KY 9 Scoping Study

Project Team Meeting No. 1

Date	May 26, 2021	Attendees	
Time	1:30 PM (Eastern Time)	Dane Blackburn	KYTC District 6
		Mike Bezold	KYTC District 6
		Craig Walker	KYTC District 6
		Matt Yeager	KYTC District 6
		Tony Blau	KYTC District 6
		Emily Eising	KYTC District 6
		Carol Callan-Ramler	KYTC CO Program Mgt
Location	Virtual – Zoom	Stephen De Witte	KYTC CO Planning
		Jay Balaji	KYTC CO Planning
		Steve Ross	KYTC CO Planning
		Sadie Middleton	KYTC MPO Liaison
		Amanda Desmond	KYTC CO Location Engineer
		Jeff Thelen	NKADD
		Robert Koehler	OKI
Facilitator	Brad Johnson, HMB Project Manager	Brad Johnson	HMB
		Matt Bullens	HMB
		Michael Leathers	HMB
		Joey Mosley	HMB
		Matt Sipes	HMB
		Lindsay Walker	HMB
		James Robertson	HMB
		Rebecca Thompson	QK4
		Jeremy Lukat	QK4
		Rebecca Hammond	QK4

Agenda

- ✓ **Introductions**

  KYTC District 6 (D6) Dane Blackburn, the Project Manager for the district on this project, welcomed attendees and provided a brief overview of the project. He noted the study is intended to improve traffic flow and safety at the interchange. Brad Johnson, HMB project manager, introduced all attendees. HMB shared the project StoryMap and explained to the project team that it would be used for the life of the project and made available to the project team. HMB also noted a OneDrive folder would be created as a repository for all deliverables including meeting agendas, minutes and study documents.

- ✓ **Study Background**

  HMB noted the objective of the study is to identify and evaluate potential improvement options and solidify their scope and priority. This study could result in an Interchange Modification Report (IMR), but that would be determined at a later time. KYTC noted the KY 17 interchange, an adjacent I-275 interchange, did not trigger an IMR with their displaced left turn lane design.

  A preliminary discussion of how the project team would handle public involvement took place. HMB noted a shorter public input window would help keep the project on schedule and KYTC Central Office (CO) was open to a two-week window. KYTC D6 pointed out the project was sponsored in SHIFT and want to the study to be far enough along to potentially program projects into the next Highway Plan early next year.

- ✓ **Roadway Information**

  KYTC D6 elaborated on the design of the interchange. The hillside southeast of the interchange and the Licking River to the west were physical constraints that resulted in this design. The signalized intersection at Town Drive is also closer than desired to the interchange and will periodically cause I-275 eastbound traffic headed south on KY 9 to back up near or onto I-275.

  HMB specifically noted the deficient acceleration length for the westbound on-ramp. In order to meet current design standards in its current configuration, the Licking River bridge would need to be widened.

  HMB noted there are four CHAFs in the area. This study is one of those and was sponsored through the SHIFT process. In addition, the Pooles Creek Rd from AA Hwy to US 27 Connector (IP20080297) was sponsored.

- ✓ **Safety**

  HMB presented the crash data next. There were many rear end crashes on KY 9 at signalized intersections. Sideswipes were prevalent at the I-275 eastbound exit ramp and where KY 9 merges to one lane. QK4 did an analysis for EEC (Excess Expected Crashes) and LOSS (Level of Service of Safety). EEC was positive for most of the project area and the LOSS was also at 3-4, indicating crashes are happening above the expected rate.

- ✓ **Traffic**

  QK4 and HMB performed traffic counts at all study intersections with the exception of Town Drive and Gloria Terrell Drive. This location will be counted this week or next and added to the existing turning movement counts.

  HMB showed the preliminary traffic forecast numbers. A one percent growth rate is being proposed which was estimated using OKI model runs, population / employment growth, and

historic traffic growth trends. HMB is looking to share these preliminary numbers with the Modal Group next week. KYTC CO Modal Group wanted to make sure HMB compares 2018 volumes to insure COVID-19 is not impacting the traffic forecast. They also asked if HMB had volume to capacity ratios calculated for the segments and HMB responded they did not at this time. However, they did note current daily traffic on KY 9 is approximately 24,000 vehicles and applying the one percent growth would result in daily traffic volumes of approximately 32,000 vehicles per day. The analysis will likely show capacity constraints at this level. KYTC CO would also like to look at the lunchtime peak (midday peak). HMB noted this data was collected and can be reviewed and compared to AM and PM Peak volumes. HMB noted that the Brent Spence Bridge can influence traffic on I-275.

HMB also shared screenshots from Google Traffic that showed typical traffic conditions that displayed congestion along both I-275 and KY 9 surrounding the interchange during both the AM and PM peaks.

HMB presented several charts plotting the speed data provided by KYTC. KYTC CO was surprised that eastbound AM traffic had such low speeds. HMB pointed out the lowest speeds were for truck traffic headed eastbound up the hill towards I-471.

✓ **Environmental**

HMB presented the Environmental overview next. They noted there were not too many significant environmental items besides the obvious constraints from the Licking River. The floodplain does extend near the existing ramps. They also recommended the floodway along the river not be disturbed. KYTC asked if any environmental concerns northwest of the interchange had been identified in previous studies. District 6 stated the issues were geotechnical concerns more than environmental concerns. There is also an old landfill further north but it is outside of the study area. KYTC CO said there was a DND (Do Not Disturb) area south of the interchange.

There are minor tributaries flowing into Licking River. There is a typo on Threatened and endangered species paragraph ("one bat three bat") that will be corrected.

KYTC District 6 noted, typically, there have not been archaeological sites identified this far north on the Licking River.

KYTC D6 had a utility related question about a powerline that was moved under the road just east of this interchange (believed to be electric distribution only). KYTC confirmed there is an electrical and possibly a communication line running directly under the shoulder or next to it on KY 9 on the northbound side.

✓ **Potential Improvement Options**

HMB showcased some of the improvement options that were in the proposal and the project team discussed these options and other ideas. One option was to add a lane southbound to or beyond Town Drive. Other options were closing Town Drive completely or converting to a right-in/right-out.

KYTC D6 seemed open to evaluating the closure of Town Drive. They noted local law enforcement have blocked access to the Town Drive exit onto KY 9 during peak operations for the movie theater and sports complex forcing motorists to Rosewood Drive. This option has been proposed by the district before to the City of Wilder, but due to pushback from businesses on Town Drive the option has never advanced beyond the concept phase. HMB suggested modeling this scenario and using this to help demonstrate the benefit of closing

Town Drive. Creating a thru movement from Gloria Terrell Drive to Rosewood Drive will be investigated as well.

To address northbound KY 9 traffic and the heavy left-turn volume onto I-275 westbound, several options were discussed. One option would be to have an "auxiliary lane" northbound on KY 9 outside of the bridge piers for thru traffic to bypass the interchange signals. KYTC District 6 noted the City of Wilder has also brought this option forward, but the amount of thru traffic does not warrant that.

A more feasible option that will be evaluated is providing dual left turn lanes from KY 9 to the westbound ramps. The next option discussed was a displaced left to shift all northbound lefts to one location. KYTC CO asked what this does to EB loop ramp. HMB answered that the channelization for KY 9 would likely need to be removed and stop condition introduced. KYTC District 6 were concerned with the terrain north of I-275 accommodating the ramp and also were concerned with how you would lay out the southern intersection to accommodate the crossover movement.

The last option from the proposal that was discussed was a flyover ramp for the WB entrance ramp that started after the bridges and went out and over KY 9 to tie into the existing WB entrance ramp. KYTC thought this was an interesting concept but geometrically this might not work due to superelevation of the bridge over KY 9.

A few options were discussed that were not in HMB / QK4's proposal. One option was a flyover ramp that would begin south of the interchange near Town Drive and cut through the southeast quadrant of the interchange and over I-275 to swing around and tie into I-275 westbound. HMB will investigate this option further.

Another option discussed was a westbound exit ramp in the northeast quadrant either tying in at the existing ramps or going north of the hotels. This option would likely require one or both hotels to be purchased. There is also a large utility strip behind the hotel that would need to be considered.

HMB asked if it was worth evaluating what would it take to completely reconfigure the interchange. Shifting the alignment of KY 9 to the East was a part of this discussion. KYTC is looking for outside the box options that address the safety and congestion along KY 9 and should not be constrained by the Licking River bridge or the current interchange configuration.

✓ **Local Official / Stakeholder Meeting No. 1 / Public Engagement Effort No. 1**

HMB asked about the timing of the first round of public engagement and KYTC D6 asked if we even need to meet with the public at this point? KYTC CO said that is a fair point and with this interchange's problems being well documented, we could accelerate the schedule a little. KYTC D6 asked if we can wait until we have traffic simulations on this to show potential improvements and how they work to the public/stakeholders.

It was agreed that the first Local Officials /Stakeholder (LO/S) meeting and Public Engagement Effort would not be conducted. The next project meeting will be a project team meeting anticipated in late July. This meeting will review the traffic analysis in more detail as well as cover the improvement concepts in more depth. For this phase of the study, only one round of LO/S and Public Engagement meetings will be held. The schedule will be reviewed to determine if those meetings can be held earlier than originally anticipated.

- ✓ **Wrap Up**

  HMB reiterated the next steps were to finalize the traffic forecast, evaluate the existing traffic conditions and start to develop the improvement options. A project team meeting will be scheduled for July.

  The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:30 pm.

KY 9 Scoping Study

Project Team Meeting No. 2

Date	September 29, 2021
Time	1:00 PM (Eastern Time)
Location	Virtual – Microsoft Teams
Facilitator	Brad Johnson, HMB Project Manager

Attendees	
Dane Blackburn	KYTC District 6
Mike Bezold	KYTC District 6
Craig Walker	KYTC District 6
Matt Yeager	KYTC District 6
Ellen Gregory	KYTC District 6
Tony Blau	KYTC District 6
Emily Eising	KYTC District 6
Sharon James	KYTC District 6
Carol Callan-Ramler	KYTC CO Program Mgt
Stephen De Witte	KYTC CO Planning
Jay Balaji	KYTC CO Planning
Scott Thomson	KYTC CO Planning
Robert Koehler	OKI
Amanda Desmond	KYTC CO Location Engineer
Scott Schurman	KYTC CO Environmental
Rebecca Thompson	QK4
Jeremy Lukat	QK4
Brad Johnson	HMB
Matt Bullens	HMB
Michael Leathers	HMB
Joey Mosley	HMB
Lindsay Walker	HMB

Agenda

✓ **Introductions**

No introductions were conducted given most everyone was involved in the first Project Team Meeting. The StoryMap from Project Team Meeting #1 was updated and served as the basis for the presentation.

✓ **Study Background/Schedule**

Attendees were reminded of the purpose which is to improve safety and reduce congestion in the vicinity of the I-275 interchange with KY 9 (AA Highway). The objective of the study is to identify and evaluate potential improvement options and solidify their scope and priority.

HMB shared an updated schedule that suggested a LO/S meeting in October followed by a public meeting in early November and a final report being delivered in January 2022. This schedule was revisited later in the discussion with a decision to not host a public meeting at this stage of the project.

✓ **Traffic/Safety Update**

The Roadway Information and Safety tabs of the StoryMap were unchanged. HMB pointed out that the *2021 Turning Movement Volumes* figure was updated, and a *2045 Turning Movement Volumes* figure was added to the StoryMap. The heaviest turn movements were noted.

✓ **Environmental**

HMB noted subconsultant, Corn Island, has completed their historic structures overview. They identified St. Johns Church in the Southern section of the project area along St. Johns Lane as the only historical property on the National Register Historic Places (NHRP). They also noted a couple of archaeological sites within the study area, but the locations were not specifically identified.

✓ **Refined Improvement Options / Traffic Analysis**

The Improvement Options tab has been reorganized into areas instead of problems to be addressed. Areas are as follows: I-275 Westbound Ramps, I-275 Eastbound Ramps, KY 9 Mainline, and Secondary Roads.

<u>I-275 Westbound Ramps:</u>

Regarding Improvement Option 2, KYTC District 6 asked to not show a dual lefts option unless a dual lane entry onto I-275 is provided. Furthermore, it was noted that the problem in this area is the shortened acceleration lane onto I-275. KYTC requested a price for adding a lane to the bridge be included in the cost estimate. HMB asked if an auxiliary lane be provided to the next interchange (Exit 79) to the west. KYTC District 6 responded that the traffic analysis should determine if this is needed. For Option 2, KYTC District 6 prefers equal length left turn lanes with the overall length determined by the traffic analysis. There is a concern that both turn lanes will not be equally utilized if implemented as illustrated.

KYTC District 6 preferred Option 5 over Options 3 and 4. KYTC Central Office mentioned that the Westbound ramp intersection could be converted into a continuous green with that flyover ramp option since the left is being taken out; however, traffic volumes may not warrant this change. District 6 said the traffic analysis needs to determine if traffic can be merged on the ramp before the interstate and avoid having a two-lane ramp. District 6 is concerned about merging and sight distance with the flyover ramp and KYTC Central Office is concerned about the grade on these flyover ramps. These design details will be checked as the conceptual designs are refined.

I-275 Eastbound Ramps:

Improvement Options 7 and 9 are not recommended to be carried forward. For both, the preliminary traffic analysis showed these to be inferior to the other options. Improvement Option 8 will need to be illustrated and analyzed. It was noted this would require widening of the Licking River Bridge.

KY 9 Mainline:

The KY 9 options address the southbound lane utilization and congestion by eliminating the southbound lane drop and extending the I-275 off-ramp southbound lane. District 6 requested the third lane not drop at Town Drive but rather continue through the intersection. Preliminary traffic analysis showed it worked better taking it through the intersection. This analysis also showed removing the existing lane drop at the ramps provided additional improvement.

A continuous green intersection at Town Drive and Steffen Lane was added as Improvement Option 13. District 6 felt it is worth evaluating further. For this option to be implemented, KY 9 will most likely need to be widened to provide more median width to channelize the movements.

Improvement Options 14 and 15 will be carried forward for additional analysis but will be considered variations of Improvement Option 12. Traffic analysis and input from stakeholders will be an important part of determining their ultimate feasibility.

Secondary Roads:

The preliminary traffic analysis showed that dual lefts for either Town Drive or Rosewood Drive would be needed. Opinions varied on these four improvement options. There were concerns that businesses would not like Option 18 because it cuts off truck access to Rosewood Drive. The Southern intersection at Pooles Creek Rd already has problems with safety and that option would only add to it. Option 19 was preferred over Option 18 but concerns still exist that the public will not like the option. District 6 suggested making Thorntons a right in/right out only would help the intersection tremendously. Improvement Option 20 was not recommended for further analysis due to the difficulty in constructing this option.

✓ **Local Official / Stakeholder Meeting No. 1 / Public Engagement Effort No. 1**

District 6 recommends initially meeting with the City of Wilder and reviewing the improvement options with them. The City of Wilder can determine what other representatives would be beneficial to invite to the meeting. Before conducting this meeting, the traffic analysis, conceptual designs, and preliminary cost estimates will need to be completed. It was suggested by other staff that providing public access to review the improvement options would be beneficial at some stage in the study. Following this meeting, the project team can determine the next steps.

✓ **Wrap Up**

OKI requested the videos in the SharePoint folder (.mov files) be relabeled to better describe what is contained in the video. KYTC Central Office requested the opportunity to review the future year traffic models and the traffic forecast report.

The improvement options to be advanced to the next phase of analysis are summarized on the following page.

Improvement Option Original #/Proposed #	Keep	Notes	Discard
Area No. 1: I-275 Westbound Ramps			
1 / 1	✓	Modify turn lane length based on traffic analysis	
2 / 2	✓	Modify to show a dual lane entry onto I-275	
3 / NR			✓
4 / NR			✓
5 / 3	✓	Modify to be closer to KY 9 and further from the Hampton Inn and Suites	
6 / NR		No new options recommended	
Area No. 2: I-275 Eastbound Ramps			
7 / NR			✓
8 / 4	✓	Need to illustrate this option including impact to Licking River bridge	
9 / NR			✓
10 / NR		No new options recommended	
Area No. 3 KY 9 Mainline			
11 / NR			✓
12 / 5a	✓	Need to illustrate this option	
13 / 6	✓	Widen median to improve channelization	
14 / 5b	✓	Need to illustrate this option	
15 / 5c	✓		
16 / NR		No new options recommended	
Area No. 4: Secondary Roads			
17 / 5b & 6		Incorporate in Options #5b and 6, modify turn lane length based on traffic analysis	✓
18 / 5b, 5c & 6		Incorporate in Options #5b, 5c and 6. Modify back to T-intersection, but provide dual left onto KY 9	✓
19 / 5d	✓		
20 / NR			✓