

Concerns aired about planned office project

CHARLES TOWN, W.VA.

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Concerns continued to be raised during a public hearing Tuesday night regarding a proposed \$250 million office-space project next to Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

Developers of the project have promoted it as a way to create 6,000 jobs in Jefferson County and give county residents a place to work without having to commute to nearby metropolitan areas.

That is important, given that by the year 2010, about 60 percent of the county's work force is expected to go out of the county for work, attorney Jim Campbell said during the Jefferson County Planning Commission hearing at the Charles Town Library.

Campbell is one of two attorneys representing the developers.

Despite Campbell's comments, concerns continued to be raised about how the office complex would affect traffic congestion in the Harpers Ferry area and how it would affect Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

The planning commission is expected to decide whether the project is compatible with the county's comprehensive growth plan. It will be up to the Jefferson County Commission to decide whether 410 acres where the complex would be built should be rezoned from agricultural use to commercial use to allow the project.

Planning commission members are expected to make their decision next Tuesday.

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Project: Office plans raise concerns at hearing

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The office complex would be next to Harpers Ferry National Historical Park property along Millville Road off U.S. 340. Park Superintendent Donald Campbell said Tuesday night that he is concerned how glare from office-building windows and noise from the complex would affect the park.

Although Jim Campbell said during his presentation that the office buildings would be below a "tree canopy" that extends about 65 feet into the air, Donald Campbell contended the office complex cannot be hidden.

Donald Campbell acknowledged that the county needs specified areas for commercial development, "but not at an American Civil War battlefield."

Donald Campbell's comment was followed by a round of applause from the audience.

The area around the site was where Confederate Gen. Stonewall Jackson orchestrat-

ed the capture of 12,500 troops during the Civil War. Jackson's capture of 12,500 troops in 1862 was the largest during the Civil War and it remained the largest military capture until World War II, Civil War experts say.

Bob Hardy, another opponent of the office complex, said traffic congestion on U.S. 340 is already a problem and traffic will probably double on the road if county voters approve casino table games for Charles Town Races & Slots on Saturday.

If another 6,000 motorists are added to the road because of the office complex, road conditions will be "suicidal" on U.S. 340, said Hardy, mayor pro tem of Bolivar, W.Va.

Jim Campbell was asked by a planning commission member how he came to the conclusion that 6,000 jobs will be created at the office complex.

Jim Campbell said his clients have spoken with people about using the office space, but it would be "inappropriate to make disclosures."