

30 June 2004

Ms. Martha Carver
Historic Preservation Manager
Environmental Planning, Historic Section
Tennessee Department of Transportation
James K. Polk Building, Suite 900
505 Deaderick Street
Nashville, TN 37243-0334

RE: Historical and Architectural Survey, Proposed State Route 397 Extension

Dear Ms. Carver,

Thank you for the extensive work required to prepare the Historical and Architectural Survey for State Route 397 Extension. This is a worthwhile effort and is appreciated by our community. Preserving the historic character and environment of our city while ensuring the safety of our citizens is of paramount importance. In addition to specific comments provided as Transportation Committee Chairman with Mayor Tom Miller, I offer the following for your consideration.

Franklin has changed dramatically over the last decade, and our transportation needs have changed as well. State Route 397, conceived as a high-speed bypass around a sleepy little village, has become a significant part of our local road network. Traffic counts on this facility are now such that higher speeds are no longer desirable, and at most times of the day are not even possible. One section of this roadway is a four-lane, median separated design with state funds currently budgeted to widen and "improve" the additional existing sections to a similar cross section and design speed.

However, professional understanding and influence is shifting to that of context sensitive design criteria. It is possible and even recommended to construct road facilities that meet not only the need to move vehicles safely and efficiently, but also to be sensitive to the environment and compatible with the landscape through which they are built. Because of the results of this Historical and Architectural Survey and of TDOT's desire to engage new concepts, the opportunity for a successful completion of State Route 397 that addresses all desires cannot be missed.

Both Williamson County and City of Franklin officials recognize the importance of our historic resources, represented by the significant public investment made or committed to the preservation of open space and the revitalization of our city core. Completion of the entire loop of Mack Hatcher Parkway, specifically the extension from Hillsboro Road to Columbia Avenue, is the number one transportation priority of our city. And if taxpayer dollars are to be invested, let's be sure to invest them wisely.

To properly mitigate the impact of the extension of State Route 397 through our historically significant landscape and near existing neighborhoods, the narrowest ROW possible should be considered. Construct a limited access, four-lane roadway with a design speed of no more than 50 mph, including a landscaped median that enhances

the facility and separates the ROW. At intersections with Highway 96 West, Carter's Creek Pike and Columbia Avenue, keep this and other roadways at grade. Seriously consider incorporating rotaries as traffic calming intersection options that keep traffic flowing, or signalization as an alternative. To encourage slower and safer travel, allow the roadway to follow the topography rather than blasting through challenging areas. All of these considerations will help to reduce the cost of this project, a significant benefit to taxpayers.

It has been proven that more vehicles can be accommodated when slower speeds are required, and that wider is not better. This being the case, let's also "improve" existing sections of State Route 397 to match the design speed cross section of the extension. A wider ROW is in place for the existing facility, but that doesn't mean we have to fill it up with a high speed, interstate type design. To properly address the ultimate safety of our citizens, the desire for increased capacity, and understanding of the importance of design, the entire loop of State Route 397 can and should be built with a consistent result in mind.

The City of Franklin is positioned to be a willing partner with TDOT to ensure the successful completion of this important transportation facility. By working together we have the opportunity to meet everyone's goals in a cost efficient and timely manner. Let's prove what's possible by building a calm, beautiful and functional parkway that enhances the historic core of Franklin.

Thank you for your contribution to this project. Please let me know how I can best participate in expediting the process.

Very sincerely,

Daniel B. Klatt
Alderman, Fourth Ward

cc: Tom Miller, Mayor
Board of Aldermen
Jay Johnson, City Administrator
David Parker, City Engineer