

The REO Rant: Interstate 440 in Nashville

I am not the first person to write about this. I won't be the last. **Stated plainly: Interstate 440 in Nashville is an embarrassment.** It is an embarrassment to the great city of Nashville. It is an embarrassment to the wonderful state of Tennessee. It is unsightly, unseemly, and unsafe.

There are sections of I440 that are nearly un-drivable unless you actually are trying to cause damage to your vehicle. There are so many potholes that you cannot avoid them. Some of those potholes are so large they have their own ecosystem. I narrowly avoided one the other day that was so big, I'm pretty sure there was a family living in it. (Tiny houses are all the rage these days.)

A handful of years back, I440 was a decent drive. It was never the most pristine or the most luxurious of interstates, but it was well-maintained and did its job. Shockingly[1. This is sarcasm. Nothing about government incompetence shocks me anymore.], some genius decided to do some form of milling[2. Pavement milling (cold planing, asphalt milling, or profiling) is the process of removing at least part of the surface of a paved area such as a road, bridge, or parking lot. Milling removes anywhere from just enough thickness to level and smooth the surface to a full depth removal.] to the road. Now, I realize the interstate was not milled in the complete sense of the word. But something very much like milling was done. The road suddenly had deep lines that ran the entire length. At the time, it seemed as if this was the first step in resurfacing the interstate. How naïve and stupid of me to think something logical like that! Years and years later, no resurfacing has been done. The lines/grooves stayed and the road slowly began to crumble. I mean that literally. The road is crumbling. Falling apart. Eroding. You can see huge chunks

of interstate splayed all over the shoulders of the road every time you are blessed enough to drive it. To make matters worse, when bad weather hits, potholes form. Instead of a few sprinkled here and there like any other interstate in the nation, I440 is simply riddled with them. I don't like hyperbole but in this case, I believe it is warranted. There are more potholes per square foot of I440 than on any road I have ever driven or seen. (And I grew up in Central America.)

I'm not sure who to blame. Tennessee Department of Transportation surely deserves a good portion of the blame. I think the Governor and the Mayor of Nashville deserve some blame as well. Evidently, those in positions of power never have to drive I440 because if they did, it would have been fixed by now. If leaving this interstate to literally fall apart before our eyes is some sort of ploy to make the people of Nashville desperate for some big fix to our traffic problems, then that is sickening and evil. The decision-makers that have allowed this problem to get this bad need to be held accountable, fired, or forced to drive on I440 in a continuous loop from now until the end of time. Or until their vehicle breaks in half. Whichever comes first.

How many more tires have to blow before something is done? How many gallons of coffee must be spilled each time a pothole is hit? How many hubcaps need to be forcibly removed from their wheel only to go spinning down the road alone and afraid? How many children must ask, through tear-stained eyes, "Dear father, why does I440 look like a third world road instead of a beautiful, smooth, and safe interstate in the heart of one of America's 'It' cities?"

Enough is enough.