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Parkway plan divides family near its path

By **DON JACOBS**, jacobs@knews.com
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Both meetings are 6-8 p.m.

- **Aug. 30: Hardin Valley Elementary School, 11445 Hardin Valley Road, Knoxville**
- **Aug. 31: Karns Elementary School, 8108 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville**

The Todd residence atop a ridge in Claxton is a house divided when it comes to the proposed Knoxville Parkway.

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Not only are the Todds faced with the prospect that the road will slash through the family's land in Anderson County, but their sentiments toward the project are on opposite ends of the spectrum.

"It will open us up to the rest of the world and that would be good for industry and business," said Ron Todd, who resides on Mehaffey Road with his wife, Sharon. "I think it will stimulate growth, and we need that."

Sharon Todd, on the other hand, said she is opposed to the project because of inadequate environmental studies. Sharon Todd is one of 19 members of the Regional Parkway Resource Design Team tasked with recommending a route for the parkway, which also will be designated state Route 475.

The four-lane highway designed to divert traffic from downtown Knoxville by connecting Interstate 75 in Loudon County with I-75 in Anderson County could come within 150 feet of the Todds' driveway, Ron Todd said. The path also will slice through the middle of property occupied by Sharon Todd's mother.

Sharon Todd represents the Claxton community. About 300 people from Claxton and Powell turned out Tuesday night for a public hearing at Claxton Elementary School to review the parkway's proposed path.

Judging from comments of the attendees, the design team will have its hands full trying to make everyone happy.

While Ron Todd can't wait for the inevitable development that crops up like mushrooms in a cow pasture after a rain, Jennifer Elmore of Strader Road dreads it.

"We moved here 17 years ago to get away from the city and the traffic," said Elmore, a Knoxville native. The parkway could pass 100 feet from the four acres she shares with her husband, Rick, and their four horses.

"If you love the country setting, you don't want the gas stations and the fast-food businesses that pop up at each interchange," she said.

Others who filled out comment pages for Palmer Engineering were more terse.

"Get on with the building," wrote one person. "Don't leave people hanging for years not knowing if their home will be taken."

Palmer Engineering is a Kentucky company paid \$684,000 by the state to obtain community feedback and to design the parkway with respect for the region's natural beauty and historic features.

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

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