

STATE OF TENNESSEE

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

PUBLIC MEETING (WORKSHOP)

PROPOSED US-64 (SR-40) CORRIDOR K PROJECT

WEST OF OCOEE RIVER TO SR-68 NEAR DUCKTOWN, TN

BENTON, TN 37307

FEBRUARY 16, 2010

The Tennessee Department of Transportation held a Public Meeting (Workshop) on Tuesday February 16, 2010 in the gymnasium of the Polk County High School, Benton, Tennessee 37307 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m., for discussion of the proposed Corridor K Project from Proposed US-64 (SR-40), west of the Ocoee River to SR-68 near Ducktown, Tennessee, where the following proceedings were had, to-wit:

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ANNA S. DOLOS
CERTIFIED COURT REPORTER
(423) 284-3223

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1 E X H I B I T S

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4 Exhibit No. 1, Resolution 2010-012
(Submitted by James F. Logan, Jr.)

5 Exhibit No. 2, Comment Sheets
Page 1

6 Exhibit No. 3, Comments from Local Cleveland
7 Businesses that were unable to attend

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20 (Note: Unless provided to the reporter, all names are
21 rendered as the best phonetic approximation.)

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1

COMMENTS

2

MR. CHUCK HAMMONDS: My name is Chuck

3

Hammonds. I'm the RPO coordinator for the Southeast

4

Tennessee Rural Planning Organization. Corridor K has

5

been the number one priority of the RPO since its

6

inception in 2006. The RPO is fully supportive of

7

TDOT's efforts to create a viable, economic corridor

8

for the citizens of this area.

9

10

MS. SUSAN FISHER: I'm for the road and

11 prefer whichever option would be least impact to our
12 beautiful environment and wildlife and the most cost
13 effective.

14

15 MR. PHIL NEWMAN: My name is Phil Newman. I
16 think my preferences would be 8 or 8a. That would be
17 the ones I think would be the preferable options that
18 I looked at, and I think that would provide, you know,
19 ample room for the trucks to get off the gorge and get
20 down and enhance the commerce up above the mountain.
21 And it would also be a very beneficial way to improve
22 and to reach into the North Carolina side, and based
23 on what I saw, it's very much like a lot of North
24 Carolina, the three-lane access. Sounds good to me.
25 I strongly support that too.

□

4

1

2 MR. AL RYMER: After review, I'm gonna vote
3 for 8 or 8a. I'm Al Rymer and I'm for 8 or 8a.

4

5 MR. DOUG MCNELLY: Let me start out by saying
6 that Albert Einstein had a quote one time that said
7 "Today's solutions are tomorrow's problems." I think
8 that's real important in overall taking a look at this
9 Corridor K concept. First thing I note is on the
10 study that was done -- and I was just told they paid
11 some \$500,000 for it -- cited some benefits to Polk
12 County. Those benefits to the corn maze and
13 specifically to some produce and trinket shop in
14 Delano. And while not to demean those, because those
15 are important to Joe Fetzer who has the corn maze that

16 I know of and I don't know who owns the trinket shop
17 and produce stand in Delano, but if this thing is bias
18 toward that kind of business, then it's not worthy of
19 spending that kind of money for it now and in the
20 future. I also note when I went through the study
21 that was on the internet that Polk County had one
22 representative that I could find. North Jackson
23 County, Alabama had way more -- ten times more
24 representation on this thing than Polk County had.
25 Everybody had more representation, all the counties

□

1 west of Polk County. North Georgia and North Carolina⁵
2 all had more representation. So it's obvious that
3 this thing is bias to make this thing go.

4 Polk County has a pristine national forest in
5 it, and this thing is intended to -- these folks want
6 their economic engines tied to putting a thoroughfare
7 through this pristine forest, and they don't really
8 care that it's gonna do that because they're more
9 interested in satisfying their economic needs and
10 their fantasy that increasing their tax base will make
11 their counties go. And that's just not -- that's a
12 fantasy. Nobody's ever really got enough tax base.
13 Once you get what you think you need, you always need
14 more, and this thing is gonna have a lot of up-front
15 cost and it's gonna have a lot of legacy cost. And I
16 point specifically to Roane County. Everybody has
17 heard about the ash spill in Roane County, and what
18 they don't understand is that there was another
19 catastrophe that was before the ash spill. And that
20 was the four-lane, specifically Interstate 40 that

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7
1 study is they need a thoroughfare to the East Coast so
2 that they can ship these goods overseas and make
3 distribution. I would like to point out that there
4 are no major shipping ports in North Carolina, South
5 Carolina or Virginia. You have to go to New York and
6 the New Jersey area for major shipping points to
7 Europe and other countries. Either that or you have
8 to go to the gulf coast. North Carolina, again, does
9 not have shipping. So this is a fallacy in this
10 study.

11

12 MS. KATHLEEN BROADBENT: I would just like to
13 say that this landslide has crippled a lot of people
14 in Ducktown and the surrounding area, and I think it's
15 a stinking shame that the governor has done nothing to
16 help us economically. He has gotten federal money to
17 fix the road from the landslide. He has gotten
18 federal money for small businesses. He has done
19 nothing for the people who put him in office, and it's
20 a good thing he's leaving. That's all I have to say.

21

22 MR. CASEY DALE: We need a new highway. We
23 need an alternate route when a situation like this of
24 natural disaster occurs. What happens when you need
25 an ambulance to get to bring someone to a hospital in

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8
1 Bradley County from the Copper Basin area. There's
2 not really a quick route to get there. Safety
3 concerns during rafting season: You have rafters that

4 stand on the side of the road, literally right on the
5 white line on the side of the road out in the middle
6 of oncoming traffic and trying to get in cars, put
7 boats on top of their car, change clothes, what have
8 you.

9 You also have maintenance to do on this road.
10 I mean, who is to know when there is going to be
11 another rockslide. The rockslide has occurred. We
12 don't have an alternate route to get us around it.
13 Commercial businesses: Commercial vehicles need to be
14 able to have a good route to drive. On this curvy
15 road which is in need of maintenance -- and I have
16 been told there is a maintenance plan, but on the new
17 road coming through, there would be a lot of easier
18 travel for commercial vehicles who are not used to
19 this area. In our current economic recession people
20 living on that end of the county and trying to come to
21 work on this end of the county or trying to go
22 somewhere further in Tennessee from up there, it's
23 really, really hitting them in their pocketbooks to
24 try to pay for gas to try to get around through there.
25 That's about all I have:

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9

1
2 MR. GARY FARLOW: My name is Gary Farlow and
3 I'm with the Cleveland/Bradley Chamber of Commerce
4 which is a 650 member business organization. We're in
5 favor of having a Corridor K. I don't have a strong
6 preference as far as which route. I think 8a seems to
7 be one that would work well from what we've seen, but
8 our main concern is making sure we have a corridor

9 through the mountains for business and for tourism
10 interest. We also represent a tourism agency, the
11 Bradley County Convention and Visitors Bureau, and a
12 number of our manufacturers have employees that live
13 on the other side of the mountain up in the Ducktown
14 Copper Basin area, and they depend on that corridor to
15 get to and from work.

16 We also have a number of businesses that do
17 business on that side of the mountain with deliveries
18 and other business interests that they have on the
19 other side. You have organizations like UPS, FedEx
20 and other trucking companies that use that as an
21 access into North Carolina. We also have companies
22 like Bowater that depend on logging trucks to get to
23 and from their operation over there. So there are
24 just a number of business reasons for keeping that
25 corridor open and improving it both for tourism

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10

1 traffic as well as business traffic.

2 I think our preference would be, if there is
3 a feasible way to do it, is to maintain the existing
4 road through the gorge as more of like a scenic drive
5 and then have a way to get around the gorge so you
6 could have a more efficient system for commercial
7 traffic.

8 As far as other things, obviously, you need
9 to consider the environment and the impact on the
10 national forest up here, but I think that needs to be
11 balanced with the needs for people that are seeking
12 work in Bradley County and for Bradley County
13 businesses that do business on the other side of the

14 gorge.

15

16 MS. LISA PICKEL: The Corridor offers options
17 for our businesses to stay competitive in the
18 marketplace and opens doors for new industry and new
19 business as well as existing industry expansion. It's
20 important to have a road that is just dedicated to
21 business and travel as well as a road that is
22 dedicated to the scenic area and to the river.

23

24 MS. RACHEL ROGERS: My name is Rachel Rogers.
25 I feel like that the regional impact, not just the

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11

1 impact to the citizens of Polk County should be
2 considered. I think the rockslide hopefully will wake
3 some people up to the struggles that we have getting
4 through this area. There is a lot of commercial
5 traffic that goes through the gorge along with a lot
6 of local traffic. Safety is my biggest concern.
7 There is not enough considered to the safety of the
8 citizens and the commercial traffic that goes through
9 there. I just hope that when they take in the
10 environmental impact into consideration, that they
11 will note that our bears are as smart as any bears in
12 North Carolina or Wyoming or Colorado or any other
13 place where they've built a corridor.

14

15 MR. ROSS TARVER: My name is Ross Tarver. I
16 own property. It's the Elrod property located behind
17 Ocoee Express on Highway 64. I'm here today to voice
18 my opinion on the various options on the Corridor K

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19 Project. I prefer Option 8a. I think it's less
20 intrusive to the local environment, and I think it's a
21 better use of our taxpayer's dollars with \$320 million
22 versus some of the other options I saw for 1.3
23 billion.

24 The only thing I would like to see or maybe
25 possibly recommend as a modification to Option 8a is

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1 the roadway be a four-lane from the Ocoee River up to ¹²
2 Highway 30 there at Greasy Creek and then a two-lane
3 from that point up to the welcome valley visitors
4 Center and then a four-lane from there to Copperhill.
5 That would be the only changes I would make to Option
6 8a.

7 we definitely need this project. It's very
8 valuable. Obviously, with the current rockslides that
9 have occurred, it draws a lot of attention to the
10 importance of that river gorge and the passage there
11 and the importance of it for the local community and
12 local businesses. Thank you.

13

14 MR. DJ CHORD: I think Corridor 8a is the
15 best suited for the Project, I guess, and the most
16 cost effective. I guess my choice B would be Option
17 8, and that's pretty much it.

18

19 MR. DAN H. CHORD: My preferences would be
20 8a, 8, 6 and 7 in that order, and primary reason being
21 that it allows for two traffic ways through that area
22 and the through traffic could actually be split from
23 the tourist traffic or rafting traffic and it would

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24 make for much safer travel down through that area.

25

□

1 MR. WILL LANCE: Some of the things I wanted¹³
2 to mention, the first thing I wanted to mention is I
3 was here back in the summer, and I had made some
4 comments that the presentation overall, especially the
5 video but also the presentation in the gym, seemed
6 obviously bias toward the build option as opposed to
7 the no build option. And I was really angry today to
8 find out that it's still obviously bias toward that.
9 It's an obvious bias toward the build option because
10 there's use of terms like "need" and there's
11 mentioning all these supposed economic development
12 things that will be a plus for the road being built
13 rather than talking about like the environmental
14 damage or that it will destroy the quality of life in
15 the mountains.

16 It will change it from what it was, raising
17 property taxes where a lot of people can't afford
18 where they live. I know from personal experience that
19 in North Georgia they built a road through some areas,
20 and it raised the property taxes. And a lot of the
21 people who were poor before at least had land, but now
22 they've had to sell their land because they can't
23 afford the property taxes. So they have sold off to
24 developers, and they haven't really made all that much
25 money either.

□

1 Also, I was wanting to mention that the ARC¹⁴
2 stated back in the '60s that these roads would help

3 Appalachia and some of the mountainous areas of the
4 east, but if we think about it, this is 2010 now and
5 we can see, if we'll bother to notice, that the places
6 that were poor before these roads were built are still
7 poor. I can mention a lot of places in Appalachia,
8 including like Blairsville, Georgia, where people,
9 especially in this economic downturn but even before,
10 a lot of people were out of work on social security
11 and things like that. So the roadway didn't really
12 make them richer. It just brought in rich people from
13 outside who, once again, raised the property taxes and
14 caused a lot of people not to be able to afford their
15 land anymore.

16 Also, hundreds of millions of dollars and
17 possibly up to a billion dollars would be invested in
18 building any of these road options, and that money
19 would be much more responsibly spent toward schools
20 and hospitals in the area. If they could raise the
21 quality of education in the area as well as the
22 medical help here, that would give people a lot of
23 opportunities. And if a roadway was built, from what
24 I've seen, the only opportunities that come in are
25 fast food restaurants and junk like that, and that's

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1 not really -- for the 21st century, that's not really¹⁵
2 progress for the United States.

3 So if they invested hundreds of millions of
4 dollars in schools rather than the highway, the gold
5 plated highways, that would go further and help the
6 people of the area much more, and then we might
7 actually be able to keep up with China and Europe who

8 have much better education systems than we do here in
9 the United States.

10 Also, most likely, especially with how much
11 economic trouble is going on right now, they would use
12 stimulus funds to build a road like this like they've
13 been using lately, and those stimulus funds are often
14 borrowed from spurious sources such as the government
15 of China and different lending people like that. So
16 do we really want to be in debt to those kinds of
17 groups for a road project like this?

18 Also, if we think about the existing 64
19 roadway through the Ocoee Gorge, it's really better
20 than most highways in the world. I can think about
21 the Trans-Canada Highway which is a highway connecting
22 Eastern Canada to Western Canada. So it's a major
23 highway, one of the most major for that country, but
24 it's not near as nice as U.S. 64 is. One thing that
25 they do there that might help U.S. 64 is they build

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16
1 avalanche collection ramps where if an avalanche comes
2 down the hill, then it's collected on top of the ramp
3 and can be disposed of later, or it directs the
4 avalanche to go off into the river or off into an area
5 on the side of the river. I know people had a worry
6 about the kind of rock getting into the river, but
7 it's natural to the area. So it must be already
8 reaching into the river. Anyway, it's part of the
9 natural course.

10 Also, from this presentation, it seems like
11 the Tennessee Department of Transportation is actually
12 the Tennessee Department of Roads, because every

13 option that is on the table besides the "no build" has
14 to do with roads. There is no even mention of
15 increased rail capacity, either passenger rail or
16 freight rail. There is also no mention that this new
17 roadway, if it's built, might be a toll road that's
18 mostly for trucks that local people may not even want
19 to use because it's so dangerous from the trucks.
20 They may not even be able to afford to use it if it's
21 a toll road.

22 And last but not least, we should realize
23 that building a new road isn't gonna help because even
24 if it's a four-lane road, it's still liable to either
25 be washed out from under if it's on top of the

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1 mountain or to get covered with a rockslide. I-40 is¹⁷
2 a four-lane highway, a major interstate, and it's been
3 closed for just as many months as the Ocoee Gorge due
4 to a rockslide that closed it off. So if I-40 can be
5 closed off, I'm sure any new Highway 64 Corridor K
6 could also be closed off by a rockslide even if it is
7 four lanes.

8 And we should realize that if a new road is
9 built, then we'll have two roads to collect wrecks on
10 rather than just one because induced demand would mean
11 that the new road will encourage more traffic. So
12 there will just be more cars traveling that corridor
13 than there were before and possibly trucks if it's a
14 truck route. And the Ocoee road most likely will
15 still maintain its current amount of traffic, if not
16 grow in amount. So instead of collecting wrecks just
17 on the Ocoee Gorge, we'll have to collect wrecks off

18 the top of the mountain as well as at the bottom of
19 the mountain.

20 So, to me, the only option that makes any
21 sense is either the no build option, and if not the no
22 build option, then just minor improvements to the
23 existing roadway such as those avalanche ramps. But I
24 wouldn't even recommend blasting out too much of the
25 rock because that will destabilize the hillsides

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1 further and also destroy a lot of the beauty that 18
2 makes the Ocoee such an interesting and spiritual
3 place to be, and we should always remember that it's
4 not just economic things that we're looking at, but
5 also the spiritual side of the Ocoee region. We want
6 to protect the intrinsic values that people find when
7 they go and visit that area.

8 If people think they need roadways and fast
9 food restaurants and all that, they should just live
10 in the city rather than demand another roadway to be
11 built and destroy more of our mountains. I guess
12 that's it.

13
14 MS. PHYLIS CALLAWAY: I would like to say I'm
15 in favor of Option 8a because this achieves my goal of
16 preserving the beauty of the gorge and it uses as much
17 existing road as possible. Therefore, I would submit
18 my opinion as being in favor of 8a.

19
20 MR. WILLIAM GEORGE: I have indicated a
21 preference for Option 8 because it utilizes much of
22 the existing roadway, and for that reason, it would

23 have less of an environmental impact than some of the
24 other proposed routes. And just on a personal note, I
25 make frequent trips to the Carolinas and would

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1 appreciate a safer, quicker route. And the other 19
2 comments I have on the sheet that I'm turning in.

3

4 MR. MIKE CALLAWAY: My name is Mike Callaway.
5 I'm a retired attorney from Cleveland, Tennessee in
6 Bradley County. I'm 70 years of age. Familiar with
7 the Ocoee River Gorge and the Highway 64 through the
8 gorge since I was a child and have spent many, many
9 years on Parksville Lake in a summer residence there,
10 and during my career -- I was telling somebody here
11 while waiting to make a statement that probably during
12 my legal career, I did a lot of litigation, and I
13 probably handled 12 to 15 lawsuits that involved
14 accidents of various kinds, some fatalities, that
15 occurred on Highway 64 in the Ocoee River Gorge. Some
16 accidents also involved substantial property damage
17 where tractor-trailers literally went into the river,
18 went off the road because the shoulder gave way. So
19 this has been a safety hazard for my entire life.
20 It's been a transportation bottleneck for my entire
21 life and has been an economic strangle hold on Polk
22 County for my entire life.

23 I think it's not only a Polk County issue
24 though. It's a regional issue that needs attention.
25 I think it will benefit the entire Southeast Tennessee

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Polk Co Pub Mtg US-64 transcript 021610.txt
1 and Northwest Georgia area, and, certainly, the other
2 end of Nashville and North Carolina could benefit from
3 it. I have a number of friends and associates in
4 Bradley County who have businesses there, significant
5 business and significant interest, that at this point
6 in time because of the rockslide on the highway are
7 not able to get their vital employees and managers to
8 work in a timely fashion.

9 I don't know what else we need to demonstrate
10 how important this is to this area and to the people
11 of Polk County. It would be a great benefit to them.
12 Personally, I think among the options -- and these are
13 new options to me. This is the first time I've seen
14 these. Either Option 8 or 8a would be my preference.
15 It seems to be best budget wise and all other aspects.
16 So those would be the ones I would be glad to support.
17 I just think it's of prime importance that this
18 project go forward.

19 I understand the environmental concerns. I'm
20 a member of the Sierra Club and also the Tennessee
21 Nature Conservancy and the National Nature
22 Conservancy. I have been a member of those groups --
23 of the Sierra Club since back in the '70s and Nature
24 Conservancy since in the early '80s. So I have some
25 appreciation for the environment, but I think this

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21
1 project can be managed without doing any damage to the
2 environment. It's certainly an environment that's
3 very dear to me because of my long association with
4 it, but I think this can be handled in a proper
5 fashion. So that's my comment.

6

7 MR. DON RITZHAUPT: In looking at all the
8 different options, it makes a lot more sense to me to
9 go with Options 8 or 8a. I think I really prefer 8a
10 is my preference. I think that any of these corridor
11 options are an absolute must for this area. I think
12 that this area will never see the kind of economic
13 development that would be possible without this
14 highway. It absolutely needs this corridor. I come
15 through here on average 20 to 30 times a year, and I
16 would drive up this road.

17 It's great to have the recreational aspects,
18 but I think that this will allow us an exit to the
19 east that we can bring more truck traffic across these
20 roads. And the 8a and 8 options are both to me more
21 economically feasible. The other options I think are
22 just way too expensive, and we can achieve what's
23 needed to be achieved by going with 8a. I guess
24 that's all at the moment.

25 Oh, one more thing. I think it's very

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1 unfortunate that it took a rockslide to get everybody²²
2 to show the kind of attention that's being shown
3 tonight. I think this road should have been
4 considered 20 to 30 years ago, but it doesn't always
5 work that way. Thank you.

6

7 MR. JOHN HAGLER: I'm John Hagler. I'm from
8 Cleveland, Tennessee. I'm a retired circuit judge. I
9 used to hold court here and up in Ducktown and
10 traveled that road a lot. It's a wonderful road if

11 you're a tourist. It's extremely dangerous if you're
12 anything else. I like Option 8 or 8a either one. I
13 think I prefer 8 a little bit more because it totally
14 separates -- gives the potential for completely
15 separating commercial and recreation which I think is
16 very important.

17 I just hope this project can get under way as
18 soon as possible. The rockslide has proven that we
19 have not been thinking ahead the way we should have
20 been, and now we realize how important this is, number
21 one, to commerce, all commerce, working people, people
22 who have businesses, people who need goods delivered
23 to them and also to preserve the beauty of this
24 county.

25

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23

1 MR. LOU PATTEN: I think it's of critical
2 importance that we have a new road through the Ocoee
3 Gorge for safety reasons, for commercial reasons, for
4 tourism reasons and economic reasons for Polk County,
5 for the entire county and especially for the folks up
6 in the Copper Basin area. And I think that the road
7 can be built in an environmentally safe manner, and I
8 think it's just critically needed. It's been needed
9 for a long time. So I hope that TDOT would move
10 forward with this. I guess I would favor Option 8a or
11 8 above the other ones for several reasons. It
12 doesn't seem to be as intrusive into the whole forest
13 area, and, of course, the costs are considerably less
14 in those two option as well. So I think by having a
15 lower cost, that would help to move the project ahead,

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16 but I think it's definitely needed for the whole area.

17

18 MR. JAMES F. LOGAN, JR.: My name is James F.
19 Logan, Jr. I'm an attorney in Cleveland, Tennessee.
20 It's my privilege and responsibility to represent
21 Bradley County, Tennessee as its litigation counsel as
22 well as internal counsel for the purpose of advising
23 the Commission on important issues confronting
24 Southeast Tennessee and Bradley County. I also
25 represent Polk County government and represent the

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1 Commission as well as the agencies around it.

24

2 I've lived in Southeast Tennessee all of my
3 life, born and reared on the banks of the Hiwassee
4 River and have had the pleasure of enjoying the
5 mountains of Polk County and the Ocoee River Gorge
6 since I was a child.

7 I'm particularly familiar with the unique
8 needs and the pockets of poverty which are present in
9 Southeast Tennessee. To a large extent I think that
10 those are attributable to the lack of transportation
11 and the lack of a reliable transportation system
12 through the Cherokee forest along the Ocoee River.
13 Today the Bradley County Commission passed a
14 resolution which I'm gonna tender to the court
15 reporter as an exhibit to my presentation. The
16 Resolution supports proceeding with the final design
17 and funding of the revised Corridor K through the
18 Ocoee River Gorge. The whereases within this
19 Resolution are substantially significant and important
20 to all of the people of Northwest Georgia and Eastern

21 Polk Co Pub Mtg US-64 transcript 021610.txt
North Carolina as well as the surrounding areas.

22 It is not to be overlooked, however, that the
23 east west corridor through the Ocoee River Gorge is an
24 important asset for our entire nation, particularly,
25 however, with reference to the education which is a

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25
1 necessary ingredient for bringing people from a
2 continuing cycle of poverty and a lack of cultural
3 knowledge outside of the Appalachia region. We have
4 tremendous educational opportunities readily available
5 through award winning Lee University in Bradley
6 County; through the Cleveland State Community College;
7 the McMinn County, Athens, Tennessee which is some 20
8 miles from where we are now State Vocational Training
9 Center. All of these are really unavailable to people
10 who live within a short 30 to 45 minutes away because
11 of the lack of a reliable transportation roadway from
12 above the mountain, what we call above the mountain
13 and from Western North Carolina and Northwest Georgia.

14 Corridor K must be improved and revised in
15 order to promote the ability of all of the people of
16 this area to be able to enjoy the social interaction
17 which is necessary for a vibrant people and a vibrant
18 economic improvement for people who live in Polk
19 County and who live in Northwest Georgia and Western
20 North Carolina.

21 There are other considerations which I'm
22 certain have been brought to the attention of the
23 United States Department of Transportation, and I
24 leave this with you.

25 And then I want to speak on a personal basis

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1 from knowing many people who live in the area. I've²⁶
2 had many, many clients who've lived in the Copper
3 Basin area, the Blue Ridge, Georgia area who rely upon
4 the excellent medical care and treatment which is
5 available at the fine trauma centers of Chattanooga,
6 Tennessee, Erlanger and Memorial Hospital and our fine
7 health care facilities in Cleveland and Bradley
8 County. Those individuals have suffered immensely as
9 a result of not having a reliable roadway upon which
10 to travel, a roadway which is safe.

11 It now takes people as a result of the
12 expected rockslides some two and a half hours one way
13 to receive medical care and treatment from their
14 physicians. I represent two physicians who travel to
15 Copper Basin Medical Center, and those physicians are
16 unable to make that five-hour round-trip. They must
17 stay more assessable to their own practices.

18 When my clients have called and said, Jimmy,
19 I don't have enough money to seek medical care and
20 attention for treatment for injuries that I have or
21 some disease, they call with tears in their eyes. The
22 time has come for us to act responsibly and to fully
23 fund a revised and improved Corridor K, and I implore
24 you to do so both individually and in my capacity as
25 an official representative for the Polk County

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1 Commission and the Bradley County Commission. Thank²⁷
2 you very much.

3

4 MR. DAVID CHAFFIN: I favor Option 8a for the
Page 22

5 following reasons: It would be the most inexpensive
6 option. I think it's one of the options that under
7 the build category, I think it will increase safety.
8 I think it will increase commerce and ease
9 transportation for not only local residents, but for
10 those passing through the area for whatever reason.
11 Personally, I am a bird watcher by hobby, and that
12 option will take the road, once it leaves the current
13 road, through the high elevations that allows bird
14 watchers like me to see high elevation species which
15 the Cherokee Parkway now gives us in another part of
16 the state. So those are my reasons in a nutshell.

17

18 MR. TIM SPIRES: My name is Tim Spires. It's
19 an interesting process today to be able to review the
20 different options, the history of the project. As I
21 consider this, I think it's very important for our
22 community in this part of Tennessee to accomplish
23 several things in the goals. The first thing is to
24 improve the safety of the existing roadway that runs
25 through the river gorge. The fact that the roadway

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1 tends to have a lot of accidents, and an opportunity²⁸
2 to lower those would be a great opportunity through
3 this project.

4 I think another very important thing is the
5 commerce opportunities. I've been involved in
6 manufacturing for almost 30 years, and one of the
7 limits in the infrastructure of this area is the
8 transportation from Southeast Tennessee into North
9 Carolina. This new roadway would help open that up

10 with the new industry coming in. This would only help
11 that and provide much better opportunities for
12 everything else.

13 Also, I enjoy the outdoors, and I think it's
14 important to do the least amount of impact on the
15 environment. The options that provide that and look
16 to be the best as I have reviewed the different
17 options here, it seems that probably Option 8a would
18 be my choice based on the fact that it takes advantage
19 of some existing roads but still provides an
20 opportunity to get out of the actual river gorge area
21 which is the most dangerous. Also, price wise, it
22 looks to be the best in the price. I hope that all
23 those involved will consider this and will move
24 forward with this project in a timely manner.

25

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1 MS. JUANITA SANISLO: We have a problem with ²⁹
2 where this is starting here. Right now with the road
3 the way it is, it's coming right down into two lanes
4 right in front of our driveway. There is no brim for
5 us to get off the road, and we've almost got hit
6 several times with someone trying to beat the other
7 person to get in front. And we would like to have
8 somebody do something to fix that where it's not gonna
9 be so dangerous for us to try to come down that hill
10 and get in our driveway. I would just as soon leave
11 this road, the road that's there already, as a scenic
12 route and then use another route for people to go to
13 North Carolina, Copperhill, whatever.
14

15 MR. RONNIE PULLIAM: We're saying why don't
16 they use the existing road that they've got from
17 Cherokee Corners to the head of the lake on 64, and
18 then at the head of the lake, go to the south along
19 the ridge to the Ocoee Whitewater Center. You're
20 looking at about eight miles, and I don't think that's
21 gonna be that big of a problem to widen 64, the
22 existing highway, up to the head of the lake.

23

24 MR. JAMES TALLEY: My name is James Talley.
25 I feel that we need to construct Corridor K as soon as

□

1 possible and fund it so that we can improve the safety ³⁰
2 and economic development of our region, our area and
3 our cities within Polk County, Bradley County and
4 Cherokee County, North Carolina and also stimulate the
5 growth, the industrial growth between Ashville, North
6 Carolina and Chattanooga, Tennessee. And I would
7 request that Governor Bredesen fund it as soon as
8 possible.

9

10 MR. K. HARRISON BROWN: My name is K.
11 Harrison Brown. I am a native of Bradley County. I'm
12 69 years old, born in 1941. I have lived there and
13 worked there all of my life. I am currently and have
14 been for some 25 or 30 years president of Brown Stove
15 works, Inc. in Cleveland, Tennessee, a family held
16 manufacturer of cooking appliances. Was formerly a
17 county commissioner in Bradley County from 1970 to
18 1982. Have access to a cabin on Parksville Lake. So
19 I'm quite familiar with the U.S. Highway 64 and the

20 need for a change in that road to provide better
21 access between Chattanooga, Cleveland, Murphy and
22 Asheville, North Carolina.

23 This issue has gotten even more critical in
24 recent years and over the last decade. We have a
25 number of employees that are greatly disadvantaged by

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1 the current situation coming to our plant and have 31
2 been regular employees for 10 to 15 years from
3 Copperhill and Ducktown. As anyone knows, it takes a
4 great deal more fuel and almost an extra hour each
5 way. That's two hours away from their family and
6 their home. We are concerned about the issues in
7 terms of the wear and tear on our employees. There's
8 quite a number of them, and some of them are very
9 critical to our operation.

10 In addition, it's generally a public hazard
11 for people that don't know the area that are driving
12 through here as tourists, particularly, in the
13 summertime with the whitewater rafting. It's my
14 opinion that there should be a compromise between the
15 amount of money that has to be spent on the project.
16 Looking over the options, I think Option 8 or 8a makes
17 the most reasonable sense to spend a reasonable amount
18 of money and alleviate the problem in the Ocoee Gorge.
19 That would then allow the gorge to reheel itself. I
20 think the gorge has taken a great deal of damage over
21 the past couple of decades because of the highway
22 traffic, not just the rafters, but the highway
23 traffic. I think it's polluted and just the various
24 accidents and so forth.

25 I'd like to make one other comment. I think,

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1 having been familiar with the area back in the 1970s,³²
2 there was almost a constant stream of tanker trucks
3 from Copperhill full of sulfuric acid going to the T&T
4 Plant in Chattanooga. Occasionally, those trucks
5 would go off the road and they would be in the stream
6 creating an environmental impact. If that plant had
7 not closed and they were still running that kind of
8 traffic down that road with that kind of cargo, I feel
9 certain that this road would have been replaced with
10 another route long before now.

11 So I certainly hope that all concerned will
12 take great interest in getting this situation for the
13 economy and for the people of Polk County and Bradley
14 County and the area and for the environmental impact
15 that it will have to improve the environment, in my
16 opinion, in this area by having a better route.

17

18 MR. MIKE STINNETT: The two southern routes I
19 do not like. The Old Kimsey Highway, that would be my
20 last choice of the northern routes. I think the route
21 I like best is the 8a option. From the cost
22 projections that are on the board back here, \$320
23 million, that is a doable project for the Department
24 of Transportation, and I would urge them to consider
25 one of these options at their earliest convenience

□

1 and, hopefully, start the funding in place to start³³
2 the project.

3

4 MR. JOHN CAIN: Too many lives have been lost
5 on that highway over the years. We need to go forward
6 with this project. In my opinion, we're 35 years late
7 in coming with it.

8

9 MR. DENNY MOBBS: My name is Denny Mobbs. I
10 live on Sugarloaf Mountain in Polk County. My wife is
11 a retired teacher from Copper Basin High School and
12 drove the gorge daily for her career. From a safety
13 standpoint and an environmental enhancement, economic
14 development, I like Options 8 and 8a. The cost is
15 about \$320 million, but I would like to see an
16 amendment to those options, including a cost figure
17 for following Old U.S. 64 in Option 8a, but
18 four-laning the road from Cherokee Corner to Mack
19 Point, then two lanes around the north side of the
20 gorge with passing lanes on the upgrade in each
21 direction and then a four-lane road from the
22 Whitewater Center to Highway 68 in ducktown.

23

24 MR. DUDLEY LAWSON: My opinion is that a
25 four-lane is the only thing that's acceptable, and

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34

1 they can pick whichever route they want to. Of
2 course, the shorter one, Corridor 2, would probably be
3 the cheapest, but it's not really as important as it
4 needs to be a four-lane. And the long-range opinion
5 would be to tie I-24 in Chattanooga into it to use
6 interstate clout to help with the building and
7 political persuasion, but the four-lane is a must.

Polk Co Pub Mtg US-64 transcript 021610.txt
8 And I-75 going across the top of Jellico Mountain, the
9 impact of that should be considered, that going across
10 these mountains down here should be accepted in like
11 manner because the wildlife and everything up there
12 survived it. So I don't see why it couldn't survive
13 it here, and it's way overdue.

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MR. MARK BISHOP: I like Option 8a. It holds
more around the lake as far as traffic conjecture
around the lake and utilizes the existing four-lane on
the east lane. I like that one.

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C-E-R-T-I-F-I-C-A-T-E

STATE OF TENNESSEE:
COUNTY OF BRADLEY:

I, Anna S. Dolos, Court Reporter and Notary
Public, do hereby certify that I reported in machine
shorthand the above testimony, and that the foregoing
pages were typed under my personal supervision and
constitute a true and accurate record of the
proceedings.

I further certify that I am not an attorney
Page 29

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or counsel for any of the parties, nor a relative or
employee of any attorney or counsel connected with the
action, nor financially interested in the action.

witness my hand and official seal this 25th
day of February, 2010.

Anna S. Dolos
Court Reporter and Notary Public
My Commission Expires 7/18/2011

□