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### Parkway would have no billboards

Transportation group approves making it part of National Highway System

By **DON JACOBS**, [jacobs@knews.com](mailto:jacobs@knews.com)  
July 27, 2006

The proposed Knoxville Regional Parkway garnered unanimous approval Wednesday to be designated as part of the National Highway System and have protection from billboards.

Members of the Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization agreed that the proposed 25-mile, four-lane, divided highway should be part of the National Highway System. The Tennessee Department of Transportation will take the TPO's recommendation and apply to the Federal Highway Administration for the special designation.

The National Highway System is composed of interstates and other routes important to the nation's economy, defense and mobility.

Approval by federal road officials would open the proposed parkway to increased funding. TDOT estimates that the road, which won't be completed for 15-20 years, will cost about \$570 million.

The Knoxville Regional Parkway, once labeled the Orange Route, will connect Interstate 75 in Loudon County with I-75 in Anderson County near Wolf Valley Road. The proposed road will cut through Hardin Valley in West Knox County.

Members of the TPO also passed a resolution requesting that TDOT help designate the proposed road as a Tennessee Parkway or a state scenic highway.

TDOT Commissioner Gerald Nicely can designate the road a Tennessee Parkway by signing a document. But that designation - against billboards, nearby junkyards and buildings more than 35 feet high - could be usurped by city and county regulations.

State legislators could impose more firm regulations against eyesores along the parkway by passing a bill either naming the road a scenic highway or addressing specific prohibitions in a special law. The TPO resolution asks that TDOT help provide the best designation for the parkway that complies with the wishes of a design resource team that wanted the route free of visual pollution.

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