

In-Person Public Hearing-By Appointment Only

Thursday April 14, 2022, 8AM-12PM & 1:30PM-7PM EST

Newport Community Center, 433 Prospect Avenue, Newport, TN 37821

Due to limited space, attendance at the Public Hearing is by appointment only.

Please call **888-283-4678** no later than Wednesday, April 13 at 1:00 pm to schedule your appointment.

WELCOME

The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) welcomes you to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Public Hearing for the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the State Route (SR) 32 Improvements Project. NEPA requires that projects receiving federal funding or requiring federal actions (e.g., permits) undergo an assessment of their effects on the natural, cultural and socioeconomic environment prior to the federal agency making a decision on the project (e.g., alternative selection, permit issuance). The project cannot proceed until this requirement has been successfully completed. This hearing is part of the NEPA environmental review process.

This Public Hearing is being held in order to provide the public an opportunity to provide input on the approved EA prior to completion of the final environmental document and meet the requirements of NEPA. Due to the limited capacity of the public hearing space, TDOT held a Virtual Question and Answer Session on April 12, 2022, to provide the public with a virtual opportunity to ask questions and provide input on the approved EA prior to completion of the final environmental document. The pre-recorded project presentation for the Virtual Question and Answer Session and the pre-recorded presentation for the Public Hearing contain the same project information.

All comments received during the Question and Answer Session, the Public Hearing and through **May 14, 2022** will be included in the final environmental document.

Upon entering the Public Hearing, you will see four stations:

1. Station 1-Prerecorded PowerPoint Presentation
2. Station 2-Project Displays
3. Station 3-Right-of-Way Information
4. Station 4-Comment Cards, Comment Drop Box, and Court Reporter

TDOT representatives are available to answer your questions and help you with the displays. Please visit each station in order.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The proposed project for SR-32 (US-321), from SR-73 at Cosby to the existing 4-lane divided section of SR-32 (US-321) north of Wilton Springs Road in Cocke County would ultimately improve SR-32 from a two-lane roadway to a four-lane roadway with a continuous center turn lane. The project length is approximately 7.1 miles.

PROJECT HISTORY

NEPA studies for the SR-32 (US-321) project from SR-73 to Wilton Springs Road were initiated in 1998. The original Build Alternative started on SR-73 west of the SR-73/SR-32 intersection and traveled on new location west of existing SR-32 to Foothills Parkway. From the Foothills Parkway, it essentially followed the existing SR-32 roadway until Deer Foot Road, where it then traveled on new location east of existing SR-32 to the northern project terminus at Wilton Springs Road. Following a public meeting on June 29, 2010 and a presentation to the Tennessee Environmental Streamlining Agreement (TESA) agencies in August 2010 a second Build Alternative was proposed for consideration.

In 2012, TDOT initiated an Expedited Project Delivery (EPD) review of the project to identify feasible, cost-effective improvement options that would provide improved safety and mobility in the corridor. A public meeting was held on March 15, 2012, to obtain public input regarding the two alternatives under consideration at that time, and an agency field view was conducted on September 25, 2012. Based on recommendations in the EPD technical report, agency coordination, and public input from public meetings, TDOT developed a third potential Build Alternative. The third potential Build Alternative was introduced to the public at a public meeting held on August 9, 2018. Two of the three potential Build Alternatives, Alternatives A and B, are currently being considered for the project.

NEED FOR THE PROJECT

The needs for the proposed project include:

- Inefficient connectivity/access to tourist areas;
- Existing roadway deficiencies;
- Existing operational deficiencies;
- High crash rate;
- Improve SR-32 consistent with the legislative intent of the “Improving Manufacturing, Public Roads, and Opportunities for a Vibrant Economy” (IMPROVE) Act; and
- Support economic development opportunities.

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

The purpose of the project is to:

- Improve connections/access to high tourism areas within the region;
- Improve the roadway to meet current design standards;
- Improve traffic operational efficiency;
- Reduce crashes;
- Meet the intent of the IMPROVE Act; and
- Enhance economic development opportunities.

ALTERNATIVES EVALUATED IN THE EA

The EA analyzed the No-Build Alternative and two Build Alternatives (Alternative A and Alternative B).

No-Build Alternative: The No-Build Alternative is required by federal regulations to be evaluated in an EA. The No-Build Alternative provides a baseline for comparison against the other project alternatives. The No-Build Alternative would leave this portion of SR-32 (US-321) as it currently exists, other than routine maintenance as needed.

Alternative A: Alternative A would begin on SR-73 just south of Stonebrook Drive and continue north on new location west of Stonebrook Drive for approximately 1.4 miles before crossing existing SR-32. After crossing existing SR-32, Alternative A continues north on new location to just north of SR-339 (Jones Cove Road), where it then follows the existing SR-32 alignment, except where it straightens out several curves, to north of Middle Creek Road where it again travels on new location to align with existing SR-32 at the SR-32/Wilton Springs Road intersection. Alternative A continues through the intersection to connect with the existing four-lane divided section of SR-32 north of the bridge over Cosby Creek. Alternative A would result in the realignment of the entrance to the Foothills Parkway. Coordination with the National Park Service (NPS) has been ongoing. The NPS has reviewed the current plans for the realigned entrance and has found them acceptable, with appropriate mitigation.

Build Alternative B: Build Alternative B would begin just west of the SR-73/SR-32 intersection and reconfigure the existing intersection. Currently, vehicles accessing SR-32 from SR-73 have to stop at the intersection and turn left to go north on SR-32. The T-intersection would be reconfigured so that traffic travelling from SR-73 to SR-32 northbound, or from SR-32 to SR-73 southbound, would become the through traffic, and traffic travelling to or from SR-32 south of the original intersections would have a stop condition.

Just north of the reconfigured intersection, Build Alternative B would follow existing SR-32 to just north of Caney Creek Road where it would diverge slightly to straighten out the curve, cross existing SR-32 and Cosby Creek, and continue in a northwesterly direction on new location. Approximately 1,000 feet north of where it crosses existing SR-32, Build Alternative B would follow the same alignment as Build Alternative A to the northern project terminus. Build Alternative B would include the same realignment of the entrance to the Foothills Parkway as Build Alternative A.

A graphic showing Alternatives A and B is located at the end of this handout.

CONSTRUCTION PHASING

Both of the Build Alternatives are proposed to be constructed in two separate construction phases from the southern terminus to Penland Road. TDOT is proposing to acquire enough right-of-way for Phase 1 Construction (Interim Build) to accommodate the construction of Phase 2 Construction (Full Build). Phased construction is not proposed for the section of the Build Alternatives from Penland Road to the project terminus at the 4-lane divided section of SR-32 north of Wilton Springs Road. That section would be constructed at the same time as Phase 1 Construction (Interim Build).

The proposed typical sections for both Build Alternatives for the Interim Build and Full Build are shown in graphics at the end of this handout.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The table below and on the following page provides a summary of the potential impacts of the project by alternative. A more detailed table is presented in the EA.

SR-32 SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS WITHIN ROW BOUNDARIES				
Impact Category (Resource)		No-Build Alternative	Alternative A	
Land Use	Legislation, Executive Orders, Plans, and Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not consistent with legislation, executive orders, plans and policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent with legislation, executive orders, plans and policies 	
	Planned Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would not support planned development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would support planned development 	
Transportation	Average Travel Speed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35 miles per hour (mph) (2020/2040) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 41 mph (2020), 50 mph (2040) 	
	Crashes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in crashes 	
Displacements	Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 21 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24
	Commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11
	Non-Profit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1
Socioeconomic and Community	Community Cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project would not affect community cohesion 	
	Community Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 church 1 cemetery Temporary traffic impacts during construction Improved response times for emergency vehicles and school buses once constructed 	
	Environmental Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No identified environmental justice populations No disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations with respect to health and the environment 	
Cultural Resources	Archaeology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adverse effect to one National Register of Historic Places resource 	
	Historic Architecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No effect 	
Floodplains	Floodway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.37 acre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.38 acre
	100-year Floodplain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14.0 acres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13.4 acres
Streams	Perennial/Intermittent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3,535 linear feet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,768 linear feet
	Wet-Weather Conveyance/Ephemeral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,940 linear feet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,704 linear feet
Wetlands	Fill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.63 acre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.72 acre
Threatened and Endangered Species	Federally Listed or Candidate Species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not likely to adversely affect Gray bat (<i>Myotis grisescens</i>), Indiana bat (<i>Myotis sodalis</i>), or Northern Long-eared bat (<i>Myotis septentrionalis</i>) 	
	State Listed Species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	
Section 4(f) Resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.95 acres of easement from Foothills Parkway Potential Section 4(f) <i>de minimis</i> use of Foothills Parkway 	

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

SR-32 SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS WITHIN ROW BOUNDARIES (Continued)

Impact Category (Resource)	No-Build Alternative	Alternative A	Alternative B
Farmland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 29 acres Farmland Conversion Impact Rating: 140 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 34 acres Farmland Conversion Impact Rating: 145
Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSAT) emissions due to implementation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) vehicle and fuel regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced MSAT emissions by 3 to 4 percent Potential decrease in global carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in 2040 of 0.0001 percent Potential decrease in Tennessee's share of global emissions in 2040 of 0.0002 percent 	
Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in existing noise levels in project area by approximately 1 decibel (dBA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 58 residences Cosby Elementary School playing field Would reduce noise levels by up to 23 dB at many land uses adjacent existing sections of SR-32 where the new roadway shifts away from them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 49 residences Cosby Elementary School playing field Would reduce noise levels by up to 15 dB at many land uses adjacent existing sections of SR-32 where the new roadway shifts away from them
Hazardous Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 potential sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 potential sites
Visual Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 landscape unit with moderate to high visual sensitivity 2 landscape units with low visual sensitivity Minimal to moderate effect 	
Bicycle/Pedestrian Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not provide bicycle and pedestrian accommodations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sidewalks or wide shoulders provided throughout project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sidewalks or wide shoulders provided throughout most of the project

RIGHT-OF-WAY RELOCATION PROCESS

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://tn.gov/tdot/righ-of-way-division/relocation-office.html>.

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, and field check 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 **888-283-4678** and leave a voicemail message with your name, phone number and question. A TDOT representative will respond to questions within 7 business days by a TDOT representative.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

Transportation project 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.

Activity	Forecasted Completion Date*
Environmental Technical Studies	Complete
NEPA Public Meetings	2010, 2012, 2018
Environmental Assessment Approval	Spring 2022
NEPA Public Hearing	April 2022
Final Environmental Document Approval	Fall 2022
Right-of-Way Appraisal/Acquisition	TBD
Construction	TBD

*All forecasted dates are subject to change.

WAYS TO ASK QUESTIONS OR MAKE COMMENTS

DURING THE PUBLIC HEARING

Questions: TDOT representatives are present to help answer your questions.

Comments: You can drop off your comment card in the Comment Box at Station 4. You can also provide your oral comments to the Court Reporter at Station 4.

AFTER THE PUBLIC HEARING

Questions: If you have questions about the project after leaving the Public Hearing, please call **888-283-4678** (toll free) and leave a voicemail message with your name, phone number, and question. A TDOT representative will respond within 7 days.

Comments: There are several ways you can provide your comments after the Public Hearing. The comment period for the EA ends **May 14, 2022**.

- **Verbal Comments:** Please call **888-283-4678** (toll free) and leave a voicemail message with your name, phone number, and comment no later than **May 14, 2022**.
- **Comment Card:** Download a pre-addressed comment card from the project website **www.tn.gov/tdot/projects/projects-region-1/sr-32-project** and mail it to TDOT postmarked by **May 14, 2022**.
- **Email:** Send an email to **TDOT.Comments@tn.gov** by **May 14, 2022**. Please use the subject line State Route 32 (US-321) Roadway Improvement Project.
- **Letter:** Mail a written statement, postmarked by **May 14, 2022**, to the following address:

Public Hearing
Attn: SR-32 (US-321) Project
Tennessee Department of Transportation
Suite 700, James K. Polk Building
505 Deaderick Street
Nashville, TN 37243-0032

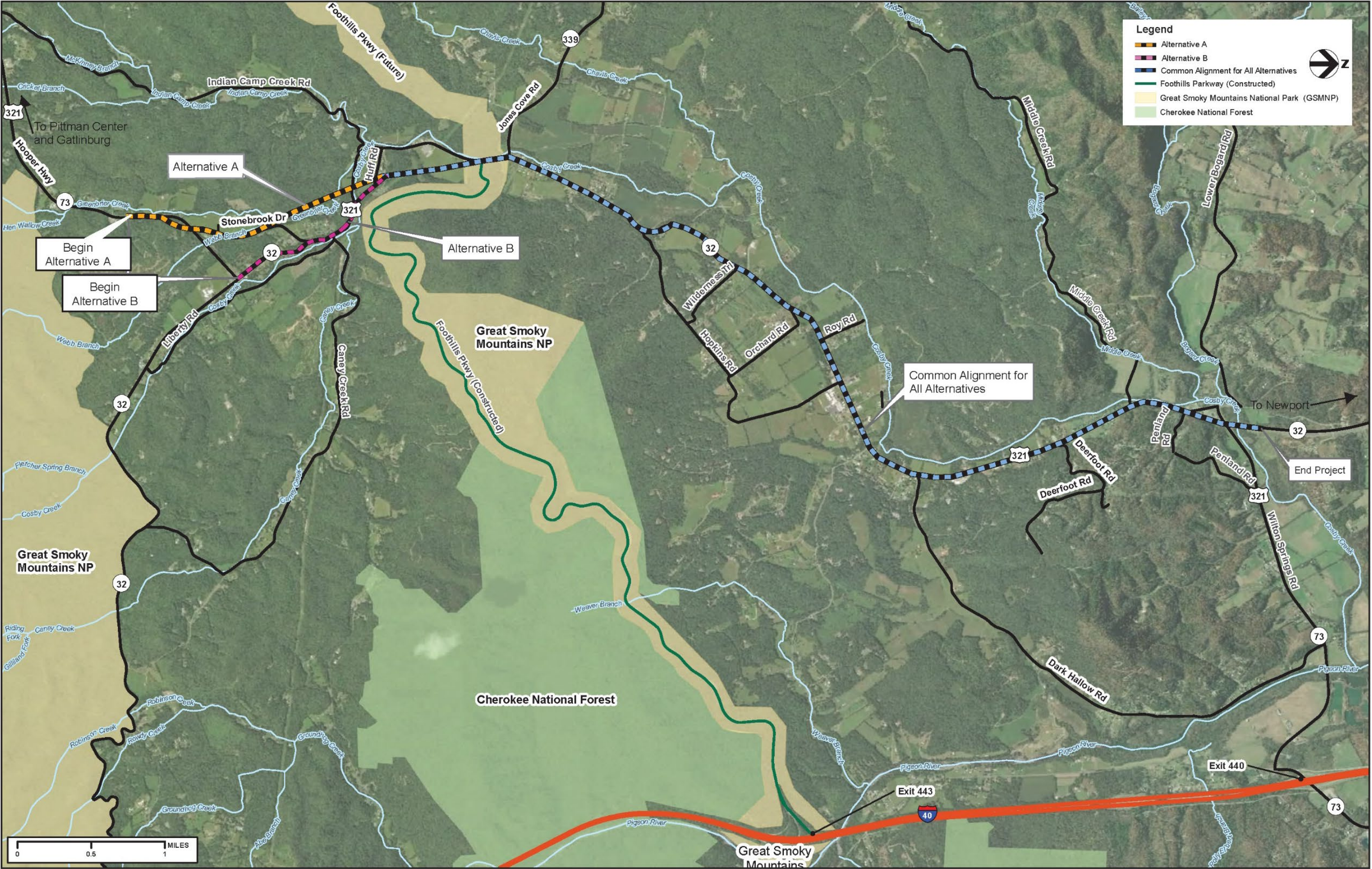
All comments received within the specified comment period will be included in the official public hearing transcript.

PROJECT CONTACT

For further information regarding the SR-32 (US-321) project, please contact:

Mr. Erick Hunt-Hawkins, Environmental Manager
TDOT Environmental Division, NEPA Special Projects
Email: **Erick.Hunt-Hawkins@tn.gov**
Phone: 615-253-5163

Proposed Alternatives



Proposed Roadway Typical Sections by Construction Phase: Alternative A

