

Richwood businesses concerned about interchange plans

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RICHWOOD — Richwood business owners are concerned about the potential effect of proposed plans to reconstruct the Ky. 338 interchange with Interstate 71/75.

Community business leaders reviewed preliminary plans at a meeting sponsored by the Richwood Business Association earlier this month.

The meeting was to help facilitate conversation between Richwood businesses and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, said Adam Howard, Boone County government and community relations director.

“My role was to provide the business owners with a copy of the latest design for the Richwood interchange project.”

The purpose was to draft a letter to the KYTC “that would provide a unified voice” for the businesses.

“As a business owner, any time there’s changes, there’s concerns,” said Greg Schrand, owner of the Richwood Shell station. “Sometimes they’re good, sometimes they’re bad.”

Union Commissioner John Adams, owner of the Richwood Snappy Tomato Pizza, said after viewing the plan at the meeting, his concern was the access in and out of the businesses.

“I understand the concept,” he said. “Every concept fits into a certain situation and in this situation I don’t see how that fits.”

As for joining with other business owners, Adams said from working on the city commission, he knows “when you come in as a group, you have much more influence on the powers that be.”

How it works

While one alternate plan was presented at the meeting, the preferred alternate has since changed.

KYTC spokeswoman Nancy Wood said the interchange will be a double cross over diamond configuration, which facilitates efficient traffic operations, less waiting time at signals and increases safety because of the elimination of left-hand turn bays.

Signals will continue to be provided at the north and southbound entrance/exit terminals in about the same location as the existing ramps, she said.

For drivers on Ky. 338 turning right on the interstate, Wood said movement would be the same it is today.

However, for those making a left onto the interstate, the road geometry aligns drivers to cross to the other side of the road at the initial cross point, where drivers will pass beneath the interstate overpass and left turns will be free-flowing.

If continuing beyond the interchange, drivers are aligned to the second cross point and once through this signal, the driver is returned to the usual side of the road, according to Wood.

Preliminary plans

Preliminary plans call for Ky. 338 to be widened from Triple Crown (west) to beyond Old Lexington Pike (east).

To the west, plans call for additional lanes and a raised median to be provided, she said.

According to Wood, preliminary plans call for signalized access to be provided at Frogtown Connector Road and Triple Crown, while Paddock Drive will be full access but unsignalized. All other points of access will be right-in and right-out.

Howard said at a subsequent meeting of the Richwood Business Association, business owners decided to draft a letter asking for a signal at Frogtown Connector and Richwood Road.

“Despite that the plan now calls for the changes they requested, they’re still planning to send a letter to the transportation cabinet,” Howard said.

Plans also call for Ky. 338 to the east to be provided with additional lanes and a signalized Best Pal intersection.

The project will also reconstruct the intersection of Ky. 338 and U.S. 25, said Wood.

Preliminary plans call for Ky. 338 to be routed under U.S. 25 and under the Norfolk Southern Railroad, requiring two new bridges. By going under the railroad, two at-grade railroad crossings will be eliminated.

“This provides significant increase in safety to eliminate two major conflict points,” said Wood.

Sidewalks/multi-use paths will be constructed with the project.

According to Wood, right-of-way acquisition is expected to begin in 2014 and will take between 1.5 and two years. Some \$2.08 million has been authorized for the design phase.

“Businesses have the potential of having their access modified,” said Wood. “Some will change to right-in/right-out. Businesses that directly front Ky. 338 may also have strip of right-of-way acquired for the widening. Impacts are minimized as much as possible.”

Plans have not been finalized.

A public meeting on the interchange is scheduled from 5-7 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 29, at Florence Baptist Church at Mt. Zion, 642 Mt. Zion Road, Florence.

A website, which should be available soon, is being developed for this project. Visit www.75crossings.com.