

# Project

think it's a great idea," he said. "It's a long time coming. Blount County needs some help with her infrastructure."

Otherwise, speaker after speaker hammered away at the assumptions of the DEIS and the nearly \$100-million-or-more price tag to extend the road, citing traffic needs in other parts of the county.

County mayoral candidate Howard Kerr: "My personal preference is in opposition of the Pellissippi Parkway extension. We must try to find as much of this \$100 million as possible ... for improving existing roads."

Linda King: "I am for the no-build alternative. "I believe we need to save valuable farmland and not affect people who would live along these existing routes. ... I don't believe in eminent domain, especially for a road that you said would cause the same amount of traffic within a short amount of time. ... Build it and they will come. We will have uncontrolled growth along this road."

Seymour resident John Carlton Templeton said that the \$100 million to construct the roadway could be better spent on maintaining current roads. "If the existing roadways of Blount County are just not up to the job now, it just seems to be common sense to improve the existing roadways," he said.

Gail Harris: "On the whole, I could not see that there was much to justify the tremendous expenditure of this program. ... This would be a very irresponsible action to take to build this road given the minimal benefits."

Susan Keller: "How can a road that destroys homes and farmland ever be thought of as 'minimizing impacts?' The impacts ... are life-changing. Once destroyed, we can never get them back."

Howard Beckwith: "I am in favor of using this money to improve the roads in this part of the county. By straightening, realigning and widening some of these county roads, we could have a good system to take care of this situation. We don't need super-highways."

Kathleen Skinner: "The experience of communities throughout the nations is that building new highways (based on traffic concerns) does nothing to reduce it. In the long run, it actually makes the problem worse."

Stephanie Burr: "I am for the no-build option for many reasons. ... I am afraid we'll look like Faragut and the roads will be overly congested before long, too."

County Commissioner Bob Proffitt: "The extension would disrupt some of the most beautiful open farmland in our county. ... It certainly would increase commercialization to that area. ... The cost of the extension is such that I think to save 11 minutes time or 8 minutes time, it's not worthy of that and would not serve that much benefit."

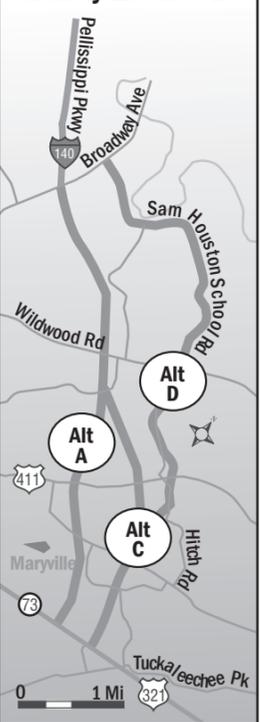
Jay Clark: "I can't imagine \$100 million being spent for me to get here a few minutes quicker. ... If you want a quicker drive to Knoxville, I would suggest moving a little closer."

Nina Gregg: "The DEIS states without question that these costly new highways will not address our traffic congestion problems."

**Calculations questioned**  
Some of the comments took issue with TDOT's long-range traffic calculations, which were based on the construction of the extension, the Alcoa Parkway and the Southern Loop.

Project Manager Mike Russell said that TDOT bases its traffic assumptions on the long-range plans for road projects put in place by the Knoxville Regional Transportation Organization. "We're just following their lead. ... They should know what is needed in their area to

## Proposed Pellissippi Parkway Extensions



Source: Tennessee Department of Transportation. Anja Smith/The Daily Times

### Time saver?

■ The existing route from Rockford to Maryville to Washington Street to Lamar Alexander Parkway is an 11-mile trip that takes about 19 minutes.

■ Pellissippi extension alternatives A/C would be a seven-mile trip and would take eight minutes, saving 11 minutes of time.

■ Alternative D would be an eight-mile trip and would take 11 minutes, saving eight minutes of time.

Source: TDOT

keep it as safe as possible and still move traffic."

The KRTO's Long Range Plan includes a proposal for a scaled-down Southern Loop, a two-lane bypass around the cities of Alcoa and Maryville, instead of a much larger roadway that had once been discussed.

Tom Robinson: "If you guys are going to take 50 acres of (the Pellissippi Place research park), are you going to give us (the estimated value of) \$300,000 an acre? We've already wasted \$30 million on (the research park). I know you want to waste another \$100 million, but I want to know what you're going to pay our county for those 50 acres?"

In response to the question, project manager Mike Russell said that an alternative would have to be chosen before right-of-way costs could fully be determined.

"How can you say it's going to cost \$100 million if you can't answer that



Vernon Stephens, Dick Hostetler and Mark Whitehead (left to right) look over one of the proposals for the Pellissippi Parkway extension during a hearing on Tuesday.

question?" Robinson said.

After the hearing, Russell said that it has not been determined how much, if any, land could be taken from the Pellissippi Place property. It would depend on the proposed route. "That hasn't even been calculated," he said.

Audra Walker: "I don't want this area of Blount County to fill up with strip malls, McDonald's and gas stations ... just to get to West Knoxville a little faster."

John Rush: "This road .. will be a stimulus for massive growth on Highway 321, ... but it's going to generate a traffic nightmare through there."

Because of the intense public interest, TDOT extended the hearing by an hour longer than normal and has also extended the deadline to submit written comments to Aug. 30., said Yvette Martinez, community relations manager for the Tennessee Department of Transportation.

### Cost comparison

Current price estimates for the alternatives are:

■ Alternative A, \$91.5 million for engineering and construction, \$5.4 million for right-of-way acquisition.

■ Alternative C, \$96.2 million for engineering and construction, \$8.3 million for right-of-way acquisition.

Tom Sherlin/The Daily Times

place the fewest residences — five single-family units.

### Affected farming

Alternative A would affect about 128 acres of farmland.

Alternative C would affect about 74 acres of farmland.

Alternative D would affect about 45 acres of farmland.

An electronic copy of

the DEIS is available at [www.tdot.state.tn.us/pellissippi](http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/pellissippi). Copies of the document are available for public review at the Blount County Chamber of Commerce and the Blount County Public Library. Questions regarding the project should be directed to Michael Russell, [mike.russell@tn.gov](mailto:mike.russell@tn.gov), TDOT Project Management Office, 594-2334.

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