

Minutes

Citizen's Advisory Committee - Meeting #3

US 25 – Item No. 8515.00

US25/25E/25W – KY 1006

Meeting Location: Laurel County Judge Executive's Conference Room

Meeting Date: May 30th, 2012

- 1) Introduction: The meeting began at 2:00 pm. Mr. Gregory welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. The following individuals attended the meeting:

Jessica Blankenship	Cumberland Valley ADD
Rick Cochrane	City of London
Danielle Smoot	Rep. Hall Rogers Office
Mark Farley	Aisin Automotive Casting
Larry Corum	London-Corbin Airport
David Westerfield	Laurel County Judge Executive
Joseph Mosley	KYTC-District 11
David Fields	KYTC-District 11
Jonathan Dobson	KYTC-District 11
Dean Croft	KYTC-District 11
Sherri Chappell	KYTC-District 11
Keith Caudill	KYTC-Central Office
Randall Thomas	HMB Professional Engineers
Rob Dowler	HMB Professional Engineers
Richard Dutton	HMB Professional Engineers
Randy Gnau	Municipal Engineering Co.
Brad Gregory	Municipal Engineering Co.

Mr. Gregory outlined the goals for the meeting:

- a) Introduce the various tools and methods available to the group
 - b) Discuss several examples along the project for application of the tools above
 - c) Present preliminary alternatives for the US25/25E interchange
 - d) Present a preliminary alignment for an "off existing" alternative
- 2) Mr. Gregory briefly described project limits, upcoming milestones for the project, and where we are in the process.
 - 3) The overall project goals and objectives identified in previous meetings and from public comments were presented once again as a reminder of the things we want to accomplish with this project. The "Purpose and Need" statement generated from these goals was presented to the group, "Address highway capacity and growth needs in Laurel County, improve safety by providing an improved route that complies with current design standards, and provide an emergency alternative route during incidents or closures of I-75". The Committee was reminded to keep these objectives forefront in their mind as the project develops.
 - 4) Mr. Gregory then discussed various issues relating to each of the specific goals and objectives stated above. It was also pointed out that many of the following items will be somewhat contradictory to each

other and some will be complimentary. For instance, some of items used to increase capacity, may not be the best idea to increase safety.

- 5) In order to increase capacity, the total number of lanes will need to be increased, an unobstructed connection between London and Corbin will need to be established, delay is to be minimized by increasing the free-flow speed, and the number of vehicles stopped in the roadway waiting to turn needs to be reduced. An analogy of an interstate versus a county road was used to explain the critical items for increasing capacity.
- 6) Increased safety can be accomplished by separating the traffic with a median of some sort, decreasing the number of stopped cars with turn lanes, reduce the overall number of access points and entrances, decrease speed, and reconfigure intersections. It was once again noted that one of the major items identified with safety along the route is the number of entrances and their confusing nature. The group also discussed how some of these items are difficult to achieve while maintain the capacity objective discussed above.
- 7) Mr. Gregory suggested that no matter how this project is developed, emergency officials will continue to route I-75 traffic through this area during future interstate closures. Many of the issues with this situation coincide with our desire to increase capacity and safety with this project. The intent with the I-75 traffic is to move them through our project as efficiently and safely as possible.
- 8) Mr. Gregory then presented several of the “tools” and methods available to the committee that attempt to accomplish our goals. Both the positive and negative aspects of each of the methods were discussed by the group.
- 9) Three different examples of typical roadway cross sections with added lanes were presented to the Committee. These included a 5-lane TWTL (two-way left turn lane), a 4-lane depressed median, and a 4-lane raised median cross section. The balance or tradeoff of adding lanes was discussed. The positives were increased capacity and providing passing opportunities. The negatives discussed included constructing a wider road will mean more impacts to adjacent properties and it can create a situation where it is more difficult to turn out into the roadway when you have more lanes to cross.
- 10) Turn lanes were discussed as one of the tools available to the Team to utilize on the project. The Committee identified with the fact that turn lanes can increase safety and capacity by removing stopped vehicles from the through traffic and are useful for both right and left turns. However, the tradeoff with turn lanes is, when you have a higher access density and turn lanes are developed for each entrance, the result is one continuous turn lane along the route. In addition, adding turn lanes increases the overall width of the roadway, thus increasing impacts to adjacent properties.
- 11) Several examples of access management schemes were presented to the group. In particular, Mr. Gregory presented a 3-D computer rendering of an example area just south of Hunter Hills Elementary School where a frontage road could be used to reduce the number of accesses to US 25E from 6 to 2. This was used to outline one method to reduce the overall number of entrances by consolidating several access points into one. The group identified that, by employing this method it better defines some of the confusing entrances, provides fewer conflict points, and increases safety. However, the negatives were this will take more right of way width to accomplish and many of the residences and businesses along the route may not be agreeable to losing their individual entrances.
- 12) The possibility of using a continuous two-way left turn lane (TWTL) was discussed. The group agreed that this type of roadway configuration does provide separation between oncoming traffic and it can be used as “unlimited”, meaning that can be accessed anywhere along the route instead of at certain locations. It was also noted that this does remove the stopped vehicles out of the through lanes, thereby

having a significant impact on safety and capacity. Mr. Gregory indicated that while over the entire project length, this roadway does fall between the recommended thresholds for the number of entrances per mile generally used to decide if a TWTL is appropriate, certain areas of the project have a much higher entrance density. The Committee recognized this as an issue that can increase the number of head-on collisions in the center turn lane and decrease safety by motorists using it as a merge lane when entering the roadway from a side entrance. Mr. Gregory also noted that a TWTL is generally used on 45 mph or less roadways. This reduction in speed is contradictory to our goal of increased capacity and reduced delay.

The KYTC District personnel voiced some concerns over the use of a TWTL on this project. They indicated that they are currently designing and constructing projects to eliminate TWTL's in their area that were installed some years ago. The group understood the District's concerns and agreed, that they did not want to propose a facility that would need to be "fixed" in a few years, but take the opportunity to develop a solution that will be long-lasting.

Mr. Gregory noted to the group that even if a TWTL lane configuration is not something that the group desires to pursue, it does represent a minimum overall roadway width that would most likely be considered for this project. Considering that the 14 foot center turn lane can represent a raised median, painted flush median, or any number of configurations, the group agreed that this is the overall narrowest typical section that would apply to this project.

- 13) The group next looked at several examples of non-traversable medians and access schemes. Several positive aspects of the medians were discussed such as, the designers are able to establish the access points along the roadway much better, they provide positive separation for oncoming traffic, and they provide enough width to develop individual left turn lanes without needing to vary the overall width of the roadway. The District also noted that these type of medians seem to be more difficult to "defeat" by future development. Typically on a facility that has no physical restriction to left turns, such as a barrier or median, future adjacent developments are more likely to be granted an entrance permit to the roadway thus aggravating the issue of too many access points. In comparing raised versus depressed medians, it was noted that typically, raised medians are limited to 45 mph or less while depressed medians are appropriate for 55 mph.

One of the problems identified by the group with non-traversable medians was that typically depressed medians require more width thus impacting more adjacent property. They also noted raised medians have more long term maintenance issues and both types force more access points to be right-in/right-out with u-turns at major cross roads. In order to help the group visualize how this scenario could be developed, an example with a depressed median using u-turns at two major intersections was presented which consolidated several mid-block entrances and restricted left turns from these locations. The example visualization was located just north of the Hunter Hills Elementary and detailed how the access scheme would operate. In addition it was noted that this scenario may require more signalization at key intersections to permit safer u-turns.

- 14) Considering the previously discussed TWTL configuration being potentially the narrowest cross section viable for this roadway, Mr. Gregory presented a comparison of this type of roadway to a depressed median facility which represents potentially the widest cross section considered for this project. The purpose of this comparison was to outline the severity of impacts to the area adjacent to the roadway. Once this comparison was discussed, it became apparent to the group that in the sample area at least, the number of impacts to adjacent parcels did not increase significantly. For example, given the close proximity of many structures to the existing roadway, the narrowest typical section will already have impacts that will force significant costs in proximity damages to the parcel or in some instances removal of the structure entirely. Thus, the wider depressed median cross section only marginally increased the severity of these impacts, but not the overall number of them.

- 15) Mr. Gregory highlighted several other goals and objectives that were summarized from previous Citizen's Advisory Group meetings and the first public meeting for the group to keep in mind while evaluating the various tools and approaches to the project. These included enhanced tourism, bicycle and pedestrian concerns, and the potential for increased commercial and industrial development along the route.
- 16) Next Mr. Gregory presented several items that the design team has preliminarily investigated in regards to a proposed interchange at the US 25/25E intersection and a possible new location for US 25 in the Fariston Road area.

One of the possible configurations for the interchange presented was a standard diamond interchange with the relocation of US 25 to the east of the existing intersection and ramps in all four quadrants. The other configuration relocates US 25 to the west of the existing intersection and utilizes a loop ramp in the northwest quadrant and a bridge over US 25E for mainline US 25. Some of the major design and construction constraints in this area were outlined to the group such as maintaining traffic through the existing intersection during construction and maintaining access to the adjacent parcels after the project is complete.

- 17) The Committee also reviewed a preliminary alternate for re-alignment and relocation of US 25 away from the existing roadway on the northern end of the project corridor. This alternate leaves the existing roadway near the intersection of KY 552 to the east and crosses the railroad with a new bridge near the existing Aisin Automotive Plant. The alignment then traverses the undeveloped area west of Fariston Road and ties back to existing US 25 near the intersection of KY 1006. Some of the features that were highlighted with this alternate are that it eliminates an at-grade railroad crossing at KY 552, utilizes a depressed median cross section, and allows the facility to be designed as a "Partial Control of Access" facility. Mr. Gregory explained to the group that partial control of access means that many more constraints are able to be placed on future development along the route that would prevent additional access points to the roadway. The access that is developed with the initial design is typically at a 1200 foot minimum spacing for this type of roadway and is rarely allowed to be modified in the future. Mr. Gregory explained that given the fact that the area adjacent to the existing roadway was so heavily developed, this type of access control is nearly impossible to develop along the existing corridor due to the number of existing entrances and side roads.

The group immediately recognized the enhancement to safety and capacity provided with this type of facility and agreed that this alternate should be developed further to compare against improving the existing roadway from KY 552 to KY 1006. One of the concerns raised by the group was the moving of traffic away from businesses along existing US 25. The members of the design team assured the Committee that this would be one of the factors used in the comparison of the alternates in the future.

Another question from a Committee member was if any improvements along existing US 25 could be expected if ultimately the new alignment is chosen in this area. The Design Team indicated that once the majority of the traffic is moved to the new roadway, there would be little need for improvement along existing US 25, so existing US 25 improvements would not be likely if this alternate is chosen.

Mr. Gregory explained to the Committee members that this alternate may also accommodate, at least in part, the goal of providing a safer route for bicyclist that connects the communities of London and Corbin. By removing the majority of the traffic from existing US 25, the safety for cyclist along this section of the route could be enhanced. This is one of the goals outlined in a bicycle master plan completed for Laurel County.

18) In summary, Mr. Gregory asked the group to indicate what ideas and methods that were presented warranted further development. After some discussion and evaluation of the information outlined above, the Committee definitely desired to continue to develop a 4-lane depressed median template along the existing roadway as well as along the proposed new alignment around Fariston Road. After considering the difference between the overall width of the 5-lane flush median (TWTL) template and the 4-lane depressed median template, the Committee felt that the narrower template should continue to be developed. This will provide further comparison along the entire route between the two and there may be opportunities to use this narrower width in conjunction with a different type of median in certain areas where the speed along the corridor needs to be reduced. For these reasons, the group decided to continue to develop the 5-lane scenario. The Committee also agreed that the Design Team should continue to utilize methods such as frontage roads, consolidation of entrances, and left turn restrictions to reduce the number of accesses to the proposed roadway.

Mr. Gregory indicated that at the next Advisory Committee meeting, he hoped to present detailed information about each of these alternates and ideas that will be eventually be presented at the next public meeting. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:15 pm.