

STATE OF TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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JOHN C. SCHROER COMMISSIONER BILL HASLAM GOVERNOR

February 5, 2013

The Honorable Tony Shipley State Representative 114 War Memorial Building Nashville, Tennessee 37243

Dear Representative Shipley:

Thank you for your January 28, 2013 letter stating your concerns regarding the SR-126 (Memorial Blvd.) project in your district.

At the public hearing, the three alternatives presented are in keeping with the common ground recommendations of the Community Resource Team (CRT) with regard to the number of lanes through different areas of the project, and are in line with the latest travel models and traffic projections. TDOT is currently moving forward in the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) process by considering all input gathered during the public hearing process which will allow the department to develop the Final Environmental Impact Study (FEIS) document. Your letter will be included in the official public hearing record. There will be opportunities to address actual changes in community needs and actual changes in traffic demand during the design phases of the project. Adding a new alternative now, during the NEPA process, would require TDOT to go back and develop a new Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and then hold another public hearing, delaying the project several more years.

Your letter stated some concerns with the alternatives from Harbor Chapel Road to Cooks Valley Road, and requested TDOT to evaluate a minimal four lane with a center barrier separating the opposing travel lanes and with minimal paved shoulders. On this type of roadway that has side road intersections and driveways, it is not appropriate to have a center barrier since the openings in the barrier would create very dangerous obstacles. The currently proposed 6' paved shoulders are about as narrow as can be constructed and still be wide enough to allow vehicles such as school busses and postal carriers to completely pull out of the travel lane. They also allow drivers leaving the travel lane to recover and not run off the side of the road or over-correct and be thrown into oncoming traffic. Adding adequately wide shoulders is one of the most significant safety features of the project. Since safety is a major need of the SR-126 (Memorial Blvd.) project, the suggested minimal four lane would not meet the project's purpose and need.

You are also concerned that Alternate B Modified has the same lane configuration traveling east from Harbor Chapel Road; however, the two eastbound lanes in the alternative will extend approximately 1,000' past the Old Stage Road intersection where they currently end prior to the intersection.

Thank you again for your active involvement and support of the SR-126 (Memorial Blvd.) project. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Gary King, Project Manager for this project, at 615-741-4777 or by email at gary.king@tn.gov.

Sincerely,

John C. Schroer Commissioner

JCS:GK

Cc: Mr. Gary King, W/Attach.