

STATE BUILDING COMMISSION APPROVES WEST TENNESSEE MEGASITE PROJECT

Citing its potential to bring jobs to an economically-struggling area, the State Building Commission Executive Subcommittee gave its approval Tuesday to the West Tennessee “megasite” project.

The subcommittee’s vote clears the way for state officials to spend \$40 million to purchase about 3,836 acres near Interstate 40 in southwest Haywood County. The site is envisioned as a future home for companies which will provide a new economic engine for west Tennessee.

“As a west Tennessean, I’m proud to support this project,” said Treasurer David H. Lillard Jr., one of the subcommittee members. “Like many areas of our state, unemployment is high in Haywood County and other west Tennessee counties. Development on the megasite has the potential to change that area’s economic fortunes for the better.”

“Megasites in middle and east Tennessee have successfully lured big businesses to those areas – Volkswagen’s plant in Chattanooga and the Hemlock Semiconductor plant in Clarksville,” said Secretary of State Tre Hargett, another subcommittee member. “I am pleased that west Tennesseans will now have the same opportunity to reap the economic benefits associated with a TVA certified megasite.”

The full State Building Commission discussed the project Sept. 10, but did not take a vote because Department of Economic and Community Development (ECD) officials were unable to identify exactly which parcels of land would be targeted for purchase.

At the Sept. 10 meeting, members of the State Building Commission agreed to let the Executive Subcommittee make the final decision about the project’s approval. The subcommittee planned to discuss the project at a meeting last week, but Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development officials requested another delay to work out remaining issues with property owners.

“Anything worth doing is worth doing right,” said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson, another subcommittee member. “Before committing to spend \$40 million of taxpayer money, we just felt it was important to be clear about exactly what land we would be purchasing. Now that ECD has provided the information and assurances we requested, we’re happy to give our support to this worthwhile project.”

The State Building Commission Subcommittee is comprised of the Secretary of State, Comptroller of the Treasury, State Treasurer, and the Commissioner of Finance and Administration, Mr. Dave Goetz.

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Media contacts: Blake Fontenay, communications director, Tennessee Departments of Comptroller, State and Treasury, (615) 253-2668 or blake.fontenay@tn.gov
Roxanna Pierce, communications officer, Tennessee Departments of Comptroller, State or Treasury, (615) 741-4471 or roxanna.pierce@tn.gov