TRANSPORTATION PLANNING REPORT

STATE ROUTE 255/ HARDING PLACE EXTENSION FROM EZELL PIKE TO INTERSTATE ROUTE 40



PREPARED BY CTE

IN COOPERATION WITH THE TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING DIVISIONS

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SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION

A. <u>Preface</u>

The Tennessee Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) established a new Project Evaluation System (PES) as an analytical methodology to aid programming efforts and to prioritize multi-modal investments. The methodology consists of both quantitative and qualitative evaluation criteria built upon the Guiding Principals, goals and objectives established in the LRTP.

The purpose of this Transportation Planning Report is to provide project decision makers with a synopsis to aide project selection with information needed to evaluate and prioritize candidate highway improvement projects for inclusion in the Statewide Transportation Program (STP).

The data used to perform all analyses within this report was derived from the following sources:

- 1. Tennessee Roadway Information Management System (TRIMS) database,
- 2. Advanced Traffic Data Analysis Management Software (ADAM),
- 3. Evaluation of Roadway Deficiency Program (EVE),
- 4. GIS Maps created by TDOT Viewer Software,
- 5. Survey records at the Tennessee State Historic Preservation Office (TN-SHPO).
- 6. Economic data produced by the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development.

The following are additional information resources used to develop this report:

- 1. 1999 Interchange Justification Study for the Harding Place Extension,
- 2. 2004 Interchange Modification Study for the Donelson Pike (SR 255),
- 3. 1999 Update of the 1991 Environmental Assessment for the Harding Place Extension,
- 4. 2005 Metropolitan Nashville Airport Authority's Master Plan for BNA,
- 5. 2005 Lang Range Plan for Nashville Area MPO.

B. Report Restrictions

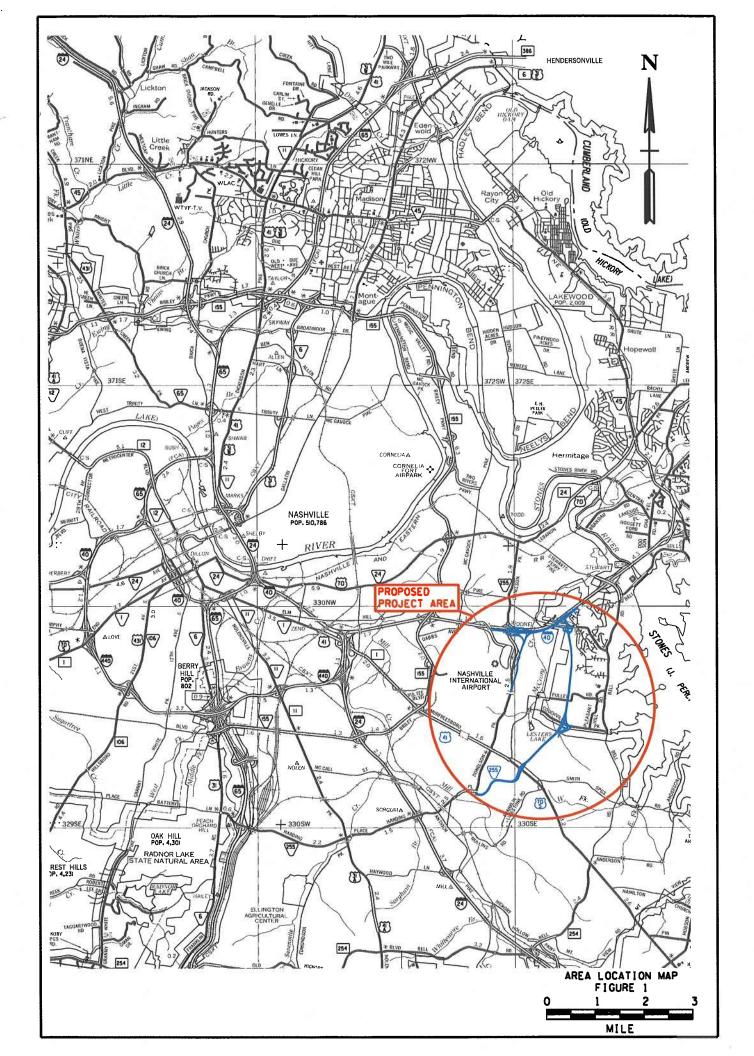
Environmental studies were not performed as part of this report. However, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was performed in 1999 with a resulting Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI). Since there have been no apparent changes to the project limits, the Tennessee Department of Transportation issued a letter of validity for the FONSI in 2004.

This report does not provide a detailed cost estimate based upon actual estimated quantities. Preliminary plans and estimated quantities have been developed for Phase I (Donelson Pike Relocation) and a portion of Phase II (Ezell Pike to Murfreesboro Pike). The estimated costs for these sections are based upon 2004 TDOT bid tabulations applied to the preliminary estimated engineering quantities. However, the estimated cost of the remaining section of Phase II is based upon a ratio of overall roadway length of the remaining section to the overall roadway length of Phase I.

C. <u>Preliminary Purpose and Need</u>

Multiple sections of the existing Donelson Pike (SR 255) corridor currently contain geometric deficiencies. These deficiencies are intensified since the SR 255 corridor from Harding Place to Interstate Route 40 (I-40) operates at a Level of Service (F) in Design Year 2025. These deficiencies will continue to worsen with the continuing growth in origin – destination traffic at Nashville International Airport (BNA). In addition, the projected growth in airport traffic has caused the Metropolitan Nashville Airport Authority (MNAA) to investigate alternatives for improving access to the airport for the expansion and development of new landside facilities. These studies have resulted in a proposed phased improvement that combines; (Phase I) the relocation of Donelson Pike and reconfiguration of the respective interchange with I-40 and (Phase 2) a north-south extension of Harding Place to I- 40, including interchanges at Couchville Pike and Elm Hill Pike. The improvements will address the capacity and safety needs of the SR 255 East Airport Corridor. The resulting opportunity for a public-private partnership will provide the following benefits:

- Provide needed capacity for traffic using the SR 255 corridor between Ezell Pike and I-40,
- Retain access to businesses along SR 255, north of I-40,
- Provide access for new development in the area east of BNA.
- Reduce the potential for crashes on SR 255 by correcting geometric deficiencies,
- Improve the operations of the interchange of SR 255 at I-40,
- Allow for improvement and expansion at BNA,
- Support the growth of economic activity in middle Tennessee and southern Kentucky by improving this important multi-modal center in southeast Nashville-Davidson County



D. Background

SR 255 (Harding Place-Donelson Pike) is an Urban Principal Arterial on the National Highway System, traversing the southeast quadrant of Nashville Davidson County between SR 6 (U.S. 31, Franklin Pike) south of downtown and SR 24 (U.S. 70, Lebanon Pike) east of downtown. See Figure 1 for Location Map. A large percentage of traffic using this route is through traffic between I-65, I-24 and I-40.

Since opening its new terminal in September 1987, the Nashville International Airport has been a major contributor to the rapid growth of southeastern Nashville-Davidson County. Access to the airport terminal is provided by an interchange on SR 255 and from discrete ramps on I-40 serving traffic to and from downtown Nashville. In addition to growth in origin and destination traffic, the airport has also spurred industrial growth along the SR 255 corridor such as the Dell Computer manufacturing campus.

For many years, planning studies have shown the need to increase capacity along SR 255 (Donelson Pike) from Harding Place to Elm Hill Pike and I-40. The interchange of SR 255 with I-40 currently experiences significant peak hour delays. As a result, northbound traffic frequently bypasses the interchange by exiting at the airport entrance and using the westbound discrete entrance ramp onto I-40. Additionally, the substandard geometry of SR 255 is contributing to crash rates in the segment between the airport interchange and I-40.

Early alternatives for increasing the capacity of SR 255 recognized that the widening of Donelson Pike would be difficult and costly, since it required the reconstruction of two taxiway bridges connecting Runway 02R-20L with the terminal and airport facilities at Nashville International Airport. The realignment of SR 255 to the east of the airport would eliminate this restriction and serve future development in the area between I-40 and SR 1 (US 41, US 70S, Murfreesboro Road).

SECTION TWO

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A. <u>Guiding Principle 1: Preserve and Manage the Existing Transportation System</u>

The 25-year vision for Tennessee includes the investment to preserve and maintain the existing roadway infrastructure. Preservation and maintenance projects are intended to apply to projects that are generally related to system modernization, safety, system expansion and enhancement. These projects will be determined according to existing TDOT Sub-Allocated Highway Programs such as the Bridge Replacement Program and the Resurfacing and Maintenance Program. In general, this principle will not be applicable to "New Start" projects.

The East Airport Corridor project contains both "New Start" and maintenance-enhancement of existing facilities. The first phase of the corridor involves the enhancement of the Donelson Pike interchange with Interstate Route 40. The need for the enhancement is threefold. First, the interchange contains several substandard geometric configurations rendering safety concerns. Secondly, the interchange requires expansion to the existing bridge to handle the anticipated traffic volumes. Lastly, the overall interchange signal system should be upgraded to accommodate a single point urban interchange (SPUI). The combination of these three enhancements will allow the interchange to operate safer and more efficiently.

The proposed corridor includes the new construction of an interchange along Interstate Route 40 and the proposed Harding Place Extension. Based upon the traffic volumes utilizing I-40 to access the two interchanges within this project, the project also includes the implementation of a collector-distributor (C-D) system along I-40 between Donelson Pike and the Harding Place Extension. With the C-D system, eastbound I-40 and westbound C-D (west of the Donelson Pike interchange) will result in a lane drop and lane addition, respectfully. Consequently, the eastbound C-D and westbound I-40 (into the C-D) will result in merging and diverging ramps, respectfully. This enhancement to the existing interstate will reduce the merge/weave movements along the interstate.

B. Guiding Principle 2: Move a Growing and Active Population

Accessibility, mobility and congestion relief are the primary factors that influence a projects ability to move a growing and diverse population. Consideration shall be given to projects that illustrate the ability to provide all transportation customers equal access to enhanced mobility and modal choices. Projects that enhance inter-modal connections as well as make destinations as accessible as possible improve the convenience and functionality of the modal choices.

1. Accessibility and Mobility

State Route 255 (Harding Place/Donelson Pike) is an arterial that connects Interstate Routes 65, 24 and 40 in southeast Nashville. Currently SR 255 (Harding Place) traverses an east-west direction and becomes SR 255 (Donelson Pike); a north-south arterial approximately 3.5 miles south of I-40 via a ninety degree intersection. SR 255 is a four-lane urban highway with several at grade intersections.

The existing SR 255 (Donelson Pike) corridor intersects two significant traffic generators; Dell Industries and the Nashville International Airport (BNA). Each of these generators contribute significant vehicular and truck trips to the local transportation network. The majority of these trips are utilizing SR 255 to access the interstate system. The accessibility to these existing trip generators, as well as anticipated additional trip generators, is currently restricted due to at-grade intersections, deficient geometric roadway conditions and limited roadway capacity.

The corridor's ability to attract future growth of inter-modal industries is limited due to the accessibility deficiencies along the corridor. The corridor will require expansion in order to meet the growing demand for air and land cargo operations in Tennessee. The East Airport Corridor project is intended to meet the accessibility and mobility challenges.

The corridor will extend Harding Place from the current terminus at Donelson Pike to Interstate Route 40. The extension will consist of a four-lane divided highway with controlled access. The extension of SR 255 (Harding Place), as a continuous route, will improve the continuity between I-24, I-65 and I-40. Since the extension will parallel the Nashville International Airport, access to BNA and their respective anticipated landside developments will be improved.

2. Congestion Relief

The existing Donelson Pike corridor experiences significant congestion at the intersection with Murfreesboro road and the interchange with I-40. Based upon 2005 design hourly volumes (DHV), capacity analyses were performed on the existing corridor, interchange with I-40 and intersection with Murfreesboro Road. Capacity analyses were also performed using 2025 project DHV. The results of these analyses are shown in Table 1.

The proposed East Airport Corridor will operate in conjunction with the Donelson Pike corridor. Therefore, existing and projected traffic volumes have been applied to the two corridors for both 2005 and 2025. Based upon the proposed corridor, capacity analyses were performed on the Donelson Pike corridor with the Harding Place extension for 2005 and 2025. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: LOS Analyses Results

	Existing		Proposed
	2005	2025	2025
Location of Analysis	LOS	LOS	LOS
I-40 Interchange	E	F	B/C*
North-South Corridor	D	F	C/E*
Elm Hill Interchange w/ Harding Place Ext.	N/A	N/A	A
Couchville Pike Interchange w/ Harding Place	N/A	N/A	A
Extension			

^{*} Denotes "Harding Place Extension" / "Donelson Pike"

The Design Year (2025) levels of service conditions for the entire corridor are graphically respected in the following diagram.

C. Guiding Principle 3: Support the State's Economy

A Project's potential to support economic growth may be measured by the ability to stimulate growth in a region and/or encourage the development of new industries. The indicators used to determine a Project's economic potential include a measurable impact to create jobs, movement of good and freight, and/or the ability to entice an industry to relocate to Tennessee.

The East Airport Corridor Project contains significant potential for each of the measurable indicators. Harding Place currently provides access from Interstate Route 24 to U.S. Highway 70 and the Nashville International Airport. The East Airport Corridor Project will extend Harding Place from U.S. Highway 70 to Interstate Route 40. The extension will provide continuous movement from Interstate Route 24 to Interstate Route 40 with immediate access to the Nashville International Airport.

The Nashville International Airport's Master Plan indicates a significant growth potential for the landside and airside industry. In 2002 the airport hosted 8.04 million passengers (a 46% increase from 1994). The Master Plan further indicates that the number of passengers per year is expected to increase to 10.3 million by 2010. In addition, an anticipated sixty-two thousand (62,000) tons per year of cargo/freight movement will require access to the transportation network. The East Airport Corridor Project is essential to the development and expansion of these airport services to the greater Nashville area businesses.

1. Economic Development

According to the 2000 US Census, the Greater Nashville Area underwent a 24.6% population growth between 1990 and 2000. During the same timeframe, employment grew by 46%. The Nashville International Airport (BNA) is located immediately adjacent to the East Airport Corridor Project. In 1999, the airport employed approximately 4000 people resulting in wages in excess of \$127 million. In addition, the total sales on-site from BNA rose to over \$306 million in 1999.

The implementation of the East Airport Corridor will enable the Nashville International Airport (BNA) to expand for future industries. The corridor will provide immediate and efficient access to the airport as well as Interstate Route 40 and Interstate Route 24. According to the Metropolitan Nashville Airport Authorities 2005 Master Plan, BNA has a direct impact on a 79 county area consisting of over 3 million people. These impacts range from transportation of freight and cargo to tourism. Therefore, expansion of the BNA facilities will increase the State's ability to entice industries to locate in Tennessee. The combination of increased efficiency between Interstate Routes and development of potential new industries will positively affect the State's economy.

2. Goods/Freight Movement

As BNA expands facilities to the east, the amount of land-air cargo is expected to significantly increase. The East Airport Corridor Project is anticipated to serve as a means of direct access to the Interstate system for these new cargo-based industries. Currently, the Donelson Pike corridor experiences 5% of the ADT as heavy trucks. However, the majority of the landside operations for the new cargo-based industries will utilize, almost exclusively, large trucks. Therefore, the total percent of trucks is expected to increase substantially with the implementation of the East Airport Corridor Project.

3. Costs

Preliminary plans and estimated quantities have been developed for Phase I (Donelson Pike Relocation) and a portion of Phase II (Ezell Pike to Murfreesboro Pike). The estimated costs for these sections are based upon 2004 TDOT bid tabulations applied to the preliminary estimated engineering quantities. However, the estimated cost of the remaining section of Phase II is based upon a ratio of overall roadway length of the remaining section to the overall roadway length of Phase I.

Phase I: Donelson Pike Relocation

Length: 1.73 miles

Estimated Phase Cost	\$19,443,000
P.E. Cost	\$ 1,768,000
Construction Cost	\$17,675,000

Phase II: Harding Place Extension

Length: 4.63 miles

Estimated Phase Cost	\$ 131,599,000
P.E. Cost	\$ 11,764,000
Construction Cost	\$117,639,000
ROW Cost	\$ 2,466,000

D. <u>Guiding Principle 4: Maximize Safety and Security</u>

A project's potential to improve the safety of a transportation facility shall be given consideration. Improvements should result in reduced crash risk, benefits to security and ultimately the saving of human life.

1. Crash Data (2001-2003)

Crash data was obtained from the Tennessee Department of Transportation; Short Range Planning and Data Office for the Donelson Pike Corridor from Murfreesboro Pike to I-40. The crash rate for the corridor was calculated to be 1.25 crashes per million vehicle miles traveled (VMT). This rate is lower than the Statewide Average Crash Rate of 3.19 for a four-lane undivided urban highway. However, the majority of the crash locations were located at the intersection of I-40 ramps with Donelson Pike. These were primarily due to substandard geometric deficiencies at these intersections (see the following section for more details). There were no fatalities for the period 2001 through 2003.

2 Geometric Deficiencies

The Interstate Route 40 interchange with Donelson Pike currently contains three geometric deficient locations and the Donelson Pike Corridor contains two additional geometric deficiencies based upon current TDOT and Federal standards. These deficiencies are made more dangerous to motorists due to the high number of airport travelers that are unfamiliar with the local transportation system. In addition, according to the Tennessee Department of Transportation's Project Planning Division nearly seventy (70) crashes were reported within these deficient areas between 2000 and 2002. Of these crashes, seventy-seven percent (77%) were during daylight with no adverse weather or roadway conditions.

The following summarizes the *Safety and Operational Geometric Deficiencies*;

- (1) The first area is the on-ramp from Nashville International Airport to northbound Donelson Pike. This merge/weave section of Donelson Pike has substandard merge distances and sight distance. This is mainly attributed to the horizontal and vertical curve along Donelson Pike.
- (2) The second area is the off-ramp from eastbound Interstate 40 to northbound Donelson Pike. The sight distance is less than desirable due to the horizontal and vertical curve of Donelson Pike. This deficiency is compounded by the left turning vehicles from southbound Donelson Pike to the eastbound on-ramp to I-40.
- (3) The third area involves the off-ramp from eastbound Interstate 40 to southbound Donelson Pike. The ramp enters Donelson Pike by way of an acceleration lane. However, the length of the acceleration lane is substandard and conflicts with a subsequent deceleration lane along Donelson Pike that serves an entrance into the airport.

- (4) The fourth area consists of left turns from the airport onto Donelson Pike (just south of the I-40 off-ramp to southbound Donelson Pike). Due to the existing configuration of Donelson Pike, there is inadequate sight distance for motorists to successfully navigate this maneuver.
- (5) The last area is located just south of the Donelson Pike interchange with the Nashville International Airport. This area suffers from the same deficiencies as the fourth area (inadequate sight distance), as well as minimum gap acceptance along Donelson Pike due to heavy volumes.
- (6) In addition to geometric deficiencies, the overall corridor contains deficient capacity. Widening of the existing corridor is economically infeasible due to two existing airport taxiway bridges across Donelson Pike.

A joint effort between the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) and the Metropolitan Nashville Airport Authority (MNAA) was utilized to develop an optimum strategy to address the many deficiencies previously identified. The fundamental strategy involves the realignment of Donelson Pike and the reconfiguration of the Donelson Pike interchange with Interstate 40 and the extension of Harding Place to I-40.

Both *Safety and Operational* as well as *Capacity* deficiencies have been corrected through the proposed strategy. To further explain, each of the deficiencies listed above have been addressed using the following strategies.

Deficient Section 1 – Recommendation - realignment of Donelson Pike. The proposed alignment would remove the vertical and horizontal curve at the interchange with the Nashville International Airport. In addition, an acceleration lane would be added to Donelson Pike.

Deficient Section 2 – Recommendation - relocating the eastbound off-ramp from I-40 to northbound Donelson Pike to the west side of the interchange and would allow the turning movement to flow through the proposed single point urban interchange (SPUI). This would allow motorists to have a protected turn from the ramp onto Donelson Pike.

Deficient Section 3 – Recommendation - relocate the eastbound I-40 off-ramp to southbound Donelson Pike to the east side of the interchange. This would allow the ramp movements to enter Donelson Pike through a long merge/acceleration lane

Deficient Section 4 – Recommendation – removal of the existing intersection with Donelson Pike. This is made possible through the realignment of Donelson Pike. Instead of having multiple accesses points from the airport to Donelson Pike, a single interchange would be utilized.

Deficient Section 5 – Recommendation – removal of the existing intersection. A new southbound on-ramp from the airport would remove all turning movements. The proposed ramp would connect to Donelson Pike through a standard acceleration lane preceded by a parallel ramp.

Deficient Section 6 – Recommendation – Extension of Harding Place to I-40. The proposed roadway would increase the corridor from four lanes to eight lanes. The proposed roadway would be controlled access allowing for a more efficient corridor.

The proposed new alignment of Donelson Pike would allow for the construction of a single point urban interchange (SPUI) with Interstate 40. The reconfiguration of the Donelson Pike interchange with I-40 to a SPUI in conjunction with the realignment of Donelson Pike enables the capacity of the intersections to significantly increase. The new configuration eliminates deficient storage lengths, removes two left turns and allows three of the interchange's ramps to function as free-flow ramps to and from Donelson Pike. Therefore, the volume of vehicles traversing the intersection is significantly decreased. The decreased volume combined with the removal of these two turning movements result in the overall intersection operating at a LOS of C in Design Year 2025.

E. Guiding Principle 5: Build Partnerships for Livable Communities

Public and community support are factors to gauge the synergy of transportation projects in contributing to livable communities. Criteria are developed to evaluate how well a project improves Tennessee's quality of life.

Nashville International Airport is an important element in the economy of Nashville and middle Tennessee. Therefore, maintaining efficient access to the airport has received broad based community support. Recognizing the need for increased capacity in the SR 255 East Airport Corridor, the Nashville Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has included the realignment of Donelson Pike and reconstruction of the interchange at I-40 into a single point urban interchange in the 2016 Plan for FHWA/State-Funded Projects as part of the current long range plan.

The project is supported by the **Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County**. In a letter dated May 18, 2005, Mayor Bill Purcell wrote:

"The Nashville International Airport continues to be an integral part of the region's economic strength and growth. For that reason, it is important that transportation in and around the airport be constantly improved in order to meet increasing demands.

An important component is the realignment project of Donelson Pike (I-40, Donelson Pike/SR 255). Not only does the proposed project improve

access to the airport and its traffic pattern, but it also is a positive improvement for the surrounding business community. Successful completion of the project will correct existing deficiencies that contribute to abnormally high crash rates on Donelson Pike and relieve air pollution from idling vehicles."

Given the many positive aspects of this project, the Donelson Hermitage Chamber of Commerce endorses this project. On June 6, 2005, the **Donelson Hermitage Chamber of Commerce** voted to adopt a resolution supporting the project. The resolution states:

"The proposed relocation of Donelson Pike and the reconfiguration of its interchange with I-40 is an important goal for Donelson Hermitage, Nashville Metropolitan Davidson County and the State of Tennessee as it improve access to the business community along Donelson Pike North of I-40, as well as correct existing deficiencies that are contributing to abnormally high crash rates on Donelson Pike. It will also reduce air pollution from idling vehicles and will really improve access to the Nashville International Airport as well as ultimately reduce the cost of the planned extension of Harding Place from Murfreesboro Road to I-40."

The Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee has included "Implementation of the Donelson Pike Improvement project" in its list of regional transportation priorities. This list is planned to be submitted to the Board of Directors for endorsement in early 2006.

A "Finding of No Significant Impact" (FONSI) was approved on December 13, 2001 for a plan to extend Harding Place, east of the airport to I-40 and reconnect with Donelson Pike north of I-40. Because the proposed realignment of Donelson Pike and future extension of Harding Place to I-40 does not alter the basic setting of the effected environment approved for the initial project, TDOT believes the "Finding of No Significant Impact" remains valid.

An interchange modification study for the reconfiguration of the Donelson Pike Interchange at I-40 and realignment of Donelson Pike was submitted to the **Federal Highway Administration** in December 2004. The study was approved on March 17, 2005.

F. Guiding Principle 6: Promote Stewardship of the Environment

Environmental considerations determine a project's impact on our air and water. Noise levels, aesthetics, and proximity to historical and cultural resources are also considerations to select projects that promote better stewardship of our environment.

An environmental assessment (EA) was performed for this project location in 1989. A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was issued in 1989 and subsequently in 2001.

Due to the observed low level of environmental consequences in addition to the previous EA and the 1989 and subsequent 2001 FONSI, no substantial impacts have been determined for this proposed project. Therefore, the Tennessee Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration concluded in 2005 that the FONSI is still valid for this project. See Appendix E for confirmation of validity for the FONSI.

G. Guiding Principle 7: Promote Financial Responsibility

Funding considerations address the financial feasibility of projects and their costs to benefit ratio. These criteria are used to reward projects that leverage options such as public-private partnerships or projects that are accompanied by the highest federal matching funds.

The proposed improvement of the SR 255, East Airport Corridor, will improve traffic operations in and around the Nashville International Airport by reducing congestion and improving safety. The project will also benefit the Donelson–Hermitage business community along Donelson Pike north of I-40, as well as the industrial/commercial businesses south of Murfreesboro Road along Harding Place.

The proposed improvement is envisioned to be accomplished in two phases. Phase 1 will relocate Donelson Pike and reconfigure the I-40 interchange at Donelson Pike into a single point urban interchange. Phase 2 will extend Harding Place to the east of the airport terminating at a new connection with I-40. Phase 2 will provide access to new developments in the East Airport Corridor and provide the needed additional capacity to traffic connecting I-65, I-24 and I-40.

The Nashville International Airport in combination with Donelson Pike and I-40 form a vital Inter-modal system connecting passenger and freight air transport, passenger and freight surface vehicles, and bus transit. In the future, rail transit may be another link to this major multi-modal facility serving Nashville and Middle-Tennessee. The relocation of Donelson Pike in Phase 1 will allow the airport to improve their internal roadway system and parking facilities to support projected future growth. As a result, Phase 1 provides an opportunity for a Public-Private Partnership to improve a multi-modal transportation facility that is vital to the economy of Nashville and Tennessee. The combined cost of the Terminal Access Roadway Improvements and Realignment of Donelson Pike is approximately \$43,000,000. The airport will be contributing approximately \$23,000,000 of this cost. Using Federal funds for a portion of the roadway improvements brings the State's portion of the project to approximately \$4,000,000. The result is a 10:1 leveraging of TDOT's roadway funds to improve a vital inter-modal facility. The state will benefit further from the growth in the economy that will be realized in the future.