

New sidewalks in city, county a team effort, planners say

By JOHN MCGARY
WOODFORD SUN EDITOR

Gov. Andy Beshear came to Woodford County EMS Station #1 on Big Sink Road Friday, July 15, with an oversized check worth \$654,863 and a message about the importance of cooperation between local governments and the state.

The check represents a federally-funded state

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant that will pay about half the cost of a new sidewalk on the north side of Big Sink Road between the U.S. 60 Bypass and Stonegate subdivision.

Judge-Executive James Kay spoke first at Friday's event, saluting Woodford Fiscal Court and the Versailles City Council for making the Big Sink Road sidewalk project a reality. Kay said Planning Director Pattie Wilson worked to get it in the county's 2018 Comprehensive Plan and noted the sidewalk falls in the district of three magistrates — William Downey (Dist. 5), Liles Taylor (Dist. 2) and Matt Merrill (Dist. 3). Merrill, who is not running for reelection, was the chief driver for the project, Kay said.

"I had the pleasure of studying under Squire Merrill (a former teacher at Woodford County High School) and he spent his time in retirement running for office and becoming a magistrate to better serve this community, and this was one of his first projects ..." Kay said.

Speaking of Merrill, Kay said, "One of the best quotes I've ever heard on any project that we've ever done, (was when) he said, 'A sidewalk is not partisan. A sidewalk is not a Republican sidewalk or a Democratic sidewalk. It serves our whole community ...'"

The Big Sink Road sidewalk will benefit residents of the Stonegate, Homestead and Woodlands neighborhoods and others in the area,

like employees of More Than A Bakery and other businesses, Kay said.

(Monday, Merrill told the *Sun* he hopes the area where the sidewalk will be located will be surveyed and public meetings held so that work on the sidewalk can begin by next spring. He estimated the sidewalk will take three years to complete, and said a possible county/city split on the local contribution will be negotiated between Kay and Versailles Mayor Brian Traugott.)

"Today's award works toward one of our top priorities — helping to improve infrastructure across the commonwealth to keep our families safe and healthy," Beshear said. "I think we can just look across the road right now and see what an important role (the sidewalk) will serve. This is a road that serves so many of your large employers, it serves your first responders, and I think it is past time that we start this project ..."

Beshear, who is up for reelection in November 2023, plugged economic development efforts across the state.

"You know, it is an exciting time in Kentucky, one where we're breaking every economic development record in the books and one where we're seeing more people move here, picking us, than ever before," Beshear said.

Traugott noted the proximity of Friday's announcement to the new walking path

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GOV. ANDY BESHEAR, whose mother once taught in Woodford County Public Schools, was the headliner at Friday's announcement about the new sidewalk planned for Big Sink Road. "Today's award works toward one of our top priorities — helping to improve infrastructure across the commonwealth to keep our families safe and healthy," Beshear said. (Photo by John McGary)

SIDEWALK

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across the U.S. 60 Bypass from Crossfield Drive to Douglas Avenue. A TAP grant paid 80 percent of the \$191,000 cost of the multi-use path, which was finished last October, according to Versailles Public Works Director Bart Miller.

"This is an exciting time, working with the judge (Kay), working with Squire Merrill, Squire Taylor and the fiscal court. It's been seamless, I think the judge and court would agree, so I'm appreciate of that effort," Traugott said.