

Planning continues for Heartland Parkway

By Calen McKinney

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About 300 residents attended a hearing on Thursday to discuss the route of the Heartland Parkway, which will travel through Campbellsville. Residents were shown maps of the preferred route for the parkway so they can see how it might impact their property.

Construction might still be years away, but residents are being asked for input as to where they believe the Heartland Parkway should be built.

Armed with maps and questions, about 300 residents attended a public hearing Thursday night about the effort to build the Heartland Parkway and the Campbellsville Bypass portion of the parkway through Campbellsville. About 70 people attended a hearing in Columbia last Tuesday.

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet representatives hosted the hearing at Taylor County High School and brought with them several large maps of the proposed, and, for some sections, preferred route the parkway would take.

The entire length of the parkway was broken into 15 sections so residents could see exactly how each would impact their properties.

Ultimately, 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 Campbellsville Bypass portion of the project includes widening KY 210 from U.S. 68 to KY 3183 and widening KY 55 to four lanes from KY 1625 to U.S. 68.

In Taylor County, the project stretches from the end of the Columbia Bypass, where the road comes into KY 55, to the northeast side of Campbellsville, where the bypass will tie in to the parkway. The bypass will be about seven miles long.

Chris Jessie, public information officer for the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, said the name "Campbellsville Bypass" is the general term for the portion of the parkway that will travel through Campbellsville. The road will be named, he said, and it will meet with the parkway. Until a final route is chosen, that meeting point can't yet be pinpointed.

Thursday's hearing was the fourth about the project.

Planning of the several alternative paths the parkway could take began in 2005. Two years later, the first public meeting was hosted to get the public's input on the project.

In 2009, there were two public hearings, each narrowing the parkway's path even further based on public input. The last was in November 2009.

Since then, there has been an environmental assessment report done. The final route of the portion of the parkway that will come through Campbellsville will be selected based on input collected at Thursday's hearing.

David Lindeman, vice president of Palmer Engineering, the company involved with designing the parkway's route, discussed the project with the crowd.

He said there were several focus groups formed to discuss the project and see where the parkway would best be built.

To select the parkway's final route, Lindeman said, the state will consider the public's input, environmental impacts, right of way issues, cost, how to maintain the parkway and its functionality.

The state hasn't chosen a preferred route for three sections of the parkway and he said officials need input from the public to help choose those.

The alternatives ask residents to choose how they believe the parkway should connect with the Columbia Bypass and then how it should tie in with south and north portions of the Campbellsville Bypass.

The next steps for the project, Lindeman said, include addressing the concerns voiced at the public hearings, which will take about a month or so, and selecting a final alternative. Once that is done, the final environmental documents must be approved and the final design phase will begin.

Design phase for the Campbellsville Bypass will begin early next year. Lindeman said residents will see surveyors and workers.

Lindeman next discussed funding for the project. The only part of the project that is funded beyond this point, he said, is the final design for the Campbellsville Bypass portion.

"No right of ways, utilities or construction is funded at this point," he said.

Jessie said there has been no money allocated to actually build the parkway.

"Design will be accomplished over the next several months," he said. "Ideally, right of way purchasing and utility relocation would be next and that could take a couple of years.

"After that, building (or construction) would also be a couple of years in duration, if money continues to be allocated for the project in upcoming budgets. But again, no money is authorized beyond design of the project at this point."

According to information given to those who attended Thursday's hearing, the state has allocated \$4.9 million in its 2012-2018 six-year highway plan for the Campbellsville Bypass portion of the project. The \$4.9 million includes \$3.8 million for design and \$1.1 million to purchase right of ways.

Jessie said he believes the public hearings have been successful.

"We did receive useful feedback and are in the process of compiling that feedback," he said. "Folks still have time to send in their questionnaire from the hearing."

Those wishing to submit written comments about the parkway project can mail those to Patty Dunaway, P.E., Kentucky Transportation Cabinet-District 4, P.O. Box 309, Elizabethtown, KY 42701.

Comments can also be emailed to comments@heartlandpkwy.com.

Proposed maps of the parkway and the Campbellsville Bypass portion of the project, as well as general information about how to submit comments about it are available at transportation.ky.gov/District-4/Pages/HeartlandParkway_pub_meeting.aspx.