

KnoxNews

To print this page, select **File** then **Print** from your browser

URL:

http://www.knoxnews.com/kns/local_news/article/0,1406,KNS_347_4486142,00.html

Parkway workshop crowd unsupportive

One attendee calls whole public meeting 'a farce'

**By DON JACOBS, jacobs@knews.com
February 22, 2006**

A former state representative deemed a Tuesday night public meeting to review plans for the proposed Knoxville Regional Parkway "a farce."

"All these meetings are a farce," said H.E. Bittle, who represented Knoxville when the parkway was under study in the 1990s. "They're doing this to cool people off."

Bittle's house on W. Gallaher Ferry Road won't be directly affected by the proposed 26.5-mile-long road that he fought as an elected official. At one public meeting, Bittle ripped off his suit jacket in 2002 ready to engage in fistcuffs with the former commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Transportation because of a dispute about the route.

"By the time they finish this, they'll be looking to build the blue route," he said. "It's sad."

TDOT said 315 people attended Tuesday's meeting at Pellissippi State Technical Community College to peruse plans for the parkway and its interchanges at Pellissippi Parkway and Clinton Highway.

Bittle, who retired from office in 2004, was opposed to the route that joins Interstate 75 in Loudon and Anderson counties by cutting through Hardin Valley in West Knox County. He favored a more westerly route - deemed a blue route by TDOT - that would cut around Roane County and skirt Oak Ridge.

TDOT rejected the blue route as too expensive.

State planners contend a bypass is needed around Knoxville to divert some of the traffic on the commingled Interstate 40/75 that pushes into the downtown area. The proposed State Route 475 will attract truckers that now clog the downtown interstate, TDOT argues.

Participants Tuesday were able to fill out comment sheets about the proposed road's path. The comments will be reviewed by the 18-member Knoxville Regional Parkway Design Resource Team before making its final recommendations March 29 to TDOT.

The mood of attendees was not supportive of the route that will consume 118 houses, 17 businesses, and three churches or nonprofit organizations.

"Ninety-nine percent of the people are against it," said Edgar Faust, who represents Hardin Valley on the resource team. "They haven't softened at all.

"Once it's completed, people are going to scratch their heads and ask, 'Why did they build it here?'"

Hardin Valley resident Karen Butler agreed with Bittle's summation of the public meetings.

"Time will tell, but I think it's just a dog-and-pony show," Butler said.

She said she hopes the group Citizens Against the Beltway Orange Location, of which she is a member, will kill the project in the future with a lawsuit.

Initial plans had the route passing behind Butler's 2,500-square-foot rancher home on four acres along Couch Mill Road that the family built 16 years ago. Now the alignment has been moved so it will pass in front of her property, about 500 feet from her front porch.

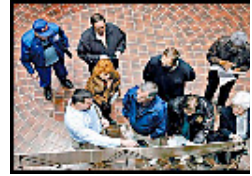
"It still kills my property value and my privacy," she said. "I guess I can always put 'See Rock City' on my roof."

Don Jacobs may be reached at 865-342-6345.



Copyright 2006, Knoxville News Sentinel Co.
[Want to use this article? Click here for options!](#)

Copyright 2006, KnoxNews. All Rights Reserved.



SAUL YOUNG
NEWS SENTINEL

People gather around a map of the nearly complete plans for the Knoxville Regional Parkway during a public workshop at Pellissippi State Technical Community College on Tuesday. About 315 people attended the meeting and their general mood was not supportive of the route.

Buy a link here

Lose inches 4 the Wedding

Oprah & 60 Minutes agree Hoodia Diet Patch helps you. Try it FREE

Lower Blood Pressure

Lower Blood Pressure up to 36 Points with no drug side-effects!

Hard Drives

Get free music, photos, or games when you buy a Seagate Hard Drive!

Need a Contractor in Knoxville?

Provide the details of your home improvement project and receive up to 4 free estimates from local contractors. When contractors compete, you save!