

# Section IV

## Public Process



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### Introduction

Public and stakeholder involvement for the Knox to Oak Ridge Greenway Study was ongoing throughout the planning process and consisted of:

- Four project Technical Advisory Committee meetings;
- A public workshop at Pellissippi State Community College in June 2014;
- Two online surveys;
- TDOT workshop in August 2014; and
- A public open house at Hardin Valley Academy in December 2014.

**Project Technical Advisory Committee Meetings.** The advisory committee met four times throughout the course of the study to review the scope of work, provide input on the format and content of public meetings, review design concepts, and review the draft and final study documents.

Advisory Committee members included representatives from:

- Knoxville Regional TPO;
- Knox County;
- City of Knoxville;
- City of Oak Ridge;
- Tennessee Technology Corridor Development Authority
- Great Smoky Mountains Regional Greenway Council;
- Oak Ridge National Laboratory; and
- TDOT



## June 2014 Workshop.

The first public meeting was conducted in June 2014 at Pellissippi State Community College and consisted of an afternoon and evening forum, drawing approximately 40 attendees. These attendees include business owners, business managers, elected officials, advisory committee members and interested citizens.

A Visual Preference Survey allowed participants to grade various images in a slide show based on the desirability of various greenway contexts and design features.

In general, greenway features that received high ratings from participants were:

- Greenways or pathways that were separated from traffic by a substantial vertical or horizontal barrier;
- Greenways that were in natural settings and include design features that fit the context of the area (e.g. wooden timbers, landscaping);
- Wayfinding signage that made it easy to determine the direction and distance to destinations;
- Greenways of adequate width (12-feet or greater) to provide for safe movement by users of all non-motorized modes; and
- Design aesthetics such as rock outcroppings, stone facades on bridges, and adjacent features that complement the greenway.

Less desirable features were:

- Lack of shade and predominance of hardscape features such as concrete;
- Lack of separation from a roadway or highway;
- Poorly maintained and poorly lighted facilities; and
- Treatments such as chain link fencing

Participants in the June 2014 workshop mapped their desires on the study area in small groups. The participants were asked to label major residential areas, major destinations, areas they wish to be preserved, and potential alignments for the greenway. The results of the mapping exercise were used by the consultant team to bolster findings from the field review and technical analysis and offered insight on where links to the greenway may be considered.



Figure 49—An image that ranked high in the visual preference survey



Figure 50—An image that ranked lower in the visual preference survey

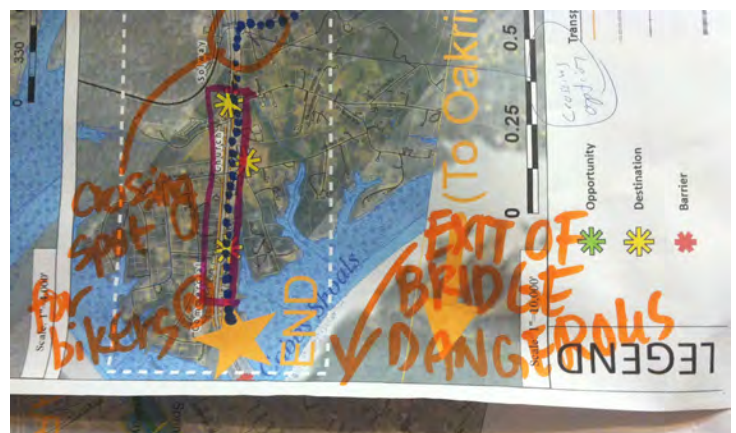


Figure 51—Participants comments during the mapping exercise

## TDOT Workshop

A meeting with TDOT engineering, right-of-way and planning staff was organized to discuss potential alignments and TDOT preferences for the greenway. This coordination was necessary due to the proximity of the greenway alignment to Pellissippi Parkway and the Solway Bridge. The August workshop included eight staff members from TDOT. In general, the staff was supportive of the alignment and there were no major issues cited in relation to planned TDOT projects. A project to widen Pellissippi Parkway and make it fully access controlled is identified in the Long-Range Regional Mobility Plan. TDOT staff acknowledged that this project is still in a long-term horizon and that due to funding challenges the agency is more focused on maintenance activities than on major highway expansion.

See Appendix B for a full summary of this workshop

Some preferences for the ultimate design and alignment of the greenway included:

- Avoidance of Pellissippi Parkway right-of-way where possible, but they would consider allowing the greenway within highway right-of-way in constrained areas;
- There are no plans to make major changes to the Solway Bridge. A cantilevered structure could be considered if weight limits allowed for it;
- Right-of-way on the shore of Melton Lake could be either TDOT or TVA right-of-way, even if it's off-highway due to old alignments of Highway 162;
- Right-of-way impacts are critical to consider in the final design of the greenway as TDOT has seen past designs that did not properly consider right-of-way needs, particularly slope easements; and
- If the greenway were built prior to the expansion of Pellissippi Parkway, then TDOT would replace or realign the greenway if the highway expansion had an impact on the route.

## Preliminary Online Survey

The first survey was completed by 334 respondents and was open from July 21 until August 5, 2014, to gather more input following the workshop. Some of the key findings were:

See Appendix C for more results from the online surveys

- 42% of respondents said they would use the greenway at least once a week;
- 30% said they would use the greenway at least once a month;
- 58% said they would use the proposed greenway for recreation and exercise; and
- 39% said they would use the proposed greenway for both transportation and recreation/exercise.

The destinations that were identified as most popular along the proposed greenway were:

- Oak Ridge National Laboratory (by 54% of respondents);
- Hardin Valley school campus (by 33%);
- Cedar Bluff Middle/Elementary school campus (22%);
- Scripps Networks Campus (22%);
- Pellissippi Corporate Center (22%);
- Ball Camp Elementary School (19%);
- Webb School (17%); and
- Knoxville Catholic High School (16%).

## December 2014 Open House

About 30 members of the public attended an open house at Hardin Valley Academy. Several stations were set up to capture public feedback at the open house. These stations were:

- **An Introductory Station:** Included introduction and background information on the project.
- **Conceptual Plan With “One Mile” Station:** Attendees were allowed to choose which one mile of the greenway they would build first.
- **“Design Your Greenway” Station:** Attendees were allowed to vote on images of amenities, design elements, and associated land uses. Attendees ranked the images they preferred.
- **A “Survey and Answer” Station:** Attendees were asked to take a survey, and they were able to ask the project team members and consultants questions.

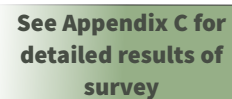
Feedback heard at these stations is summarized below.

**The Preferred Mile For Initial Construction.** The public agreed that the Phase 1 section (from Ten Mile Creek Greenway to Dutchtown Road) identified in this plan was priority. Several comments identified the Solway Bridge crossing as critical to connect to Oak Ridge. The majority chose their section because they felt it would be the most used.

**Preferred Greenway Amenities, Design Features, and Adjacent Land Uses.** The following greenway features are ranked in order of most preferred to least preferred by the public (vote count indicated in parenthesis):

- Greenway in wooded open space (20)
- Greenway around natural features (19)
- Greenway with waterfront views (18)
- Greenways through or adjacent to commercial areas (like outdoor eateries) (16)
- Greenway adjacent to river/creek fishing access (14)
- Greenway with pedestrian underpasses (10)
- Greenway with adjacent pocket park (8)
- Greenway in or adjacent to meadows (8)
- Greenway that runs along the perimeter of office parks (7)
- Greenway that connects to schools (5)
- Greenway on the edge of a subdivision (5)
- Greenway that runs through the interior of office parks (3)
- Greenway with landscaping enhancements (2)
- Greenway that runs through the interior of a subdivision (2)
- Greenway that parallels a road (2)
- Greenway adjacent to apartments (1)

**Summary of Survey.** The following is a summary of common concerns, greatest likes, and biggest dislikes associated with elements of the plan:



See Appendix C for  
detailed results of  
survey


*Major concerns:* Proximity to the Pellissippi Parkway—Many felt that if the greenway was too close to the Parkway it would be a very unenjoyable experience and should be avoided.

*What they liked most:* The connectivity that the greenway could provide to schools, Turkey Creek Greenway, natural areas (which was mentioned multiple times), and commercial.

*What they liked least:* Proximity to the Pellissippi Parkway was mentioned again. Several expressed dislike for the amount of time it would likely take to implement the entire plan.

## Final Online Survey

See Appendix C for  
more results from  
the online surveys



The final online survey went up immediately after the December 2014 Public Open House. The survey mirrored questions asked in the Open House. Below are the questions with a summary of dominant themes in the responses:

**Question 1: A draft of the preferred and alternate routes for the greenway is available here. Do you have any questions or concerns about the proposed routes?**

Summary of Answers: The most common response included concerns about close proximity to roads and how the greenway will safely interact with road crossings. Most mentioned was the proximity to the Pellissippi Parkway, but there were additional concerns about the interface with Hardin Valley Road, the Oak Ridge Highway/Parkway interchange, and crossing at Cedar Bluff Road. Several mentioned they would have less concern if the greenway was separated and adequately buffered with trees.

**Question 2: The plan proposes greenway construction in 3 major phases. Please review the proposed phasing diagram and phasing description. In what order do you think the phases should be constructed?**

Summary of Answers: Online responses agreed with the Open House responses about phasing. The majority agreed with the proposed phasing identified in this plan.

**Question 3: What was the main reason for choosing your preferred phase in the previous question?**

Summary of Answers: The majority felt that Phase 1 would be the most used. Phase 1 already connects to a greenway that can connect into Knoxville, and it serves the most populous and urban area. Several commented on their strong desire to have a safer commute option to Oak Ridge and that the Solway Bridge barrier is something that should be addressed.