

1 STATE OF TENNESSEE
2 DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
3 PUBLIC MEETING (WORKSHOP)
4 PROPOSED US-64 (SR-40) CORRIDOR K PROJECT
5 WEST OF OCOEE RIVER TO SR-68 NEAR DUCKTOWN, TN
6 Copperhill, TN 37307
7 February 17, 2010

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10 The Tennessee Department of Transportation held a
11 Public Meeting (Workshop) on Wednesday, February 17,
12 2010 in the gymnasium of the Copper Basin High School,
13 Copperhill, Tennessee 37307 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.
14 est., for discussion of the proposed Corridor K Project
15 from Proposed US-64 (SR-40), west of the Ocoee River to
16 SR-68 near Ducktown, Tennessee, where the following
17 proceedings were had, to-wit:

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Alisha Armour

Court Reporter

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1 EXHIBITS

2 Exhibit #1 Comment Sheets (92 sheets)

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1 MS. SUSAN H. KING: Your sorry alternate
2 route is not fit to travel. Your -- 68 through Farner
3 and Tellico and all that mess, that's garbage. The
4 River Road was better and it's ridiculous whoever was
5 in charge of the project of the clean-up of the River
6 Road to get it back open for the people up here. It
7 has been ridiculous how long it took them to even
8 decide what to do and now this is the middle of
9 February -- almost the end of February and they still
10 don't even have all of the debris removed.

11 It should have been done a whole lot faster,
12 the whole thing -- the geologist, everybody involved,
13 they should be working a whole lot speedier. It's
14 ridiculous. If it was somewhere in Middle Tennessee --
15 Nashville or somewhere it would have been done a whole
16 lot quicker. It's the fact that they think that they
17 can just run over the people up here. If any place in
18 the state needed economic growth it's this place and
19 yet, they have just shut us off from the world. So I
20 have started traveling through Georgia to get where I

21 needed to go because I have two grandbabies in
22 Chattanooga so I have to be down there quite often.
23 And where is the governor? He should care.
24 I mean he should have come either in December or
25 tonight or maybe in Benton -- maybe he came to Benton,

1 I don't know -- last night I don't know. But it's just
2 ridiculous and they're taking too long about this road
3 to open it. And there's too many people up here that
4 have health problems and stuff that are having to drive
5 four and a half and five hours on the road plus,
6 whatever time they spend at the doctor. And all the
7 other people that work down the road -- and there's 12
8 people that have to get up here everyday in time for
9 school and it's just ridiculous how long it's taking,
10 and it's like they don't care.

11 And the people that pay taxes in this county,
12 and which I'm one of them, should be considered over
13 the top of the rafters. And it seems like that's just
14 all they're working for is just shooting to get the
15 rafting season open because they have sure not worked
16 very swiftly. It's not been all bad weather and they
17 could've worked faster, like in November it wasn't all
18 that bad that that geologist couldn't have made a
19 decision quicker and gotten a construction crew
20 quicker.

21 And it was all over the news -- it wasn't

22 just on the Tennessee news -- it was on the Today's

23 Show about the rock slide. That's it.

24 MR. JEFF LEDFORD: I represent Cherokee

25 County EMS in Murphy, North Carolina and our biggest

1 concern with this is, (A) getting it cleaned up -- the
2 initial project. But beyond that, our link to our
3 closest Level I trauma center right now is basically
4 broken. We can't fly right now, we're having to take
5 really long alternate routes to get there.

6 A four-lane down this river is an excellent
7 idea and it would connect us with our closest
8 definitive health care system for strokes, heart
9 attacks, and big-time trauma. And that's -- it's not
10 just about the economy, it's about, you know, people's
11 lives. So that's our whole point of being here tonight
12 and that's what we wanted to relate. Thank you.

13 MS. MARY HOPKINS: I am for the new road. I
14 like 8 or 8a, one of those options. I think they need
15 to hurry up. Thank you.

16 MS. GAIL CRAGG: Tell them I shopped in
17 Canton because I couldn't get to Cleveland or
18 Chattanooga for Christmas, so all my tax money went to
19 Georgia. It's true. We need an alternate route. And
20 Bredesen was saying that the tax revenues were down and

21 that's why. I help bring them down, but they didn't do
22 anything to help me get to Cleveland or Chattanooga. I
23 love it here, I really do. I'm a retired teacher.

24 I was nearly run off of 64 one time, a semi
25 was coming around a big curve and they were stopped

1 turning left to go on a scenic route and he started
2 coming into my lane -- if I had been in a big car, I
3 would have been toast. Just to improve Highway 64
4 serves no purpose, there has to be an alternate route
5 because there will be more slides and the same thing is
6 just going to keep happening.

7 MR. RAY FORD: I'm the administer of Copper
8 Basin Medical Center. The hospital is losing in the
9 neighborhood of \$200,000 a month because of this
10 rockslide. That will happen any time the rockslide
11 occurs because the specialist who come down here and
12 have clinics are in Cleveland or Chattanooga, so we are
13 losing significant, what we call ancillary volume,
14 which is like outpatient volume because of the
15 rockslide.

16 We are also losing patients that are referred
17 to as swing bed patients. They are patients that might
18 have serious surgery in Chattanooga and they need more
19 time than the hospital in Chattanooga can afford them,
20 so they come back down to us into a swing bed and we'll

21 take care of them. We've lost 70 percent of our
22 ancillary business in scopes and stress tests and
23 things like that. And we've lost about 50 percent of
24 the swing bed admissions because of the rockslide.
25 Additionally, -- that's an economic impact.

1 I'm not really sure I even want to say this. This
2 weekend -- I'll give an example -- a 23-month old
3 little girl comes into the emergency room, she's sick.
4 Now, she's fairly stable right now, we give her
5 antibiotics, but we know what we think is wrong with
6 her, we think she may have meningitis. She needs to go
7 to the hospital with a pediatric intensive care unit,
8 that means she has to go to Chattanooga or to Atlanta.

9 The weather is too bad to fly her out. It
10 takes us five hours to get an ambulance to go ahead and
11 take her, the ambulance just goes up the road -- by
12 this time the weather is breaking and they get a
13 helicopter to come and pick her up. She gets to
14 Chattanooga, she's blue and she dies.

15 So the deal is -- looking at it from an
16 environmentalist standpoint, bears or babies?

17 I'd rather take care of babies. So there you
18 go.

19 MR. SCOTT BARKER: I'd like to say I'm glad
20 to see this much interest generated over the Corridor K

21 Project. I'd really like to see this come to pass. I

22 like the -- probably the Option 4 and 8a best, but

23 any -- I'd be willing to take anything.

24 I drove that road for 27 and a half years and

25 held a job down and it was really tough in bad weather

1 or whatever. I'd really like to see them -- I think it
2 would be an economic boost for the whole economy in
3 this region -- in this area, or Western North Carolina,
4 North Georgia, Southeast Tennessee and all of it.

5 I think it would give the kids a lot more
6 options about going to college which is something that
7 we know how important it is. I don't think it would
8 get any cheaper to build it later on. I think they've
9 put it off and its price tag, I know, has went up
10 double from what I've heard just a few years ago. I'd
11 really like to see it come to pass and I'd like to see
12 them be able to go ahead and get it started, that
13 way -- I think a lot of people here are put out on
14 them, especially, after the rockslide.

15 I feel like they think there hasn't been
16 enough done, but it just showed how bad we're cut off
17 from the rest of southeast -- from the rest of
18 Tennessee and anything else like a lot of options for
19 the children.

20 I think -- it's hard to say everything you

21 want to say. I think that -- I want to say this, I
22 think a lot of tax money has went toward Atlanta
23 because it's only an hour and a half from Blue Ridge to
24 Atlanta, and like, most people will do a lot of their
25 shopping at Hamilton Place or down in Cleveland and

1 they've went to Canton and Atlanta, Georgia to do their
2 shopping. So I think we're losing a lot of tax
3 revenue.

4 Not only that, I believe it has hurt the
5 whole psyche of people in the area where it seems like
6 they are cut off from the rest of the state. I know a
7 few years ago, I remember, we had a tax for that road
8 and they moved it to another corridor project. And I'm
9 not for sure exactly which project it was, but the tax
10 remained and the project went somewhere else.

11 I think that's it. I appreciate it and I
12 appreciate them having the meeting here.

13 MS. ANGELA BARKER: I just like 4 and 8a and
14 we need something in the area.

15 MR. KEITH BALLEW: First of all, I want them
16 to pick out one and get'er done. I don't care which
17 one it is, but the yellow one I'm looking at here,
18 Option 8, I think, is probably the best. At any rate,
19 I feel like they've got to get out of gorge because
20 it's been falling in ever since it was built.

21 And I was in a wreck in 1960 where it fell
22 off, and I ran into -- that was where the 15-mile an
23 hour curve is. Nobody remembers that one. But the
24 other reason we've got to get out of there is, in 1986,
25 my mother was killed in a car wreck there on the River

1 Road and it's claimed a lot of people maybe not as many
2 as some big interstate does but we're a small community
3 and they are all important to us, but we've got to get
4 something done.

5 The thing that really irritates me about this
6 is they can't go through this Little Frog Refuge, and I
7 didn't even know it was a refuge until they came out
8 with this. I used to hunt in there. If they'd go
9 through there they'd be on top of the mountain much
10 quicker with less cost because I've walked all that in
11 through there and it's pretty level once you get on
12 top.

13 If they build a four-lane, that's great. If
14 they build a two-lane that's got to be -- anything has
15 got to be better than being in the gorge because the
16 gorge is going to -- we're going to have this over and
17 over and over about every 10 to 15 years and gravity
18 don't quit. And that's all I've got to say, I guess.

19 MR. JOHN PHILLIPS: Very much in favor of
20 having an alternative route and leaving the existing

21 corridor as it is. I prefer Option 4, Option 5,
22 secondary. It is very, very important to keep this
23 road -- the existing road open during construction and
24 I believe those are the only two options that would
25 allow that to happen. If you close 64 during the

1 summer you are putting 1,000 people out of work who,

2 otherwise, probably wouldn't be able to find jobs.

3 Okay.

4 Let's go ahead and construct the four-lane

5 not do a two-lane, that would be doing it half way. If

6 we're going to build a road, let's do it a hundred

7 percent, build a four-lane and then we're done with it

8 for a hundred years.

9 MS. BRENDA PROCTOR: This is something that I

10 feel like is taking too much time to start with. It's

11 been ridiculous of the amount of time that's been

12 stretched out over something that is so important to

13 Chattanooga, Cleveland, all the way up to Ashville,

14 North Carolina. It has affected businesses -- and I

15 guess the best way to put it is, it has really affected

16 the economy in this area. Everywhere, not just

17 counting Polk County, I'm counting Hamilton County,

18 Bradley County and all around us, all the way up.

19 I am for 8a and 8, either one there's not

20 much difference in either one. That's going to take

21 the least amount of money, the shortest amount of time,
22 makes more sense than any of the rest of them, it's not
23 going to affect the environment that much, and as far
24 as I'm concerned, I feel like it would probably be on
25 the docket to start quicker than any of the other

1 options, period.

2 MR. JOE HUSKEY: I would like to see a road
3 built but I may live to see the dust from the first
4 blasting that's done, and I may not. I hope to live a
5 while but I do not anticipate the road being finished
6 in the next two or three years. It's going to be a
7 while even if they started tomorrow. It would take a
8 long time to build a road. So I'm not an expert in
9 building roads, I'm a chemical engineer, not a road
10 engineer, but when the road does get built, and even
11 before then, I hope we can start working on the
12 education system. I don't know if you're asking for
13 that or not but anyway that's my comment.

14 MR. T. E. OVERSON: Corridor 8 looks like it
15 might work, it's the least disruptive of the whole
16 mountain situation and it's too bad they can't hire
17 more local people to work on this project. I guess
18 that's it.

19 MR. R. K. CAMPBELL: In looking over these
20 various options, to me, it looks like Option 8 or 8a

21 would be the most logical thing to do and easiest thing
22 to do, not that I know anything about it, but from
23 talking to people, that looks like a pretty good
24 option. But this area definitely needs a reliable
25 transportation network and the existing highway doesn't

1 seem to fulfill that need. Maybe if we had a better
2 highway system up here we would get more industry in
3 here which is badly needed. And I guess that's about
4 all I have to say.

5 MR. GREG TAYLOR: I'd just like to say we are
6 definitely for the road. We need something done. I've
7 been traveling this road since 1985 and have seen
8 numerous accidents, have had numerous delays, not to
9 mention the expense of having to go around it when they
10 do have a problem.

11 I'm definitely for the route, either Option 8
12 or 8a. I think, economically, that would be the best
13 route to go as far as the amount of money that it would
14 cost. As far as accidents -- my mom and sister had a
15 wreck and ended up in the river, luckily they were
16 okay, but they did have a wreck on that river.

17 I live in the Copper Basin area but I have a
18 business in the Ocoee region, with the delays it does
19 affect our business as far as how quickly we can get to
20 somebody. We're a 24 hour a day 7 days a week

21 business -- medical. So that's one reason we think we
22 need Corridor K for sure. That's probably about it.

23 MR. U. H. TAYLOR JR.: To begin with, we need
24 a road and we need it bad. I'm 70 years old and I
25 don't know how many people I've seen killed on that

1 river that's -- that's dear to people's heart, you
2 know, unless you've lost a loved one, and like my son
3 just said, my wife and daughter could have been in that
4 list.

5 And we have a lot of people that live up here
6 that commute and some of them goes as far as
7 Chattanooga, Dalton, around like that and since this
8 slide, the delay has been anywhere from an hour to an
9 hour and a half added on to what they usually travel.

10 And it's so expensive, I know, I drive it. I work part
11 time for my son, but I drive it two weeks out of each
12 month and it is extremely expensive and the danger is
13 even more so because the roads are crooked on the
14 detour we have to go.

15 Just like this morning there was a wreck and
16 we had to even detour even more and go through a part
17 of the mountain where it still had ice about a inch
18 deep on it -- that was just this morning.

19 And I prefer 8 and 8a that's what I think
20 would be the most cost effective. It would be the

21 better of any route we've got, and it would use some of
22 the existing roads that we already have as a
23 ride-of-way. I think it would serve our Copper Basin
24 because if we don't get a road, we're just one good
25 rock slide away from shutting that down -- that road

1 permanently because if it falls into the mountain on
2 other side, it's going to land in the river and we'll
3 have another dam in that river that will be there from
4 now on. I guess that's about all I've got to say.

5 MS. PEGGY BLANCHE: We would definitely like
6 an alternative route for the safety of the children and
7 families traveling up through that area.

8 MR. RICHARD SCOTT: We've reviewed the
9 plans -- my wife, Patricia, and I and we were kind of
10 partial to Option Number 7, because it includes an
11 element of four-lane capacity, though I understand the
12 studies indicate Option 8 and 8a -- the two-lane
13 options are viable and will meet the capacity needs for
14 the near term future. I really think if they are going
15 to spend the money, that the section of the road that
16 goes around gorge should be four-lane in capacity not
17 two-lane. Look -- that -- it would need -- look into
18 the future for the added capacity that they would need.

19 And if we're going to spend all this money,
20 we should have a road that's going to last us 50 to 100

21 years not a road that's going to last us 15 years.

22 So we think Option 7 is the best option on

23 the table. We are a bit concerned about the timetable

24 for this project because it takes so long to bring us

25 some relief -- 2013 for the studies to be complete. It

1 would be adventitious for our community if some way
2 could be found to expedite this process and get actual
3 work on the road started earlier than the plan
4 currently calls for. Hurry up we need a road now, not
5 in 2020.

6 Thank you very much.

7 MR. DAVID BECKLER: I want a road down 64. I
8 don't really care -- the only thing that I'm concerned
9 about -- if I were doing it myself, I would -- at
10 Munde (phonetic) bluff, I would make it wider.

11 MS. JODI ALVERSON: Our biggest comment is,
12 why isn't it already done? Yeah, I know it takes time.

13 We like some of the proposals as far as, you
14 know, making sure we go ahead and get a road. I like
15 the fact that we are going to keep it fairly close to
16 the main road, but off of it a little bit more.

17 One of the concerns that I had is, instead
18 this dip -- I don't know what one it is, I don't have
19 my glasses on -- instead of this dip, it seems like it
20 would be better if it was a little bit more straight.

21 At that 8a point over there, the one that was a
22 chart -- (indicating) on that 8a chart -- that you can
23 get up over the ridge top a little bit more so
24 that's -- I like that particular part.
25 I wonder, is there a way we can speed up the

1 process a little bit, especially since we're in a --
2 almost an emergency situation here as far as having
3 access to medical care, visiting families, and so forth
4 like that?

5 And I know there's certain time frames you
6 have to follow, but is there a way that we might could
7 get special permission to speed it up somehow, someway?
8 We've got businesses starting in Chattanooga, we've got
9 people who come from North Carolina -- because we live
10 in North Carolina -- who would come from North Carolina
11 to Tennessee to work. People have done it for many,
12 many years. And we've got people who are being
13 hindered, we've got families being affected and we've
14 got to do something but waiting for four years to get
15 started on it is not acceptable.

16 MR. DAVID ALVERSON: That's going to leave
17 all this area and Western North Carolina out of the
18 Volkswagen bonanza. It's going to be a done deal by
19 the time we get anything out of it. We just need to be
20 able to get from Ducktown to Cleveland.

21 MS. JODI ALVERSON: We would just like to see
22 it speeded up, if at all possible.

23 MR. TOM SATTERFIELD: I favor the one that
24 actually goes around the dam, that would be -- I like
25 the Option 8 until it gets down to here (indicating).

1 I like Option 4.

2 MR. TIM GARRISON: I'm probably with him

3 then, on 4, where it goes up around Lakeman (phonetic)

4 Dam and it comes back in there above the Whitewater

5 Center. Thank you.

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STATE OF TENNESSEE
COUNTY OF MEIGS:

I, Alisha J. Armour, 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
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.

This _____ day of _____, 2010.

Alisha J. Armour
Court Reporter and Notary Public

My commission expires:

September 10, 2010

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