

# Pellissippi extension decision expected in 2015

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The Federal Highway Administration may finally issue a decision on the fate of the proposed Pellissippi Parkway extension in spring 2015.

Changes to the proposed route, forced by the discovery of a sensitive archaeological site in 2013, forced the Tennessee Department of Transportation to do further studies prior to submitting a final Environmental Impact Statement to the FHWA. The last estimate had been for a FHWA decision by this autumn.

In July 2013, TDOT chose to propose an 150-foot alignment shift to the west at the southern end of the route in order to avoid the site. This will affect some residents of the Kensington Place mobile home community.

TDOT spokesman Mark Nagi confirmed the following timeline:

- Reevaluation of DEIS – summer 2014
- FHWA issues Final EIS – winter 2014
- FHWA issues Record of Decision – spring 2015

The agency is updating the project's traffic forecasts and reevaluating the Draft EIS because it is more than three years old.

The proposal would extend Pellissippi Parkway (State Route 162) from Old Knoxville Highway to East Lamar Alexander Parkway 321, a length of about 4.4 miles. TDOT's preferred route for the proposed Pellissippi Parkway extension, labeled Alternative A, would cross Old Knoxville Highway, Wildwood Road, Brown School Road, Sevierville Road and Davis Ford Road before reaching the terminus at East Lamar Alexander Parkway near Morning Star Baptist Church.

The evaluation process has been ongoing for years. The Citizens Against the Pellissippi Parkway Extension (CAPPE) filed a lawsuit in the early part of the decade because the EIS hadn't been done, violating the National Environmental Policy Act.

A federal court halted the project in 2002 with an injunction. Two years later the case was remanded to Tennessee state court and the injunction was lifted so officials could begin the EIS process.