

Parkway meeting is Tuesday

Public input is needed on alternative routes.

By James Roberts

Sunday, November 15, 2009 at 7:00 pm

Local residents will have another chance to provide their input on the proposed plans for the Heartland Parkway next week.

On Tuesday, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet officials will present the final conceptual alternatives for the Heartland Parkway. The meeting is from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Taylor County High School cafeteria. A meeting also took place in Columbia on Tuesday.

"We are just trying to get one last public opinion on the alternatives before we start the environmental field work," said John Moore project development branch manager of the Cabinet's office in Elizabethtown.

The 60-mile Heartland Parkway will connect the Louie B. Nunn Parkway at Columbia with the Martha Layne Collins Bluegrass Parkway at Springfield by widening the existing KY 55/U.S. 68/KY 555 route to four lanes.

Locally, the project includes widening KY 210 from U.S. 68 to KY 3183 and widening KY 55 to five lanes from KY 1625 to U.S. 68.

At a public meeting in March, five alternatives for the Parkway's path were presented. Using public comments, Moore said, those alternatives were refined and narrowed to two. Moore said the alternatives simply suggest "different ways of building the parkway."

The next step, Moore said, will be environmental impact studies, which would continue throughout the next year. Another public meeting would be scheduled, he said, before the final route is submitted to the Federal Highway Administration.

Funding for the project has only been allocated for phase I design, Moore said, not construction. No funding has been allocated for final design, purchase of rights of way, relocating utilities or construction.

In March, Moore said rights of way could be purchased around 2015, which would put actual construction beginning in 2017.

u Staff Writer James Roberts can be reached at 465-8111 Ext. 226 or by e-mail at writer@cknj.com. Comment on this story at www.cknj.com.