

Tennessee Department of Transportation

PUBLIC MEETING

May 09, 2019



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TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
PUBLIC MEETING

WASHINGTON COUNTY
I-26 CORRIDOR STUDY

May 9, 2019
Memorial Park Community Center
510 Bert Street
Johnson City, Tennessee

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Elite Reporting Services
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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. EBBERT: Thank you all so much for being here tonight. My name is Troy Ebbert. I'm the Region 1 Supervisor for Long-Range Planning and Office of Community Transportation.

I get to work with the MPOs quite a bit, I get to work with the RPOs, I get to work with a lot of the city managers.

My question here, real quick, as we get started -- again, I'm really tickled y'all are here tonight -- I'd like to recognize the elected officials. If you are an elected official and are here, could you please stand and introduce yourself and your jurisdiction.

MS. BROCK: Jenny Brock, Mayor of
Johnson City. I'm from the Kingsport area.

MR. MCINTIRE: Mike McIntire, Vice Mayor
of Kingsport, and Chair of the Kingsport MTPO.

MR. EBBERT: All right. Any other
elected officials here that want to be recognized?

Thank you-all so much for being here,
Mayor and Vice Mayor. This starts with you-all, and
then it's going to bleed down from you-all and it

1 comes to your staff. It goes from the staff, and it
2 goes down to the public. And we need to get this
3 information out.

4 We have Assistant Public Works Directors
5 here. We have consultants here. We have TDOT folks
6 here. We have our RPO coordinator here with the
7 Development District. There are a lot of really
8 good staff people here in addition to the public.

9 We need this information from you-all.
10 So here in just a few minutes, what I'm going to do
11 is, I'm going to start introducing some of our
12 consultant team that's helping us with what we're
13 working on on our plan. They'll go through, they'll
14 explain what each one of these stations are, and
15 give you some more information.

16 If there are any times that you-all are
17 going to speak or would like to say anything, we do
18 have a court reporter up here, whose name is
19 Jennifer. Please state your name so we can get it
20 on record and record your comments accurately.

21 In addition to that, we have comment
22 cards that you can fill out, you can take them with
23 you. We have cards you can do online as far as the
24 online survey.

25 Or if would like to sit down and talk to

1 Jennifer here in a little bit, she will write down
2 every word that you want to put down and it will
3 become official public record. And that's the kind
4 of information that we need to make these kind of
5 decisions.

6 When we post this information on
7 Facebook, it's great. People will go on and make
8 comments. Those comments don't ever get to us. You
9 have to take the survey or talk to Jennifer. Okay?

10 Quickly, before we get started, as far
11 as restrooms, if you go out the door, down the hall,
12 that's where the restrooms are, as far as
13 housekeeping goes.

14 This is going to be kind of an informal
15 event once we get done, after Matt gets done with
16 his information.

17 And again, if you do have anything that
18 you would like to say, we need your name -- and
19 I will probably remind you, What's your name? And
20 Jennifer needs to know, even though I know your
21 name, so we can get that information on record.

22 But again, thank you so much for that.
23 I'm going to go ahead and introduce Matt Maservy.
24 Matt is with AECOM. They are the lead consultant on
25 this little project that we're working on.

1 MR. MASERVY: Okay. Thank you, Troy.

2 Welcome, everybody. I'm glad we have
3 such a large audience. I'm very happy that this
4 means something to the folks here in East Tennessee;
5 Johnson City, in specifically.

6 Before I get started, I'd like to
7 introduce the rest of the consultant team that's
8 here to help you-all out today. So if you could,
9 say your name in the back and what company you're
10 with, and your role in this as well.

11 MS. DUGARD: Good evening. Perri
12 duGard, Owens-duGard Communications. We are helping
13 with Public Outreach Community Relations. And see
14 you later.

15 MR. ELLIOTT: Preston Elliott, API.
16 We're helping out on the project as well.

17 MS. GEOTHERT: Leisel Geothert, with API
18 as well.

19 MR. PINNOCK: Van Pinnock, with duGard
20 Communications and Public Outreach Community
21 Relations.

22 MR. MASERVY: Again, I appreciate that.
23 We do have some folks from the OCT group other than
24 Troy.

25 Could you say your name too, please?

1 MS. CHRISTIAN: Yeah. I'm Michelle
2 Christian. I'm with the Office of Community
3 Transportation out of Knoxville.

4 MR. MASERVY: Okay. Great.

5 Okay. So I want to make this as short
6 and sweet as possible. Can you hear me or do I need
7 the microphone? I've got a booming voice. I should
8 be okay. Okay. But if not, I'll speak up into it.

9 Some of the things we're going to cover
10 today, it's all going to lead to why all these
11 boards are out here. So if you don't mind, we'll
12 just get started. I want to give you as much time
13 as possible for you to go out and look around and
14 provide that input that we're looking for.

15 So again, what is the purpose of these
16 studies? Well, as everybody knows, interstate
17 corridors are pretty important when it comes to the
18 mobility of moving people, goods, and services.

19 So what corridor planning does, is we
20 try to forecast deficiencies -- or we forecast
21 population employment, look for deficiencies, both
22 now and in the future, and try to find ways that we
23 can to fix these problems before they actually
24 become problems. So that's corridor planning in a
25 nutshell.

1 The corridors that we are focusing on as
2 this team, this study, is comprised of four
3 different interstate corridors.

4 As you know, today we're in Johnson
5 City, East Tennessee, for the I-26 corridor.

6 Last week we were in Knoxville to do the
7 public meeting for the I-75 corridor.

8 Next week we'll be in Memphis to do 55.

9 And then in June -- we're going to take
10 a little break, come back in June and go to
11 Northwest Tennessee to look at the 155 corridor --
12 yeah, the 155 corridor.

13 Again, all of these have economic
14 impacts. We want to make sure that these
15 interstates and the corridors are running as
16 efficiently as possible and as safely as possible.
17 So it is important to make sure that all of these
18 corridors are studied at periodic times throughout
19 their life.

20 So again, I-26. The study area for I-26
21 is four counties that, as you can see here, comprise
22 the corridor. I-26 runs from North Carolina to the
23 south, all the way up to almost Virginia where I-26
24 stops, and then US-23 continues through Virginia.
25 So that corridor is what we're here to concentrate

1 on because everybody lives around here.

2 If you do have comments about the other
3 corridors, you're more than welcome to make those,
4 but we don't have the boards set up for that.

5 Although, Jennifer could take those
6 comments for you, and we could get those back. The
7 survey and the comment cards would also be as
8 effective.

9 Okay. So what have we been doing since
10 this meeting started? So we actually started this
11 meeting -- or we started this study in October of
12 2018, so we're about seven months into the study.

13 We've been collecting a lot of data,
14 we've been analyzing some of that data up to this
15 point, getting it ready. And that's what you'll see
16 across the room here, is some of the stuff that
17 we've started to notice as far as deficiencies and
18 other items of note.

19 So as you can see, we're kind of --
20 we're almost to the middle of this study as far as
21 the timeline goes. We're sitting here at the first
22 open house. Where, again, thank for coming to
23 provide that input.

24 You'll probably see us later this fall,
25 where we come back and talk about some of the

1 solutions that we've uncovered based on the input
2 that you've given us.

3 You can see we're at Task 2 right now.
4 Task 3 will start the Solutions. So everything that
5 you help us with will be incorporated into that and
6 helping make decisions.

7 We've also been meeting on a periodic
8 basis with some of the advisory board -- or the
9 advisory committee members, and we do have some of
10 these people in the room today. We've got Kingsport
11 and Johnson City and TPOs here to help with that.
12 And they help us direct some of the ways that we
13 come out and discuss this stuff to the general
14 public.

15 So again, we appreciate all the help.
16 And this does take a lot of work from all parties.
17 So again, we thank you.

18 Some of the outcomes in this study.
19 Well, we're sitting here in Step 1, where we're
20 still looking at some of the existing deficiencies
21 and the future forecast to help determine those
22 deficiencies. We'll turn that into goals and
23 objectives once we collect that information, develop
24 some performance measures to help us figure out
25 whether or not the improvements are working

1 properly, develop some of those solutions a little
2 bit further, refine them.

3 And then talk about prioritizing these
4 projects through a screening process, which looks at
5 things like how much will the project cost, what
6 will be the benefit to cost, or what's the best bang
7 for the buck with that project, if it fits within
8 that ratio. Whether or not the potential economic
9 impacts are positive or negative, as well as the
10 environmental impacts.

11 So we look at all that type of stuff to
12 develop a list that we would use as the ultimate
13 goal for this study. And then that would be given
14 to TDOT, and TDOT would take that and try to
15 incorporate some of these into their plans as they
16 move forward.

17 Okay. So why are you-all here? Well,
18 that's what we wanted to talk about. So I'm going
19 to talk a little bit about what our stations are
20 right now through these slides, and help you
21 determine what would be the station that you'd like
22 to visit.

23 So we're looking at our first station
24 over here, which is our -- I'm sorry, the one in the
25 back, which is our population and employment

1 section -- or station.

2 As you can see, based on our data we've
3 been collecting -- or we've been noticing that there
4 are some substantial growths in population and in
5 employment. Do you see these purple-shaded areas
6 are showing where it's forecasted that a thousand
7 people or more are expected to be located in those
8 areas from 2010 to 2014? So in the next -- well,
9 almost the next 20 years, based on that.

10 And same as employment. You can see how
11 employment's starting to grow along that corridor.
12 So it's becoming more and more apparent that jobs
13 along this corridor need to be moved efficiently,
14 based on that.

15 But again, this is based on model
16 results. You are the folks that use this area a lot
17 more than any of the people on the study team. So
18 we'd like to get your input on that, which is why
19 our Station 1 is set up to help us figure out how
20 you use I-26 on a regular basis.

21 And when we disburse and get into that
22 station, there'll be directions on what we do, but
23 we're actually looking to find out where do you live
24 and where you work or what are some of the more
25 significant destinations that you use I-26 for?

1 That's the first exercise.

2 Then we get into the congestion and
3 safety issue, which is this station up here at the
4 front.

5 Again, model predictions are showing
6 that -- base-year congestion is not necessarily a
7 problem yet. But again, congestion's relative, so I
8 understand that.

9 But as far as the volume to capacity,
10 which means the ability for that facility to hold
11 the amount of traffic that's being on that system,
12 you're doing okay on that. So there's capacity for
13 it.

14 When you go into 2040, you see that this
15 section between Johnson City and Kingsport is
16 starting to get a little more congested, but it's
17 still at a point where it's manageable by capacity.

18 Again, this is model-based,
19 forecast-based. I think you-all would have a much
20 better opinion of where congestion is happening on a
21 regular basis.

22 Again, we've got recurring congestion,
23 which is basically everyday congestion. And then
24 there's the non-recurring, which is crash incidents,
25 where lanes are closed or the entire facility is

1 closed, creating a backup for that.

2 And speaking of that, five years' worth
3 of crash data has started to uncover that 58 percent
4 of I-26 has crash rates that are at or above
5 statewide averages. So there is a little concern
6 that -- especially down here in the mountainous
7 areas -- that there is a safety issue.

8 Preston, I think it was you that said
9 that 80 percent of the crashes that were reported --
10 is it the severe crashes or the --

11 MR. ELLIOTT: Well, it's like
12 90-something in the -- you're talking about in the
13 dark conditions?

14 MR. MASERVY: Right. Well, it's the
15 single vehicle.

16 MR. ELLIOTT: Oh, single -- oh yeah, 80,
17 yes.

18 MR. MASERVY: 80 percent are
19 single-vehicle incidents, so they're not interacting
20 with anything else other than the road.

21 So is it -- we'd like to know. Is it a
22 geometry issue? Is it something that is unsafe when
23 it comes to weather-related? Those are the type --
24 that's the type of input that we're looking at -- or
25 we're looking for you to provide us so we can help

1 justify the statistics.

2 So that -- again, Station 2 is the
3 congestion and safety. This is probably, more than
4 likely, would be the most populated ones of the
5 stations. But we'd like you to help us identify
6 some of the unsafe or congested conditions
7 throughout the I-26 corridor.

8 Okay. And lastly, our station in the
9 back, I don't know if you-all noticed, but the slide
10 title is Multimodal Corridor Study. So we're
11 looking at things other than just the car and how we
12 can incorporate mobility using other modes of
13 transportation.

14 Essentially, we want to be able to
15 provide a choice for somebody to use. It doesn't
16 have to -- we're not directing anybody into any
17 particular mode, but we want to give them the
18 ability to choose which way they want to make their
19 trip, whether it's by car, bus, you know, Uber,
20 Lyft, anything like that.

21 So like this slide right here shows some
22 of the transit agencies in the vicinity, and the
23 colors show the outline of their boundaries. And
24 you can see how that compares to some of these
25 greater-shaded areas that look at the employment

1 concentrations.

2 So is there a disconnect there? We'd
3 like to know if there's a need for you-all to want
4 to incorporate better multimodal options and --
5 whether it's a regional transit. If there's
6 something that you'd like to do to go from Johnson
7 City to Kingsport or from Johnson City to Bristol,
8 we'd like to hear these things.

9 Bike, are there any avid bikers in the
10 crowd right now? Do you feel safe? Anything that
11 would help with some of the regional movement
12 device. Do you think a carpool or vanpool service
13 would work in this area? Again, we'd like to hear
14 all of that type of opinion on what you think is
15 out there.

16 Park and ride locations; anything that
17 you think would be a good location for a park and
18 ride lot.

19 So again, that's what it is.

20 Opportunities, how you can get involved
21 in this study. Well, one of them is you being here.

22 So over to the right, you see the public
23 meetings? That's this.

24 We have other options -- and you-all
25 should have received a small card, like a baseball

1 card style --

2 Are they out there?

3 Okay. When you leave, there will be a
4 card that you can take with you that has information
5 on how to access the project website, how you can
6 answer the online survey, if you haven't already
7 done.

8 We've heard from TDOT that the response
9 from the survey already has been tremendous in East
10 Tennessee. I sound like Trump, tremendous.

11 But there's been a large concentration
12 of people that have already responded to the survey
13 for the I-26 corridor. So if any of you have
14 already done that, I applaud you for that. If you
15 haven't, then you can be part of that mass to do
16 that.

17 Because again, the more we get from
18 you-all as far as comments, the better the study can
19 become and your project or your solution.

20 So the last thing is an interactive map.
21 There will be an opportunity in the coming weeks for
22 you to go onto the TDOT project website. Click on
23 the interactive map, zoom into a location, and click
24 a point, and write your own comment of what you
25 think the problem is and how you maybe could be the

1 solution to it.

2 So there's multiple ways to do that.
3 For today, as Troy said, there's a chance to talk to
4 the reporter to make your comments official public
5 record. You can speak to any member of the project
6 team wearing the nametags. We have comment sheets
7 in the back that you can fill out.

8 If you don't want to do anything -- yep,
9 right there. If you don't have any comments yet,
10 you can take that home with you --

11 MR. EBBERT: And mail it back to us.

12 MR. MASERVY: -- mail it back. Or you
13 can drop it in the box in the back. Or you can go
14 to -- again, to the website and take the survey.

15 So with that, I'm going to hand it back
16 over to Troy, and then he will excuse you-all to the
17 stations. So I appreciate your time. Thank you.

18 MR. EBBERT: So what Matt was saying is,
19 we do have these cards that are in the back. Please
20 take one with you if you don't want to do it here.
21 If you have someone at home who has the answer, that
22 doesn't have a computer, you can mail it right back
23 to us.

24 These are the cards they're talking
25 about. I know you-all have friends. Take them with

1 you. Take the survey. Give it to somebody else.

2 See how many people you can get to take these

3 surveys so we can get that information.

4 And, please, we need to make sure
5 that -- there are the clipboards outside of the
6 fence, please sign up so that we know you were here,
7 we have an idea of who was here, and some
8 information as well.

9 With that being said --

10 MR. MASERVY: Hold on one moment.

11 I forget to mention that there is a fourth exercise
12 as you leave out in the hallway. It's a way of --
13 you're leaving your last mark at this meeting.

14 One of the questions is, if you had the
15 ability to create a project today and have it on the
16 ground, what would that be? And the other one is
17 more about choosing what your desired mode would be.

18 So again, as you leave, there will be a
19 couple others out there that you can check out.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Question: Does
21 any of the DOT people here tell me how much that
22 it -- cars per day, surveys on I-26 and close to 36,
23 how many cars a day run --

24 MR. EBBERT: I-26 at Boone's Creek,
25 yeah, 64-ish thousand.

1 Do you know what 36 is running?

2 MR. ELLIOTT: Do not.

3 MR. EBBERT: Okay. We can pull it up,
4 but I don't have that.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. Deadline
6 for survey responses?

7 MR. MASERVY: We're going to let it ride
8 until it starts to trickle out, you know, as --

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What if we
10 procrastinate?

11 MR. MASERVY: I'm sorry? I would not
12 procrastinate.

13 It's going to stay open at least through
14 June, because we want to make sure that everybody --
15 all these other corridors that we have to visit have
16 a chance to respond.

17 So the first question on the survey is,
18 Which corridor are you interested in? And then you
19 go from there. So it'll go through at least
20 June 13th. But I would guess we'd let it go at
21 least through June; end of June, at the minimum.

22 MR. EBBERT: Sounds good. Anything
23 else?

24 All right. We'll let you go ahead
25 and -- Staff, go ahead and go to the points where

1 you're going to be, and we'll be here to be able to
2 answer those questions and work our way through.

3 Thank you-all very much.

4 * * *

5
6 PUBLIC COMMENTS

7
8 MR. MANLEY: Matthew Manley, 172 East
9 Highland Road, Johnson City 37601. I actually live
10 on the street that crosses that -- an overpass,
11 right over I-26.

12 All right. So I guess there's three
13 main topics that I'd like to touch on.

14 The multimodal aspect of this, I would
15 love to see rail or a successful mass transit
16 option. I am a bicycle advocate, and a big
17 proponent of creating opportunities to commute by
18 bicycle, though I don't know how that could really
19 tie into the interstate project.

20 But I do want that to be on the record,
21 that if there's any opportunities for, you know,
22 enhancing people's opportunity to connect to
23 different destinations by bicycle, then that would
24 be -- I'm all for it.

25 Next topic is maintenance of I-26

1 right-of-way. There's a lot of vegetation that's
2 overgrown, a lot of litter, and it creates pockets
3 of either places for people to sleep and homeless
4 camps. And it hurts our neighborhoods when the
5 places just fester in their own maintaining.

6 And so putting more effort toward
7 maintaining the right-of-way would be really helpful
8 for our community.

9 And under that same topic, making design
10 improvements to bridges that also discourage
11 negative behavior, drug use, drinking, littering,
12 loitering, camping. All that is taking place right
13 in our neighborhoods under some of these bridges.

14 I have no problem with people sleeping
15 under a bridge, but when they start -- when their
16 actions start to interfere with my rights and I feel
17 unsafe and make me feel unsafe, then it becomes an
18 issue and it needs to be addressed.

19 And I think that's a design issue. It's
20 not a law enforcement issue, it's a design issue.

21 And then a project for Johnson City that
22 I think would be very beneficial is moving the
23 downtown exit from Market Street and Main Street
24 over to State of Franklin Road. That would allow
25 the state route to be moved from being Main Street

1 to the State of Franklin.

2 And it would just improve economic
3 opportunities, how people who are traveling through
4 on the I-26 corridor can access downtown. We have a
5 lot of issues with downtown. We're chipping away at
6 them, and things are starting to happen and things
7 are getting better.

8 The market is responding, but our access
9 and automobile flow between the interstate and how
10 it interfaces the downtown needs to be improved.
11 And I think putting the exit and entrance ramp onto
12 State of Franklin is the key to that.

13 I think that's it.

14 * * *

15 MR. HERRIN: Erick Herrin, 806 North
16 Mountain View Circle, Johnson City 37601.

17 My comment is that the interstate coming
18 through Johnson City cuts through several
19 residential areas. And there would be -- and with
20 the increase in traffic, especially truck traffic,
21 the noise level is noticeable.

22 What I have seen that I'd like to see
23 put in are sound barriers. And there's some really
24 nice-appearing sound barriers in Nashville,
25 Knoxville, and especially up in Virginia, as you

1 approach Roanoke or maybe -- maybe more near
2 Christiansburg, Virginia. There's some really
3 top-shelf, nice-looking sound barriers on those
4 interstates. So I would like to encourage that.

5 Thank you.

6 * * *

7 MS. OLSEN: Natalie Olsen. I live near
8 I-26. And depending on the traffic volume and
9 weather conditions, the noise is either background
10 noise or intrusive, and I would not like it to be
11 any more intrusive. That's it.

12 * * *

13 MR. MINER: Chase Miner. As both the
14 RPO Coordinator and then also the Planner for the
15 town of Unicoi and the town of Erwin, I'm very
16 interested in seeing what opportunities we can
17 create with the creation of an alternative fuel
18 corridor in the I-26 and I-81 region.

19 But with I-26, there's an opportunity
20 for creating electric vehicle charging stations
21 through partnerships, both with state, local, and
22 private partners, to put in electric vehicle
23 charging stations in both those towns of Unicoi and
24 Erwin.

25 And I'd like to explore those

1 opportunities. I think it's important for us to be
2 able to connect the dots with EV charging stations
3 throughout the country that are being put in right
4 now.

5 Specifically, the town of Unicoi has an
6 opportunity to put a DC Fast Charger, which is one
7 of the best chargers, stations to be created. The
8 infrastructure is there at the visitor's center and
9 I think it's an opportunity worth exploring.

10 * * *

11 MR. CARVER: George Carver, 709 Georgia
12 Street.

13 What I think would help on I 26 would be
14 to put in some longer merging lanes for the traffic
15 to pick up speed to get in the traffic flow.

16 Because congestion on the interstate, it's -- at
17 4:00 to 5:00 to 6:00 in the evening, it's really
18 congested and it's hard to get into the lanes to
19 merge onto the interstate because the merging lane's
20 too short to get the speed up -- well, not only the
21 speed, but getting into the traffic flow because of
22 the traffic condition that's on the interstate.

23 I believe that would help the interstate.

24 And probably need to look at maybe on
25 the decelerating lane, maybe making them longer

1 because -- well, at the Boone's Creek exit, because
2 it's -- the traffic -- the flow of traffic being
3 there is picking up tremendous.

4 And if they build that thing out there
5 that they're speaking of, building that shopping
6 center, it'll be more congested and for stopping
7 traffic to back up on the interstate.

8 I think those two things will help the
9 interstate some, but I think eventually we'll have
10 to put another lane in on both sides going.

11 Okay. That's it on that.

12 I have another issue. It's on Highway
13 11E at Tri-Cities Flea Market. There've been
14 several people killed there, coming in and out of
15 flea market -- going into -- coming out of the flea
16 market.

17 And I think there, if they would put a
18 turn lane coming from Bristol going towards Johnson
19 City on 11E and decelerating lane -- they don't have
20 a decelerating lane to turn off there, to turn into
21 the flea market. They have to stop out in the fast
22 lane of traffic.

23 And if they would just go ahead and go
24 all the way to the top of the hill and put in
25 merging lanes for the traffic coming out of the flea

1 market going to Johnson City, where it would pick up
2 speed all the way to the top of that hill to pick up
3 speed, to move that traffic out of there, it would
4 make it a lot safer.

5 And a merging lane going out of the flea
6 market to the bridge to move that traffic out of
7 there. There's several thousand cars that go in
8 there on the weekends. Plus they have car auctions
9 there on the -- through the weekday.

10 And then they have vans and trucks
11 coming out of there, trying to go up the hill. It's
12 really congested. There's been a number of
13 accidents there. Not only accidents, there've been
14 several people killed there.

15 Where the cars are coming down the hill,
16 they pick up 45 to 60 mile an hour where it
17 downgrades, just coasting.

18 Because I've come through and tested it.
19 You take off the gas pedal at the top of the hill
20 and back to the bottom, you're at 60 miles an hour,
21 just coasting.

22 And I think it would make it a safer
23 place up there, with all the public coming in and
24 out of the flea market.

25 * * *

1 MR. TAGGART: Ken Taggart. I live at
2 5631, but I also own 5764 and 5796 Fort Henry Drive.
3 All three of them front the highway. Johnson City.

4 One of the comments I got on I-26 --
5 most of mine are going to be for State Road 36
6 because it runs parallel and it's overflow for
7 I-26 -- something needs to be done with I-26.

8 Since they put the fence in the medians,
9 if there's an accident now and you pass Boone's
10 Creek going north, there's no way to get off until
11 you get to Gray, which is a good, what, 3 miles
12 maybe.

13 So if there's an accident there -- I've
14 gotten stuck three times there, one time for two
15 hours -- there's no way to turn around. There's no
16 way for the police to turn people around because
17 that fence is there. They can't U-turn people out
18 of there, so you're stuck.

19 Something needs to be done about that.
20 Put a break in the fence or somewhere where they can
21 let it -- you know, the cable, whatever, let it
22 down, where they can let people out of the accident
23 area.

24 That's basically my -- because most of
25 the accidents that happen on 26 for some reason

1 happen between Boone's Creek exit and the Gray exit.
2 It's like the devil's triangle of I-26. I'm
3 serious.

4 The other comments basically are
5 basically about 36, which -- Fort Henry Drive that
6 I live on. I'd like to know why the first
7 two-thirds of it out of Johnson City going towards
8 the interstate were finished up to Airport Road,
9 State Road 75, and were not finished.

10 I know they quit because of funding.
11 2008, the economy went bad, and they didn't have the
12 funding.

13 In 2017, when they got the sales tax
14 funding from the gas tax, we were, all of us,
15 expecting, that lived in that property -- or lived
16 in that 36 Highway, expected that the project was
17 going to be picked back up and finished.

18 Instead, other projects like 126, State
19 Road 126, Memorial Boulevard out of Kingsport, got
20 put in front of us, and so did 93 in Fall Branch.

21 We'd like to know why ours wasn't
22 finished. We've been told all kind of different
23 things. One of them was the moneys weren't there
24 first, but then when the money was there, they said
25 that these other projects were already in process.

1 They couldn't have been in more process
2 than ours. Ours was two-thirds done. So that
3 answer doesn't fly very well.

4 And the other thing is, is that we were
5 told that the reason that 93 was done in Fall Branch
6 was because it was an escape route when there was an
7 accident on 81. It was a way for the traffic to get
8 off. So is 36.

9 Every time there's an accident on
10 Interstate 81 or Interstate 26, they put them on 36.
11 All right?

12 And I've had traffic -- so then I've had
13 tractor-trailers blocking my driveway. I couldn't
14 even get out of my driveway because there's so much
15 traffic there when you're diverting all the -- and
16 that happens, you know, sometimes a couple times a
17 month.

18 And we want to know when it's going to
19 get finished. We kept getting -- you know, the
20 Kingsport MPO says it's Sullivan County's fault.
21 Sullivan County says it the MPO's fault. Or they'll
22 say it's the DOT's fault. And between the three of
23 them, we keep getting the fingers -- you know, the
24 ball keeps getting passed one to the other.

25 We'd like the governor or somebody to

1 step in and take control of this thing and get it
2 finished; whatever that is.

3 The project was supposed to have been
4 finished all the way to the interstate in 2007. It
5 is now 2019, and it hasn't even been started yet.
6 They say it's been started, but we haven't seen
7 anything. Twelve years after the fact, it's not
8 even done, not even started, and we'd like to know
9 why.

10 That's it. Thank you very much for
11 that. I appreciate it.

12 (END OF PUBLIC COMMENTS.)
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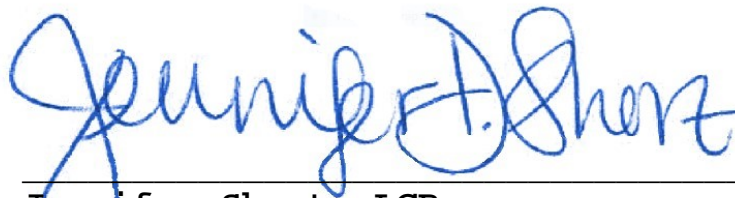
1 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

2 STATE OF TENNESSEE

3 COUNTY OF KNOX

4 I, Jennifer Short, Licensed Court
5 Reporter, with offices in Knoxville, Tennessee,
6 hereby certify that I reported the foregoing
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