



## TDOT accepts local recommendations for Knoxville Parkway

June 19, 2006

KNOXVILLE (WATE) -- State officials accepted local recommendations in the plan for the Knoxville Parkway, officials announced Monday.

Those recommendations include:

- Interchanges at Pellissippi Parkway and Clinton Highway with interchanges that tie in to I-75 in Loudon and Anderson counties.
- 70 mph design speed (with posted speed to be determined).
- 4-lane divided highway with 52-foot depressed median.
- 12-foot travel lanes with 12-foot outside shoulders.
- Seek Scenic or Tennessee Parkway designation to prohibit billboards.

The recommendations came from the Regional Design Parkway Resource Team. Its 18 members are from Knox, Loudon, Anderson counties, along with the communities of Hardin Valley, Karns, Heiskell, Claxton, Powell and Solway. Representatives of the Sierra Club and Citizens against Beltway Orange Location also served.

[Click here for maps of the route](#)

Gov. Bredesen and TDOT Commissioner Gerald Nicely announced the accepted recommendations Monday in Knoxville.

"We believe the resource team's recommendations represent the best option encompassing all considerations from right-of-way impacts to environmental concerns," Bredesen. "After reviewing their work, and a good deal of public input, we agree with the recommendations the team provided."

"When I announced my decision to ask citizens who live in the area to be included in the development of the Parkway, I knew it would require a substantial commitment," Nicely said. "We appreciate the dedication they demonstrated to their community."

Edgar Faust, who served on the resource team as a representative of Hardin Valley, is still unhappy with the project.

"Well nobody wants an interstate in their backyard. It's not just Hardin Valley. It's anywhere. But yeah, the rural nature of the valley will be lost forever. It's one of the last rural areas in Knox County and that's going down the tubes with this thing," Faust said.

"Ultimately when you got a project this big, you are going to have some that are not happy with the final

decision," Nicely said. "All we can do is say we'll make sure they are heard their input is considered and we hope that it has been a fair process."

**[Click here to read how the state acquires property for the parkway](#)**

The groundbreaking for the parkway is expected in three or four years. It will be complete in 15 to 20 years. It's expected to cost \$500 to \$600 million to build. In addition to taxpayer money, TDOT will look at other ways to help fund the project.

In 2003, Nicely said TDOT will construct a modified "Orange Route," but first needed more input from the community. The Regional Parkway Design Resource Team made its recommendations to the state in April.

**Purpose of parkway**

The parkway, also called the beltway in the past, is proposed state route 475. It will be an alternate route for I-75 traffic to bypass Knoxville and the I-40/I-75 corridor. The parkway would also improve access to communities.

The state says an alternate route for I-75 is needed because I-40 and I-75 are major through-truck routes that are funneled together for the combined I-40/I-75 segment. It's also a major commuting route in and out of Knoxville.

By allowing traffic to bypass the combined section, travel times will be reduced safety will be improved for through traffic.

Also, shifting through traffic away from the combined section would provide relief for commuters and local traffic on the combined I-40/I-75 segment.

The parkway would also provide a high capacity alternate route if I-40/I-75 were closed in an emergency.

**Parkway timeline**

The idea for a parkway was first proposed in the 1970's. In 1994, the East Tennessee Development District and the Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission requested that TDOT conduct a feasibility study.

That study began in 1997. The state released a draft environmental impact statement in December 2001.

In 2002, TDOT announced the Knoxville Beltway would follow the 38-mile "Orange Route" through West and North Knox County. Local officials were upset and heated words were exchanged during the announcement.

In 2003, Commissioner Nicely asked UT to review 15 projects based on complaints Gov. Bredesen heard during his 2002 campaign.

UT published a study recommending that if the state moved ahead with the Beltway, design concepts should be considered to involve the public in the process.

## Public input

The public can call the Knoxville Parkway Hotline toll free 1-888-447-7475 from 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday or email [info@knoxvilleparkway.com](mailto:info@knoxvilleparkway.com).

TDOT and the resource team held 12 public workshops at various places along the proposed route. The state says more than 2,700 citizens attended and gave approximately 1,749 comments.

Also, from March 2004 to May 2006, there were 255 emails and 397 calls to the project hotline.

6 News Reporter [Jeff Lennox](#) contributed to this report.



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