

Residents react to preferred I-73 northern route

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By Mackenzie Taylor

As with any major road project, there are various opinions about where Interstate 73 should or shouldn't run.

This was evident Thursday afternoon when residents from across the Pee Dee filled Marlboro Civic Center to see which route was chosen as the preferred alternative for the northern portion of the I-73 project.

Dr. Carolyn Prince, a Marlboro County councilwoman, said she was glad to see officials had chosen the central route as the preferred route.

"Well, we are in a depressed area. We're very small, very rural and we need jobs for our citizens," she said. "So, with this interstate coming through the county, maybe this will convince some business owners to place their businesses here and employ our people."

Three alternative routes were identified for the northern portion of I-73. Officials described them as the western, central and eastern routes.

After looking at a map and learning the central route had been chosen as the preferred alternative, Bennettsville resident Alexander McGovern said he worried it could cut into some of the 43 acres he owns.

"I understand you're going to have a road coming through. It's going to come through somewhere," he said. "I don't want it on my land and other people don't want it on their land."

McGovern said he's had his property for 30 years and was looking forward to enjoying it with his wife in the years ahead.

"We have a horse pasture out there and different odds and ends, and I just don't want to lose any of it because I've been there 30 years and I want to kick back," he said.

Many of the people who attended the announcement said they realized, however, the preferred route can't please everyone.

"I don't think any route would have satisfied everyone," Prince said, "and we have to think of the good of all people and not just, you know, the wishes or desires of a few people."

S.C. Department of Transportation officials said the preferred alternative route is not final and could be altered as a result of public input in the coming months.