
SOUTHERN EXTENSION OF SR 186/US 45 BYPASS

NEPA PUBLIC HEARING

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2018

4:30 TO 6:30 P.M.

SOUTH JACKSON COMMUNITY CENTER

412 HIGHWAY 18

JACKSON, TENNESSEE

NICHOLE LAWRENCE: My name is Nichole Lawrence. I'm the community relations officer for the Department of Transportation here in West Tennessee. We do cover 21 counties, with Jackson-Madison County, of course, being one of them. On behalf of Governor Haslam and Commissioner John Schroer, I would like to welcome you all here to discuss the southern bypass part of Jackson.

We would also like to recognize a few special guests. I know we have Mayor Connie Mullins here; Mayor Jerry Gist; Vice Mayor, Vicki Foote; as well as Madison County Mayor, Jimmy Harris; and State Representative Johnny Shaw. We appreciate your support and you being here.

Like I said, tonight's public meeting is on the southern bypass. If you have any questions on the State Route 18, I think that's going to be a separate meeting. We might could answer some general questions. We do have representatives from our TDOT right-of-way office, project development

office, and our main office, as well as our designers and our friends from Gresham Smith, who I'm going to turn it over to now.

MARK HOLLORAN: Thank you, Nichole. Thank you to everyone for coming out tonight. We really appreciate your time to come out and hear this presentation and look at all the material that we have laid out for this project.

The purpose of this meeting is really three-fold. It's to give you an update on the project status. I don't know if many of you came to some of the earlier meetings that were several years ago now. Did anybody come to one of those? Oh, great. We're going to give you an update on the project to this point. We're going to show you the proposed alignment. Those are all displayed here on the boards or on the table.

What we want to do is also get some input from you. On the northern end of the project there are some alternate alignments. The last part is we'll give you the opportunity to ask questions. For sure,

if you have comments, you've got multiple ways to give us those, either by written comment or verbal comments over to the court reporter.

This is the project location here in south Jackson. It encompasses the end of the bypass and 45 South. A little bit of project history. It began in 2005. There was a congressional earmark that was passed in Congress for a southern bypass. In 2009, we went through what's called a transportation planning report process of looking at the project and looking at multiple alignments. We proceeded forward and got to the stage of completing an environmental document called an environmental assessment. That document was approved by Federal Highway. At that point, the project stopped because there was no funding that had been dedicated yet for the project to move forward from there.

In 2017, you all know that the IMPROVE Act was passed. With that, the Department assigned funding from that to this

project, which started the project back up again. That required -- in order to start back up because it had been a while since the environmental document had been approved -- that we had to go through and do what's called a reevaluation of the NEPA document. So that's the process we're going through now, and this public meeting is part of that process.

Needs that were identified in the environmental document for the needs for this project included that there are inadequate crossings of the South Fork of the Forked Deer River from Jackson down to south Jackson. I think that became evident to most everyone during some of the issues of the tornadoes and emergency vehicles not being able to get from north to south or south to north. There are safety issues that are on the bypass and US 45, specifically talking about accidents and those type of things, with the amount of traffic that is on there.

This project will improve the system linkage and will accommodate the

present and future traffic, the projected traffic, in how it will carry a lot of the traffic from the bypass and take it off of 45. Coming to the south, this will add a way for infrastructure to grow and further economic development. It does fulfill the mandate that came from that earmark that I mentioned to start with.

The project description, so you can see the full length of it, starts at US 45 at the south there. Everybody knows where 18 ties out here just north of that. It goes all the way up around Bemis and heads up north. When you get to the north, that's where I mentioned before about having two alternatives in the north section there. When you get to the tables, you can look and see those. Basically one follows Riverside Drive and goes up beside Riverside Cemetery and then turns and lines back up with the bypass. The other, instead of going further up Riverside, will turn and parallel the river and tie into the bypass where it makes the turn to go toward town. That's generally

where it is. The total length of everything, including the State Route 18 extension that's shown, is almost seven miles total.

This is a typical section for part of the roadway, part of the length. From 45 to the south to about Boone Lane, it will be a four-lane divided highway with a grass median. When you get further past Boone, the cross section narrows as it goes into the floodplain area. So it will be, again, a four-lane section with a median, raised median. So that will still be a four-lane section all the way through there.

This will be similar to the other section of 45 Bypass in that it will be a limited access facility. In other words, driveways will not come out onto the bypass. So these are the proposed locations where you would be able to access the bypass through some of the existing. You can see those. Again, when you get to the tables, you'll be able to look and actually see how those are laid out.

Now Sandy is going to come up and

she's going to lead you through the studies and everything that have been done in the environmental document.

SANDY LAYNE-SCLAFANI: I'm Sandy Sclafani with Gresham Smith. I have been working on this project since 2010. We started out with environmental studies. As you can see here, I have a list of studies: ecology, archeology, history, architecture, traffic, relocations, air quality. This is just a partial list. We've done many more studies. We did farmland impact. So we really took a look at the project and the alignment, and then for the reevaluation, which was just signed in 2018, we looked at all of those studies again and brought them up to date. Federal Highway signed off on the reevaluation.

As you can see here some of you might even be in the picture. We have a couple of people that are with us that are in the picture. We had two meetings here. We had two public meetings. We had one in early 2010 and then one in late 2010. As you can

see, they were very well attended. We had over 200 at one of the meetings.

Then what's next for this? Well, after this meeting, we'll take your comments and then we're going to prepare a document that will have the selection of the preferred alternative. As Mark talked about, we still have two optional alignments on the north end of the project. So please put that on the comment card if you have a preference. Then we will complete it. We'll add your comments into a final environmental document. We'll complete the document. We're hoping to have it complete by the end of this year. Then we'll go into the design phase, right-of-way phase, and construction phase.

We do know that right-of-way is programmed for fiscal year 2021, so that's the only other hard date we have on that. Then when you're looking at what we have on the tables, remember the lines that we're showing on the table are the study, the environmental study, alignment. It's a larger corridor than actually what would be

the design. That larger corridor is what we study, and then the design fits into that corridor. So there will be some weaving in there. So if you see something and you think the line is right on top of your house, that might not necessarily be true because the design will be much smaller than the corridor that's shown on there.

Again, as Mark said, your comments are very important to us. You know, please fill out your comment cards. We have a box at the table. When you're leaving, you can put them in there. You can take them home. They have the address to mail them to. Just put a stamp on them, fold them up or staple them or tape them, and put them in the mail. We have a court reporter right here. Whatever you say to her will be part of the record, as well as whatever you put on the comment cards will be part of the environmental record for the final document.

We need to get those back. If you put them in the mail, we need to get them back by October 11th, in 21 days, to be part

of the record. Here we have some contact information. We have Chris with the City of Jackson and Tabitha with TDOT. Then also this web page address here is on the handout that we gave you.

If you'd like to take a look at the environmental document, I think it's about 1,600 pages. Then we have the reevaluation, which is probably just as much as that as well. They're on there. Please take a look at them. You know, visit our tables around the room. We're here at the tables to answer any questions that you have. We have quite a few people here. You see the name tag I have on, the name tags. We're here to answer any questions. There are people with TDOT name tags on. So any of us can answer any questions that you have. I would just like to thank you all for coming.

MARK HOLLORAN: With that, we're going to break up out to the tables. Again, if you see somebody with a name tag, you can ask a question of them. Thank you again for coming. We appreciate it.

-COMMENTS TO COURT REPORTER-

BILLY ARD: My comment is on the northern part of the bypass. I feel like the outer extension would be the best bet. I feel like that would probably be much cheaper on the state. They're cutting into a lot businesses right there by JEA.

DOROTHY MANESS: I'm proud they're going to get this done. I thought it had been lost. I'd never heard no more on it. I'm for it. I like the idea of the one starting at Airways, you know, that one there. I think it would be more feasible. I'm just glad it's going to go ahead, I hope, and I vote for it.

RONNIE MANESS: We're both for it. I just wish it had happened sooner.

-COURT REPORTER CERTIFICATE-

I, CHARLOTTE R. JAQUET, LCR, CCR,
being a duly licensed court reporter in the
state of Tennessee, do hereby certify that
the preceding is a true and accurate
transcription of the Tennessee Department of
Transportation public hearing on September
20, 2018.

So certified on the 24th day of
September, 2018.

Charlotte R. Jaquet

CHARLOTTE R. JAQUET, LCR, CCR

Tennessee LCR #005 Expires: 6/30/2020