

DEBATE

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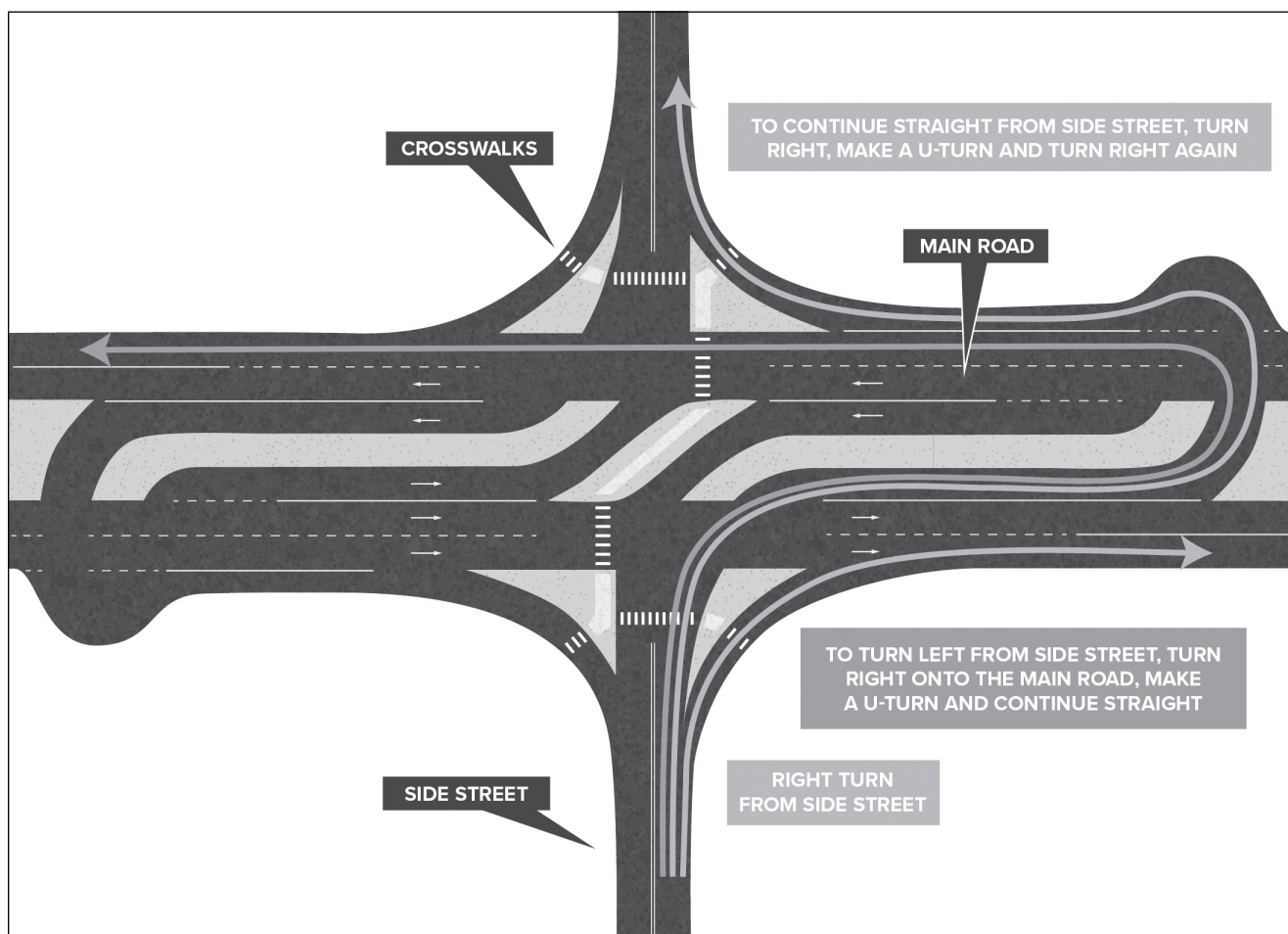
way project, the proposal was discussed at both the Somerset City Council and Pulaski County Fiscal Court meetings this week.

Pulaski County Magistrate Mike Strunk said officials are in ongoing communication with the state regarding alternative options.

"I want everybody to know that we're in constant communication with the state trying to get them to do something different out there on the Slate Branch-914 intersection," Strunk said. "I don't know what's going to happen, but we are talking to our representatives. We're trying to get something better than what's currently planned."

Pulaski County Judge Executive Marshall Todd echoed the concerns, noting the potential impact of the project on traffic during the upcoming Fourth of July celebrations.

"We are getting a lot of calls on it. I asked the Transportation Cabinet to do a more in-depth study," Todd said. "They say the RCUT is the safest option according to their data, better than a stoplight. I've asked them to



COURTESY OF KYTC

An example of how an RCUT intersection works, as available on the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet website.

back up a bit and look at it again."

Todd also noted that construction during the holiday period could worsen congestion, particularly with events like Horse Soldier Bourbon activity scheduled nearby.

Somerset Councilwoman Phyllis Lawson said

at Monday's Somerset City Council meeting she visited the project site with retired state highway engineer Eddie Adams to better understand the RCUT design. Lawson and Adams met with Amber Hale, spokesperson for the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet District

8 Office, and James Jones, the chief district engineer.

"At first, it was a little confusing, but it's doable," Lawson said. "It's intended to cut down on collisions by about 60 percent. We've seen it work in Richmond and Danville. People should go to the state highway de-

partment's site for accurate information—whatever you see on Facebook is bogus."

Mayor Alan Keck stressed the safety benefits of RCUT intersections, despite public skepticism.

"The data shows RCUTs are safer," Keck said. "Other states have seen a

60 to 70 percent reduction in accidents, and Kentucky has seen a 67 percent reduction. The graphics may look confusing, but the results speak for themselves."

Lawson further warned against misinformation circulating on social media. "This comes from Facebook," she said, holding a copy of an altered RCUT graphic. "Once you read it, it's totally bogus. Whatever you're seeing online should not be taken seriously."

The project is moving forward under state contract, but some local officials continue to advocate for additional review and public clarity before construction begins.

There has been no traffic signal at the intersection since May 2024, when a vehicular accident caused damage to the signal pole. That's meant that individuals have not been able to cross from one side of Ky. 1642, or Slate Branch Road, to the other across the KY. 914 bypass, or make left-hand turns at either Slate Branch intersection. The RCUT will be installed rather than a replacement of the traffic light.

Contact Steve Cornelius at scornelius@somerset-kentucky.com.

CLERK

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Litteral spent four and a half years working in the clerk's office.

Price said he has worked in the office 19 years, having spent the last three and a half as clerk, meaning both candidates are familiar with the duties of that office.

As Price said in his introduction, "I know a lot of the ins and outs, but I'll tell you something about the clerk's office, it is a continual learning process. ... No matter what, I just ask that people get out and vote. That's an exercised right that everybody needs to do."

Litteral, meanwhile, used part of her introductory time to talk about one of the things she would like to see changed in the office.

"My future plans are to change the hours of operation one day a week, where we go 7-to-7. And I will be present. I will be there. I will work the front lines," Litteral said.

While several of the questions asked of the candidates involved the

election process, there was one in particular that caused the audience to take notice: Ensuring voter integrity and that their votes are counted via mail or drop off when they cannot make it to the physical polls are concerns to a segment of the voting population. How will you help ease their minds?

Litteral began, "In the last election there were 250 ballots that were unaccounted for, and I took that heart, because I worked the poll. I opened and closed at a precinct. So when I heard that, it broke my heart, because that's 250 people that voted and it didn't count. ... I think we need to have a double-check system behind everybody. Behind everybody and everything that they're doing, whether it be the absentee ballots, whether it be coming in with the boxes after the voting that day, or the closing system of each early voting session. There needs to be more than one person doing things."

Price responded, "Rachel is right. We did have an issue with 250 ballots that we don't know what happened. They got

thrown in the trash? We don't know what happened. But we were able to realize and count that there was no election that it made any difference in, thank the Lord for that. What we are going to do going forward is that we're going to put some safety nets, some measures to make sure that that does not happen again. Again, let me say, it could have been a disaster if it had been a close enough election, so accidents happen. And it was on the mail-ins. With the regular voting, you don't have to worry. It's all digital, computerized, and as it comes in, they're counted for. But going forward, we will have one person taking care of all those mail-ins."

Another question presented to the candidates asked what specific protocols each would maintain or implement to ensure elections stay secure, transparent and accurate.

"We have a guideline from the state board of elections that we have to follow with all parts of our election to keep it secure," Price said. "We have, actually, people located in

each voting center for our protection for our voters protection. ... There are so many rules and regulations you have to follow. I really believe in our election system here in Kentucky. I have full confidence in that and I will keep it the same."

Litteral talked again about needing more checks on those who work in the election.

"One thing that I will change (is), on election night, I do believe that we need to go live stream from the moment go," she said. "I think that the whole day needs to be available anytime you want to click on and see where where you're at in the polls, to see what is going on in the office. ... I think we need to have a double-check system at all times behind every per-

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Housing Authority of Somerset is currently accepting bids for construction/rebuild of a new office building located at 608 McKinley St. We will hold a pre-bid conference at the aforementioned address on May 13th at 10:00am EST. Bid packets will be supplied at the conference or by request at the office, 400 Hail Knob Road. If you have any questions, please contact the office at 606.679.1332.

Estate/Yard Sale

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Senior Living, Specialized Facilities and Transitional Living.

Folks can choose a category and look at all available options available in the Pulaski area that the owners/administrators have posted.

"We are asking local leaders to help spread awareness and encourage participation," Lovins said.

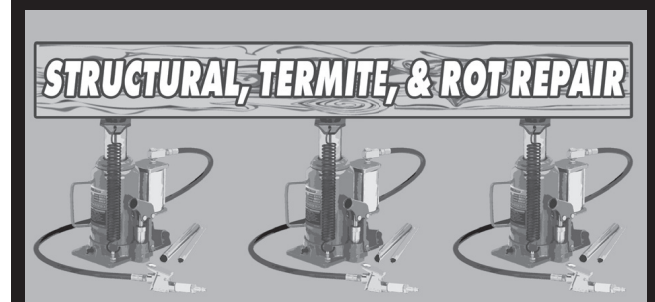
nity members who care deeply about the housing in Pulaski County. We come together to discuss housing challenges, share what we are seeing in real life, and work collaboratively towards practical solutions that can strengthen our community over time," she said.

Currently, the website has five categories: Apartments, Houses for Rent,

Between our boat dealers, our car dealers, our trailer dealers, we get to keep 3% of all the transfers. Speaking of that, I will create a dealer department in our south branch. ... We're going to get back to where we were a couple years ago, and the dealer work will stay in this county. It will not go to the south end of the state to be taken care of. I don't want to see that money lost out of Pulaski County."

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HOUSING

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"(The coalition) came out of a mental health mapping that was brought about by Judge (Marcus) Vanover," Estep said.

"... The coalition we have developed is a community organized group made of local organizations, housing partners and commu-