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No Silence Here

The News Sentinel's Michael Silence blogs on blogs.
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The Knoxville parkway

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — The Knoxville parkway project known as the "Orange Route" took a major step forward Monday as state Transportation Commissioner Gerald Nicely announced that design recommendations by a citizen review panel had been accepted.

The panel said the 28-mile beltway linking Interstates 40 and 75 southwest of the city to I-75 north of the city should be a four-lane, divided highway with a 52-foot-wide median, 12-foot-wide shoulders and a scenic designation prohibiting billboards.

The 19-member group, which included local government, business and resident representatives, also recommended two interchanges at Clinton Highway or U.S. 25W and Pellissippi Parkway or Interstate 140.

Gov. Phil Bredesen, whose administration undertook a review of the Orange Route and 14 other controversial highway projects after taking office in 2002, said in a statement that the recommendations "represent the best option encompassing all considerations from right-of-way impacts to environmental concerns."

The panel spent nearly two years on the assignment, deciding the best location for a 300-foot-wide path within a 1,000-foot-wide corridor selected by the Tennessee Department of Transportation.

The beltway was conceived in the 1970s to help reduce highway traffic passing through downtown Knoxville.

In late 2003, the Bredesen administration approved the Orange Route alternative, which cuts through semi-rural Hardin Valley. Critics say the route still is too close to the city.

Groundbreaking is expected in three or four years and construction is expected to take 15 to 20 years. The cost is estimated at \$500 million to \$600 million.

Here's the parkway's [web site](#). Here's the team's [report and recommendations](#). (pdf)

Posted by Michael Silence on June 19, 2006 at 04:17 PM

Comments

What a horrid waste of money and environment! Running light rail, with auto and truck ferry capabilities, along existing Interstate corridors makes more sense.

Could you imagine loading your car onto a train in Knoxville and unloading it in LA? Mmmm. Forget the car ferry option. Just give me the train!

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"The beltway was conceived in the 1970s to help reduce highway traffic passing through downtown Knoxville." We've lived for 30 years without it. Why do we need it now? I'm sorry...not now...20 years from now which would be half a century after conception. Shoot! By the time its done, our whole transportation system could be different and the beltway could be as obsolete as some of the old highways.

Is anyone that is interested in seeing downtown Knoxville prosper asking, "Why are we diverting traffic/potential business away from downtown? Shouldn't that \$500,000,000 - \$600,000,000 be better spent creating a luxury exit from I-40 straight into the convention center? And perhaps sprucing up I-275 with lovely commerce centers and decorative rest stops? Let's take a lesson from Pigeon Forge and turn I-275 into outlet store central. We could install a bungee cord on the Sunsphere!

Posted by: [djuggler](#) at June 19, 2006 10:05 PM

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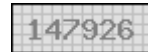
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A collection of East Tennessee blogs. See the list »

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- Top 100 blogs
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View the headlines only version of the blog

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No (means no) profanity! No personal insults or name calling!

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