

CHAPTER SEVEN

INTRODUCTION

Increased mobility, accessibility, and efficiency of a region's transportation system can be a stimulant to population growth, residential development, and have a pronounced effect on the location of industrial and commercial land uses. For this reason, it is important that a study of the county's transportation system be included in the London-Laurel County Comprehensive Plan. As roadways are the predominate means of transportation in Laurel County, roads will be discussed first, followed by bicycle, pedestrian, bus, rail, waterway and airport facilities.

LAUREL COUNTY ROADS

There are 14 major highways in Laurel County which are part of the State primary or secondary road system and provide access to and through Laurel County. These highways are: Interstate 75, Hal Rogers (Daniel Boone) Parkway (HR 9006), US 25E, US 25W, US 25 and Kentucky Highways 30, 80, 192, 229, 312, 363, 472, 490, 770, 1006, and 1193. London lies at the crossroads of I-75, the Hal Rogers Parkway, US 25, and KY 80. KY 30, 80, 192, 229, 363, 472, 638, and 1006 provide ingress and egress primarily from the City of London to points within Laurel County. KY 192, locally known as the London Bypass, moves traffic around the City of London from the Hal Rogers Parkway east of London to I-75, reducing congestion within city limits. KY 80 provides access to and from Pulaski County and may become a part of the future I-66 Corridor. KY 3432 is a connector road between US 25 and KY 192.

NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) has developed the National Highway System (NHS) routes within Laurel County. The significance of being designated as a NHS roadway is that improvements qualify

London - Laurel County



for specific NHS funding. NHS routes for Laurel County include Interstate 75, the Hal Rogers Parkway, KY 80 from the Pulaski County line to US 25, and US 25E from the Knox County line to the junction of KY 770 at the west ramps of I-75.

TRUCKING CLASSIFICATIONS

Laurel County's road system consists of federal and state roads maintained by the State of Kentucky, county roads maintained by the Laurel County Road Department, and city streets maintained by the City of London. State maintained roads are classified by truck weight capacity. Kentucky Revised Statute (KRS) 189.222 requires the KYTC to establish weight limits on the state maintained highway system. To implement this statute, Kentucky Administrative Regulations (KAR) designating these weight limits are promulgated and updated frequently. The last such update occurred on December 18, 2003. Designated "AAA" trucking highways have an 80,000 pound permitted gross load limit, while "AA" highways have a 62,000 pound gross load limit. All other state maintained roads are designated as Class "A" trucking highways with a 44,000 pound gross load limit. Figure 7-1 shows the AAA, AA, and A rated highways in Laurel County.

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

The analysis of existing roadway systems includes the assessment of the function performed by individual facilities within the system. Functional classification is the process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes, or systems, according to the character of service that they are intended to provide. The functional classification system for Laurel County (Figure 7-2) as established by the KYTC is as follows:

Rural Principal Arterial - The rural principal arterial system consists of a connected rural network of continuous routes having the following characteristics: 1) Serve corridor movements having trip length and travel density characteristics indicative of substantial statewide or interstate travel; 2) Serve all, or virtually all, urban areas of 50,000 and over in population and a large

majority of those with populations of 25,000 or over; 3) Provide an integrated network without stub connections except where unusual geographic or traffic flow conditions dictate otherwise.

Rural Minor Arterial - Rural minor arterial roads, in conjunction with the principal arterial system, form a rural road network having the following characteristics: 1) Link cities and larger towns (and other traffic generators, such as major resort areas, that are capable of attracting travel over similarly long distances) and form an integrated network providing interstate and intercounty service; 2) Be spaced at such intervals, consistent with population density, so that all developed areas of the state are within a reasonable distance of an arterial highway; 3) Provide (because of the two characteristics defined previously) service to corridors with trip lengths and travel density greater than those predominately served by rural collector or local systems. Minor arterials therefore constitute routes whose design should be expected to provide for relatively high overall travel speeds, with minimum interference to through movement.

Rural Collector Roads-Rural collector roads generally serve intracounty traffic where travel distances are shorter than those on arterial routes. On average, more moderate speeds occur on these roads. There are two types of rural collector routes, characterized as follows:

Major Collector - These routes typically: 1) provide service to the county seat not on an arterial route and to other traffic generators of equivalent intracounty importance, such as consolidated schools, shipping points, county parks, etc. ; 2) link these places with nearby larger towns or cities, or with routes of higher classification; and 3) serve the more important intracounty travel corridors.

Minor Collector - These routes are; 1) spaced at intervals, consistent with population density, to collect traffic from local roads in order to bring all developed areas within a reasonable distance of a collector road; 2) provide service to the remaining smaller communities; and 3) link the locally important traffic generators with rural areas.

London - Laurel County



Rural Local Roads - Roads within this classification have the following characteristics: 1) Serve primarily to provide access to adjacent land; and 2) provide service to travel over relatively short distances as compared to collectors or other higher road classifications. Local roads account for the remainder of roadways not classified as a principal arterial, minor arterial, or collector systems.

The KYTC uses a separate classification system for incorporated or urban areas. Therefore, the classification for streets within the City of London differ slightly from those in the County (Figure 7-3). Classifications for urban areas are as follows:

Urban Principal Arterial - This system of streets and highways serve the major centers of activity of a metropolitan area, the highest traffic volume corridors, the longest trips, and should carry a high proportion of the total urban area travel on a minimum of mileage. These roads should be integrated both internally and externally between major rural connections.

Urban Minor Arterial - These roadways interconnect with and augment the urban arterial system and provide service to trips of moderate length at a lower level of travel mobility than principal arterial routes.

Urban Collector Streets - The collector street system provides both land access service and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial, and industrial areas. These roads differ from arterials as they penetrate residential neighborhoods distributing trips from arterials to the ultimate destination. The collector street also collects traffic from local streets in residential areas and channels it to the arterial road system. In the central business district, the collector system includes the street grid to facilitate traffic circulation.

Urban Local Streets - The local street system comprises all roads not placed in higher classifications. These streets primarily provide direct access to abutting land and access to the higher street classifications. These streets offer the lowest level of mobility. Service to through traffic movement is typically discouraged.

The functional classification of a road should be considered when approving development proposals. The classification will be an indicator of road capacity. For example if a major subdivision is proposed along a rural local road, it is unlikely that the road will be able to handle the increased traffic in a safe and efficient manner. Therefore, the road may need to be upgraded or the proposal not approved. The factors which determine the capacity and safety of a specific road are numerous and include lane width, shoulder width, current traffic counts etc. Therefore, when the capacity of a road to handle the additional traffic from a development is in doubt, a traffic impact study using computer modeling should be required. New streets in subdivisions or developments should be designed to meet future as well as current transportation needs. Developers should be required to provide collector or arterial streets or the right of way for future extensions as appropriate considering long term traffic patterns.

Acquisition of necessary rights-of-way for the construction of new streets and the widening of existing major streets occur in many ways such as purchase, donations, and required dedications when land is subdivided, developed or redeveloped. Subdivision regulations require that the subdivider shall dedicate for public use the rights-of-way for widening existing streets or roads. Greater setbacks will be required along major existing streets and roads to provide this additional right-of way.

When portions of rights-of-way are not required to be dedicated by the subdivider, the property owner may still choose to provide them by voluntary dedication as a public service. Such dedication may encourage the construction or upgrading of roads which will provide better access to the developer's property. In cases where the necessary rights-of-way are not available through dedication for constructing or upgrading streets or roads, it will be necessary for the appropriate jurisdiction to purchase the required rights-of-way. Purchases may be made by negotiation with the property owner, or if necessary, the rights-of-way may be condemned through the jurisdiction's power of eminent domain.

London - Laurel County



PROPOSED INTERSTATE 66 CORRIDOR

A new proposed interstate highway known as I-66 is being developed as part of the Transamerica Corridor. It will run from I-24 in Missouri, across the state of Kentucky through Ballard, Carlisle, McCracken, Graves, Marshall, Livingston, Lyon, Caldwell, Hopkins, Muhlenberg, Ohio, Butler, Warren, Barren, Metcalfe, Adair, Russell, Pulaski, Laurel, Clay, Leslie, Perry, Letcher, Knott, Floyd, and Pike counties and end at the proposed King Coal Highway (I-73/74 North-South Corridor) in West Virginia. This highway is intended to link the east and west coasts of the United States to accommodate trade and freight transportation.

A draft environmental impact statement (EIS) was completed for the Somerset to London portion of I-66 on May 17, 2006. Five different alternative routes within Laurel County from Pulaski County to I-75 were analyzed as part of the draft EIS. A preferred route was determined as part of the preparation of a final EIS in 2007. The preferred route is shown on Figure 8-4 Laurel County Future Land Use. The potential corridor for connecting I-66 from I-75 to the Hal Rogers Parkway is also shown on Figure 8-4. As an environmental assessment of this section of I-66 has not yet been completed, this corridor is subject to change.

PLANNED ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet follows a six year highway plan for all 120 counties approved by the Kentucky State Legislature every two years. The current plan is for the period from Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 through FY 2012. This plan shows road improvement, bridge, weigh station, rest area rehab, interchange, and other highway related planned projects for the period. Figure 7-4 is the Laurel County Six Year Plan Project Map. It shows all of the current six year projects divided into three categories: construction projects that have been awarded, construction projects that have been authorized to move forward, and proposed projects that have not been authorized or funded as of March, 2007. The projects included in the six year plan and their anticipated funding year are as follows:

ROAD CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS THAT HAVE BEEN AWARDED:

1. 11-2023.00 - Pavement Rehab on I-75. A construction contract for pavement rehabilitation of I-75 from MP 28.8 to MP 33.2 in Laurel County was awarded 8/4/2006.
2. 11-2014.00 Pavement Rehab on I-75. A construction contract for pavement rehabilitation of I-75 from MP 41.3 to MP 48.00 in Laurel County was awarded 10/2/2006.
3. 11-11.26 & 11-11.27 - Major Widening of I-75. I-75 in Laurel County from 1.1 miles south of the KY-909 underpass (MP 48.0) to the Rockcastle River bridges (MP 50.5) will be widened to six lanes. The construction contract for this work was awarded 10/6/06.
4. 11-2007.00 - Repair & Diamond Grind US 25E. The Cumberland Gap Parkway (US 25E) from MP 0.344, US 25 & US 25W to MP 2.024, West Ramp to I-75 will be repaired with diamond grinding. A construction contract for this project was awarded on 9/12/06.
5. 11-278.22 - Relocate KY 30. Construction on London-Tyner Rd (KY 30) began on 3/21/06 to relocate the road from VIVA E approximately 1.3 miles to near Freeman Branch Road. The construction contract was awarded on 10/3/05.
6. 11-278.23 Relocate KY 30. London-Tyner Rd (KY 30) is being relocated from near Freeman Branch Road to 0.1 miles east of the Rockcastle River. A construction contract was awarded on 9/12/06.

PROJECTS THAT HAVE BEEN AUTHORIZED:

7. 11-8300.00 - Bridge Replacement CR 1475. The bridge and approaches on White Oak Road over Sinking Creek will be replaced. Construction was authorized on 9/29/06.
8. 11-8301.00 Bridge Replacement CR 1382. The bridge and approaches on over Mitchell Creek will be replaced. Construction was authorized on 9/29/06.
9. 11-151.00 Widening of US 25. US 25 will undergo low cost traffic operations improvements at its intersection with KY 192 in London. It will be widened to four lanes as authorized on 10/26/06.

London - Laurel County



OTHER PROJECTS IN SIX YEAR PLAN:

10. 11-11.10 & 11-11.11 - Major Widening of I-75. A section of I-75 from 0.6 miles north of KY 80 at London (MP 41.29) to 0.2 miles south of the South US-25 overpass (MP 44.00) will be widened to six lanes. Construction FY 2006.
11. 11-139.01 -New Route Parallel to I-75. A new road will be constructed along the I-75 corridor between Exits 38 and 41. This work is to be done by Laurel County. Construction FY 2006.
12. 11-146.00 Reconstruction of I-75. I-75 in London will undergo reconstruction. Construction FY 2006.
13. 8-59.11 – I-66. Planning, engineering, and environmental assessments will be performed for the future I-66 Corridor.
14. 11-147.00 - US 25 Widening. To provide congestion relief for US 25, it will be widened to five lanes from KY 1006 to KY 2069. A connector from US 25 to KY 229 will be constructed. Improvements will be made to KY 229 up to KY 192, and a back entry to the school from the KY 192 Bypass will also be constructed. Design FY 2007, right of way acquisition, utility relocation and construction FY 2008.
15. 11-109 – Reconstruct US 25 Intersection. The intersection of US25E/US25W/US25 will be reconstructed 1.0 mile east of the I-75/US25E interchange. Right of Way Acquisition and Utility Relocation FY2007, Construction FY 2008.
16. 11-8305.00 - US 25 Bridge Rehab. Increase capacity of the Robinson Creek Bridge on US 25 at milepost 3.28. Design FY 2007, right of way acquisition, utility relocation FY 2008, Construction FY 2009.
17. 11-278.24 - Relocate KY 30. Relocate KY 30 from 0.1 miles east of the Rockcastle River to 0.3 miles west of Welchburg Road.
18. 11-1073.00 KY 1803 Bridge Replacement. Replace bridge and approaches on KY 1803 over Laurel River. Design FY 2007, right of way acquisition, utility relocation FY 2009, Construction FY 2010.
19. 11-904.01 KY 363 Roundabout. Construct a roundabout on KY 363 at KY 1006 to eliminate a safety hazard. Design FY 2006, right of way acquisition, utility relocation FY 2007, Construction FY 2008.

20. 11-1060.00 KY 490 Bridge Replacement. Replace bridge over the Rockcastle River at the Rockcastle-Laurel County line. Right of way acquisition, utility relocation FY 2007, Construction FY 2008.
21. 8-8304.00 – KY 1006. Scoping study for 5th Street/Downtown traffic operations. Install highway lighting on US 25 from I-75 to the Country Music Hall of Fame in Renfro Valley. Planning FY 2007.

ACCESS MANAGEMENT

Roadways serve a dual function of facilitating traffic movement and providing access to abutting properties. Where those two functions conflict, roadway design capacity will not be achieved resulting in congestion and an increase in traffic accidents. The implementation of access management guidelines enhances the overall transportation system by ensuring that each roadway continues to function at its capacity level.

Although access to local streets is regulated solely by local government, KYDOT must authorize new access points (or curb cuts) onto state-maintained roadways from abutting properties. KYDOT standards are minimum standards. Local access management guidelines help to assure that a roadway will operate at its design capacity by identifying factors that need to be considered when access points from individual properties to a roadway are approved. Along arterials and major collectors, for example, driveways should be kept at a minimum. Measures that should be considered as part of access management include provisions for:

- Parallel service roads
- Frontage roads
- Interconnected parking lots
- Shared driveways
- Limitation on turning movements (especially left turns).
- Limitations on new access points for subdivisions.

London - Laurel County



It is recommended that the London-Laurel County Planning Commission review and update their subdivision regulations to include access management regulations.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The principle alternative to the automobile for local travel is public transit. The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet describes the Kentucky public transportation system as having several components which provide statewide comprehensive services. These services can be broken down into four classifications which are: (1) inter-city and interstate buses that move passengers and freight, (2) rural public transportation vehicles that move passengers in rural areas of the state, (3) public transportation vehicles for the elderly and disabled which meet the special needs of their users, and (4) bus/transit systems in the cities that provide scheduled passenger service.

Greyhound Bus provides inter-state bus service to Laurel County. The Greyhound Bus terminal is currently located in the Burger King in the London Shopping Center. Currently, there is no scheduled public bus passenger service within Laurel County.

Rural Transit Enterprises Coordinated, Inc. (RTEC) is a non-profit corporation which provides community transit services open to the public in rural Southeast Kentucky. RTEC operates more than 180 vehicles in their 12-county service area with planning one day ahead for cash fare transportation. In addition, RTEC operates an intercity route with 72 hour advance reservations to access non-emergency medical appointments in urban areas. RTEC is also the broker for Human Service Transportation Services in Region 12 of Kentucky. Under this program they provide transportation services to eligible Medicaid recipients seeking nonemergency treatments, welfare recipients needing job and child-care related trips, and others.

SCENIC BYWAYS

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 established a Scenic Byways Advisory Committee to develop a national

scenic byways program. ISTEA further encouraged the individual states to institute state scenic byway programs. The Commonwealth of Kentucky through the Transportation Cabinet has initiated a Scenic Byways and Highways Program in Kentucky. Kentucky defines a scenic highway or byway as a road which has roadsides or view sheds of aesthetic, cultural, historical, and/or archaeological value worthy of preservation, restoration, protection, and enhancement.

The Wilderness Road Heritage Highway (Figure 7-5) is the only Scenic Byway in Laurel County. In addition to being a Kentucky Scenic Byway, the Wilderness Road Heritage Highway is designated as a National Scenic Byway by the Federal Highway Administration. It begins in the Cumberland Gap National Historic Park and extends to Berea, Kentucky following the trail marked by Daniel Boone and traveled by early pioneers years ago. Within Laurel County, the Wilderness Road Heritage Highway extends from Knox County to the south along KY 229 to Levi Jackson State Historic Park and then continues north to US 25 in London. It follows US 25 north to Rockcastle County.

BICYCLE FACILITIES

Over the past several years the use of bicycles as a viable means of transportation has substantially increased. This overall trend has been accepted as a very desirable addition to most communities as it increases the quality of life for residents and provides linkages to recreational or institutional facilities. Bikeway and pedestrian routes typically involve usage by all ages for recreational and educational purposes as well as providing a means of transportation to and from work. Increased usage requires improved bikeway and pedestrian facilities in order to make trips along these routes as safe as possible. This is especially important since some trips occur within existing road rights-of-way.

For the most part, there are two major categories of bicycle facilities: on road, and off road or separate. The most common type of bikeway is located along existing roadways. This enables the cyclists to travel to almost

London - Laurel County



any destination. Separate bike paths and multipurpose trails are designed specifically for the purpose of facilitating non-motorized means of transportation. In addition, trails and greenways can serve both recreation and transportation needs while creating linkages with other areas of the community.

The guide to bicycle routes in the state is titled Kentucky Bicycle Tours and was published jointly by the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet's Division of Multimodal Programs and the Kentucky Department of Travel Development. The routes in the guide crisscross the state to provide as many opportunities for cyclists as possible. For the most part the seven recommended routes are along less traveled roads so as to avoid interstates, parkways, and major thoroughfares. The routes listed and mapped in the guide are as follows: KY TransAmerica Trail, Ramblin' River Tour, Midland Kentucky Tour, Southern Lakes Tour, Central Heartlands Tour, Mammoth Cave Tour, Bluegrass Tour, and Mississippi River Trail.

The Bluegrass Tour crosses Laurel County. This bike tour route takes bikers from the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains at the Kentucky-Tennessee border up through the Bluegrass Region, ending at the Kentucky-Ohio border in Maysville. The Laurel County route follows KY 312, KY 192, and KY 1956. The guide highlights a stop in London at the Levi Jackson Wilderness Road State Park. Here visitor's can see the Mountain Life Museum and McHargue's Mill, and the largest display of millstones in the country.

It is recommended that a Greater London Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan be developed to emphasize the importance of incorporating bicycling and pedestrian facilities in all transportation planning activities and roadway projects (both local and state). All new highways and streets, except those where bicyclists will be legally prohibited, should be designed and constructed under the assumption that bicyclists will use them. It is also recommended that developers be encouraged to incorporate dedicated bicycle paths into their subdivision design and to link them to other existing and proposed developments. In addition to providing an alternative means of transportation, bicycle facilities are amenities which can enhance the marketability of homes for those seeking a more active lifestyle.

PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Sidewalks and other walking paths are an essential component of a multi-modal transportation system. However, as automobiles became the dominant form of transportation, sidewalks were often left out of developments. Maintenance of existing sidewalks has also often been a low priority. This has contributed to increasing traffic congestion as often the only safe way to get to or from one place to another is by automobile, even though the destination may only be a few hundred yards away. As this problem has been recognized as a national one, Federal TEA-21 legislation now requires the inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian facilities into the transportation planning process. All new public facilities, including sidewalks, must be handicapped accessible.

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

The CSX railroad is the only railroad located in Laurel County. It traverses west Laurel County from north to south. It is part of a line running between transfer stations in Richmond, Kentucky and Corbin, Kentucky. Maintenance of the railroad is the responsibility of CSX.

AIR TRANSPORTATION

The London-Corbin Airport is located 3 miles south of London just off of US 25. The airport is small and primarily serves local privately owned small planes. The airport has two asphalt runways which are 5,650 feet long and is 150 feet wide. A rotating beacon light operates from dusk to dawn. Facilities at the site include administrative offices, pilot lounge, and hangars. The airport is staffed from dawn to dusk. Eighty-five planes are usually based at the airport. The current five year plan for the airport does not include any expansion of the airport or runways. It does include maintenance and upgrade projects such as new runway and taxi signs, installation of additional security fencing, a fuel system upgrade, replacement of a rotating beacon, refurbishment of the lobby and various pavement overlay projects. The construction of a new nine unit T-hanger is also included in the five year plan.

London - Laurel County

