Categorical Exclusion Environmental Review

11-9015.20

Whitley County

Construct Roundabouts along US-25W at the I-75 Exit 15 Ramp Terminals

The following information is to address Section 10. Comments and Coordination, of the Categorical Exclusion Environmental Review form, for the Reevaluation for the Construction phase of the above project.

A) Include the type of public, local government, and/or property owner outreach and summarize the type of comments received:

11/22/2021 – Information regarding the project was posted to KYTC District 11's website. This information consisted of a location map, conceptual drawings of the proposed roundabouts at both the North and South exit terminals, and a narrative describing the project. The narrative on the website was the same as that advertised in local papers (see attached). 11/29/2021 – Several Whitley County local government officials were emailed directing them to the notice on District 11's website, and requesting their input, comments, and concerns (see attached). No issues, comments, or concerns were received from local government officials. 12/01/2021 & 12/08/2021 – An advertisement for the project was posted in The News Journal of Corbin, KY (see attached). This is a prominent paper serving the Whitley County area. 12/02/2021 & 12/07/2021 – An advertisement for the project was posted in The Times Tribune of Corbin, KY (see attached). This is a prominent paper serving the Whitley County area. 01/06/2022 – As of this date, information regarding the project is still available on District 11's website.

Eight comments were received from members of the public. One comment simply requested to be kept informed about the project. The remaining comments were generally in support of some type of improvement at the I-75 Exit 15 ramp terminals along US-25W, however all of those commentors were opposed to the roundabout option (see attached).

- B) Was there controversy on the Project? Yes.
- C) If yes, describe the controversy and indicate if there is additional work needed to resolve all public, local government, and/or property owners' concerns.

As indicated above, seven comments were received generally indicating support for the Cabinet making improvements at the I-75 Exit 15 ramp terminals, but they were opposed to the roundabout concept. Despite this, KYTC does not feel that additional work is needed in order to resolve these issues for the following reasons:

11-9015.20 Whitley Co., I-75 Exit 15 Roundabouts CE-1 Reevaluation, Comments & Coordination Page 2 of 2

- KYTC believes that outreach attempts were more than adequate for this level of project. Note that:
 - Website information has been available for over 6 weeks.
 - Direct communication was established with the County Judge Executive, the County Emergency Management Coordinator (who has since been appointed to Sheriff), the Police Chief, and the EMS Director.
 - Four ads covering two different weeks in two different newspapers were posted.
- Of those outreach attempts, only eight comments were received, which is an extremely low representation of the overall public routinely travelling the roadway (note: 2021 ADT = 6,880) or that lives in the Whitley County area. This indicates a general public indifference towards the project.
- The main reason for issuing the public announcement was to obtain input regarding the potential six-week closure of the ramps for construction. No one expressed concern with the closure.
- The commentors generally agreed that safety improvements and speed controls were needed in the area. Roundabouts are very effective at both (see <u>https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/roundabouts.cfm</u>). Most notable from that website is that there is an 82% reduction in fatal and injury crashes when going from a two-way stop-controlled intersection (i.e.: the current Exit 15 ramp terminal configuration) to a roundabout.
- Several commentors indicated traffic signals would be better than a roundabout. However, information from the same website above shows a 78% reduction in fatal and injury crashes when going from a signalized intersection to a roundabout.
- As stated in the public announcement information, the roundabout option will cost less, and have a lower environmental and utility impact than other alternatives.
- As stated in the public announcement information, the roundabout option is expected to improve traffic flow through the area.
- While official documentation and data does not exist, the District has had very positive results and feedback with a roundabout constructed approximately 6 years ago in Laurel County at the intersection of KY-363 and KY-1006.

Attachments:

Local official email, newspaper ads, comments

11-9015.20

Whitley County

Construct Roundabouts along US-25W at the I-75 Exit 15 Ramp Terminals

Local Official Email, Newspaper Ads, Public Comments

From:	Higgins, Joshua J (KYTC-D11)
Sent:	Monday, November 29, 2021 2:04 PM
То:	pwhite@2geton.net; dmoses@2geton.net; achriste@2geton.net; jwilson@2geton.net; wcemsambs@yahoo.com
Cc:	Chappell, Sherri M (KYTC-D11)
Subject:	I-75 Exit 15 Ramp Terminals - Roundabouts (KYTC Item No. 11-9015.20)

Dear Judge White and Directors Moses, Christe, Wilson, and Harrison:

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC), District-11, is planning a road project to address safety concerns with the existing Exit 15 ramp terminals at the intersection of I-75 and US-25W. We invite you to provide any input with regard to the project. A narrative providing information on the project, a location map, and conceptual drawings are on the District-11 webpage at the following link:

Highway District 11 | KYTC

Once there, please scroll down to "Featured Projects" and view information regarding "I-75 Exit 15 Ramp Terminals – Roundabouts." Please feel free to respond to me directly with any comments, questions, or concerns.

Sincerely,

Joshua J. Higgins Environmental Coordinator

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Department of Highways – District 11 603 Railroad Ave. Manchester, KY 40962 606-598-2145

Dept of Highways News JOURNAL - DECEMBER 1, 2021 - A-13	Classified advertisements deadline is noon Monday. All classifieds must be prespaid to must pass a background check into professional while providing cleaning services for our compa- ny. References required and you must pass a background check. Please email resume or re- quest more information to pawillis@forchtgroup.com or pawillis@forchtgroup.com or pawillis@forchtgroup.com pawillis@
	Figure 1: Section 1

Dept of Highways

B-4 - NEWS JOURNAL - DECEMBER 8, 2021

APARTMENTS ! is now accepting applications for 1, 2 & 3 bedroom . apartments. Rent based on . Income. Garbage & water . included. Applications can be picked up Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri - 9am-Noon (TTY 1-800-648-6056 for Hearing/Speech (mpäired)

· Trailer diam

Legal Notices

NOTICE:

Notice is hereby given by order of the Whitley District Court, that the following appointments have been made:

Jason Baatz, 1401 Old Jellico Creek Road, Williamsburg, KY 40769 was appointed administrator on 11/22/2021 for the estate of James A. Farmer, Sr. (deceased), 1525 Old Jellico Creek Road, Williamsburg, KY 40769. The attorney for the administrator is Hon. Aaron M. Howard, P.O. Box 1546, Corbin, KY 40702.

Mary W. Bray, 3164 West Hwy. 204, Williamsburg, KY 40769 was appointed executrix on 11/2/2021 for the estate of Lonnie E. Bray (deceased), 3164 West Highway 204, Williamsburg, KY 40760 The attor

40701. The attorney for the executor is Wesley Tipton, P.O. Box 1284, Corbin, KY 40702.

Patty Powers, 116 Boulevard of Champions, Williamsburg, KY 40769 was appointed executrix on 11/23/2021 for the estate of Maymie Alsip (deceased). Bryant The attorney for the executrix is Greta Atherton, P.O. Box 1465. Corbin, KY 40702.

Joann Marie Brown, 424 Rains Street, Willlamsburg, KY 40769 was appointed executrix on 11/23/2021 for the estate of Willlam Lee Brown (deceased), 410 Rains Street, Williamsburg, KY 40769. The attorney for the executrix is Hon. Lee Gilbert, P.O. Box 2177, Corbin, KY 40702.

Given under my hand this 30th day of November, 2021. GARY W. BARTON, CLERK **DISTRICT & CIRCUIT** COURTS WHITLEY COUNTY WILLIAMSBURG, KY 49-1-B 40769

NOTICE:

Paula Watson has filed the final settlement for the estate of Roy Eugene Hud-(deceased). dieston The settlement hearing will be held on 1/4/2022 @ 11 am. Johnna White Rob-

PUBLIC NOTICE I-75 Exit 15 Ramp Terminals - Roundabouts item No. 11-9015.20 Safety and Hazard Elimination **Whitley County**

11-9015.20 Location Map LINK:(https://transportation.ky.gov/DistrictEleven/Documents/11-9015.20% 20Location%20Map.pdf)

11-9015.20 I-75 Northbound Exit 15 Concept LINK:(https://transportation.ky.gov/DistrictEleven/Documents/11-9015.20% 20I-75%20Northbound%20Exit%2015%20Concept.pdf)

11-9015.20 I-75 Southbound Exit 15 Concept

LINK:(https://transportation.ky.gov/DistrictEleven/Documents/11-9015.20% 20I-75%20Southbound%20Exit%2015%20Concept.pdf)

Project Background

The purpose of this project is to address safety concerns with the existing Exit 15 ramp terminals at the intersection of I-75 and US-25W. The proposed project is needed since both intersections have experienced an elevated crash problem due to poor sight distance. This project is being developed through the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), and the preferred alternate is the installation of mini-roundabouts at the two intersections. The roundabouts are intended to remain almost entirely within the current intersection footprint, thereby reducing the cost, and environmental and utility impact of other alternates considered. Once completed, the roundabouts are also expected to improve traffic performance through the intersections.

Current Intersection Summary

Existing conditions at both intersections includes large rock faces in three of the four quadrants which greatly limits the Intersection Sight Distance (ISD). This is a likely contributing factor to the elevated crash rate. Over a five-year period across both intersections, there have been 36 crashes including eight injuries and one fatality.

Maintenance of Traffic and Alternate Routes

It is anticipated that alternating one-way traffic will be maintained on US-25W throughout the duration of construction by temporary signals. The preferred mini-roundabout alternative will require the Exit 15 ramp terminals be shut down for approximately six weeks. However, construction will be planned for the summer when school is out to minimize disruption to local traffic. Alternate routes will include the use of Exit 11 to the South, and Exit 25 to the North.

Project Input

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet would like to seek input from the public about this proposal, especially from drivers who use this road regularly or from people who live in the area. If you have any questions or concerns about this project, or would like any additional information, please contact the District-11 Environmental Coordinator at the email address below: Joshuaj.higgins@ky.gov

PUBLIC NOTICE I-75 Exit 15 Ramp Terminals – Roundabouts Item No. 11-9015.20 Safety and Hazard Elimination Whitley County LINK: (https://transportation.ky.gov/DistrictEleven/Documents/11-9015.20%	ZULOCATION%ZUMAp.pdf) 11-9015.20 I-75 Northbound Exit 15 Concept LINK: (https://transportation.ky.gov/DistrictEleven/Documents/11-9015.20%20 I-75%20Northbound%20Exit%2015%20Concept.pdf)	11-9015.20 I-75 Southbound Exit 15 Concept LINK: (https://transportation.ky.gov/DistrictEleven/Documents/11-9015.20%20 I-75%20Southbound%20Exit%2015%20Concept.pdf) Prolect Background	The purpose of this project is to address safety concerns with the existing Exit 15 ramp terminals at the intersection of I-75 and US-25W. The proposed project is needed since both intersections have experienced an elevated crash problem due to poor sight distance. This project is being developed through the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), and the preferred alternate is the installation of mini-roundabouts at the two intersections. The roundabouts are intended to remain almost entirely within the current	intersection footprint, thereby reducing the cost, and environmental and util- ity impact of other alternates considered. Once completed, the roundabouts are also expected to improve traffic performance through the intersections. Current Intersection Summary	Existing conditions at both intersections includes large rock faces in three of the four quadrants which greatly limits the Intersection Sight Distance (ISD). This is a likely contributing factor to the elevated crash rate. Over a five-year period across both intersections, there have been 36 crashes including eight injuries and one fatality.	Maintenance of Traffic and Alternate Routes It is anticipated that alternating one-way traffic will be maintained on US- 25W throughout the duration of construction by temporary signals. The preferred mini-roundabout alternative will require the Evit 15 remaintements	be shut down for approximately six weeks. However, construction will be planned for the summer when school is out to minimize disruption to local traffic. Alternate routes will include the use of Exit 11 to the South, and Exit 25 to the North.	Project Input	The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet would like to seek input from the public about this proposal, especially from drivers who use this road regularly or from people who live in the area. If you have any questions or concerns about this project, or would like any additional information, please contact the District-11 Environmental Coordinator at the email address below:
FULL-TIME MANAGERS/ SUPPORT BROKERS are needed to work with individuals with developmental/ intellectual disabilities (D/ID) and/or-mental illness. Must have Bachelor's Deoree in		criminal record, drug screen and driving record required. Various southeastern locations available. Apply online today at www.erigoes.com. We are an EOE.	Mobile Homes for Rent for Rent Bedroom mobile home in Gray, Gar- bage and water in- cluded. No pets. Call 606-627-5965	EStates	RENT OR LEASE RENT OR LEASE	ME OR LAND!!! 7; you need to check our to sell your property.	uesday, Thursday Ations		'25) 4 for

14 | TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2021 | TIMES-TRIBUNE

Www.thetimestribune.com

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a.

From:	Higgins, Joshua J (KYTC-D11)
Sent:	Wednesday, December 8, 2021 3:19 PM
То:	
Subject:	RE: I-75 Exit 15 Ramp Terminals – Roundabouts

Thank you for your interest in the I-75 Exit 15 Ramp Terminals – Roundabouts project. We expect that future announcements regarding the project will be posted to District 11's website, Facebook, and Twitter pages. Depending on the nature of additional comments received during the current comment period, future posts may be limited to an announcement indicating when construction will occur. District 11's website, Facebook, and Twitter pages can be accessed by the following links:

Highway District 11 | KYTC

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet District 11 | Facebook

KYTC District 11 (@KYTCDistrict11) / Twitter

If you have any additional questions or comments during the current comment period, which will close on or about December 15, 2021, please feel free to respond to me directly.

Sincerely,

Joshua J. Higgins Environmental Coordinator

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Department of Highways – District 11 603 Railroad Ave. Manchester, KY 40962 606-598-2145

From:

Sent: Monday, December 6, 2021 8:03 PM To: Higgins, Joshua J (KYTC-D11) <JoshuaJ.Higgins@ky.gov> Subject: I-75 Exit 15 Ramp Terminals – Roundabouts

Hi i would like to sign up for project updates and construction updates regarding the I-75 Exit 15 Ramp Terminals – Roundabouts Project.

sent from

From: Sent: To: Subject: Higgins, Joshua J (KYTC-D11) Friday, December 17, 2021 11:49 AM

RE: Exit 15 round a bout

Dear

Thank you for your interest in the I-75 Exit 15 Roundabout Project, and for sharing your concern. I will share your comments with the Project Team in order to make sure those issues have been considered.

Sincerely,

Joshua J. Higgins Environmental Coordinator

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Department of Highways – District 11 603 Railroad Ave. Manchester, KY 40962 606-598-2145

From:

Sent: Friday, December 17, 2021 11:18 AM To: Higgins, Joshua J (KYTC-D11) <JoshuaJ.Higgins@ky.gov> Subject: Exit 15 round a bout

Just voicing my concerns, wouldn't scaling back the mountain and adding a red light be cheaper, easier and safer option than this madness?

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

Higgins, Joshua J (KYTC-D11) Friday, December 17, 2021 11:55 AM RE: Exit 15 Round about

Dear Concerned Citizen,

Thank you for your interest in the I-75 Exit 15 Roundabout Project, and for sharing your concern. I will share your comments with the Project Team in order to make sure those issues have been considered.

Sincerely,

Joshua J. Higgins Environmental Coordinator

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Department of Highways – District 11 603 Railroad Ave. Manchester, KY 40962 606-598-2145

From:

Sent: Friday, December 17, 2021 11:40 AM To: Higgins, Joshua J (KYTC-D11) <JoshuaJ.Higgins@ky.gov> Subject: Exit 15 Round about

Hello, I just wanted to voice opinion about the upcoming plans for the Exit 15 roundabout. I think it would be more convenient and cost efficient to add a red and scale back the mountain. Thank you,

A concerned citizen.

From: Sent: To: Subject: Higgins, Joshua J (KYTC-D11) Friday, December 17, 2021 2:42 PM

RE: Exit 15 roundabout proposal.

Dear

Thank you for your interest in the I-75 Exit 15 Roundabout Project, and for sharing your concern. I will share your comments with the Project Team in order to make sure those issues have been considered.

Merry Christmas to you, too!

Sincerely,

Joshua J. Higgins Environmental Coordinator

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Department of Highways – District 11 603 Railroad Ave. Manchester, KY 40962 606-598-2145

-----Original Message-----

From: Sent: Friday, December 17, 2021 2:21 PM To: Higgins, Joshua J (KYTC-D11) <JoshuaJ.Higgins@ky.gov> Subject: Exit 15 roundabout proposal.

Hello, I have seen the proposals for the insulation of roundabouts on Exit 15. As someone who has lived off this exit for 37 years and been driving for more than 20 I feel like this would not be an appropriate solution to the problem. I commute through that area twice a day 6-7 days a week and I feel that the more appropriate solution would be to cut back on the rock walls that obstruct the view of traffic. It's not only that a roundabout would be a personal irritation to me but there will be hundreds of inexperienced drivers traveling through that area to and from school, heavy equipment that exits off of Prewitt Bend Road, not too mention the School buses.

I hope that you listen to the concerns of the people that actually live in the area and will be affected by these changes. I hope you have a blessed and happy Christmas.

Best regards,

Sent from my iPhone

From:Higgins, Joshua J (KYTC-D11)Sent:Wednesday, December 22, 2021 8:59 AMTo:Image: Comparison of the sector of the sec

Dear

Thank you for your interest in the I-75 Exit 15 Roundabout Project, and for sharing your concern. I will share your comments with the Project Team in order to make sure those issues have been considered.

Merry Christmas to you, too!

Sincerely,

Joshua J. Higgins Environmental Coordinator

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Department of Highways – District 11 603 Railroad Ave. Manchester, KY 40962 606-598-2145

From:

Sent: Wednesday, December 22, 2021 12:23 AM To: Higgins, Joshua J (KYTC-D11) <JoshuaJ.Higgins@ky.gov> Subject: Exit 15 roundabout concept

Hi Josh,

I am writing in regards of the exit 15 roundabout concept. I have lived in exit 15 my whole life, I am . I don't think we are in need of the roundabouts. I think it would be more beneficial if the mountains by the exits be taken off, making it more visible to see. also maybe red lights could probably work there too.

We have lots of traffic and problems in those areas I am aware. But I don't think a roundabout it necessary. If there wreaks on the interstate the roads become badly backed up causing stand still traffic at times. We also have quit a bit of school traffic being so close to Whitley county campus. I think it would be problematic for buses and young drivers. Also we aren't use to roundabouts and some have never drove on one.

I would also like to draw your attention to the 3 point area of Whitley county. The bridge is horrible. Couple years ago there where talks about widening the road and the bridge. Most of the time you have to stop before getting on the bridge because of 18 wheelers, larger trucks or equipment to pass. I would think that would call for major repair then the roundabout.

I wish you and your family a merry Christmas. Thank you for your time and I do apologize for rambling.

Thank you,

From: Sent: To: Subject: Higgins, Joshua J (KYTC-D11) Monday, December 27, 2021 9:15 AM

RE: Exit 15/I-75 Roundabout Proposal

Dear

Thank you for your interest in the I-75 Exit 15 Roundabout Project, and for sharing your concern. I will share your comments with the Project Team in order to make sure those issues have been considered.

Sincerely,

Joshua J. Higgins Environmental Coordinator

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Department of Highways – District 11 603 Railroad Ave. Manchester, KY 40962 606-598-2145

From:

Sent: Wednesday, December 22, 2021 9:15 PM To: Higgins, Joshua J (KYTC-D11) <JoshuaJ.Higgins@ky.gov> Subject: Exit 15/I-75 Roundabout Proposal

Mr. Higgins:

I have lived within a mile of this exit for 35 years and use it daily. I have seen problems that are encountered here such as with semi- trucks stuck on the north bound on ramp divider strip many times. Finally the highway dept. took out the curb and grassy area and now they only get scrapes if they are driving a low boy trailer. A current existing problem with the semis is when they exit off and see there is no truck stops, fuel center or truck turnarounds at this exit and they proceed to go straight across back on; being over 60 feet long they are blocking the highway for a few minutes as they attempt this cross over. Traffic continues to approach at a speed much higher than the limit as usual. I have asked several times for help at this exit as there have been many accidents close calls here, myself included. I have called the Manchester office and ask for the brush and walls to be cut down to give better visibility and have been told that it will be resolved in the "six year road plan"---this being 12 years ago. Also I was told that this is an impossibility due to erosion and mudslides----they happen anyway and often. I have been told to live with it as well. I would like to submit some considerations:

- 1. Remove the rock walls
- 2. Add a merge lane to turn right off exit ramps
- 3. Installation of caution lights for through traffic on Hwy 25 as well as stop flashing for ramp traffic
- 4. Addition of more speed limit signs approaching the interchange
- 5. Could even install red lights (last option)

There are other solutions versus a roundabout as this idea is not widely accepted nor wanted by the majority that it will affect daily.

Thank you,

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:

Higgins, Joshua J (KYTC-D11) Thursday, January 6, 2022 1:27 PM

RE: Proposed Round-about at Exit 15, I-75 in Whitley County

Dear Mr.

Thank you for your interest in the I-75 Exit 15 Roundabout Project, and for sharing your concern. I will share your comments with the Project Team in order to make sure those issues have been considered.

Additionally, I forwarded your concern regarding the US-27 & KY-92 intersection in McCreary County to District-8 personnel.

Sincerely,

Joshua J. Higgins Environmental Coordinator

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Department of Highways – District 11 603 Railroad Ave. Manchester, KY 40962 606-598-2145

From:

Sent: Thursday, January 6, 2022 10:16 AM To: Higgins, Joshua J (KYTC-D11) <JoshuaJ.Higgins@ky.gov> Subject: Proposed Round-about at Exit 15, I-75 in Whitley County

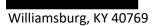
Hello Joshua,

I am admittedly opposed to the proposed Round-abouts at Exit 15 on highway-25W

Traffic lights and removal of visual obstructions would accommodate the traffic far better over the long haul.

I know it is not in District 11, but the junction of the new highway 92 at highway 27 in Pineknot seriously needs to be addressed. No traffic light, no caution light and zero night lighting. There have already been serious accidents there. Looking from the junction, to the left about 200 yards away is a flashing caution light for a very low traffic intersection. To the right about 300 yards there is a traffic light at the junction of Old Highway 92 (now 2792). Truck traffic on the new 92 has increased significantly. So, this intersection needs serious evaluation (all about safety).

Thanks for your time.



From: Sent: To: Subject: Higgins, Joshua J (KYTC-D11) Friday, January 7, 2022 7:25 AM

RE: Wondering why you guys do this,

Dear Mr.

Thank you for your interest in the I-75 Exit 15 Roundabout Project, and for sharing your concern. I will share your comments with the Project Team in order to make sure those issues have been considered.

Sincerely,

Joshua J. Higgins Environmental Coordinator

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Department of Highways – District 11 603 Railroad Ave. Manchester, KY 40962 606-598-2145

-----Original Message-----From: Sent: Thursday, January 6, 2022 4:21 PM To: Higgins, Joshua J (KYTC-D11) <JoshuaJ.Higgins@ky.gov> Subject: Wondering why you guys do this,

Dear Sir,

It has come to my attention that the commonwealth has the intention of putting a round about at exit 15 in the area commonly known as Goldbug.

May I ask how this idea came about? Was the person that thought this up huffing paint, or just back from a trip to the Mohave and still suffering from peyote buttons? Are they suffering from a brain injury? Maybe they are off their prescription meds? But for the love all that is holy please get them examined.

These things might be a good idea somewhere, but as commercial truck driver I have yet see one that doesn't require the trailer to be drug through part of the middle to keep from curbing the tires and potentially causing a couple of thousand dollars damage to the trailer.

I assure you as a resident of this area I will be pulling every inch of my equipment "through" not around this mistake and many others will also. Anyone I see that blows out a sidewall or bends a rim because of this traffic travesty that you the commonwealth are considering should hire an attorney and not only sue the commonwealth, but you personally, for not tabling this idea but and beating the clown that thought this stupidity up over the head with the blue prints rolled up around a lead pipe.

Instead of wasting more of our tax money on follies like this, can we at least try to be fiscally responsible?

A very upset tax payer