

## No end in sight on sinkhole fill work

By Thomas Benning  
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Workers and engineers continued efforts Thursday to permanently fix a sinkhole on the southbound side of Pellissippi Parkway, but it is still unclear when the road will again have all lanes open.

With traffic restricted to the roadways shoulder, crews drilled four holes, 4-inches wide and 30- to 40-feet deep, according to Tennessee Department of Transportation spokesman Travis Brickey.

Starting at 3 p.m., the activity switched from drilling to pumping grout, and barring rain, Brickey was hopeful the holes would be filled by the end of the day.

In the next few days, workers will repeat the process, drilling and filling at least 10 holes, but Brickey said it was impossible to estimate an end date for the project.

The hole is dictating that for us, he said.

The sinkhole first appeared May 7 just south of where the parkway meets Oak Ridge Highway. Workers initially filled the hole with 720 tons of rock and 40 cubic yards of concrete. It has since settled, causing TDOT to twice repave the section as a temporary solution.

There was not yet any noticeable difference in the sinkhole depression Thursday, but Saieb Haddad, a TDOT geotechnical engineer, said the days activities were the initial stages of a multi-faceted attack against the sinkhole.

Haddad said that through TDOTs excavation of the sinkhole and knowledge of the area, they determined the sinkhole is moving downhill in the direction of the northbound side of Pellissippi Parkway.

The drilled holes will make an L-shape around the sinkhole to contain its movement, Haddad said. The holes are pumped with grout at 10-foot intervals, he said, so the grout can expand in a bulb shape.

After the L-shaped barrier is completed, three or four holes will be drilled directly into the depression, Haddad said.

Hopefully, if we do the outside line well, we will see some good signs, he said.

Once the sinkhole is fixed, Haddad said about 300 feet of ditch on the side of the road will be excavated and then reconstructed with a synthetic membrane to carry water away from the sinkhole.

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