

Welcome

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) welcomes you to tonight's public meeting for the Reconstruction/Widening of US 79 in Todd and Logan Counties from Guthrie to Russellville. The purpose of this meeting is to present information on the US 79 project and collect your input on preliminary widening alternatives to better inform you about the goals of the project.

Your involvement is very much appreciated, and we encourage you to visit the information displays and talk with the project team members. The KYTC recognizes that a vital part of the design process comes from public involvement. Please take the time to look around, ask questions, and submit the "Comment Form" provided. Please leave the completed form in the box near the sign-in table as you leave. If you would like to take the form home and submit it at a later date, please feel free to do so. Pre-addressed envelopes have been provided. All written comments will be accepted until June 9, 2023.

Project Summary

US 79 is a rural arterial route that connects Russellville, KY to I-24 and Clarksville, TN. It is on the National Highway System (NHS) and the Kentucky Highway Freight Network as an intermodal freight arterial (AAA route), and the long-term plan is to upgrade it to a truck route. Within Kentucky, and the 18-mile project area, US 79 is the primary route connecting the small rural communities, including Guthrie, to the commercial center of Russellville.

This stretch of US 79 is a two-lane roadway with a posted 55-mph speed limit. It carries between 3,700 and 4,300 of average daily traffic (ADT). This includes truck percentages as high as 15.6% at the southern end of the project area. Horse-and-buggy is also common in the area because of Amish/Mennonite settlements in the area. By 2045, traffic volumes are anticipated to range between 4,200 and 4,900. A key driver of this growth is the recent industrial development at the southern end of the project in Guthrie. Novelis Inc., a recycling corporation, recently opened an industrial plant along US 79 near Guthrie that is creating 190 jobs and they have announced plans for another facility that will create another 140 jobs.

Project Goals

During the early stages of a project's evaluation, the Project Development Team identifies goals for the project. These project goals include:

- To improve capacity of the roadway to accommodate future growth.
- To improve safety and reduce accidents.
- To provide a roadway facility that meets current design standards.

Defining a "2+1 Highway"

A 2+1 highway consists of continuous alternating passing lanes along a conventional two-lane highway. This type of roadway has been shown to improve operational efficiency and reduce crashes over a two lane roadway, and presents a cost effective alternative to a four-lane highway. The passing lane alternates between both sides of the highway to give motorist periodic opportunities to pass. This helps maintain a consistent traffic flow by increasing passing opportunities over long stretches of highway, reducing the time drivers spend behind a slower-moving vehicle. The addition of the passing lane improves safety because it eliminates the need for a driver to cross into the opposing lane of traffic to pass another vehicle. Rumble strips between opposing lanes encourage drivers to remain safely in their lanes. A 2+1 highway also provides an effective design alternative for higher volume, two-lane roads, but at a much lower cost than a typical four-lane highway, as much as 75 percent less.

While it can be built on a new alignment, it can also be applied to existing highways, making use of the existing roadbed to minimize the need for new right of way and extensive construction.

Two widening alternatives were developed for the US 79 project and the design team is seeking public input on each alternative.

- **Alternative 1 - Widen to the West**
- **Alternative 2 - Widen to the East**

Project Funding and Schedule

Funding for right of way, utilities, and construction is included in the current KYTC Highway Plan and is programmed in 2024-2026.

From Enacted 2022 Highway Plan

Right of Way (2024)	\$12,740,000
Utilities (2024)	\$20,810,000
Construction (2026)	\$59,010,000

Purpose and Need

The combination of trucks, vehicles, agricultural practices, and horse-and-buggies has hurt mobility along US 79. It's common for traffic to get backed up behind slower-moving trucks, farming equipment, or horse-and-buggy. There's also been a noted hesitancy among drivers to pass the slower-moving vehicles, which is attributed to numerous vertical curves lacking proper stopping sight distance and access points to approach roads, residential entrances, or farming areas. The purpose of this project is to improve the mobility of US 79 between Russellville, KY, and Guthrie, KY.

Next Steps

After tonight's meeting, the following are the steps to be taken for this project:

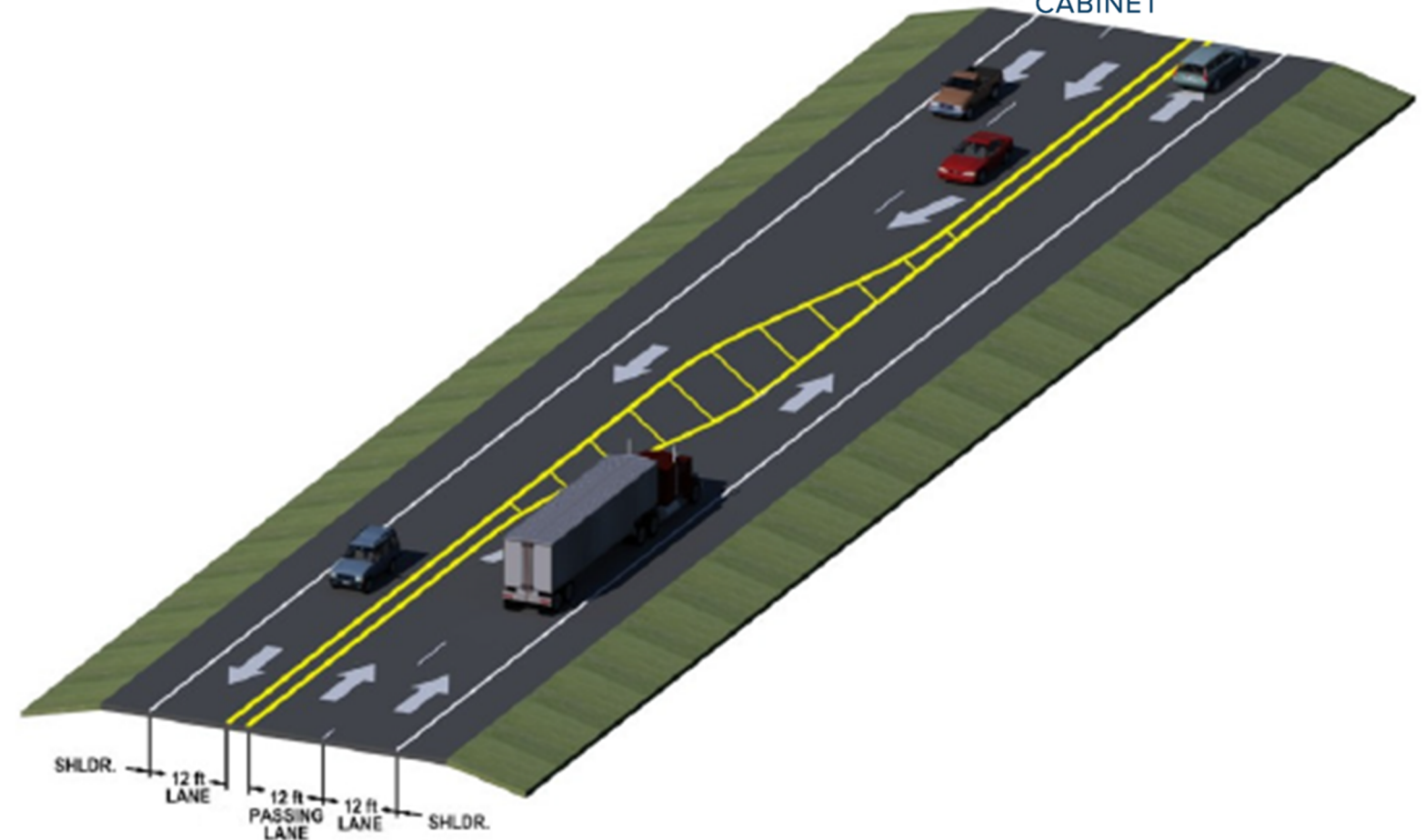
1. The Project Team will meet to review and consider all comments received from this public meeting.
2. A Preliminary Line and Grade meeting will be held where a preferred alternative will be selected.
3. Final design, including geotechnical drilling, drainage design and right of way plans will commence in late 2023.
4. It is anticipated that the acquisition of right of way will begin in 2025. Relocation of utilities will follow.
5. Bids will be solicited, and a construction contract awarded when construction funds become available.
6. The total project will likely be broken up into shorter 3-to-4-mile sections for final design, right of way and construction.

Thank you for your attendance and the input you have provided for this important highway project.

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US 79 Widening

Guthrie to Russellville
Todd & Logan Counties
May 23 & 25, 2023

