment (Concept 1) between Elliottville and Newfoundland:
 - Challenges
 - 95% of existing KY 32 is geometrically deficient so most of the road will have to be reconstructed.
 - There are lots of homes and cemeteries just outside the road right-of-way.
 - Maintenance of traffic will be difficult during the reconstruction of KY 32.
 - Total Cost and Number of Stream/Creek Crossings:
 - Concept 1 – \$82.04 million (0 Crossings)
2. Three new northern alignments (Concepts 2, 3, and 14):
 - All three concepts use point D as the western tie-down and point A as the eastern tie-down.
 - WSA looked at tying to KY 694 but decided this did not meet the purpose and need of the project.
 - The corridor width was expanded along segment 9-10. This area has a number of cemeteries and other potential impacts. A more detailed survey is needed to determine the best course of action. By expanding the corridor width, future roadway designers will have the flexibility needed to minimize impacts.
 - Total Cost and Number of Stream/Creek Crossings:
 - Concept 2 – \$92.36 million (14 Crossings)
 - Concept 3 – \$85.34 million (12 Crossings)
 - Concept 14 – \$83.69 million (13 Crossings)
3. Six new southern alignments (Concepts 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, and 13):
 - Three eastern tie down points
 - Point A at KY 7
 - Point B in Sandy Hook
 - Point C south of Sandy Hook
 - There is extremely rough terrain along the eastern portion of segment C-3.
 - All six southern concepts meet at KY 32 (point 4). Once at point 4 there are two options: (1) reconstruct the existing KY 32 to KY 504 or (2) construct a new corridor (segment 4-D) between point 4 and KY 504. A lot of the existing portion of KY 32 (segment 4-5-D) is geometrically sufficient. This will reduce the construction cost for this segment. The construction of a new corridor (segment 4-D) will require an additional stream crossing.
 - Total Cost and Number of Stream/Creek Crossings:
 - Concept 6 – \$79.84 million (11 crossings)
 - Concept 7 – \$82.76 million (10 crossings)
 - Concept 10 – \$79.11 million (11 crossings)
 - Concept 11 – \$82.03 million (10 crossings)
 - Concept 12 – \$82.10 million (9 crossings)
 - Concept 13 - \$85.02 million (8 crossings)
4. Four new alignments that cross KY 32 (Concepts 4, 5, 8, and 9):
 - Two eastern tie down points
 - Point A at KY 7: Concepts 4 and 5 share this tie-down. Both concepts will have to be careful not to disturb Laurel Gorge Trail.
 - Point B in Sandy Hook: Concepts 8 and 9 share this tie-down. These concepts will require two large structures over the Little Sandy River and Laurel Creek.

- The corridor width was expanded along segment 9-10. This area has a number of cemeteries and other potential impacts. A more detailed survey is needed to determine the best course of action. By expanding the corridor width, future roadway designers will have the flexibility needed to minimize impacts.
- All four corridor concepts have a western tie down at KY 504.
- Total cost and number of stream/creek crossings are as follows:
 - Concept 4 – \$86.87 million (13 crossings)
 - Concept 5 – \$79.86 million (11 crossings)
 - Concept 8 – \$86.41 million (11 crossings)
 - Concept 9 – \$79.39 million (9 crossings)

7. Level 1 Screening

Amanda Spencer gave an overview of the screening process for the 14 alternatives. The 14 “Corridor Concepts” include the improvements to the existing alignment (Concept 1), three new northern alignments (Concepts 2, 3, and 14), four new alignments that cross KY 32 (Concepts 4, 5, 8, and 9), and six new southern alignments (Concepts 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, and 13). Amanda briefly explained the Level 1 Screening process. A handout was provided showing the Level 1 evaluation matrix.

Amanda then explained the key decisions made to recommend the elimination of 8 of the 14 corridor concepts, as follows:

Decision 1: Concepts with 4-5-D should advance over concepts with 4-D:

- 4D and 4-5-D are somewhat redundant, one on new alignment and one on the existing roadway. However, 4-D would not provide a connection with KY 173, which is a major traffic split with most of the traffic going along KY 173. 4-5-D maintains and provides an improvement for KY 173 connection.
- 4-5 is on new alignment and will, therefore, have “new” impacts and add miles to the state system.
- 4-5-D will not be too difficult to improve and will retain existing access to homes and the McBrayer store, a local landmark, at the KY 32-KY 173 intersection and maintain the current “community” context.
- However, 4-5 is at the headwaters of Laurel Creek, so care will be needed to avoid impacts.
- **This decision would eliminate Corridor Concepts 6, 10, and 12**

Decision 2: Concepts using 8-9-10-11 should advance over concepts using 8-11:

- These are functionally the same, but 8-11 crosses Big Caney Creek twice, 8-9-10-11 does not cross Big Caney Creek
- However, five cemeteries are located between or near points 9-10 so care will be needed to choose an alignment to avoid those cemeteries. This appears to be possible within the wide corridor shown in this area.
- **This decision would eliminate Concepts 2, 4, and 8 (Note: Concept 2 crosses Laurel Creek 4 times and should be eliminated for that reason alone).**

Decision 3: Concept 14 should advance, Concept 3 should not:

- These are both similar new northern alignments, so they are somewhat duplicative.
- The differences are for segment 14-8 for Concept 14 and 14-7-8 for Concept 3.

- In this area, Concept 3 crosses Big Caney Creek and then parallels and runs in close proximity to the creek and the karst area in the stream bottom for over a mile. This could cause greater impacts to the stream and create additional potential problems in dealing with the karst. Concept 14 crosses the stream in a less intense karst area, and it does not follow the stream after crossing so it could lessen potential impacts.
- Concept 3 is longer and a little more expensive.
- **This would eliminate Concept 3.**

Decision 4: Concept 5 should advance, and Concept 9 should not:

- These have different termini on KY 7, but they are the same from points 6 to D. Both start south of KY 32 and cross to run north of KY 32.
- Concept 5 does not cross Laurel or Big Caney Creek, one of only 4 alternatives that avoid direct impacts to these two resources (one of which, Concept 12, is already recommended for dismissal, leaving Concepts 1, 5, and 13). Concept 9 crosses Laurel Creek once.
- **This would eliminate Concept 9.**

Therefore, WSA recommended the following:

- **Eliminate 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, and 12 from further consideration.**
- **Get input from project team on 1, 5, 7, 11, 13, and 14 to discuss whether any of the other corridor concepts can be eliminated.**

DECISION: The project team agreed with these recommendations.

Several questions were considered in the discussion of the remaining corridor concepts, as follows:

- 7, 11, and 13 are southern routes with starting points A, B, and C, respectively. What is the preferred starting point? Should Sandy Hook and KY 32 to the south be the prime destinations, or should access to the school, prison, and Grayson Lake be an issue?
- Does Concept 13 address the existing traffic/corridor, or is it outside the scope of the project? Is it an acceptable compromise for those who prefer a KY 173 improvement?
- Is a future connection beyond Sandy Hook an issue? Point B is located just north/east of John Street at the eastern edge of Sandy Hook, directly across from businesses and homes on the other side of KY 7, which could preclude extending it to connect with KY 32 south of Sandy Hook in the future.
- To what degree are the known archaeology sites between 3 and 4 a problem? This would indicate that other nearby sites would probably exist.
- To what degree are the crossings of Laurel Gorge Trail a problem? The trail is a public recreation area, so it could be a 4f issue. The crossings could possibly be on structure over the Trail.
- To what degree is crossing the fault line a problem? Both alternatives cross perpendicular to the fault line.
- To what degree are the many cemeteries along existing KY 32 a problem?

Together, the team was able to eliminate and/or update some of the remaining concepts as follows:

Concept 14 was not moved forward

- It does not adequately meet the scope and purpose of the project.
- There are not many tie-down points in the 12-14-8 section – it would be difficult to identify construction segments.
- This section crosses many of the tributaries to Big Caney Creek.

Concept 13 was not moved forward

- It does not adequately meet the scope and purpose of the project.
- There are not many tie-down points in the C-3 section – it would be difficult to identify construction segments.
- It crosses the fault line.

Concept 11 was not moved forward

- It will not pull traffic from KY 32 and, therefore, does not adequately meet the project purpose.
- Terminating the route at B would not provide for future continuation of a route to the east of Sandy Hook.

Concept 7 was revised slightly by changing the path to A-2-3-4-5-D

- This eliminates 2 crossings of Laurel Creek and 1 crossing of Laurel Gorge Trail on the east end of the corridor.

Other special considerations were discussed during the meeting, as follows:

- There are some known archaeology sites between junctions 3 and 4 (Concept 7). These can likely be avoided, although additional sites may be uncovered as the project moves forward. The route shown between 3 and 4 is the best opportunity to connect with KY 32 at the right elevation.
- The headwaters of Laurel Creek are located between junctions 4 and 5 (Concepts 1 and 7) and may require special erosion control measures.

DECISION: The project team agreed that the following corridor concept alternatives would move forward for further evaluation: 1, 5, and 7 (revised). Further consideration will also be given to the No Build alternative and Spot Improvements alternative. [Also, please see note at the end of these minutes.]

WSA ACTION: WSA was asked to create an exhibit that shades out the concepts that were eliminated and one to show a bulleted list explaining why each concept was eliminated.

8. Proposed Spot Improvements

Len Harper briefly discussed the spot improvements identified for the existing corridor and asked that the project team provide input on these within two weeks. Handouts were provided, including a map of the spot improvement locations and preliminary project information sheets for each location. Crash data, geometric data and public input were the primary factors used to locate the spot improvements.

KYTC ACTION: Darrin Eldridge said that his traffic branch manager would review and prioritize the spots that WSA has identified.

WSA ACTION: WSA agreed to send Darrin Eldridge an electronic version of the spot improvements and contour maps.

9. Next Steps

Carl Dixon gave a quick summary of the next steps in the study process. He indicated that we will now go back and ask our staff and HMB to make a comparative evaluation of these final alternatives. We will use this information and other data to do a Level 2 Screening of these final alternatives and bring that information back to the project team to approve for presentation in the final round of public input. The next project team meeting will likely be held in late November or early December of this year. Due to the Christmas holiday period, the next local officials/stakeholders meetings and public meeting will probably be in January.

Some ideas proposed for the next public meeting include the following: provide the information sheet developed by WSA, bring a microphone, invite the local sheriff/deputy to be a presence, ask the local leaders to be familiar faces at the meetings, and check the venue ahead of time.

After the public meeting, public input will be used to help in the final evaluation of the alternatives. WSA will then bring recommendations to the project team for discussion and approval, probably in April 2009.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:30 p.m.

NOTE: After the project team meeting, WSA prepared preliminary maps of the final alternatives and submitted them for KYTC review on October 3, 2008. After reviewing the maps, Thomas Witt, KYTC Division of Planning, suggested expanding the corridor study area near the KY 32-KY 7 intersection for Alternative 2 (Corridor Concept 5) and Alternative 3 (Corridor Concept 7 revised). Carl Dixon, WSA, discussed this proposed change with Thomas Witt and with Darrin Eldridge, KYTC Highway District 9, on October 6th, and it was decided that WSA should make the proposed changes. Based on these follow-up discussions, WSA modified these two alternatives to include two options for tying into KY 7:

1. One that includes a portion of the existing route at the eastern (southern) end from KY 7 to approximately milepoint 6.8 (Option A) and then has a short connector to the new alignment presented at the meeting; and
2. One totally on new alignment (Option B), as presented at the September 29th project team meeting.



**Project Team Meeting
 KY 32 Alternatives Study
 Rowan and Elliott Counties
 KYTC Item No. 9-192.00**

September 29, 2008

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| a. First Local Official/Local and Public Meetings | | | | Stakeholder |
| b. Environmental, Noise, Historic/Archeological, Geotechnical, EJ Overviews | | | | |
| c. Resource Agency Coordination (Round I) | | | | |
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| 10. Q & A | | | | Group Discussion |
| ADJOURN | | | | KYTC |

