

Newsletter for Somerset Northern Bypass

Project Item Number: 8-59

County and Route: Pulaski, New Route

Project Description: Somerset Northern Bypass is a 4-lane, limited access highway that will alleviate congestion in and around Somerset. The bypass extends from the Louie B. Nunn Parkway west of Somerset and heads north bypassing Somerset. It then intersects with KY 80 east of Somerset in the Barnesburg community.

Project Manager Contact information (Cabinet): David Beattie, (606) 677-4017

Project Manager Contact Information (Consultant): Mike Bruce (Design) and Paul Biggers (Environmental) both of JDQ, (859) 277-3639

Other contacts: Cathi Blair, Environmental Coordinator, (606) 677-4017

Approximate dates: August 2002

Comments (number of people reached, effectiveness of the technique, what you would do differently, etc.): This newsletter was sent to approximately 3,850 citizens and businesses. Because the newsletters were sent out via bulk mail, KYTC did not receive the undeliverable mail and could not correct mailing addresses if they were incorrect. However, with this large number, using the bulk mail system is much more affordable.



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NEWSLETTER

Somerset Northern Bypass

No. 3, September 2002

Advisory Council Mission

"The Somerset Northern Bypass Citizen Advisory Council will make recommendations to the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) concerning the location, effects, and mitigation of a proposed northern bypass of Somerset and its attendant alternatives. The Council will develop criteria to evaluate project alternatives, and submit their findings and recommendations in a report to the KYTC."

Advisory Council Members

Agriculture

- ✓ Allen Crawford
- ✓ Keenan Turner

Business

- ✓ Ken Bean
- ✓ Jim Bentley
- ✓ John Tuttle

Economic Development/Tourism

- ✓ Carrol Estes
- ✓ John Perkins

Environment

- ✓ Dan Crockett
- ✓ Lee Florea
- ✓ Father Jack Kieffer
- ✓ Ben Mattingly

Government

- ✓ Wayne Bennett
- ✓ Darrell Beshears
- ✓ J.P. Wiles

Neighborhoods

- ✓ Carrie Altmaier
- ✓ Steve Dunn
- ✓ Reverend Mark Harrell

Citizen Advisory Council Recommends North Alternate

A large majority of the Somerset Northern Bypass Citizen Advisory Council's 17 members are recommending that the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) build the North Alternate as a northern bypass of the city to alleviate traffic congestion and provide adequate space for future residential and business expansion as the local population grows, according to Chairman Ken Bean.

The KYTC considered four build options in its recent project studies:

- the North Alternate
- the South Alternate
- the Crossover Alternate
- an upgrade of existing KY 80

The No-Build Alternative was considered as well.

The KY 80 Upgrade Alternate was dismissed from further consideration when KYTC found that it would not provide an adequate level of service for future traffic operations or relieve traffic congestion along KY 80 and other connecting streets in Somerset.

Over the past several months the KYTC and the Citizen Advisory Council have sought input on the impacts of the remaining bypass alternates from the agriculture community, business and economic development/tourism sectors, government officials, environmental experts and neighborhood residents.

"We got tremendous response from the community that favored the North Alternate," Bean said. *(continued on page 2)*

Advisory Council To Present Report To KYTC At Public Meeting

The Somerset Northern Bypass Citizen Advisory Council will meet on Thursday, October 17 at 6:30 p.m. at the Center for Rural Development in Somerset to present its final report to the KYTC. Council members will be recognized by KYTC for their dedication to community involvement for transportation planning. The public is invited to attend and ask questions.

Citizen Advisory Council Recommends North Alternate (continued from page 1)

“Technical study data also verified that the North Alternate had fewer impacts on homeowners and more opportunity for future industrial development. Council members interfaced with numerous individuals from each sector of the community.”

“The North Alternate will minimize disruption to the community and provide the most space for sustainable, planned growth and quality of life needs,” he added. The KYTC also conducted surveys at Public Information Meetings throughout the study to gauge public opinion on the alternates. In August, 508 out of about 531 respondents said they prefer the North Alternate.

KYTC’s socio-economic studies showed that the most residences would be taken by the South and Crossover Alternates, and that the North Alternate would afford the greatest economic development and business/industrial growth opportunities. There were no threatened or endangered species found anywhere in the project area.

However, Council member and caves specialist Lee Florea said that of the remaining build alternates he preferred the Crossover Alternate as “the best balance” between the disruption of neighborhoods and the taking of agricultural land and the loss of open space. He and some of the other Environment Work Group representatives still prefer the KY 80 Upgrade Alternate or the No-Build Alternative.

“The North Alternate could have structural problems that will increase construction cost and degrade the previously less impacted areas,” he added. One other environmental representative on the Council preferred the South Alternate, and two preferred the North Alternate.

Father Jack Kiefer added that while the North Alternate would allow for more development, including that of unnecessary malls, it also would allow for more parks and green spaces which he feels are needed in Somerset. In his opinion, all run-off from the chosen alternate should be directed to wetlands that can clean contaminated run-off before

it enters creeks and sinkholes which eventually reaches Lake Cumberland, the water supply for Somerset and five other communities.

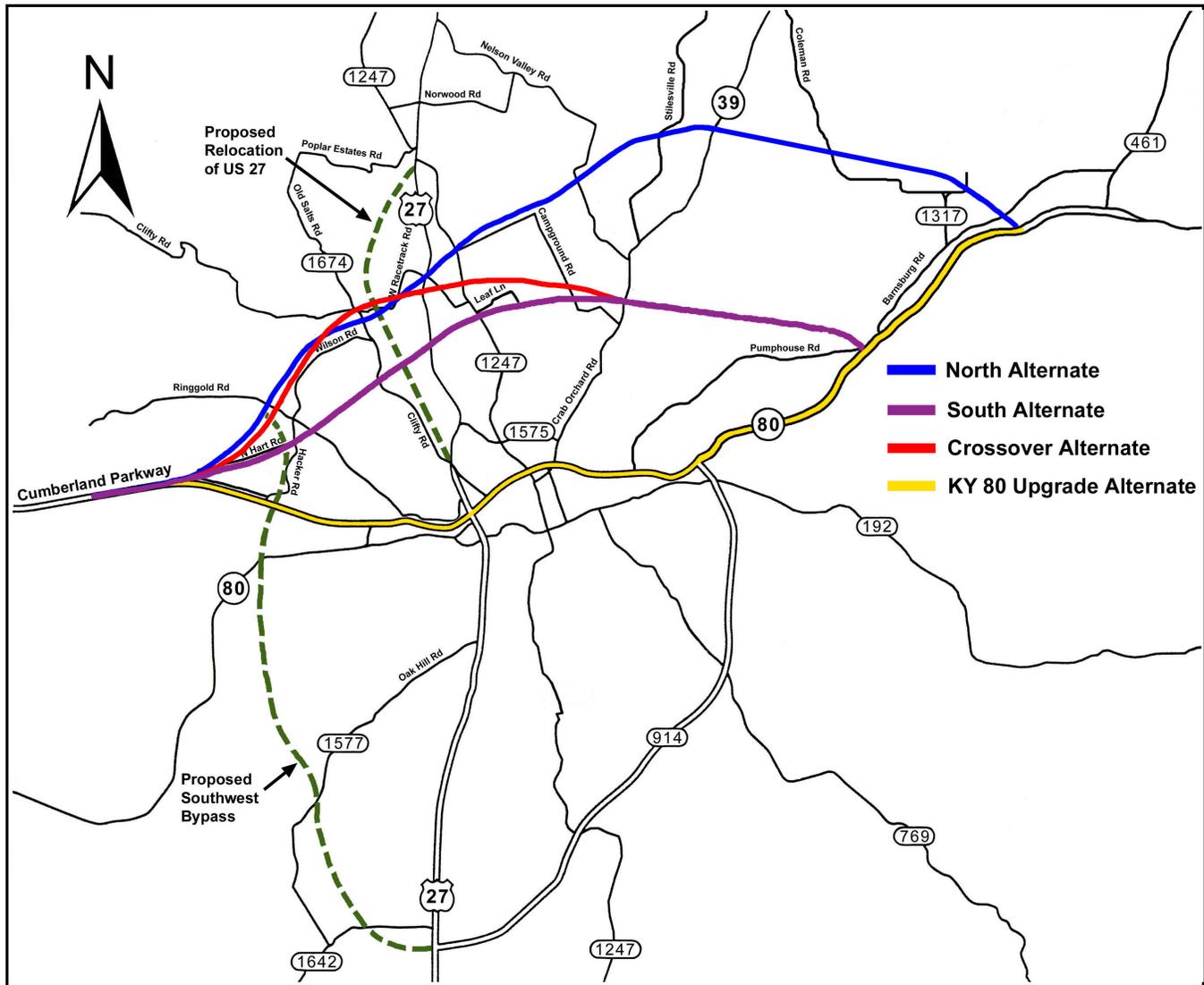
Council member Keenan Turner, University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension, said that while the North Alternate takes the most farmland, the local agriculture community will adapt to the loss of agricultural acreage due, in part, to a recent shift away from tobacco production and other components of the traditional agricultural economy in south central Kentucky.

Council members agreed that special care should be taken to protect farmland, the natural environment and the scenic quality of the land and to minimize noise, light and open space impacts. They are developing suggestions for mitigation measures to address such impacts. They also think the KYTC should continue to work with local citizens throughout the design and construction stages of the project to assure that community needs are met.

Some Council members like Steve Dunn, who will lose his home if the North Alternate is built, and Allen Crawford, who will lose portions of his family’s farm, said sacrifices have to be made for the good of the community. “My heart wasn’t with the North Alternate for my own selfish reasons, but the northern route is best for the community,” Crawford said.

Dunn, who lives in Pleasant Hill, said both the North and Crossover Alternates would take his house. “But I’m not bigger than Pulaski County. My heart is with the people. The North Alternate is best for the community.”

Council members suggested that local government officials provide guidance on how to assure planned and sustainable growth for the community in the future. Mayor J.P. Wiles and County Judge Executive Darrell Beshears said many local residents told them they want the North Alternate. Beshears said, “I don’t know if we’ll grow out to the North Alternate, but we must base our decisions on what our history of growth has shown us.”



KYTC Identifies North Alternate As Its Preferred Alternate

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) has identified the North Alternate as its “preferred alternate” for a northern bypass of Somerset, according to Project Manager David Beattie. The preferred alternate designation is based on input from the project’s Citizen Advisory Council, residents of the community at-large, and the KYTC’s own engineering design, socio-economic and environmental studies.

“Our studies of the design and impacts of each alternate and the will of the community point to construction of the North Alternate for a safe highway that will serve increasing traffic levels in the

future and provide adequate space for Somerset’s growing population and development needs,” Beattie said.

The KYTC considered four Build options in its project studies, the North Alternate, the Crossover Alternate, the South Alternate and an upgrade of existing KY 80, as well as the No-Build Alternative. The KY 80 Upgrade Alternate was dismissed from consideration when KYTC found that it would not provide an adequate level of service for future traffic operations or relieve traffic congestion along KY 80 and other connecting streets in Somerset. *(continued on page 4)*

Beattie pointed out that the preferred alternate designation does not mean the study is over or that a final decision has been made. Ongoing engineering and environmental studies and reports must be completed and approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) before the construction of any alternate can go forward.

“However,” Beattie added, “knowing which alternate is preferred allows the KYTC to expedite some of the more detailed studies that would not be done on all

the alternates because such studies are time-consuming and expensive.

For example, Beattie anticipates that more detailed archaeological studies and soil and rock borings will begin in the near future along the North Alternate. “I expect the drill rigs will start their work in the area of the North Alternate’s proposed interchange with the relocation of US Route 27,” he added. “In that way the geotechnical work for the two projects can be coordinated.”