

## From State Route 34 in Bulls Gap to the North of Speedwell Road/Old Highway 66, Hawkins County, TN, PIN 107579.00

### Public Meeting Handout

November 12, 2024 5:00-7:00 PM

Bulls Gap School

315 Allen Drive

Bulls Gap, Tennessee 37711

### Project Overview

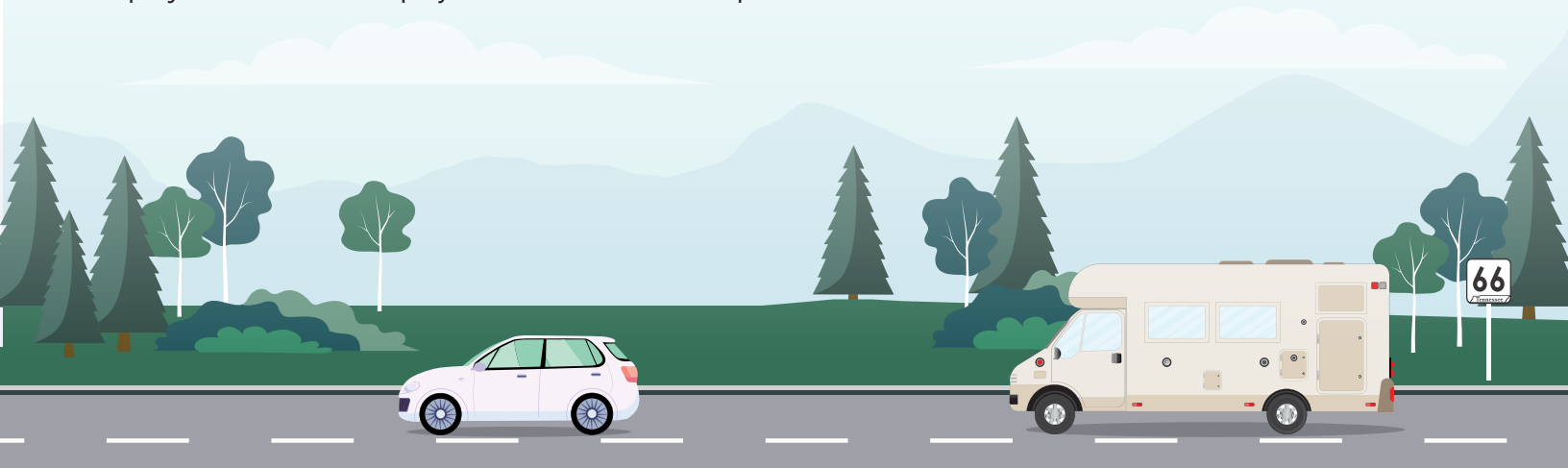
The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), proposes to widen and realign State Route (SR) 66 in Hawkins County from the intersection with SR-34 (US-11E, Andrew Johnson Highway) in Bulls Gap to north of the intersection with Speedwell Road/Old Highway 66. The proposed improvements would total approximately 5.70 miles in length.

Because the proposed project is being designed and constructed utilizing federal transportation dollars, the project is subject to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). TDOT and FHWA are preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) in accordance with the NEPA to identify and evaluate the environmental effects of the proposed project and to identify measures to minimize harm.

### Purpose Of Meeting

The purpose of this public meeting is to provide the public the opportunity to review and comment on the purpose and need for the proposed SR-66 project as well as the range of alternatives under consideration.

During the public meeting, project information will be delivered through a PowerPoint presentation followed by an open house where members of the TDOT project team will be available to discuss the project and review displays with members of the public.



## Project History

In 2006, TDOT completed a [Transportation Planning Report \(TPR\)](#)<sup>1</sup> which analyzed existing and projected traffic data and determined the feasibility of proposed improvements along SR-66 from SR-34 (US-11E) in Bulls Gap to the Otes Community in Hawkins County. The TPR evaluated improving approximately 5.3 -miles of the existing two-lane road to an upgraded two-lane facility which would match the roadway lane and shoulder width geometrics (two 12-foot lanes with 8-foot to 12-foot shoulders) of the section of SR-66 from the Otes Community to Rogersville.

Based on the 2006 TPR, the TDOT *2007-2009 Multi-Modal Work Program* identified this section of SR-66 as a substandard rural highway and provided the initial funding for the proposed project's planning, environmental, and preliminary engineering studies and processes. Four options (including the No-Build Option) were considered in the 2006 TPR as proposed improvements along SR-66. Option B would shift the alignment west of the existing SR-66 for approximately three miles and Option C would shift the alignment east of the existing SR-66 for approximately three miles. Option A proposed all improvements be concentrated along the existing SR-66 corridor. Option A was selected as the Build Alternative to be carried forward for NEPA review.

Subsequently, TDOT began development of a D-List Categorical Exclusion (CE) to document the potential impacts associated with the proposed improvements. However, due to the anticipated number of relocations associated with the proposed project, in 2024 it was determined by FHWA and TDOT to move the project forward as an Environmental Assessment.

## Preliminary Need for the Project

The preliminary need for the proposed SR-66 project has been identified as the following:

- » Geometric roadway deficiencies along existing SR-66 (curvature, limited shoulder, sight distance, etc.)
- » Insufficient system linkage (connection between Bulls Gap and the county seat in Rogersville)
- » Need for route redundancy (an alternate to Interstate 81)

## Preliminary Purpose of the Project

The preliminary purpose of the proposed SR-66 project has been identified as the following:

- » Correct geometric deficiencies to meet current TDOT design standards
- » Improve system linkage
- » Provide route redundancy for Interstate 81

Please note that the preliminary purpose and need will be refined as the environmental technical studies are finalized and public feedback from the November 12, 2024 Public Meeting is analyzed. The purpose and need will be formally presented in the Environmental Assessment expected to be released for public review in Quarter 1 of 2025.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/tdot/documents/government-how-do-i-documents/Studies/StatewidePlanning/studies-HawkinsSR66BullsGaptoLM5.3NearOtes-TPR.pdf>

## Alternatives Being Evaluated in the Environmental Assessment

A No-Build Alternative and one Build Alternative are being evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. Each alternative is described in the subsequent text below.

**No-Build Alternative:** In accordance with the implementing regulations for NEPA ([40 C.F.R. § 1502.14\(d\)](#)),<sup>2</sup> the No-Build Alternative has been retained for detailed study and serves as a benchmark for comparison with the Build Alternative. The No-Build Alternative would retain the existing state route and roadway configuration throughout the project area except for those modifications to the roadway network that have been programmed and approved for implementation, as identified in [TDOT's 25-Year Long Range Transportation Policy Plan](#)<sup>3</sup>, [State Transportation Improvement Program \(STIP\)](#)<sup>4</sup>, and the [TDOT 10-Year Project Plan](#)<sup>5</sup> and would allow for routine maintenance and safety upgrades.

**Build Alternative:** The Build Alternative includes the widening of the existing two-lane roadway (which currently consists of one 10-foot-wide lane in each direction) and would include construction of the following:

- » Two 12-foot travel lanes (one in each direction) and paved shoulders four- to ten-feet in width.
- » An intermittent 12-foot-wide two-way left-turn lane (TWLTL).
- » Five-foot wide sidewalks near the project beginning.
- » Intermittent curb and gutter.
- » Guardrail, as required.
- » Minor horizontal and vertical alignment changes, primarily located in Bulls Gap, intended to meet current highway design and safety standards.

Once completed, the proposed project would provide a consistent cross-section along SR-66 from SR-34 (US-11E, Andrew Johnson Highway) to the county seat of Rogersville, as well as provide a link from Rogersville to I-81. The total project length is approximately 5.70 miles.

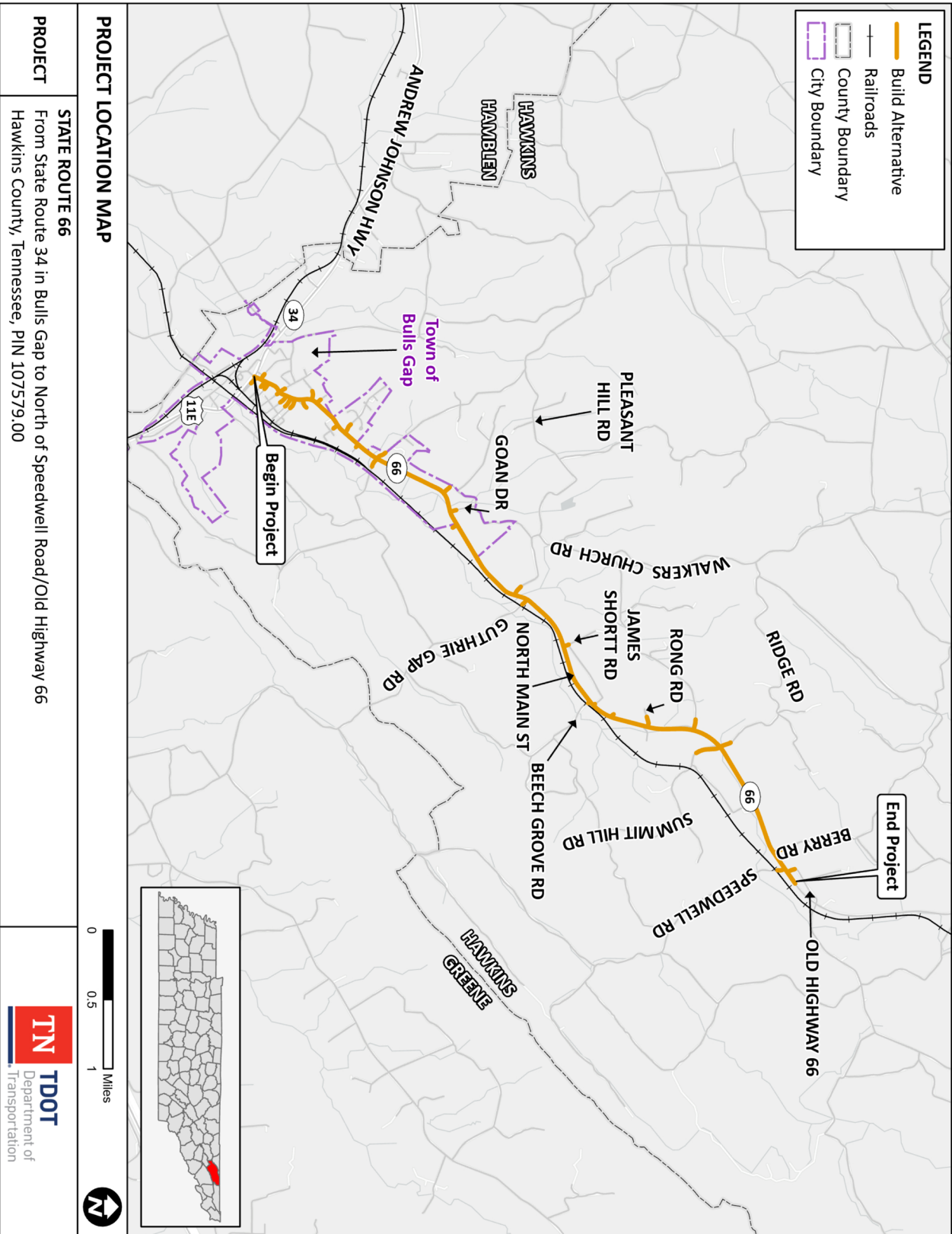
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-40/chapter-V/subchapter-A/part-1502/section-1502.14>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.tn.gov/tdot/long-range-planning-home/25-year-transportation-policy-plan.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.tn.gov/tdot/program-development-and-administration-home/program-development-and-administration-state-programs.html>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.tn.gov/tdot/build-with-us.html>

## Project Location Map



## Project Schedule

Transportation projects are developed in four phases: Planning and Environmental Design, Design, Right-of-Way, and Construction. The following is an estimated timeline for various aspects of the proposed project.

Initial Early Coordination	Quarter 3 of 2024
Conduct Technical Studies	Quarter 4 of 2024
Public Meeting	November 12, 2024
Notice of Availability / Environmental Assessment Approval	Quarter 1 of 2025
Hold NEPA Public Hearing	Quarter 2 of 2025
Approval of Final Environmental Document / Selection of Preferred Alternative***	Quarter 3 of 2025
Right-of-Way Acquisition Phase	To Be Determined
Construction Phase	To Be Determined

\*Quarter 1 – January through March. Quarter 2 – April through June. Quarter 3 – July through September. Quarter 4 – October through December

\*\*Forecasted dates are subject to change.

\*\*\*Once the final environmental document is approved by the Federal Highway Administration, the Planning and Environmental Phase is complete.

- » TDOT will complete environmental technical studies and draft the Environmental Assessment for FHWA review and approval.
- » To further engage the public, following FHWA approval of the Environmental Assessment, TDOT will:
  - + Make the approved Environmental Assessment available for public review (including the results of all environmental technical studies).
  - + Hold a public hearing to present the findings of the environmental technical studies.
  - + Invite feedback and comments from the public on the results of the Environmental Assessment.

Use this space to keep track of any notes or questions you may have.

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## Right-Of-Way and Relocations

TDOT will make relocation assistance available to all eligible persons impacted by this project, including residences, businesses, farm operations, non-profit organizations, and those requiring special services or assistance. The Regional Relocation Staff will administer the relocation program under the rules, policies, and procedures set forth in the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 as amended, the Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1972, implementing federal regulations, TCA 13-11-101 through 119, the State of Tennessee Relocation Assistance Brochure and Chapter IX of the State of Tennessee Department of Transportation Right-of-Way Manual.

An information pamphlet, *Relocation Assistance Program*, outlines the services offered and any payments for which you may be eligible, such as moving expenses and replacement housing benefits for owners and tenants. The pamphlet also outlines the eligibility requirements for receiving these payments. The pamphlet is available for download from the TDOT Relocation Office website: <https://www.tn.gov/tdot/right-of-way-division/relocation-office.html><sup>6</sup>.

TDOT will provide advance notification of proposed right-of-way acquisition. The TDOT Right-of-Way Office has the responsibility, once a project is approved, of appraising, purchasing and, if required, assisting individuals, families or businesses in relocating. Before acquiring property, all properties are appraised on the basis of comparable sales and land use values in the surrounding areas.

The value will be established by using independent real estate appraisers who will prepare, for TDOT's use, written appraisals using actual sales data in the surrounding community.

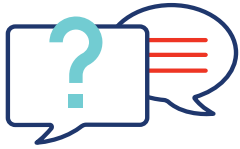
When an appraisal is necessary, the appraiser will contact each property owner and offer the owner the opportunity to accompany him/her on an inspection of the property. After the appraisal is complete, the TDOT Right-of-Way Appraisal staff will review the findings for accuracy to ensure that everything relating to value has been considered in establishing the amount to be offered. Owners of property will be offered fair market value for their property rights, as it is TDOT's desire to pay fair market value for the necessary property.

If you have a question regarding the TDOT Relocation process, please call **1-800-546-0949 (toll-free)** and leave a voicemail message with your name, phone number and question. A TDOT representative will respond to questions within 7 business days.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.tn.gov/tdot/right-of-way-division/relocation-office.html>

## Procedure for Submitting Public Comments

You are encouraged to provide comments and input on the project. Your input will become part of the official public record for this project.



### Questions:

Please call **1-800-546-0949** (toll-free) by **December 2, 2024** and leave a voicemail message with your name, phone number, and question. This will allow TDOT to provide you a response by the **December 9, 2024** comment deadline. A TDOT representative will respond to question within 7 business days.



### Comments:

Public Comments received or postmarked by **December 9, 2024** will be included in the official summary of the public meeting.

Verbal Comments: Record a verbal comment with the court reporter tonight or call **(800) 546-0949** (toll-free) and leave a voicemail message with your name, phone number, and comment.

#### Written Comments:

- » Send a Comment Card or Letter by mail to:

State Route 66  
C/O Kimley-Horn and Associates  
10 Lea Avenue, Ste 400  
Nashville, TN 37210



- » Send an email to [TDOT.comments@tn.gov](mailto:TDOT.comments@tn.gov) using the subject line State Route 66 Project.
- » Complete an online comment form available on the SR-66 project website at <https://tinyurl.com/SR-66Hawkins> or by scanning the QR code.

## Additional Information

For additional information, please contact the following TDOT representative:

**Mr. Eric Wilson, PE**  
**TDOT Region 1 Project Development Manager**  
Email: [Eric.Wilson@tn.gov](mailto:Eric.Wilson@tn.gov)  
Phone: 865.594.0742  
Project Website - <https://tinyurl.com/SR-66Hawkins>

