

Pellissippi Parkway Extension Issues: Impact Fact Sheet

Traffic

TDOT's own quantitative data show that the majority of traffic the extension is proposed to divert does not reach the proposed termini of the interstate highway.

The rationale for the Pellissippi Parkway Extension is to relieve congestion on SR 129 (Alcoa Highway) through Alcoa and Maryville. However, the majority of south-bound traffic on Alcoa Highway continues south onto the Alcoa By-pass, away from the direction of the proposed Parkway Extension. Moreover, traffic along the "benefactor route" has not increased significantly in over ten years, and the route has experienced only a twenty percent increase in twenty years. Current data show most of the increase in traffic is local, ie, within the cities.

The Pellissippi Parkway Extension will dramatically increase pressure on an already stressed county road system.

According to a Blount County study, there are 17 county roads which "create hazards for drivers." Intersecting roads along the completed Pellissippi Parkway have had major increases in traffic, not the decreases predicted by TDOT. **Three of the four intersecting roads along the existing Pellissippi Parkway have already doubled their 2005 predicted traffic counts.** Sevierville Rd, the interchange in the middle of the proposed Pellissippi Parkway Extension, has already seen a forty percent (40%) increase in vehicles and accidents in one year (from 2000 to 2001). **There are no improvements scheduled for the secondary roads intersecting the Pellissippi Parkway Extension.**

Loss of Farmland, Residences, and Businesses

The proposed interstate highway will pave 155 acres of land, most of which is farmland, 25 acres of which are classified as prime farmland.

Four full-time farmers will lose their livelihood. The 250-foot-wide --and in some cases eliminating-- agricultural use. Five businesses (including the four full-time farmers) and twenty-nine families will be displaced by the highway. Many Blount County residents who now live surrounded by fields and pastures will be living on the edge of an interstate highway.

Water, Air, and Noise Quality

The proposed interstate highway will cross fourteen streams or creeks, two of which are on the State's list as out-of-compliance with minimum standards for water quality. Four tributaries of the Little River which is a drinking water source for the municipal water authority, and which is listed as non-compliant--will be crossed by the highway. One stream will require rechannelization. Several points along the route are prone to serious flooding. The runoff from the new interstate highway will compound drainage problems, yet this is not accounted for in TDOT's studies.

The proposed interstate highway will increase air pollution both directly and indirectly. Traffic on the new highway will deliver increased automotive emissions to Blount County and to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Air quality in the GSMN Park is already at a critical level, violating ozone and particulate matter standards several weeks per year. Within three years, the EPA will probably designate Blount County and the GSMN Park a non-attainment area for ozone.

Commercial and residential development along the route of the proposed highway will bring urban sprawl, contributing more traffic, further compromising air and water quality and run-off and drainage problems, bringing construction and traffic noise and creating increasing demands for services such as schools, water and sewer.

Blount County residents within several miles of the proposed interstate highway will experience significant and substantial noise impact. TDOT projects a four to five year construction period, followed by 14,000 to 18,000 vehicles per day traveling a corridor currently with zero measurable noise. TDOT's analysis of the impact of the proposed highway provides no remediation for the 21 of 55 residences (forty percent) that will experience a twenty decibel increase in noise from the proposed highway.

Economic Impact

The proposed interstate highway will bring economic losses to existing businesses and new and costly pressures on already burdened county services. TDOT predicts that increasing development along the proposed highway will have a favorable economic impact. However, TDOT's own projections predict a

thirty-five percent decrease in south-bound traffic on the Alcoa By-pass and Hall/Washington Rds. Retailers along these routes include Wal-Mart, Home Depot, Target, and K-Mart, as well as numerous locally-owned businesses. How much development will be necessary along the route of the new highway to offset the \$35 million cost of the new highway, economic disruption during construction, losses to existing businesses, and the cost of improvements to secondary roads, building new infrastructure to satisfy increasing demand for water, sewer and other services, and expanding a school system that is already near capacity?

Wildlife Habitat

Blount County has already experienced significant wildlife habitat loss and fragmentation. Less than one-third of the county's original woodlands and only ten percent of wetlands remain. The proposed route for this interstate highway will disrupt woodland and pasture habitat and waterways, further compromising the rural character of the county and undermining the environment necessary to sustain native species.

Democratic Process

The citizens of Blount County deserve to be fully informed about the impacts of the proposed Pellissippi Parkway Extension, an interstate highway that will dramatically and permanently transform the landscape, environment and way of life in our county. The preservation of the rural, small town and natural character of the county was a priority for participants in the county's 1998 citizen-input process. The guidelines in Blount County's Comprehensive Plan recommend that a) New development should be designed to fit into the rural character of the county; b) Farmland should be preserved both for open space and to conserve prime agricultural production areas; c) Our beautiful and scenic environment should be protected, including commonly shared viewscapes, ridgetops, lakeshores, and riverbanks.

Without the information and assessments contained in a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement, neither our elected representatives nor the citizens of the county can make an informed decision about the impact of this new interstate highway on our residents and our county. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has asked the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) to address the specific concerns brought by CAPPE before the FHWA will make any final decisions on the highway project.