APPENDIX B. MEETING MINUTES

MINUTES

Project Scoping Meeting: Alternatives Study
Jackson County
Reconstruction of US 421 from KY 89
to the Rockcastle County Line
KYTC Item No. 11-113.00

August 11, 2003 10:00 a.m. EST Highway District 11 Office Manchester, Kentucky

A project team meeting for the US 421 Alternatives Study in Jackson County was conducted on Monday, August 11, 2003 in Manchester, Kentucky. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the project history and purpose, scope of work and related activities, preliminary data/exhibits, project issues, and public involvement needs and ideas. Participants at the meeting included representatives from KYTC District 11, Cumberland Valley Area Development District (CVADD), KYTC Central Office, and consultant staff from Wilbur Smith Associates (WSA). Individual attendees at the meeting included the following:

Clay McKnight Cumberland Valley Area Development
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Joel Holcomb	KYTC, District 11
Jim Ball	KYTC, District 11
Sandy Rudder	KTYC, District 11
Dean Croft	KYTC, District 11
Aaron Renfro	KYTC, District 11
Quentin Smith	KYTC, District 11
Phillip Howard	KYTC, District 11
Josh Callihan	KYTC, District 11
Greene Keith	KYTC, District 11
Mike Calebs	KYTC, District 11
Michael West	KYTC, District 11

Jim Wilson KYTC Central Office, Planning Steve Ross KYTC Central Office, Planning

Carl Dixon Wilbur Smith Associates
Amanda Ratliff Wilbur Smith Associates

A summary of the key comments and discussion items for this meeting is provided below in the order of the meeting agenda. A copy of the agenda for the meeting is attached to this document.

1) Welcome and Introductions

Steve Ross began the meeting by having all attendees introduce themselves.

2) Purpose of Meeting

Steve Ross stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss an alternatives study for a proposed improvement of US 421 in Jackson County from KY 89 to the Rockcastle County line.

3) Project History

Clay McKnight provided a brief history of the project. He stated that the project had been a Top 10 Priority of the Cumberland Valley ADD Regional Transportation Committee for the last two years, as part of the KYTC statewide transportation planning process. Mr. McKnight indicated that Jackson County's designation as a Federal Empowerment Zone may have helped to get this project selected.

4) Scope of Work

Carl Dixon briefly reviewed Wilbur Smith Associates' Scope of Work. He noted that Palmer Engineering and Qore would be subconsultants handling the environmental and geotechnical overviews, respectively. He confirmed with Clay McKnight that CVADD would assist with the environmental justice data collection and analysis by providing demographic data on minorities and economically disadvantaged persons.

Mr. Dixon reviewed the project schedule, noting that the Public Involvement Plan was due two weeks following the Project Team Meeting. At present there are two rounds of one meeting with local officials/stakeholders and two rounds of one public meeting. It was suggested that the project team consider having the public meetings in Sandgap instead of McKee. It was decided that the first Local Officials/Stakeholders Meetings should be scheduled by August 29th if possible. Clay McKnight agreed to confirm availability of local officials for this date. Mr. Dixon stated that a preliminary draft is due by February 2004, and the final report is to be completed by June 2004.

5) Preliminary Data/Exhibits

Amanda Ratliff reviewed the handouts distributed to everyone at the beginning of the meeting. Data presented was noted as preliminary and would be further defined and verified as the project progresses.

6) Project Issues

The study area was discussed, and the termini were decided as follows. The southern terminus will be the northernmost junction of KY 89 near the northern city limits of McKee. The northern terminus will be the southern end of the improved section at Bighill, just north of the Rockcastle County line.

The project team agreed that the study area buffer should be widened from 1000 feet to 2000 feet on each side of the existing alignment to provide adequate area for possible new alignment alternatives.

Several items were mentioned by the project team as issues to consider throughout the study, including:

- The potential existence of family clusters along US 421;
- Relocations, especially if the improvement is along the existing route;

- The Daniel Boone National Forest;
- A mine at Clover Bottom, along with other mines in the study area;
- An industrial park located at Clover Bottom;
- Maintenance of traffic during construction, particularly for an improvement along or near the existing road;
- The stream running alongside US 421 and other streams in the area;
- Residential development in Sandgap;
- Observed pedestrian traffic at various points along the route, especially in the Sandgap area and near other built-up areas along the route, so the study will follow Cabinet policy for accommodating pedestrian/bicycle access;
- Existence of caves and karst topography near the Rockcastle County Line;
- Acidic soils were found near the Rockcastle County Line as part of the Bighill project;
- The historic Cox Simpson House, located near the Rockcastle County Line which is currently receiving Transportation Enhancement Funds for improvements;
- Grade issues near Sandgap, which may need to be bypassed.

Some project goals were determined based on discussions throughout the meeting. Clay McKnight stressed the importance of improved access, especially considering the county's status as an Empowerment Zone. As shown in the data presented by Amanda Ratliff, this segment of US 421 has a very poor level of service, and it also falls into the lowest percentile (i.e., worst condition) for adequacy ratings, as compared to other roads. Although the data did not indicate any high crash locations along the route, a few attendees stated that the road still needed safety improvements because of narrow lanes, very narrow shoulders, and deficiencies in horizontal and vertical alignments.

Summarizing the discussion, the goals of the project are as follows:

- Improve access to this low-income area to enhance economic development
- Improve access for jobs, hospitals, services, shopping, and schools at Berea, Richmond, and Lexington
- Improve Level of Service
- Improve geometrics for better safety and operations

7) Public Involvement

Carl Dixon explained that the public meetings would be open-format, probably with a slide presentation that would run on a continuous loop throughout the meeting. No one felt that any further special public outreach efforts were needed.

As part of the public involvement process, Clay McKnight suggested that a presentation be made to the Kiwanis and the Empowerment Zone Board in a joint meeting during the Kiwanis weekly meeting in downtown McKee.

Also discussed was the importance of coordinating with the National Forest Service. There may also be a need for coordinating with Berea College, since they own a lot of land in the area and were heavily involved in the Bighill project. In addition, it may be worthwhile to coordinate with the Kentucky Speleological Society due to the caves that are located near the Rockcastle County Line.

In response to a question from Carl Dixon, it was the consensus of the group that there were probably no Environmental Justice population clusters in the study area. However, Clay McKnight said that Jackson County had a large low-income population, and this should be considered. He said that contacts could be made with some of the groups that represent this low-income population. Two of those are Jackson County Transit and the Christian Appalachian Project. He said that he would invite representatives from those groups to the first local officials/stakeholders meeting. [NOTE: In a follow-up phone conversation after the Project Team Meeting, Clay McKnight identified two other groups that represent low-income populations: Daniel Boone Development Council and St. Paul's Catholic Church. He said that he would also invite these groups to the local officials/stakeholders meeting.]

8) Questions and Answers

Jim Wilson asked the group what they believed to be the primary purpose of the study. Responses indicated that improved access was the primary reason, but congestion, safety, and improved geometrics were also important.

Mr. Wilson also asked if the study should consider spot improvements as an alternate, but the consensus was that problems exist all along the route and there were no specific locations where spot improvements would be of any benefit.

9) Adjourn

With no further comments, the meeting concluded at approximately 11:30 a.m.

AGENDA

Project Scoping Meeting: Alternatives Study

Jackson County
Reconstruction of US 421 from KY 89
to the Rockcastle County Line
KYTC Item No. 11-113.00

August 11, 2003 10:00 a.m. EDT District 11 Conference Room Manchester, Kentucky

1. Welcome and Introductions	Division of Planning
2. Purpose of Meeting	Division of Planning
3. Project Historya. Originb. Purpose	Division of Planning/ Highway District 11
 4. Scope of Work a. Tasks b. Responsible parties c. Schedule 	Wilbur Smith Associates
5. Preliminary Data/Exhibits	Wilbur Smith Associates
 6. Project Issues a. Study Area b. District/Local Issues c. Project Goals d. Environmental Justice 	Group Discussion
7. Public Involvement a. Special groups b. Tasks c. Schedule	Group Discussion
8. Q & A	Group Discussion
9. Adjourn	Division of Planning

MINUTES

Meeting with Local Officials/Stakeholders Alternatives Study US 421, Jackson County, from KY 89 to Rockcastle County Line Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Item No. 11-113.00

September 2, 2003 10:30 a.m. EDT Jackson County Empowerment Zone Office McKee, Kentucky

A local officials/stakeholders meeting for the US 421 Alternatives Study in Jackson County was conducted on Tuesday, September 2, 2003 in McKee, Kentucky. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the project history, scope of work and related activities, preliminary data/exhibits, project issues, project goals, and public involvement needs and ideas. Participants at the meeting included representatives from Cumberland Valley Area Development District (CVADD), KYTC Central Office, consultant staff from Wilbur Smith Associates (WSA), and Jackson County officials and residents. Individual attendees at the meeting included the following:

Marie Rader State Representative – 89th District Tommy Slone Jackson County Judge-Executive Mike Buckles Daniel Boone Development Council

Mike McQueen Mid-South Electronic
Daphene Lewis Chamber of Commerce

Anne Gabbard Jackson County Development Association

Sister Anne Lannon St. Paul's Catholic Church

Fletcher Gabbard Jackson County Transportation Committee Keith Gabbard Peoples Rural Telephone Corporation

Jody Madden Jackson Energy Rodney Chrisman Jackson Energy Glen Dandeneau Berea College

Cozette Neeley Peoples Rural Telephone Corporation
Mary Purkey Jackson County Empowerment Zone
Ralph Hoskins Jackson County Board of Education

Ken Williams Jackson County Tourism

Clay McKnight Cumberland Valley Area Development District

Daryl Greer KYTC Central Office, Planning Steve Ross KYTC Central Office, Planning

Carl D. Dixon Wilbur Smith Associates
Amanda Ratliff Wilbur Smith Associates

A summary of the key comments and discussion items for this meeting is provided below in the order of the meeting agenda. A copy of the agenda for the meeting is attached to this document.

1) Welcome and Introductions

Steve Ross began the meeting by having all attendees introduce themselves.

2) Purpose of Meeting

Steve Ross stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss an alternatives study for a proposed improvement of US 421 in Jackson County from KY 89 north of McKee to the Rockcastle County line.

3) Project History

Clay McKnight provided a brief history of the project. He stated that the project had been a Top 10 Priority of the Cumberland Valley ADD Regional Transportation Committee for the last two years, as part of the KYTC statewide transportation planning process. Mr. McKnight indicated that Jackson County's designation as a Federal Empowerment Zone may have helped to get this project selected.

Fletcher Gabbard endorsed these comments and mentioned that there has been no major improvement to US 421 since WWII.

4) Scope of Work

Carl Dixon briefly reviewed Wilbur Smith Associates' Scope of Work. He noted that Palmer Engineering and Qore would be subconsultants handling the environmental and geotechnical overviews, respectively. He mentioned that CVADD would assist with the environmental justice data collection and analysis by providing demographic data on minorities and economically disadvantaged persons.

Mr. Dixon reviewed the project schedule. He noted that the Cabinet had already had one project team meeting to get preliminary input from Highway District staff. He said that there would be two public meetings and another local officials/stakeholders meeting. The first public meeting is scheduled for late October, 2003, at which the general public would be given the chance to provide early input to the project before project alternatives are developed. The next local officials/stakeholders meeting is scheduled for late December. The second public meeting is scheduled for late January 2004. At both of those meetings, the project alternates would be presented to get local input. It was decided that the public meetings be held in Sandgap. Mr. Dixon stated that a preliminary draft report is due by February 2004, and the final report is to be completed by June 2004.

5) Preliminary Data/Exhibits

Amanda Ratliff distributed and discussed handouts showing the data collected and analysis completed to-date, including maps and/or data on the study area, geometric characteristics, bridge data, traffic data, crash data, and adequacy rating percentiles, and an environmental footprint map. Data presented was noted as preliminary and would be further refined and verified as the project progresses.

Several attendees questioned the low number of fatalities shown from 1999 – 2002 in

the crash analysis table and on the vehicle crash information map. Daryl Greer, KYTC, stated that crash data is sometimes unusable due to incomplete police reports. He mentioned that the KYTC and Kentucky State Police are undertaking measures to improve this process by providing Geographic Positioning System (GPS) equipment to all law officers in the state.

One attendee requested that the Northern Jackson County Industrial Park at Clover Bottom be added to the Environmental Footprint.

One attendee asked about the width of the study area buffer along US 421. Steve Ross informed attendees that it was currently shown as 2000 feet (1000 feet on either side of US 421), but it had been decided at the Cabinet's first project team meeting to expand this buffer to 4000 feet (2000 feet on each side of US 421) to provide adequate area for possible new alignment alternatives.

6) Project Issues

Steve Ross opened the floor for any comments, concerns, and input on local issues.

One attendee mentioned a dangerous curve located outside of the study area just south of McKee that needs improvement. Another attendee cited flooding as a concern at this location. Clay McKnight indicated that a project to improve the curve of concern was on the KYTC unscheduled needs list.

One attendee asked if this study was looking only within the project buffer, or if an entirely new route were an option. Daryl Greer, KYTC, answered that the scope of this study as listed in the KYTC's Six Year Highway Plan was to look at reconstruction of US 421, not a new route.

A representative of Berea College Forestry mentioned a watershed that drains into the Owsley Fork Reservoir stating that encroachment should be minimized. He also stated that Berea College owned some of the forest land shown on the environmental footprint, near the Rockcastle County Line. The representative agreed to provide the KTYC with information regarding Berea College property boundaries.

One attendee was concerned about the historic Cox-Simpson House, located near the Rockcastle County Line, which is currently being improved with Transportation Enhancement Funds. Steve Ross informed the group that the project team was aware of the sensitive nature of the Cox-Simpson House as it was discussed at the first project team meeting for this study. Carl Dixon stated that no decisions on proposed improvements should be made based on this planning study. He also said that, in the case of a historic property, it would be the responsibility of the Cabinet to avoid the property if at all possible.

Another attendee mentioned a divide near the Jackson-Rockcastle County Line that separates the drainage basin, i.e., on one side, the water goes into the Kentucky River, and, on the other side, it flows to the Rockcastle River.

It was mentioned by one attendee that two or three citizens had put in new or upgraded old businesses in Sandgap. Attendees were concerned as to what a new road would do to small towns with businesses and homes alongside the road. One attendee stated that there was no reason to disrupt small communities like Sandgap, stating that drivers

should expect to slow down in communities. This attendee cited curb, gutter, and sidewalk as necessary improvements in such areas.

One attendee noted that there are no major medical facilities in Jackson County, so anyone with a major medical emergency has to be transported north along US 421 to Berea, Richmond, or Lexington. Improvements should be made to improve emergency response time.

Another attendee said that with any improvements to the route the rural character of the area should be preserved.

It was suggested by one attendee that priority segments be identified based on safety needs.

Fog was cited as a hazard near Sandgap due to a drastic change in elevation.

One attendee mentioned that 25% to 35% of residents commute out of Jackson County to work. Improvements to US 421 would decrease travel time for commuters and make the region more attractive to potential employers, thus, decreasing the number of commuters who must travel long distances along the route to access jobs.

A curve located just south of Sandgap, known locally as "George Felty Curve" was cited as a dangerous location where several accidents have occurred.

One attendee stated that safe passing zones were desperately needed along the entire route.

Carl Dixon stressed the importance of identifying the primary purpose of the study. He explained that this is something that the Federal government takes very seriously in their reviews of projects. They want to be sure that the project that is proposed meets the initial purpose. For example, if the main reason for the project is to improve safety, then low-cost spot improvements may provide a reasonable solution; however, if the purpose is to provide a major, higher-speed connection between two cities, then the whole route might have to be reconstructed.

One attendee mentioned that upgrading US 421 would make Jackson County more of a bedroom community to Madison County, a major employment center, as some people prefer to live in a more rural setting, as long as the travel time is not a barrier.

Another attendee suggested that any improvement would improve all aspects of Jackson County.

It was stated by one attendee that emergency response vehicles had crashed along US 421.

One attendee mentioned that Jackson County has very few retail stores so residents have to travel to Berea, Richmond, London, or Lexington to shop. Nearby Beattyville, with a population less then Jackson County, has more retail shops and employers. A new route could encourage similar development in Jackson County.

Another attendee mentioned that the University of Kentucky had identified Jackson County as one of the ten most distressed counties in Appalachia, stating economic development as an obvious goal of this project.

One attendee stated that all the goals mentioned were part of those objectives of the Jackson County Empowerment Zone Strategic Plan. US 421 is a deterrent to prospective employers. An improvement to US 421 would improve the potential for economic development.

Summarizing the discussions from the first project team meeting and this local officials/stakeholders meeting, the goals of the project are as follows:

- Improve access to this low-income area to support economic development.
- Improve access for jobs, hospitals, services, shopping, and schools at Berea, Richmond, and Lexington.
- Improve geometrics for better safety and operations.

In response to a suggestion that improving the level of service should be a goal, Daryl Greer said that improving the level of service is not a goal, but it is a measure of how well some of the goals are met with the alternates that would be developed.

With respect to environmental justice issues, Steve Ross explained that the CVADD would collect data to identify low income, minority, and elderly groups that could be disproportionately affected by this project. Carl Dixon asked if there were any special groups that should be considered or contacted, but none were identified. He asked the attendees to notify Clay McKnight if they did think of any.

7) Public Involvement

Steve Ross explained that the public meetings would be open-format, probably with a slide presentation that would run on a continuous loop throughout the meeting. One attendee asked if property owners would receive a personal invitation to public meetings. Steve Ross stated that invitations would not be sent out. Carl Dixon noted that flyers could be distributed throughout the study area to ensure that citizens were aware of the meetings.

8) Questions and Answers

Daryl Greer asked attendees if there were suitable areas within the project area to relocate people. Attendees responded that suitable relocation could be a problem with this study due to topography and availability of affordable housing. Clay McKnight concurred, stating that about 30% of the population live in poverty. It was mentioned that landowners often ask considerably high prices for their land likely due to the awareness of the limited land available.

Daryl Greer answered "yes" when asked if the KYTC would consider bypassing residential areas. Mr. Greer explained that cost can drive the project team to bypass areas with high concentrations of residential dwellings.

9) Adjourn

With no further comments, the meeting concluded at approximately 12:00 p.m. EDT.

AGENDA

Meeting with Local Officials/Stakeholders

Alternatives Study

US 421 from KY 89 to Rockcastle County Line

Jackson County September 2, 2003 10:30 a.m. EDT

Jackson County Empowerment Zone Office McKee, Kentucky

1.	Welcome and Introductions	Division of Planning
2.	Purpose of Meeting	Division of Planning
3.	Project History a. Origin b. Purpose c. Group Discussion	Division of Planning/ Highway District/ Cumberland Valley ADD
4.	Scope of Work a. Tasks b. Responsible parties c. Schedule	Wilbur Smith Associates
5.	Preliminary Data/Exhibits a. Study Area b. Highway Systems c. Roadway/Bridge Data d. Traffic e. Level of Service f. Highway Crashes g. Adequacy Ratings h. Environmental Footprint	Wilbur Smith Associates
6.	Project Issues a. Study Area b. Local Issues c. Project Goals d. Environmental Justice	Group Discussion
	Public Involvement a. Special groups b. Tasks c. Schedule	Group Discussion
δ.	Q & A	Group Discussion

Division of Planning

ADJOURN

MINUTES

Public Meeting: Alternatives Study
Jackson County
KYTC Item No. 11-113.00
Sandgap Elementary School
Sandgap, Kentucky
October 21, 2003, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

A public involvement open house meeting was held on Tuesday, October 21, 2003 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Sandgap Elementary School in Sandgap, Kentucky. The purpose of the meeting was to provide preliminary information to the public on the proposed project and to get public input on possible issues, impacts, and alternates. The following Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC), Area Development District (ADD) and consultant staff were in attendance:

Clay McKnight Cumberland Valley Area Development District

Wilma Minton KYTC, District 11 Office Sandy Rudder KYTC, District 11 Office Dean Croft KYTC, District 11 Office Quentin Smith KYTC, District 11 Office Greene Keith KYTC, District 11 Office

Jimmy Wilson KYTC Central Office, Division of Planning
Steve Ross KYTC Central Office, Division of Planning

Carl D. Dixon Wilbur Smith Associates
Amanda D. Ratliff Wilbur Smith Associates

The public involvement open house was arranged with several project information stations, with KYTC, ADD, and consultant staff available to answer questions and discuss issues. As attendees entered the meeting room, they were invited to participate in the following areas:

Sign-In

Upon arrival, attendees were greeted at the door and asked to sign the attendance list. At this station, attendees were given a survey questionnaire, project brochure, and information regarding KYTC roadway projects. Attendees were asked to complete the survey questionnaire prior to leaving the meeting, or return it to the KYTC at a later date in the postage-paid envelope provided. Attendees were encouraged to view a slide presentation prior to walking through the project exhibits.

US 421 Alternatives Study Presentation

A PowerPoint slide presentation was prepared for the public involvement meeting, providing information on the current US 421 Alternatives Study. The presentation included information such as: the study area; preliminary project goals; project schedule; traffic, design and environmental considerations; public involvement opportunities; and contact information. Carl Dixon made the presentation to attendees, and it was displayed continuously during the remainder of the public involvement session.

Exhibit Boards

This section of the room was set up with a semi-circular arrangement of the following project exhibits:

- Study Area
- Project Goals
- Existing Traffic and Level of Service (LOS)
- Future Traffic, based on historical growth
- Adequacy Rating Percentiles
- Crash Location and Severity
- Environmental Footprint

Attendees were invited to view the project exhibits and discuss any questions or concerns with KYTC, ADD, and consultant staff. Comments made during the public involvement meeting could also be recorded on a large display in this area of the room. Comments recorded include:

- Negative impacts of existing US 421 in Jackson County include:
 - Significantly higher automobile insurance rates than in surrounding counties; and
 - Jackson County Schools miss more snow days than schools in surrounding counties.
- Twenty-nine (29) people have been killed in a curve located in Clover Bottom over the last several years.

Some of the verbal comments included:

- Improve access for future development and improved job opportunities
- Construct road along coal seam and recover costs through the sale of the coal
- Unsafe conditions at various locations anecdotal information on accidents and accident history along the route
- Dangerous curve/intersection at KY 3446
- Farm on both sides of US 421 near Morrill has been in family since 1803 not on historical register not being worked currently owner is retired policeman who lives in Berea
- During rain, heavy water flows through gap at Morrill, causing unsafe conditions
- May need to bypass quarry near Clover Bottom, which operates on both sides of US 421

Map Drawing Exercise

Two (2) tables were set up with environmental footprint maps of the entire study area for attendees to draw on. Markers were provided at one table for attendees to circle areas that should be improved by the reconstruction of US 421. Many areas were identified for improvement along the entire route. More than twelve (12) curves were identified for improvement for a variety of reasons such as poor sight distance, steep grades, water problems, narrow lanes, and narrow bridges.

Markers were used at the next table to indicate areas that should be avoided or preserved by any new highway. Areas identified for avoidance included:

- Development in Sandgap
- Daniel Boone National Forest
- Caves throughout the study area; one attendee identified on the map a route north and south of US 421 between Morrill and Sandgap that would not impact caves.



• Survey Area with Refreshments

A table was available to attendees to fill out their survey form and read over the project materials. Refreshments and kids' activities were also provided.

A total of 144 persons registered their attendance at the two-hour public session (this number includes the ten staff members listed above). A total of 61 individuals completed the public comment survey at the meeting, while many attendees took pre-addressed envelopes to mail in at a later date. Once all the questionnaires are received by the KYTC, these comments will also be included in the official meeting record.

The meeting closed at 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Project Scoping Meeting: Alternatives Study
Jackson County
Reconstruction of US 421 from KY 89
to the Rockcastle County Line
KYTC Item No. 11-113.00

February 12, 2004 10:00 a.m. EST Highway District 11 Office Manchester, Kentucky

A project team meeting for the US 421 Alternatives Study in Jackson County was conducted on Thursday, February 12, 2004 in Manchester, Kentucky. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss public and resource agency input, environmental justice concerns, findings from the geotechnical and environmental overviews, potential improvement alternatives, and approach for upcoming meetings. Participants at the meeting included representatives from Cumberland Valley Area Development District (CVADD), KYTC District 11, KYTC Central Office, Wilbur Smith Associates (WSA), and WSA's two sub-consultants, Palmer Engineering and Qore. Individual attendees at the meeting included the following:

Clay McKnight Cumberland Valley Area Development District

David Whitworth Federal Highway Administration

Joel Holcomb KYTC, District 11
Greene Keith KYTC, District 11
Adam Knuckles KYTC, District 11

Tom Koos KYTC, Division of Environmental Analysis

Jim Wilson KYTC Central Office, Planning Steve Ross KYTC Central Office, Planning Joshua Rogers KYTC Central Office, Planning Scott Bannwart KYTC Central Office, Planning

Doug Lambert Palmer Engineering

Bruce Hatcher Qore, Inc. Richard Wilson Qore, Inc.

Carl Dixon Wilbur Smith Associates
Amanda Ratliff Wilbur Smith Associates

A summary of the key comments and discussion items for this meeting is provided below in the order of the meeting agenda. A copy of the agenda for the meeting is attached to this document.

1) Welcome and Introductions

Steve Ross, KYTC, began the meeting by having all attendees introduce themselves.

2) Purpose of Meeting

Mr. Ross stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss public and resource agency input to-date, environmental justice concerns, findings from the geotechnical and environmental overviews, potential improvement alternatives, and the approach for the upcoming local officials and public meetings.

3) Review of Input To-Date

Amanda Ratliff, Wilbur Smith Associates, reviewed the input received from the October 21, 2003 public meeting by providing a summary of the 97 project surveys received during or after the meeting. Survey results indicated that 98% of the respondents are in favor of the reconstruction of US 421. Ms. Ratliff explained that in addition to the project survey, input was solicited at the public meeting through an interactive map drawing exercise. Environmental footprint maps of the entire study area were set up and markers provided for attendees to: 1) circle areas on the map that should be improved by the reconstruction of US 421; and 2) indicate areas that should be avoided or preserved by any new highway. Ms. Ratliff showed the many areas identified for improvement along US 421, including more than twelve (12) curves identified for improvement for a variety of reasons such as poor sight distance, steep grades, water problems, narrow lanes, and narrow bridges. Development in Sandgap, the Daniel Boone National Forest, and caves throughout the study area were identified as areas to avoid with the potential reconstruction of US 421.

4) Environmental Justice Issues

Clay McKnight, Cumberland Valley ADD, revealed findings from the ongoing Environmental Justice review of the study area. Data indicates that no minority or age issues are expected within the study area. However, low-income levels in the county are a major issue. The percent of population living in poverty is above the state and national level virtually throughout the entire study area. Mr. McKnight stated that no disproportionate impact was expected from the proposed project as the population in poverty is basically uniform along the corridor. It is anticipated that the proposed project would improve the poverty situation throughout this area.

5) Discussion of Geotechnical Overview

Bruce Hatcher, Qore, Inc., reviewed findings of the Geotechnical Overview Report. The proposed project falls in three (3) quadrants, including Bighill, Johnetta, and Sandgap. The report did not uncover anything unusual in the study area. There has been some deep and strip mining in the study area. Small openings, called dog mines, exist throughout the study area, especially south of Sandgap. The two (2) rock quarries in the study area bring up the issue of mineral rights and are the biggest geotechnical concerns because of their close proximity to the roadway and to one another.

6) Discussion of Environmental Overview

Doug Lambert, Palmer Engineering, discussed findings of the Environmental Overview Report. There are four (4) key areas of concern that would require further investigation with the proposed project, including aquatic systems, terrestrial ecosystems, historic sites, and archaeology. As for terrestrial ecosystems, three (3) federally endangered species likely exist in the study area. Two are bat species, thus, requiring caves and abandoned mines to be investigated for possible habitation. The third is the running buffalo clover, a plant species. It is important to note that the running buffalo clover can only be identified when in bloom, which is typically between May and June, so it would be necessary to schedule field investigations in that time period. Any recommended alignment should avoid the Daniel Boone National Forest. Sheltowee Trace, a national recreational trail that crosses the study route near McKee and runs adjacent to existing US 421 for a short distance, has been identified as a 4F Resource in other locations, which raises mitigation concerns. The forest service has jurisdiction over the trail, but is expected to cooperate with any alterations that benefit both the new route and the trail, while not adversely impacting the forest. As for historic sites, 200 potential historic structures were estimated via a visual survey of the study area and would require further investigation. Of these 200, it is predicted that only 20% will likely be National Register eligible. Palmer recommends that a considerable amount of historic work be done as an early phase of the project as findings are expected to impact alignment options. In regards to archaeology, as many as 50 prehistoric sites are expected to exist in the study area.

Tom Koos, DEA, had nothing more to add to Palmer's Environmental Overview. Mr. Koos did reiterate the importance of addressing the historical/archaeological issues and monitoring the running buffalo clover during the appropriate time of the year.

7) Proposed Alternatives

Carl Dixon, Wilbur Smith Associates, introduced the four (4) proposed improvement alternatives for US 421. He reminded the project team that, at the last meeting, they had recommended the study corridor be expanded from 2000 feet to 4000 feet wide. However, in subsequent discussions with the Division of Planning, it was decided to keep the 2000-feet wide corridor because (1) this was more consistent with the project description as a "reconstruction" project and (2) in the current KYTC budget climate, the direction is to avoid building more new roads while retaining the old road on the state system for continued maintenance. Alternative 1 is the No-Build option, which recommends no changes to existing US 421. Alternative 2 is a combination of 13 spot improvements along the route. Locations in need of improvement were selected based on safety concerns (crash history), horizontal alignment, vertical alignment, and public concerns. Alternative 3 is a reconstruction of the entire study length of US 421, along existing alignment. Alternative 4 is a total reconstruction on and off the existing alignment with options to bypass Morrill, the rock quarries, and Sandgap. Mr. Dixon said that an informal meeting had recently been held with Mr. Walker, who said that (1) the guarry on the west side of US 421 extends for approximately one-half mile and (2) the loading operation on the west side would be relocated to the east side of the road in about 2 to 5 years. There was some general discussion on problems associated with maintaining traffic, particularly in locations with grade improvements. The project team

agreed to proceed to the upcoming local officials and public meeting with these proposed alternatives. Mr. Dixon agreed to present the four (4) alternatives with additional detailed information about each at the upcoming meetings.

8) Discussion of Typical Section

Mr. Dixon stated that the typical section of the proposed route would likely be a twolane section with truck passing lanes and turning lanes where possible. Curb and gutter sections may best meet needs in Morrill, near the rock quarries, and in Sandgap. Mr. Walker, who owns the rock quarries, suggested at the previously discussed meeting that truck climbing lanes extend beyond the crest of the vertical curve near the quarries to allow drivers sufficient time and safe conditions to return to the appropriate lane.

9) Local Officials/Public Meeting - Round II

Steve Ross opened the floor for discussion about the next local officials and public meetings. He provided a handout showing proposed tasks to be undertaken by selected members of the project team in preparation for these meetings. It was agreed that the local officials meeting would be on February 26, 2004 in the Jackson County Empowerment Zone Office, if possible, and the public meeting would be March 16th or 18th, depending on availability of the Sandgap Elementary School.

10) Next Steps

Carl Dixon explained that the next project steps were preparing traffic forecasts and level of service analysis, evaluation of potential impacts, and cost analysis of the proposed alternatives. This information will be presented at the upcoming meetings. After the meetings, public input will be incorporated into the findings. After public input has been considered, another project team meeting will be held to (1) present the results of the alternatives analysis and public input and (2) propose and decide on the study recommendations.

11) Q & A

Jimmy Wilson, KYTC, asked Steve Ross to read the project goals to make sure that the proposed alternates were addressing the major issues. One of the goals related to improved travel time, so it was decided that some measure of travel time should be included in the analysis data for the upcoming meetings.

12) Adjourn

With no further comments, the meeting concluded at approximately 11:45 a.m.

AGENDA

Project Scoping Meeting: Alternatives Study

US 421, Jackson County Reconstruction of US 421 from KY 89 to the Rockcastle County Line KYTC Item No. 11-113.00

> February 12, 2004 10:00 a.m. EST District 11 Conference Room Manchester, Kentucky

1. Welcome and Introductions	Division of Planning
2. Purpose of Meeting	Division of Planning
3. Review of Input To-Date a. Public Survey Summary b. Areas to Access/Avoid Identified by Public c. Resource Agency Input	Wilbur Smith Associates
4. Environmental Justice Issues	Clay McKnight
5. Discussion of Geotechnical Overview	Qore, Inc.
6. Discussion of Environmental Overview	Palmer Engineering
a. DEA Comments	Tom Koos, DEA
7. Proposed Alternatives	Wilbur Smith Associates
a. Presentation of Alternativesb. Other Issues or Locations	
8. Discussion of Typical Section	Wilbur Smith Associates
9. Local Officials/Public Meeting - Round II a. Advertisement b. Meeting Agenda	Division of Planning
10. Next Steps	Wilbur Smith Associates
11. Q & A	Group Discussion
12. Adjourn	Division of Planning

MINUTES

Local Officials/Stakeholders Meeting: Alternatives Study
Jackson County
Reconstruction of US 421 from KY 89
to the Rockcastle County Line
KYTC Item No. 11-113.00

March 2, 2004 10:00 a.m. EST Jackson County Empowerment Zone McKee, Kentucky

A local officials/stakeholders meeting for the US 421 Alternatives Study in Jackson County was conducted on Tuesday, March 2, 2004 in McKee, Kentucky. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss public and resource agency input, environmental justice concerns, findings from the geotechnical and environmental overviews, potential improvement alternatives, and an approach for the upcoming public meeting. Participants at the meeting included representatives from Cumberland Valley Area Development District (CVADD), KYTC Central Office, KYTC District 11 Office, consultant staff from Wilbur Smith Associates (WSA), and Jackson County officials and residents. Individual attendees at the meeting included the following:

Tommy Slone Jackson County Judge-Executive

John Henry Jackson County Development Association
Fletcher Gabbard Jackson County Development Association

Kimberly Moussa Jackson County Times

Ed Morgan, Jr. Jackson County Board of Education

Brian Ealy Jackson County Fiscal Court

Mitchell Ball
Lyle A. Walker
Lisa Powell
David B. Reilly
Jim Hays

Annville Industrial Park
M.A. Walker Co., LLC
M.A. Walker Co., LLC
M.A. Walker Co., LLC
The Nature Conservancy

Tom Kean U.S. Forest Service

Clay McKnight Cumberland Valley Area Development District

Jim Wilson KYTC Central Office, Planning Steve Ross KYTC Central Office, Planning

Sandy Rudder KYTC District 11 Office

Carl D. Dixon Wilbur Smith Associates
Amanda Ratliff Wilbur Smith Associates

A summary of the key comments and discussion items for this meeting is provided

below in the order of the meeting agenda. A copy of the agenda for the meeting is attached to this document.

1) Welcome and Introductions

Steve Ross, KYTC, began the meeting by having all attendees introduce themselves.

2) Purpose of Meeting

Mr. Ross stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss public and resource agency input to-date, environmental justice concerns, findings from the geotechnical and environmental overviews, potential improvement alternatives, and the approach for the upcoming public meeting.

3) Review of Input To-Date

Amanda Ratliff, Wilbur Smith Associates, reviewed the input received from the October 21, 2003 public meeting by providing a summary of the 97 project surveys received during or after the meeting. Survey results indicated that 98% of the respondents are in favor of the reconstruction of US 421. Ms. Ratliff explained that, in addition to the project survey, input was solicited at the public meeting through an interactive map drawing exercise. Environmental footprint maps of the entire study area were set up and markers provided for attendees to: (1) circle areas on the map that should be improved by the reconstruction of US 421; and (2) indicate areas that should be avoided or preserved by any new highway. Ms. Ratliff showed the many areas identified for improvement along US 421, including more than twelve (12) curves identified for improvement for a variety of reasons such as poor sight distance, steep grades, water drainage problems, narrow lanes, and narrow bridges. Development in Sandgap, the Daniel Boone National Forest, and caves throughout the study area were also identified as areas to avoid.

Ms Ratliff explained that 28 local, state, and federal resource agencies had provided input on the project and identified potential areas of concern. Potentially sensitive areas and other concerns identified included: the watershed that serves the Owsley Fork Reservoir; prime and statewide unique farmland; availability of suitable relocations; air quality; family cemeteries along US 421; karst features in limestone such as sinkholes and caves; flooding in Clover Bottom; terrain in Sandgap; historic structures and sites; archaeological sites; the Daniel Boone National Forest; Sheltowee Trace; rock quarries in Clover Bottom; and federally endangered/threatened species.

Horse Lick Creek watershed in Clover Bottom was acknowledged by one attendee as a sensitive area that may contain two federally endangered mussels. Carl Dixon assured the group that the project team was aware of the watershed and would investigate existence of any federally endangered species inhabited there. Road collapse was mentioned as a concern if an alignment was chosen that ran over a rock quarry. Lyle Walker, M.A. Walker Co., LLC stated that the rock quarry in Clover Bottom was 40 feet deep and shouldn't pose such a problem.

4) Environmental Justice Issues

Clay McKnight, Cumberland Valley ADD, revealed findings from the ongoing Environmental Justice review of the study area. Data indicates that no minority or age

issues are expected within the study area. However, low-income levels in the county are a major issue. The percent of population living in poverty is above the state and national level virtually throughout the entire study area. Mr. McKnight stated that no disproportionate impact was expected from the proposed project as the population in poverty is basically uniform along the corridor. It is anticipated that the proposed project would improve the income levels in this area.

5) Discussion of Geotechnical Overview

Amanda Ratliff reviewed findings of the Geotechnical Overview Report completed by Qore, Inc. The report did not uncover anything unusual in the study area. There has been some deep and strip mining in the study area. Small openings, called dog mines, exist throughout the study area, especially south of Sandgap. The two (2) rock quarries in the study area bring up the issue of mineral rights and are the biggest geotechnical concerns because of their close proximity to the roadway and to one another.

6) Discussion of Environmental Overview

Amanda Ratliff discussed findings of the Environmental Overview Report completed by Palmer Engineering. There are four (4) key areas of concern that would require further investigation with the proposed project, including aquatic systems, terrestrial ecosystems, historic sites, and archaeology. As for terrestrial ecosystems, three (3) federally endangered species likely exist in the study area. Two are bat species, thus, requiring caves and abandoned mines to be investigated for possible habitation. The third is the running buffalo clover, a plant species. It is important to note that the running buffalo clover can only be identified when in bloom, which is typically between May and June, so it would be necessary to schedule field investigations in that time period. Any recommended alignment should avoid the Daniel Boone National Forest. Sheltowee Trace, a national recreational trail that crosses the study route near McKee and runs adjacent to existing US 421 for a short distance, has been identified as a 4F Resource in other locations, which raises mitigation concerns. The forest service has jurisdiction over the trail, but is expected to cooperate with any alterations that benefit both the new route and the trail, while not adversely impacting the forest. As for historic sites, 200 potential historic structures were estimated via a visual survey of the study area and would require further investigation. Of these 200, it is predicted that only 20% will likely be National Register eligible. Palmer recommends that a considerable amount of historic work be done as an early phase of the project as findings are expected to impact alignment options. In regard to archaeology, as many as 50 prehistoric sites are expected to exist in the study area.

7) Proposed Alternatives

Carl Dixon, Wilbur Smith Associates, introduced the four (4) proposed improvement alternatives for US 421. Alternative 1 is the No-Build option, which recommends no changes to existing US 421. Alternative 2 is a combination of 13 spot improvements along the route. Locations in need of improvement were selected based on safety

concerns (crash history), horizontal alignment, vertical alignment, and public concerns. Alternative 3 is a reconstruction of the entire study length of US 421, along existing alignment. Alternative 4 is a total reconstruction on and off the existing alignment with options to bypass Morrill, the rock quarries, and Sandgap.

One attendee asked if the KYTC is currently studying a connection from the northern end of the Big Hill project to the Berea Bypass. Mr. Dixon and KYTC representatives indicated that there appeared to be no plans to improve that section of roadway at present.

KY 1955, Rice Hill School Road, Congleton Hollow, and Lower Clover Road were identified by attendees as dangerous locations, especially for school buses. Carl Dixon explained that Alternatives 3 and 4 would address all these concerns. He mentioned that each site would be further analyzed and compared with improvements proposed in Alternative 2. He mentioned that the spot improvements in Alternative 2 would be revised if deemed necessary to include problem areas at these locations.

One attendee asked if any future plans for US 421 should be taken into consideration if the entrance to the historic Cox Simpson House is constructed this summer as planned. Mr. Dixon responded that the Cox Simpson House should proceed with construction of the entrance without consideration of future improvements to US 421. It was agreed that a turning lane could be provided at this location if this section of US 421 is improved.

Jim Wilson, KYTC asked attendees if an alignment off the existing in Morrill would adversely impact the Cox Simpson House. Attendees agreed it should not affect the welcome center. One attendee stated that an option off the existing alignment may actually benefit the center.

The representative from the U.S. Forest Service said that any alignment that required the purchase of Daniel Boone Forest property would need to be closely coordinated with the Forest Service, including possible mitigation. He discussed the need for possible improvements for the connection of the Sheltowee Trace from the west side to the east side of US 421. Currently, this portion of the trail permits use of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs); however, a portion of the trail goes north and south along the shoulder before crossing US 421, which creates potential safety problems. Two alternates were proposed: (1) providing a shoulder width that is suitable for ATV use and (2) providing a 90-degree crossing at or near the US 421 crossing location to allow the Forest Service to relocate the trail south of its existing location.

One attendee asked if an alignment is recommended that goes south of Sandgap, would it go south of the school. Mr. Dixon replied that it would.

8) Discussion of Typical Section

Mr. Dixon stated that the typical section of the proposed route would likely be a twolane section with truck passing lanes and turning lanes where possible. Curb and gutter sections may best meet needs in Morrill, near the rock quarries, and in Sandgap. Mr. Dixon said that he had an informal meeting with Mr. Walker, the owner of the rock quarries, who suggested that truck climbing lanes extend beyond the crest of the vertical curve near the quarries to allow drivers sufficient time and safe conditions to return to the appropriate lane.

9) Public Meeting - Round II

Steve Ross explained that the second public meeting would be held on March 18, 2004 at 5:00 p.m. in the Sandgap Elementary School gymnasium. The meeting will be openformat, with a slide presentation to be presented once by Carl Dixon and then to run on a continuous loop throughout the meeting. Sandy Rudder stated that the meeting would be advertised in the Jackson County Sun on March 11, 2004 and March 18, 2004.

Steve Ross presented the draft survey to be used at the public meeting to solicit input on proposed improvement alternatives. Attendees requested clarification on the second survey question. The project team agreed to update the survey to reflect the requested change.

10) Next Steps

Carl Dixon explained that, after the public meeting, input will be incorporated into the findings. After public input has been considered, another project team meeting will be held to (1) present the results of the alternatives analysis and public input and (2) propose and decide on the study recommendations.

11) Q & A

Steve Ross asked about the project schedule. Mr. Dixon said that, according to the current schedule, the draft report should be completed by the end of April, 2004, and the final report would be completed by the end of July, 2004.

12) Adjourn

With no further comments, the meeting concluded at approximately 11:10 a.m.

AGENDA

Local Officials Meeting: Alternatives Study

US 421, Jackson County Reconstruction of US 421 from KY 89 to the Rockcastle County Line KYTC Item No. 11-113.00

March 2, 2004 10:00 a.m. EST Jackson County Empowerment Zone Office, McKee McKee, Kentucky

1. Welcome and Introductions	Division of Planning
2. Purpose of Meeting	Division of Planning
3. Review of Input To-Date a. Public Survey Summary	Wilbur Smith Associates
b. Areas to Access/Avoid Identified by Public	
c. Resource Agency Input 4. Environmental Justice Issues	Cumberland Valley ADD
5. Discussion of Geotechnical Overview	Wilbur Smith Associates
6. Discussion of Environmental Overview	Wilbur Smith Associates
7. Proposed Alternatives	Wilbur Smith Associates
a. Presentation of Alternatives	
b. Other Issues or Locations	
8. Discussion of Typical Section	Wilbur Smith Associates
9. Public Meeting - Round II	Division of Planning
a. Advertisement	
b. Meeting Agenda	
c. Alternatives Survey	
10. Next Steps	Wilbur Smith Associates
11. Q & A	Group Discussion
12. Adjourn	Division of Planning

MINUTES

Public Meeting: Alternatives Study
Jackson County
KYTC Item No. 11-113.00
Sandgap Elementary School
Sandgap, Kentucky
March 18, 2004, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

A public involvement open house meeting was held on Thursday, March 18, 2004 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Sandgap Elementary School in Sandgap, Kentucky. The purpose of the meeting was to provide preliminary information to the public on the proposed project and to get public input on possible issues, impacts, and proposed alternatives. The following Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC), Area Development District (ADD) and consultant staff were in attendance:

Clay McKnight Cumberland Valley Area Development District

Sandy Rudder

Dean Croft

Quentin Smith

Greene Keith

Joel Holcomb

KYTC, District 11 Office

Daryl Greer KYTC Central Office, Division of Planning Steve Ross KYTC Central Office, Division of Planning

Amanda Ratliff Wilbur Smith Associates Samantha Wright Wilbur Smith Associates

The public involvement open house was arranged with several project information stations, with KYTC, ADD, and consultant staff available to answer questions and discuss issues. As attendees entered the meeting room, they were invited to participate in the following areas:

Sign-In

Upon arrival, attendees were greeted at the door and asked to sign the attendance list. At this station, attendees were given a survey questionnaire, proposed alternatives brochure, and information regarding KYTC roadway projects. Attendees were asked to complete the survey questionnaire prior to leaving the meeting, or return it to the KYTC at a later date in the postage-paid envelope provided. Attendees were encouraged to view a slide presentation prior to walking through the project exhibits.

US 421 Alternatives Study Presentation

A PowerPoint slide presentation was prepared for the public involvement meeting, providing information on the current US 421 Alternatives Study. The presentation included information such as: the study area; preliminary project goals; project schedule; traffic, design and environmental considerations; public involvement opportunities; proposed alternatives; and contact information. Samantha Wright gave an overview of the presentation to attendees, and it was displayed continuously during the remainder of the public involvement session.

Following the formal presentation, a few attendees asked questions concerning the US 421 project. Questions (underlined) and answers included the following:

- How long will it be before this road is completed? The road building process takes about 8-10 years following the planning phase; however, this project does not currently have any funding set aside following this planning study.
- Would it be beneficial to talk with representatives about getting the project more funding in the Six Year Highway Plan? The current session of the Kentucky legislature will review the Plan submitted by the Transportation Cabinet, which does not include any additional funding for this project. It would be a good idea to contact representatives about supporting the project before the Plan is updated again in two years.
- What is the current traffic along the corridor? Traffic volumes along US 421 range between 4,000 and 5,000 vehicles per day.
- When will the report for this study be finished? The report will be finished late in the summer – probably August.

Exhibit Boards

This section of the room was set up with a semi-circular arrangement of the following project exhibits:

- Study Area
- Project Goals
- Existing Traffic and Level of Service (LOS)
- Adequacy Rating Percentiles
- Crash Location and Severity
- Proposed Alternative 2 on Environmental Footprint Map
- Proposed Alternative 2 Matrix
- Proposed Alternative 3 on Environmental Footprint Map
- Proposed Alternative 4 on Environmental Footprint Map
- Alternatives Evaluation Matrix

Attendees were invited to view the project exhibits and discuss any questions or concerns with KYTC, ADD, and consultant staff. A large display was provided in this area of the room for attendees to record comments. The following comment was recorded:

Check the location of the quarries, Cave Spring Road and Amos Baker Road

Survey Area with Refreshments

Tables were available for attendees to fill out their survey form and read over the project materials. Refreshments and kids' activities were also provided.

A total of 78 persons registered their attendance at the two-hour public session (this number includes the ten staff members listed above). A total of 44 individuals completed the public comment survey at the meeting, while many attendees took pre-addressed envelopes to mail in at a later date. Once all the questionnaires are received by the KYTC, these comments will also be included in the official meeting record.

The meeting closed at 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC)
Project Scoping Meeting:
US 421 Alternatives Study, Jackson County:
Reconstruction of US 421 from KY 89
to the Rockcastle County Line
KYTC Item No. 11-113.00

July 13, 2004 10:00 a.m. EST Highway District 11 Office Manchester, Kentucky

A project team meeting for the US 421 Alternatives Study in Jackson County was conducted on Thursday, July 13, 2004 in Manchester, Kentucky. The purposes of the meeting were (1) to discuss additional input and findings since the last project team meeting and (2) to present recommendations for future reconstruction of US 421 in the alternatives study area. Participants at the meeting included representatives from KYTC District 11, KYTC Central Office, and Wilbur Smith Associates (WSA). Individual attendees at the meeting included the following:

Joel Holcomb **KYTC District 11** Adam Knuckles KYTC District 11 Quentin Smith **KYTC District 11** Dean Croft **KYTC District 11** Michael West **KYTC District 11 KYTC District 11** Phillip Howard Josh Callihan **KYTC District 11** Sandy Rudder **KYTC District 11**

Jim Wilson KYTC Central Office, Planning Steve Ross KYTC Central Office, Planning Ted Noe KYTC Central Office, Planning Sara Barker KYTC Central Office, Planning

Carl Dixon Wilbur Smith Associates
Amanda Ratliff Wilbur Smith Associates
Ashley Day Wilbur Smith Associates

A summary of the key comments and discussion items for this meeting is provided below in the order of the meeting agenda. A copy of the agenda for the meeting is attached to this document.

1) Welcome and Introductions

Steve Ross, KYTC, began the meeting by having all attendees introduce themselves.

2) Purpose of Meeting

Mr. Ross stated that the purpose of the meeting was to review input and findings todate and to present recommendations for US 421. He then turned the meeting over to Carl Dixon, Project Manager, Wilbur Smith Associates. Mr. Dixon reviewed the agenda items to be discussed at the meeting. After that, he asked Amanda Ratliff to address the public and resource agency input.

3) Review of Input To-Date

Amanda Ratliff, Project Engineer, Wilbur Smith Associates, reviewed the input received to date via public surveys and resource agency coordination. Ms. Ratliff distributed the attached response summary tables for each of the public surveys and summarized the responses from two public surveys. As part of this discussion, she pointed out that 98% of respondents to the first public survey expressed support for the reconstruction of US 421.

From the second public survey, Ms. Ratliff reported that 95% of respondents preferred Improvement Alternative 4 (complete reconstruction with Options A and B for new alignment at three selected locations). Option B was preferred in Morrill and Clover Bottom, with 46% and 49%, respectively, preferring that US 421 bypass these communities. For Sandgap, the largest number of respondents (47%) preferred option A, i.e., to improve along the existing alignment.

Ms. Ratliff distributed the attached summary of the 27 resource agency responses received to date and provided a review of the input received from the second round of resource agency coordination. Ms. Ratliff pointed out the agencies that recommended a preferred alternative and all new concerns identified with this round of agency coordination, including:

- Gabbard Sign Company, Jackson County stated that Alternative 4, Option B is the appropriate way to improve US 421.
- Tommy Slone, Jackson County Judge/Executive, expressed support for proposed improvement Alternative 4.
- The KYTC Division of Materials, Geotechnical Branch, reported that embankment failure has recently occurred on a portion of existing US 421 in the vicinity of Clover Bottom and Cave Spring Church. The Branch stated that the failure at this time seems to be due to sinkholes. Personnel from the Branch visited the site recently and stated that the area contained numerous sinkholes, including some that are very large. The sinkholes are found in the Newman Limestone which outcrops along the South Fork of Station Camp Creek between Morrill and Clover Bottom. The Branch recommends performing a special study of this matter as part of the geotechnical investigation in the design phase, which would cost approximately \$50,000.
- Kentucky Department of Vehicle Enforcement, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet is concerned that an increase in commercial traffic will occur when the roadway is built, especially to the Jackson County Industrial Park. The Department stated that the road should accommodate 53' trailers that are 102" wide.
- The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife stated that reconstruction may impact wetland areas. A mitigation of at least 2:1 for any permanent loss or

degradation of wetland acreage is recommended.

- Kentucky Division of Water, Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet, indicated that streams in the area are designated as Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW's), Reference Reach (RR), or Exceptional Waters (EW). This designation provides extra protection under Kentucky Surface Water Standards. These streams, including their headwaters should be avoided. Placement of fill in headwater tributaries of Station Camp Creek or Horse Lick Creek is not advisable. In addition, some headwater tributaries not designated as special use waters could be of exceptional quality and require enhanced mitigation for loss of those streams.
- The 89th District Kentucky State Representative, Marie Rader, expressed that careful consideration must be given to improvement Alternatives 3 and 4 to help alleviate safety concerns and travel time, accomplish the objectives of supporting economic development initiatives, and provide access to necessary services in surrounding cities. Representative Rader stated that, while this project should minimize environmental impacts, reconstruction does seem to be a potential necessity to reach stated goals.
- The United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), District Office expressed concern about potential soil erosion, water quality, sedimentation, and conversion of prime farmland to nonagricultural uses during the reconstruction of US 421. The Department stated that revegetating the rights-of-way, spoil areas and borrow pits immediately after construction will be of utmost importance to minimize the rate of erosion and sedimentation. The existing right-of-way passes through prime farmland soils and karst areas, creating additional areas of concern with the proposed project.
- United States Department of the Army, Nashville District, Corps of Engineers said that Alternative 2 would result in lesser impacts on the aquatic environment (streams, wetlands, etc.) and, therefore, is the Department's preferred alternative.

4) Proposed Alternatives

Carl Dixon, Wilbur Smith Associates, reviewed the project descriptions for the four (4) proposed improvement alternatives for US 421. Alternative 1 is the No-Build option, which recommends no changes to existing US 421. Alternative 2 is a combination of 13 spot improvements along the route. Alternative 3 is a reconstruction of the entire study length of US 421, along existing alignment. Alternative 4 is a total reconstruction on and off the existing alignment with options to bypass Morrill, the rock quarries, and Sandgap. The project team was provided a copy of the attached improvement alternative brochure to illustrate each alternative.

Mr. Dixon recommended the preferred alternate as Alternate 4 (i.e., complete reconstruction of the route) with the bypass option (Option B). He pointed out that this differed from the results of the public survey, which indicated that most of the respondents preferred Option A (i.e., along the existing route) at Sandgap. The majority was not excessively large and the bypass option would provide for more free

flow and would better meet the functional classification of the route.

After some discussion, the project team approved Alternative 4, Option B, as the preferred alternate.

Mr. Dixon then recommended that four of the 13 spot improvements in Alternate 2 also be approved for future implementation. Three of these would be located in the bypassed areas, i.e., Sandgap (Spot Improvement 6), Clover Bottom (Spot Improvement 10), and Morrill (Spot Improvement 13). The other would be the straightening of the curve north of KY 89 near McKee at the southern terminus of the project (Spot Improvement 1). This fourth improvement would eliminate a hazardous curve and could be reconstructed to blend in with the future development of the rest of the corridor.

The project team agreed that spot improvements should be recommended on the existing alignment in Sandgap, Morrill, and possibly Clover Bottom, if feasible, if a new route bypasses these areas. The project team also concurred with the fourth improvement at the southern terminus of the study corridor.

Mr. Dixon stated that the study report would include the recommendations for the preferred alternate and the spot improvements, as approved by the project team. He then asked if the report should also indicate that both construction alternates, Alternates 3 and 4, should be carried forward to the next phase of project development, Phase 1 Design, as part of the preliminary design and environmental assessment. Dean Croft, Environmental Coordinator, District 11, said that the Phase 1 design should have a minimum of three alternates, including the No-Build Alternate.

The project team agreed that Alternates 1, 3, and 4 should be addressed in the next phase of the project.

5) Discussion of Typical Section

Mr. Dixon stated that the recommended typical section of the proposed route is a twolane section with truck passing lanes and turning lanes where possible. Curb and gutter sections may best meet needs in Morrill, near the rock quarries, and in Sandgap. The attached schematic was presented to depict the possible typical sections.

The project team agreed with the selection of this typical section.

6) Discussion of Priority Sections

Mr. Dixon distributed the attached "proposed construction section" map and table and recommended that US 421 be constructed in seven (7) sections varying in length from 1.818 miles to 2.461 miles.

The project team agreed and decided that construction should begin on the northern end of the route. Joel Holcomb, KYTC District 11, said that the first three (3) proposed construction sections have the potential to be constructed with special economic development funds, because of the access they provide to the Northern Jackson County Industrial Park.

7) Special Considerations

Ms. Ratliff informed the project team of the United States Department of Agriculture,

Forest Service's request that the project team consider recommending that easement or right-of-way (ROW) across private land be acquired south of the US 421/ FS 370 (Elisha Branch Road) intersection, to allow reconstruction of Sheltowee Trace, a national recreational trail, on a new National Forest location away from the highway. With this option, a safely engineered crossing for OHV trail traffic would still be required.

The project team agreed, but asked that the study results be presented in a way that will allow them flexibility in looking at possible options.

Ms. Ratliff asked the project team if this planning study should recommend a special study as recommended by the KYTC Division of Materials, Geotechnical Branch, to investigate the embankment failures near Clover Bottom.

The project team said that the final report should not include a recommendation that the geotech study be done. The project team members felt that the need for the study should be explored further when the project moves into the design phase.

Ms. Ratliff asked the project team if the US 421 Alternative Study should recommend an additional study be undertaken to explore improvement alternatives from Big Hill to Berea to ensure that the benefits of the improvements from McKee to Big Hill are maximized and reach their full potential.

The project team concurred with the recommendation for a planning study from Big Hill to Berea and I-75.

8) Next Steps

Carl Dixon stated that WSA would submit a draft report to the KYTC Division of Planning in mid-August. The Division of Planning would then distribute the reports to the project team for review and comment.

9) Q & A

There were no further questions.

10) Adjourn

The meeting concluded at approximately 10:45 a.m.

AGENDA

Project Scoping Meeting: Alternatives Study

US 421, Jackson County Reconstruction of US 421 from KY 89 to the Rockcastle County Line KYTC Item No. 11-113.00

> July 13, 2004 10:00 a.m. EDT District 11 Conference Room Manchester, Kentucky

1. Welcome and Introductions	Division of Planning
2. Purpose of Meeting	Division of Planning
3. Review of Input To-Date a. Public Survey Summary b. Resource Agency Input	Wilbur Smith Associates
4. Proposed Alternatives a. Review of Alternatives b. Recommended Alternative	Wilbur Smith Associates
5. Discussion of Typical Section6. Discussion of Priority Sections	Wilbur Smith Associates
7. Special Considerations a. Sheltowee Traceb. Special Geotech Study for Designc. Other?	Wilbur Smith Associates
8. Next Steps a. Draft Report	Wilbur Smith Associates
9. Q & A	Wilbur Smith Associates
10. Adjourn	Division of Planning

US 421 Project Survey I Results

Public Meeting Responses

Do you think reconstruction of US 421 from KY 89 at the northern limits of McKee in Jackson County to the recently improved section of US 421 near Bighill in Rockcastle County, just north of the Jackson-Rockcastle line is needed? (95 Respondents)

Yes	No
93	2
98%	2%

What problems currently exist on US 421 that the proposed project should address? (97 Respondents)

(Multiple problems were selected by several respondents)

Low Travel Speed	High Speeds	Few Passing Opportunities	Sharp Curves	Steep Grades	Poor Visibility	Narrow Lanes	Narrow Shoulders	Large Trucks	Stopped or Broken Down Vehicles	Congestion	Other
53	36	83	97	81	79	73	85	83	37	44	5
55%	37%	86%	100%	84%	81%	75%	88%	86%	38%	45%	5%

How often do you use US 421 now? (97 Respondents)

Daily	Once a week	Once a month	Never	Other
81	14	1	0	1
84%	14%	1%	0%	1%

If you use this route now, what is the primary purpose of your trips? (96 Respondents)

(Multiple purposes were selected by several respondents)

Work or Business	Personal Business	Visit Friends or Family	School	Doctor	Shopping	Trips or Vacations	Other
94	33	38	19	44	39	18	7
98%	34%	40%	20%	46%	40%	19%	7%

Are there sensitive areas that should be considered if this new route is constructed? (46 Respondents)

(Multiple areas were selected by several respondents)

Personal Properties or Homes	Businesses/ Commercial Property	Natural Areas or Habitats	Recreational Areas	Historic or Cultural Sites	Hazardous or Monitored Sites	Scenic Areas or Viewsheds	Prime Farmland	Other
27	18	8	3	6	7	1	9	2
59%	39%	17%	7%	13%	15%	3%	20%	3%

US 421 Project Survey II Results

Which improvement alternative do you prefer for US 421? (166 Respondents)

Alternative 1 No Build	Alternative 2 Spot Improvements	Alternative 3 On Existing	Alternative 4 On and Off Existing
0	1	6	159
0%	1%	4%	95%

If Alternative 2 were selected, which five (5) spot improvements do you feel are the most needed? (Check 5 boxes) (97 Respondents)

<i>!</i>	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	1	2	8	9	5	8
5%	1%	1%	5%	5%	3%	5%

8	9	10	11	12	13
11	11	13	12	5	3
7%	7%	8%	7%	3%	2%

Are there any other locations where spot improvements should be considered as part of Alternative 2? (List locations or identify on the map on the back of the survey.)

The hill below the 1955 intersection.

The curve just past the Rock Quarries in Clover Bottom.

Hills, mainly the hill toward the high school, HWY should go to 30 b/c there are plants there.

Hills, mainly the hill toward the high school

Hills, mainly the hill toward the high school

Sidewalks in Waneta, Sand Gap, and Morrill community.

4-7 should be considered one spot. Straighten road completely.

Spot improvements will improve the highway, but will not solve the problem. This highway should be a state priority! Jackson Co. roads are being neglected relative to those in other parts of Eastern KY. I want answers!

Lay a straight road from Big Hill to McKee; forget 421.

Widen the shoulder 20 ft. on the curves. The whole county is not worth 24 million.

Any improvement would help, but US421 connecting w/ HWY30 would be best.

Go to HWY30.

Go to 30, plant sites there.

Need to 4-lane road from Clay Co to Richmond.

Alternative 4 offers different improvement location options in three locations along US 421: (a) Sandgap, (b) near the quarries just north of Clover Bottom, and (c) Morrill. For each

location, choose a preferred improvement option (Check one box for each location) (167 Respondents):

Sandgap			Clover Bottom		
Α	В	No Response	Α	В	No Response
79	66	22	65	82	20
47%	40%	13%	39%	49%	12%

Morrill				
Α	В	No Response		
68	76	23		
41%	46%	14%		

Resource Agency Coordination Round II

- Gabbard Sign Company, Jackson County Alternative 4, Option B is the appropriate way to improve US 421. If anything is done to this road, it should be done the right way.
- Jackson County Judge/Executive The Office is not aware of any additional concerns or problems with the proposed project. Proposed improvement alternative 4 is preferred.
- Kentucky Airport Zoning Commission No conflicts with air navigation are expected from the proposed project; however, if the proposed construction requires equipment that exceeds 200 feet, a permit will have to be obtained from the Airport Zoning Commission.
- Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services The Cabinet does have an office in the area of the proposed project, but expects no positive or negative impacts for staff or clients.
- Kentucky Department of Agriculture The agency has no specific concerns or issues about the proposed project.
- Kentucky Department for Natural Resources, Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet – The Department could not identify any specific issues or agency concerns with any of the proposed alternatives.
- Kentucky Department of Parks The proposed project will not directly impact any of the Department's facilities.
- Kentucky Department of Transportation, Division of Materials, Geotechnical Branch The Geotechnical Overview completed by QORE Property Sciences has outlined the critical issues on the project such as mining, quarries, etc. However, embankment failure has since occurred on a portion of the existing US 421 in the vicinity of Clover Bottom and Cave Spring Church. The failure at this time seems to be due to sinkholes. Personnel from the branch visited the site recently and stated that the area contained numerous sinkholes in the area, including some that are very large. The sinkholes are found in the Newman Limestone which outcrop along the South Fork of Station Camp Creek between Morrill and Clover Bottom. The Branch recommends performing a geophysical investigation of any new route in the study area during the design phase as part of the geotechnical investigation. An additional \$50,000.00 would be needed in the design phase to include this investigation.
- Kentucky Department of Travel, Commerce Cabinet The proposed improvement alternatives are not expected to adversely impact tourism related activities in the area. Providing safe and pleasant driving experiences will assist in the Department's efforts to grow the tourism industry within the Commonwealth. The Kentucky Historical Society, Kentucky Heritage Council, and Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Services should be contacted, if they have not yet been, to ensure properties of interest to these agencies are not adversely impacted.
- Kentucky Department of Vehicle Enforcement, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet – From the perspective of commercial vehicles, the only concern would be an increase in commercial traffic when the roadway is built, especially to the Jackson County Industrial Park. The road should

- accommodate 53' trailers that are 102" wide. Increased truck traffic should also be considered and accommodated for.
- Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) The Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Information System indicates that a number of federally endangered or threatened species are known to occur within a 10 mile radius of the project area, and a number of state-listed species are known to occur within a one-mile radius of the project area. In addition to earlier concerns, the Department feels the extension may include wetland areas. It is recommended that a mitigation of at least 2:1 for any permanent loss or degradation of wetland acreage.
- Kentucky Division of Conservation, Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet – There are no agricultural districts in the project area; therefore, land enrolled in the Agricultural District Program will not have to be mitigated by the Department of Transportation. Both prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance could be impacted by this project. The Division would like to see the issue of the loss of farmland addressed. The Division is also concerned with the control of erosion and sedimentation during and after earth-disturbing activities once the proposed project begins. It is recommended that Best Management practices (BMPs) be utilized to prevent nonpoint source water pollution. This would protect the water quality and aquatic habitat of several perennial and intermittent streams that this project could impact.
- Kentucky Division of Forestry, Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet –
 Alternative 4 best serves the Southeastern District of the Kentucky Division of
 Forestry. This route is used every spring and fall to reach many wild land
 fires in the northern end of the district. The Division often drives the route in
 a heavy transport vehicle carrying a 400 series dozer to be used for fire
 suppression. Alternative 4 would help reduce the severity of many of the
 curves along US 421, therefore, making this section safer for travel and
 decreasing the time it takes to respond to fires. Alternative 4 (Option B)
 would also make getting through Sand Gap easier. This improvement would
 also improve the intersections of KY 2004 and US 421 as well as Morill-Kerby
 Knob Road and KY 1912. These improvements would also make the
 transport of forest products easier and safer along a main travel route for
 these materials.
- Kentucky Division of Traffic, Permits Branch The Permits Branch makes the same recommendations as previously mentioned, these include: 1) This project should provide for a partially controlled access facility, with access control fencing and all possible access points set on the plans in accordance with 603 KAR 5:120; 2) The design speed should be the same as the anticipated posted speed when the project is completed; and 3) The Permits Branch should be notified if the proposed route is to be placed on the National Highway System.
- Kentucky Division of Air Quality, Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet

 The Kentucky Division has no additional comments regarding the proposed project at this time.
- Kentucky Division of Water, Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet –
 There are no Wild Rivers in the proposed corridor. However, some of the
 streams in the area are designated as Outstanding Resource Waters

- (ORW's), Reference Reach (RR), or Exceptional Waters (EW). This designation provides extra protection under Kentucky Surface Water Standards. These streams, including their headwaters should be avoided. Placement of fill in headwater tributaries of Station Camp Creek or Horse Lick Creek is not advisable. In addition, some headwater tributaries not designated as special use waters could be of exceptional quality and require enhanced mitigation for loss of those streams.
- Kentucky Education Cabinet The Cabinet does not have any comments at this time.
- Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission The Commission has no additional concerns and believes that most of the concerns previously mentioned would be addressed by carefully constructing US 421 within the current corridor, assuming contractors adhere to the strictest of erosion and sediment control measures.
- Kentucky State Police, Post 7, Richmond The Post is concerned with the ability of emergency vehicles to have unobstructed travel during emergency situations through the construction area of the proposed projects.
- Kentucky State Police, Post 11, London There are no adverse impacts expected from the proposed US 421 project in Jackson County.
- Kentucky State Representative, 89th District To help alleviate safety concerns and travel time; to accomplish our objectives of supporting economic development initiatives; and, to provide access to necessary services of surrounding cities, it appears that careful consideration must be given to improvement alternatives 3 and 4. While we need to have as little environmental impact as possible, reconstruction does seem a potential necessity to reach stated goals.
- United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service The items previously identified by the Department of Agriculture still accurately represent the concerns and issues related to this project. There was discussion in the March 2, 2004 Local Officials Meeting related to the possible solutions to the Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) trail issue crossing and running with US 421. The possible problems associated with designing a safe, maintainable traffic surface for ATVs adjacent to the existing or reconstructed highway indicated that the better solution might be to acquire an easement or ROW across private land south of the US 421/ FS 370 (Elisha Branch Road) intersection, to allow reconstruction of the Sheltowee Trace trail on a new National Forest location away from the highway. A safely engineered crossing for OHV trail traffic would still be required.
- United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), District Office The Service is concerned with soil erosion, water quality, sedimentation, and conversion of prime farmland to nonagricultural uses during the reconstruction of US 421. Re-vegetating the rights-of-way, spoil areas and borrow pits immediately after construction will be of utmost importance to minimize the rate of erosion and sedimentation. The existing right-of-way passes through prime farmland soils and karst areas, creating additional areas of concern with the proposed project.
- United State Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), State Office – The Department has no additional comments regarding the proposed project at this time. The Department reiterated its

- concern about prime farmland soils and additional farmlands of statewide importance with the proposed project and provided the KYTC with ArcView GIS shapefiles of basic soils information for the study area.
- United States Department of the Army, Nashville District, Corps of Engineers

 It appears that Alternative 2 would result in lesser impacts on the aquatic environment (streams, wetlands, etc) and, therefore, is the Department's preferred alternative.
- United States Department of Health & Human Services The Department has no additional comments related to the proposed project at this time.
- United States Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration

 The Madison County Airport in Berea is in the vicinity of the study area, but is not expected to be impacted by the proposed project. Provided that construction activities do not exceed 200 feet in height above ground level, no impacts are expected on Federal Aviation Administration programs and no Notice of Proposed Construction will be required.

Proposed Construction Sections US 421, Jackson County - Alternatives Study (Item No. 11-113.00)

Reconstruction of US 421 from KY 89 at the northern city limits of McKee in Jackson County to the recently improved section of US 421 near Bighill in Rockcastle County, just north of the Jackson-Rockcastle County line

Begin MP	Begin Description	End MP	End Description	Length
14.808	KY 89	16.902	Sand Lick - Foxtown Road	2.094
16.902	Sand Lick - Foxtown Road	19.262	Congleton Hollow Road	2.360
19.262	Congleton Hollow Road	21.445	Southtree Tower Road	2.183
21.445	Southtree Tower Road	23.525	Clover Bottom Creek Road	2.080
23.525	Clover Bottom Creek Road	25.376	Asbill Road	1.851
25.376	Asbill Road	27.194	J.A. Farmer Road	1.818
27.194	J.A. Farmer Road	0.070	Just North of Jackson-Rockcastle County Line	2.461
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INSERT HANDOUT PACKET

- Brochure
- Public Survey I Summary Table
 Public Survey II Summary Table
 Resource Agency Summary
 Typical Sections Schematic
 Proposed Sections Map
 Proposed Sections Table