

Alcoa Parkway closer to reality

Five-mile stretch will cut congestion on Alcoa Highway

By Iva Butler

of The Daily Times Staff

The Alcoa Parkway, a proposed bypass around Alcoa Highway to relieve congestion, is moving closer to reality after nine years of planning.

A public hearing is expected to be held by Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) on its right-of-way plans for the roadway at the earliest in spring 2010.

The TDOT environmental survey should be done in a month and the plans will then go to the Federal Highway Administration for review, said Alcoa City Manager Mark Johnson.

"That will likely take until spring and then, hopefully, we will get the go-ahead on the project," he said.

The Alcoa Parkway will run from the Hall Road/U.S. 129 Bypass split to the Singleton Station Road intersection. The six-lane parkway will run five miles and provide drivers a much quicker way to and from the Knoxville area.

From the start at the split the road will follow Alcoa Highway up to and just north of the existing Hunt Road interchange, said Alcoa Director of Public Works Kenny Wiggins. North of there it starts to bear east and then stays east of and beside Alcoa Highway until it crosses Wright Road.

It then skews a little more to the east and goes to the back side of North Park Industrial Park, crosses Pellissippi Parkway and transitions back to the west to tie into Alcoa Highway at Singleton Station Road.

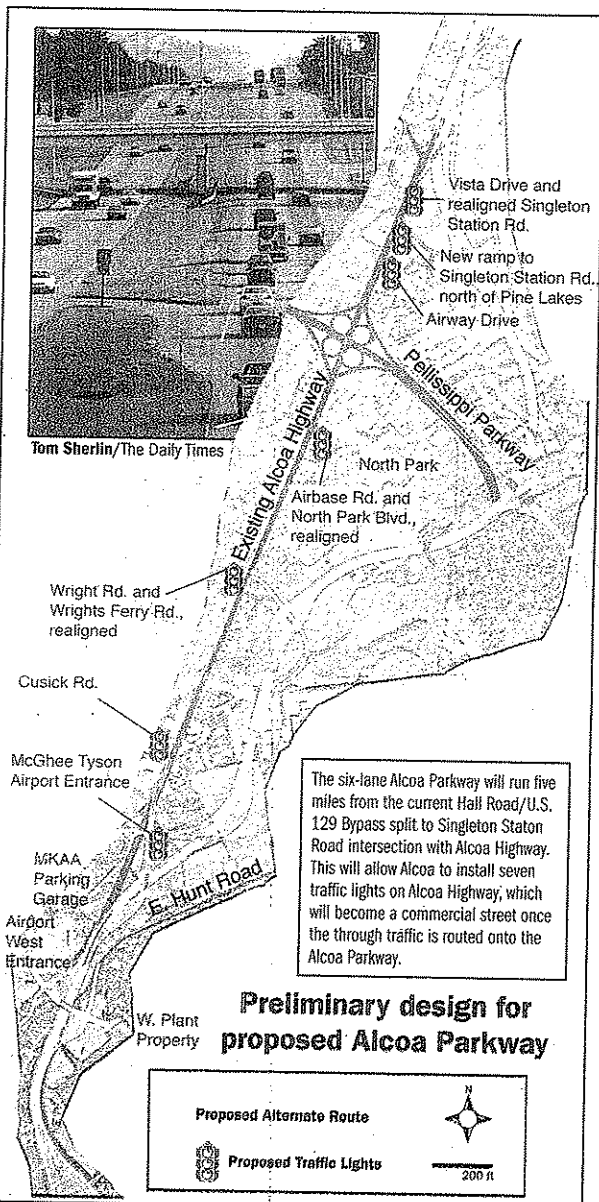
There will be no traffic lights on the Parkway, which will speed traffic flow.

Alcoa Parkway will have interchanges at Hunt Road, McGhee Tyson Airport, Wright Road, Pellissippi Parkway, Singleton Station north of Pine Lakes Golf Course and at the actual intersection of the Alcoa Parkway and Alcoa Highway near the present Singleton Station.

Alcoa Highway plans

"The purpose is to get rid of traffic congestion on Alcoa Highway, which will turn into a commercial street. It will be our Kingston Pike," Wiggins said. "It's our commercial corridor."

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The six-lane Alcoa Parkway will run five miles from the current Hall Road/U.S. 129 Bypass split to Singleton Station Road intersection with Alcoa Highway. This will allow Alcoa to install seven traffic lights on Alcoa Highway, which will become a commercial street once the through traffic is routed onto the Alcoa Parkway.

Preliminary design for proposed Alcoa Parkway

Anja Smith/The Daily Times

Missing hiker found alive in Smokies

The Associated Press

GATLINBURG — Searchers in Great Smoky Mountains National Park have found a 70-year-old backpacker who had been missing for four days.

Park spokesman Bob Miller said Albert "Morgan" Briggs of Pigeon Forge was spotted Saturday by a searcher on the Appalachian Trail and by a helicopter and appeared to be OK.



Miller says Briggs is stuck on a ridge line in rugged terrain at about 5,100 feet and can't go up or down. He has set up camp, including a yellow tent.

The helicopter dropped him food and water and a portable radio.

Miller said rescuers were running out of daylight Saturday and would have to try to reach him today.

Briggs was expected to hike out at Newfound Gap at the Tennessee-North Carolina border on Tuesday.

Masked man sought in attempted robbery at Sonic Drive-In

By Mark Boxley

of The Daily Times Staff

A 31-year-old Maryville woman reported late Friday that a masked man tried to rob her while she was at a Sonic Drive-In with her 10-year-old daughter in the car.

According to a Maryville police report, the woman told officers that she and her daughter were at Sonic, 2010 E. Broadway Ave., Maryville, at 11:48 p.m. when she noticed that "a white male was pacing back and forth toward the rear of the business."

As time went on, the man reportedly approached the woman's car and tried to grab her wallet through the passenger door of her vehicle.

"(The victim) then stated that the subject approached the passenger-side door of her vehicle," the report said. "When the subject got to the vehicle, according to (the victim), he attempted to take (her) wallet."

The man never got a chance to touch the wallet because the 31-year-old was able to pull it away before he got his hands on it, the report said. Though, the woman said she believed the suspect hit her arm while trying to get the

(See Sonic, Page 5A)

Old habit dies hard in military

Proposed ban worries troops; some say they need tobacco to stay calm

By Deb Riechmann

The Associated Press

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FALCON, Iraq — Gen. Douglas MacArthur had his signature corn-cob pipe. Soldiers got cigarettes in their C-rations during World War II. Even today, America's war on tobacco seems to have largely bypassed the military.

Now a proposal to make the forces smoke-free is drawing strong reactions from troops who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan,

even though the Pentagon itself says any ban is a long way off.

The troops' fears — and, in some cases, hopes — were triggered by a study commissioned by the Pentagon and the Veterans Affairs Department that recommends moving toward a tobacco-free military, perhaps in about 20 years.

"Your nerves get all rattled and you need something to calm you down," said Staff Sgt. Jerry Benson of San Bernadino, California, with the 5th Stryker Brigade in south-

ern Afghanistan. Benson, a tall, thin redhead with a buzz cut, said his first attempt to quit smoking was foiled by stress from a roadside bombing in Iraq.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates seems to agree.

"He knows that the situation they are confronting is stressful enough as it is," said his press secretary, Geoff Morrell. "I don't think he is interested in adding to the

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AP Photo
In this July 25, 2008, photo, U.S. Army Spc. Seth Cotrell (right) and Staff Sgt. Scott Malecki, from Hawk Company, Third Squadron, Second Stryker Cavalry Regiment, take a smoke break after gathering suspects in a raid on an al-Qaida cell north of Baghdad.



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in their teens."

Located a few miles north of the port city of Brunswick, the mobile home park consists of about 100 spaces and is nestled among centuries-old live oak trees near the

was quieter than usual. "Everybody had pretty much stayed in their houses," Vizcaino said. "Normally you would see kids outside, but everybody's been pretty much on lockdown."

Parkway

(From Page 1A)

"These will be better and safer routes for both through traffic (on the Alcoa Parkway) and local traffic (Alcoa Highway)," he said.

"Alcoa Highway is one of, if not the, most heaviest traveled non-Interstate highways in the state," Wiggins said.

Having the Parkway will allow officials to install seven traffic lights on Alcoa Highway.

"Signals are functional without through traffic. They are not functional with the volume of through traffic that Alcoa Highway now handles," he added.

Traffic lights will be located at:

■ Alcoa Highway at ramps coming off the parkway and tying in with the main McGhee Tyson Airport.

■ Cusick Road at Ruby Tuesday Restaurant.

■ Realigned Wright Road and Wrights Ferry Road near Shoney's.

■ Realigned Airbase Road and North Park Boulevard near West Chevrolet.

■ Airway Drive at RJ's Courtyard.

■ Ramp coming from Alcoa Highway to Singleton Station Road just north of Pine Lakes Golf Course.

■ Vista Drive and realigned Singleton Station Road.

The project, because it is so big, will be overseen by TDOT, not city public works employees.

Hunt portion first

Johnson hopes to pull out the Hunt Road portion from the Hall Road/U.S. 129 Bypass split to just south of McGhee Tyson Airport and construct it

These will be better and safer routes for both through traffic (on the Alcoa Parkway) and local traffic (Alcoa Highway).

**Alcoa Director of Public Works
Kenny Wiggins**

first.

"That would be easy to do," Wiggins said.

That area of Alcoa Parkway is going to serve as the main entrance into the 350-acre former ALCOA Inc. West Plant property. Developers Kinsey Probasco Hays (KPH) and International Risk Group (IRG) are planning a \$500 million development at build-out, not including inflation.

A 10-year-minimum build-out is anticipated for the project.

Having an entrance road would give developers and the city a good way to begin marketing the property.

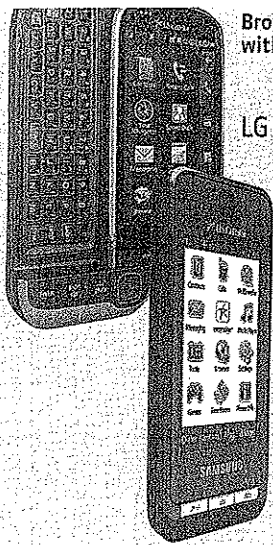
The initial plan was to let Pellissippi Parkway be the dividing line between two phases. The south end of Pellissippi is longer, but a lot of work must be done on the north side, Wiggins said.

If the Hunt Road interchange is pulled out, it would likely be a three-phase project.

Once the go-ahead is given on the project, TDOT will start right-of-way plans and hold the right-of-way public hearing. The hearing could result in TDOT engineers making some changes to the plans.

The project would then move into right-of-way acquisition and final project design.

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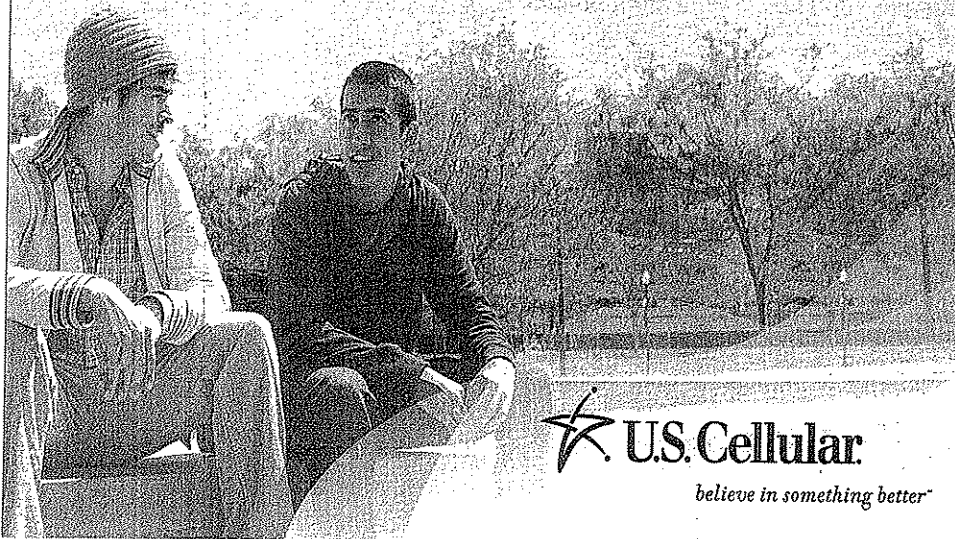
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