

Appendix D
COMMUNITY MEETING
TRANSCRIPTS

Appendix D Community Meeting Transcripts

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OASIS COMMUTER RAIL PROJECT

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COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

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PUBLIC HEARING

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APRIL 5, 2011

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7:00 P.M.

2012

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LEBLOND RECREATION CENTER

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RIVERSIDE DRIVE

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2013

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14
15 MS. HALL: Good evening, everyone. Thank you
16
17 all so much for coming out tonight. We've got lots
18
19 of great feedback and have a great crowd. And
20
21 we'll start with a little bit more formal part of
22
23 our presentation tonight. You all are welcome to
24
25 continue mingling. We hope everyone got a feedback

2014

1
2 form. My name is Betty Hall (inaudible) help
3
4 facilitate this portion. Thank you for coming.
5

6 MR. FLUEGEMANN: Good evening. My name is
7
8 Andy Fluegemann. I want to thank everybody for
9
10 coming out tonight. One of the things that's very
11
12 important -- (Inaudible.) Sorry, hopefully this
13
14 works better. Can you still hear me all right?
15
16 Thank you. My name is Andy Fluegemann. I'm the
17
18 acting administrator. I want to thank you all for
19
20 coming out tonight. I really appreciate you taking
21
22 the time now to come to this public intro on the
23
24 Oasis Commuter Rail. One of the things I wanted to

2015

1 mention to you is the purpose of being here tonight
2
3 is to be able to determine the feasibility of the
4
5 commuter rail line function (inaudible) to get.
6
7 Anybody have any questions or comments you'd like
8
9 to make, if you raise your hand we have Laura over
10
11 here that has a mic that can bring it over to you.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm encouraged about
13
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16

17
18 what I heard this evening. I've been coming to
19
20 these meetings three or four years and they keep on
21
22 changing the consultant teams and pretty much give
23
24 the same answers, but tonight I heard something
25

2016

1 different. Instead of just looking at diesel
2
3 commuter trains I heard a commitment from the team
4
5 that you're going to look at different
6
7 technologies, which is very encouraging. Like the
8
9 Cincinnati streetcar or light rail and the
10
11 advantage of those technologies is it allows the
12
13 (inaudible) ground to go through streets where
14
15 people live, like through the heart of Fairfax and
16
17 Terrace Park, Old Milford where the economic
18
19 development in old neighborhoods where this
20
21 tri-state needs help rather than just in green
22
23 fields which favor commuter trains. So, commuter
24
25 trains -- (inaudible). So, we're happy that we're

2017

1
2 looking at new technology and looking at new
3
4 routes. And I agree with that side, too, on the
5
6 roadway. You're looking at ways to get better
7
8 alignment. So, those two things are new. I'm glad
9
10 to hear it and looking forward to hearing more of
11
12 your study results.

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14 MR. FLUEGEMANN: I'd like to clarify the
15
16 alternatives. Once again, there is no alternative
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2018

made, and so as we go through this process we'll
come back with more information and talk about
alternative alignments and technologies. So, I

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just want to clarify that we are going to come back
and let you know what kind of alignments and
technologies that will be conducive.

Anybody else?

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MR. FOWLER: Joe Fowler (sp). I live near
Columbia Tusculum. My question is what type of
metrics are we looking for in order to go through
this project? Is there a certain guideline that
have to be met, cost of construction on subsidies
costs to make sure it's not (inaudible). Can you
speak to that, what type of methods you're looking
for in your studies?

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MR. FLUEGEMANN: I'm going to go ahead and let
Steve Bergman from HDR -- Just to let you know, we
are following the process just like you would for
FTA transit projects, which is assessment,
ridership, things like that. But I'll let Steve
Bergman give you more detail.

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MR. BERGMAN: Can everybody hear okay? What
we're looking at are measurements depending on the
funding source. FTA has certain guidelines and
measurements. We'll be looking at that. It could

23

24 be ridership, benefit cost, cost of effectiveness.

25

2020

1 We also need to look at other things, who's going

2

3 to operate it, ridership numbers, service

4

5 requirements, station locations. So, these are

6

7 some of the things we're going to be looking at.

8

9 Did I answer your question?

10

11 MR. FOWLER: Can you get into specifics on

12

13 that? I mean, if a study was done five years ago

14

15 that said 3,000 people were going to ride it and it

16

17 was going to cost \$400 million to build,

18

19 \$18 million a year to subsidize, if those are the

20

21 numbers and it goes forward in 2012 is this going

22

23 to be a feasible project or are you looking for

24

25 lower cost, high ridership? Can you put some

2021

1

2 numbers to that, this was five years ago and this

3

4 is what we're trying to investigate?

5

6 MR. BERGMAN: I think the unique aspect of

7

8 this project is we are going to look at benefit

9

10 cost analysis, so we'll be looking at the benefit

11

12 side and what the cost is on the different

13

14 alternatives and then comparing those two, come up

15

16 with the most optimal solution. All right? I

17

18 can't give you any specifics on the numbers because

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20 that's going to be in this next phase, but that is

21

22 the overall approach. Once we come up with those

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numbers we'll be reaching out to the public again to try to get an indication whether those numbers make sense and whether this project needs to move forward.

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UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.) One of my concerns is when I look at your survey you've really got your thumb on the scale. You're asking us to identify benefits of the project. Nowhere do you list any potential negative impacts of it. So, obviously you guys are in the business of trying to sell this project to us without really having this be objective. I just hope that -- and I tried to

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get answers about all kind of things and obviously what I've been told all across the room is it's too early for that. So, if you're really going to do an objective cost/benefit analysis I hope you will include a number of things, and that includes what having all the trains run through the east end corridor will do to the property values. Hundreds of millions of dollars of investments in this area and when you get a ways away from the station it's going to be terribly negative. And if you ran one train in each direction just one an hour every day do you know how many trains it is in a year? 17,500 train trips by your house. And that's at

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one an hour. And commuter means far more than that.

I also would just point out to you that it is possible that this would also bring freight traffic into the area, because one of your experts told me that at this time that's something we need to consider. If that's true or not, and I don't know at this point, but something we need to think about.

The other thing I would just remind you is this is a community, it's not a transit corridor.

We already have to deal with barges, Riverside Drive, Columbia Parkway and the freight traffic that is already on the rail line of the Oasis line. I believe that this will be very detrimental to our community and will really stifle development in this area. People will go further out from Clermont County, then drive to a rail center and come in on a train. It makes it more efficient for people to drive from further out. It really is not going to benefit this city.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hi. My comment would be more of a question as far as the land use predictions. A lot of the land use study goes back to 1999 in a lot of ways. Are you going to be

6
7
8 doing a full -- you know, so much has changed both
9
10 demographically and markets with respect to end use
11
12 especially out in the suburbs. I hope you're going
13
14 to take a serious look at the projections.

15
16 MR. BERGMAN: In regard to the land use, we
17
18 have a station that talks about the stations,
19
20 transit oriented development. That's part of our
21
22 project. That's a normal part of the passenger
23
24 rail project. The reason we do that is to make

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2027
1 sure that we maximize the investment that we're
2
3 making. So, yeah, well be looking into land use as
4
5 part of the commuter rail project.

6
7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: My name is Warren. I
8
9 live in Anderson Township. You've designated these
10
11 supposed points of pickup as a suggestion. Why not
12
13 try buses from those points and see what sort of
14
15 traffic you get? I question how many people would
16
17 even want to go Downtown. A percentage of those
18
19 cars coming Downtown have been going right through.

20
21 The other thing I'm interested in, somebody is
22
23 trying to promote this and I wonder where the money
24
25 is coming from and how much all this is costing in

2028
1
2 this survey work. Are there any figures on that?

3
4 MR. BERGMAN: The sponsoring agencies are Ohio
5
6 Department of Transportation is the lead agency.

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11 There are investors that have invested money in the
12 project. Clermont County TID, Hamilton County TID,
13 OKI, SORTA, City of Cincinnati.

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The first part of your question that pertains to the ridership. We will be looking at the ridership numbers as part of the next phase of this project. A lot of the benefit cost is going to be associated with ridership numbers, whether this investment actually makes sense from a ridership perspective.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I live near Portland, Maine half the year. They had rail lines in. They run trains from Portland to Maine and Boston, two big cities. They have a hard time making the money and making them viable. I think this is all a waste of money. I mean, you've got the setups for buses. See if there's a ridership. A lot of the cars going Downtown go right through. You dump Downtown; what are they going to do? They don't shop there. Most of the people on the east side don't.

MR. BERGMAN: Well, I hope they have some of those answers in the next phase of this project.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Going evening. My name is (inaudible). I live in Newtown. My family

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moved up here specifically because of the bike trails and the Little Miami River. We use both very frequently. I appreciate this public forum tonight. It's a good thing you guys are here. I would encourage you as you consider this area to make sure to try to consider as an option

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(inaudible) you know, the trails phenomenon is just something you can ride right now from Loveland, connect to Newtown, up to Springfield. It's a lovely place. In a small way it's also helped the economic development. But to connect to Downtown would be phenomenal. And there's only a few miles still needed to where they have down in Friendship Park. I encourage you all, these millions we spend on studies, you can do it for about 3 million bucks.

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MR. BORTS: Good evening. My name is Arnold Borts (sp.). I'm part of Towne Properties and also a resident of Columbia Tusculum. We're in the development business as well and we wouldn't invest this much time and effort in what you all are doing, in fairness to you all, unless we had a market study that told us there was a reason, there was a demand that should be met by the development. I find it curious that you all have done all this

15
16
17 work without having any conference or proof that
18
19 there's a demand, as the gentleman from Anderson
20
21 Township just indicated, that there's any demand at
22
23 all for usage and what makes sense.

24
25 Also, one of your questions on one of your
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1
2 boards, you indicated that in order to handle at
3
4 least the DMU technology, tracks would have to be
5
6 upgraded which would allow freight to return to the
7
8 neighborhoods. And the City of Cincinnati expected
9
10 getting the trains off of the river in particular.
11
12 And I really don't think a lot of folks here are
13
14 even that's ecstatic about bringing it back.

15
16 Your own materials indicated that the stations
17
18 would be between 1 and 3 miles apart from one
19
20 another, which tells me that you're not serving the
21
22 neighborhoods through which the trains are passing;
23
24 they're simply passing through the neighborhoods if
25
2034 stations are 2 or 3 miles apart.

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3 I want to underline what's been said by
4
5 several folks already about the solution, the right
6
7 solution consistent with the City's effort to take
8
9 the East End of town -- per the East End plan that
10
11 was completed maybe 15 years ago, this was supposed
12
13 to be a focal point for developing, using the asset
14
15 of the river which is unique obviously to this part
16
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19
20 of the city as a focal point for residential
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22 development. What concerns me is that this kind of
23
24 equipment and this right-of-way simply is not going
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2035

1 to address that. And the idea of a light
2
3 rail/streetcar technology complemented by the
4
5 extension of the bike trail satisfies lots of
6
7 goals. It takes the people who do want to come
8
9 from the East into the center of the city there
10
11 swiftly. It serves the neighborhoods through which
12
13 it passes rather than simply passing through the
14
15 neighborhood. And it could be a catalyst for
16
17 additional economic development adding to our tax
18
19 base. The DMU technology would be precisely the
20
21 opposite. We have a lot of so-called development
22
23 now along the river already. The last team of
24
25 consultants that was in tried to persuade some of

2036
1
2 us that, well, we can do transit oriented
3
4 development. Well, we had development along the
5
6 river thanks to Ted Berry, International Friendship
7
8 Park, Sawyer Point Park. We have park oriented
9
10 development. The transit oriented development has
11
12 been successful around metro stations in
13
14 Washington, D.C. The situation here is very
15
16 different.

17
18 So, sorry I made a speech. The simple
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question is has a market study been done to
determine ridership, and, if not, who plans to do

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it and what's the time line for getting that
completed, which we would have done as the first
step in this whole process.

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MR. BERGMAN: I wanted to let everyone know
there's a long history with this project. What we
know is what was given to us. What we're trying to
do is refine and determine if it is a viable
project. Now, the market assessment and that type
of work, that is part of our scope. It will be
done in a couple phases. But we have built that
into the ODOT process and we plan on moving forward
with that. So, hopefully that answered your
question.

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MR. BORTS: So, it hasn't been done?

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MR. BERGMAN: It has not been done. It will
be done. It's part of our scope.

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UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hi. Leroy (inaudible)
from Downtown. I would really like to endorse and
emphasize what the man just made. I was speaking
with you earlier about DMUs versus electric and
about freight lines and stuff. And I think that
you brought that forward very well. The project
could be of tremendous benefit or a real detriment

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1 depending upon these technical decisions. If you
2
3 go with DMUs and stations that are far apart and
4
5 diesel, very large diesel-powered vehicles that are
6
7 noisy -- and, you know, diesel exhaust is a place I
8
9 work around a lot -- versus an electrified system
10
11 that may be coordinated with Cincinnati streetcar
12
13 and all that. And I know that some of these out
14
15 plans after the initial lines did include the same
16
17 corridor and everything. So, I would like to ask
18
19 you what the opportunities are for people as you go
20
21 forward to try to refine this and have input that
22
23 definitely is in the details. And have you put in
24
25 these details like the concept of having transit in
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1
2 this corridor could be a very, very positive thing
3
4 for the city and the suburban commuters alike, or
5
6 it could be detrimental to this corridor. So, what
7
8 opportunities and how could people have an impact
9
10 on that going forward. Thank you.

11
12 MR. BERGMAN: This is not going to be the
13
14 first set of action. What we want to do is keep
15
16 coming out, getting input like we're doing tonight,
17
18 but also get your ideas here. We haven't
19
20 pre-determined anything. Like I said, we've got
21
22 information that was presented to us. What we need
23
24 to do is refine that information, present
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4 information, you know. It's going to have to be a
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6 community decision. It's not going to be my
7
8 decision. So, that's why we're here. And I hope
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10 we were at least -- it was at least apparent that
11
12 we were trying just to provide information. We
13
14 don't have anything pre-determined, let's put it
15
16 that way. The things we said we'd be looking at,
17
18 the stations are things we're going to be looking
19
20 at and (inaudible).

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22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hi. I'm from
23
24 Newtown/Anderson area. I'm just wondering

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1 ultimately who are the decision makers so when all
2
3 of the studies are done, all the information is
4
5 quantified, who makes the decision? Will it be a
6
7 vote?

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9 MR. FLUEGEMANN: No. This is part of a neat
10
11 process. What we're doing is following the process
12
13 and the partnership here with Ohio Department of
14
15 Transportation, with Hamilton County, Clermont
16
17 County, City of Cincinnati and SORTA. That is the
18
19 partnership. When we go through the process we
20
21 will either be working with FTA as a cooperating
22
23 agency, which is the Federal Transit Authority, or
24
25 FHMA, which is administration. When we get to that

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2 decision that is when they will sign off if it's a
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7 good project as far as clearance. So, we will have
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9 public involvement, come back, show alternatives,
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11 or after all this public involvement and after all
12
13 of our studies are done we may come back with a
14
15 no-build alternative. That decision isn't made.
16
17 We won't know that until another 12 months. But at
18
19 that point we will let you know what we find. And
20
21 then if we do have it referred, the decision
22
23 making -- actually Ohio Highway Public Transit
24
25 Authority to see if it's feasible, affordable, and
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2 then we'll work through the process on identifying
3
4 funds for construction.

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6 Someone asked what's NEPA. NEPA is the
7
8 National Highway Policy Act. And it's an
9
10 environmental policy that we follow for all federal
11
12 actions. So, all federal dollars that are spent on
13
14 transportation go through NEPA process. And ODOT
15
16 has a NEPA process which we follow.

17
18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hi. My name is Roger
19
20 (inaudible). I'm a Columbia Tusculum resident. It
21
22 seems to me that with mounted streetcar technology
23
24 that there would be a lot more stops on the way
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2045
1 from Eastgate Mall to Downtown. And I didn't know
2
3 if there were any benchmarks for every time there's
4
5 a stop on a line like this what kind of development
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10 dollars are generated in terms of new apartment
11 buildings, new retail, all those other things. Is
12 there sort of a rule of thumb that every time you
13 have a stop there's this much development and
14 economic activity?
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20 MR. FLUEGEMANN: We don't have that
21 information right now. As we go through this
22 process with transit oriented development wherever
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1 those transit stations are they could be on site
2 specific on what's their land use, zoning or
3 whatever. But we don't have that answer now. Does
4 that answer your question on the development that
5 may occur on the transit station?
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10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Are you going to study
11 that? Will you study?
12
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14 MR. FLUEGEMANN: Yeah. As part of the transit
15 oriented development, each transit station, see
16 what land use is around it and what kind of
17 ridership and see what kind of land use or zoning
18 that may come out of it. But that could be a local
19 decision and that's something that we'll be looking
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1 at as we go through this process.
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4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Will we be told exactly
5 what parts? I live in Adams Place. Will we be
6 told exactly where the funding is coming from for
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this project, what it's going to be, not just initial but ongoing funding? And having lived in places where they have a lot of stations, I know that they are going to need ongoing security, as well, because they are attractive for people who kind of hang out there. It's a nice, warm place to sleep. There's a lot of cost involved in this

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besides the original cost of building, which I'm sure will be substantial. And in that case do we have a chance, as part of the public, to actually vote on this at all? In other words, it's what the committee decides in terms of the cost and the benefit no matter how they evaluated the benefit?

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MR. FLUEGEMANN: Let me answer the first question. The current study is being funded through federal funds. That's the current study. We have not identified any funds for right-of-way or construction. As we go through the process in the next 12 months one of the things the consultant

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is doing is a business case assessment, a financial plan, things that you guys are asking about in terms of what is the capital cost, what is the annual cost of operation, what are the relevant (inaudible). That information will be gathered over the next 12 months and be presented as part of

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16 the public involvement process so everybody knows
17 what kind of decision making we're making and what
18 we're basing it on.

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As far as making this a vote, at the time we
have a preferred alternative or cost and we have a

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financial plan identified then we'll have to
determine, you know, how will the partners be able
to fund that. And I can't answer whether it's
going to go to a vote or what. It's really how
we're able to determine the funding. That's my
answer.

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UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hi. My name is
(inaudible) I represent (inaudible) in
Norwood/Fairfax area. Have similar systems been
looked at in the country or are these systems
sustainable, do they require subsidies in the
future?

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MR. FLUEGEMANN: I'll let Steve Carroll answer
that one.

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MR. CARROLL: These systems have been looked
at across the country. There is no transit system
in the country that pays for itself. So, if that's
what you're hanging your hat on, you're not going
to hear that from us. We will come up with what it
costs per rider. We will come up with what we

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think is going to be what we'll call the subsidy that has to come from someplace else that's not being generated. But there are all kinds of other revenue streams that factor in, such as the

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economic development and all these other things that drive costs and produce revenues for these kinds of projects. And there are a lot of success stories out there. But until we get the numbers we can't tell you these things today. That's part of the effort that we're undergoing here. It's part of this public process. It's part of what the federal government requires us to do. So, hopefully this helps you. We're going to get you the answers that you want. It may not be what you want to hear; it may simply be what we've already said, that we don't have a project to recommend.

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But we're going to be honest and say what we think the numbers are.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The problem is we saw this come about in 2000 and we've been hearing conceptual since then and it's 2011. We want answers. We want to know what it's going to cost, where it's going to be, who it's going to affect. And we're tired. We're an expanding business here in this community and we're worried about whether

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22 or not our investment dollars are going to be ill

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24 spent by investing in a company that's going to

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1 have a highway (inaudible) can't say highway -- a

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3 rail, a mobile system is confusing for everybody.

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5 Nobody knows what they're supporting here. If you

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7 check an X over there on that, it looks like you're

8

9 in support of either one. There's no X to check

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11 that I don't support either one. There is no

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13 alternative option on that sheet.

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15 MR. CARROLL: There's none on that sheet, but

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17 there will be a no-build option as part of our

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19 effort.

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21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: But we're here in

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23 effort right now.

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25 MR. CARROLL: I understand.

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2 MS. BECKTOL: I'm Jeanne Beckett (sp.). I

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4 manage the office building at the corner of Pete

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6 Rose Way and (inaudible). I'm also an Anderson

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8 Township employee. I'm going to tell you -- what

9

10 you're saying -- that the development of the site

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12 that's next to my building is being held up by this

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14 potential rail station. My buddy put over

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16 \$20 million in to make an eyesore in that corner of

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18 Downtown look beautiful. And we sit next to a

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20 horrible eyesore. We've been told since 1998

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something is going to happen there in 2000, 2007.

Here we are again. How long are we going to have to sit on waiting to find out what's going on?

MR. FLUEGEMANN: To answer that part of this study, we finally got it underway. We will in 12 months have a preferred alternative, be it an alternative or a no-build alternative. So, we should have that answer for that within the next 12 months.

MS. BECKTOL: For Oasis?

MR. FLUEGEMANN: For the whole Oasis.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Maybe you could hear it better without this.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No; use it.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. We look at the map there is Columbia Parkway between what you propose and where the people live. How many places are there that cross Columbia Parkway on foot? Doesn't seem to be convenient to anywhere.

MR. FLUEGEMANN: Thank you for your comment.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Just a follow-up question to the comment about alternatives will be studied. What do you mean alternatives will be studied, alternative routes, different locations using the Wasson line, 71 light --

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3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What alternatives are
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5 you referring to?

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looking at the Oasis -- the existing rail corridor

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from the Transit Center Downtown Cincinnati out to
Milford. So, if you go through on our one station
it shows you how it goes out from here, out to
Lunken, goes north up to Fairfax and Fairfax out
through the Newtown area and then out to Milford.
That is what we're here to talk about. If you have
comments and things that you want to bring to our
attention, that is great. That is what we need to
hear. You mentioned the Wasson line. If that's
one of your concerns or issues, let us know about

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that so we at least have a comment on it and can
address it here or look into it.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: With all due respect,
(inaudible). My name is (inaudible). I'm here
Downtown, Riverside Drive, directly across from the
station. I'd like to follow-up on what a person
talked about and what was said. It appears that
you've come in with one idea, which is basically to
use this corridor and to use diesel. And you
haven't done any studies, you haven't been able to
give us any information that you have looked at
what would happen with stations, what kind of
development would happen, what kind of ridership

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there will be. And it appears to me that there is
an agenda to put this thing in. And I think you're

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9 hearing from a lot of people we're not very happy
10 about hearing that. There are a lot of
11 alternatives, rails to trails. There are people
12 who would like to see this developed as a wonderful
13 residential business area connected to a wonderful
14 Downtown that is really finally starting to get
15 going and is amazing. And I think I'm sensing that
16 there's a lot of frustration in this audience with
17 the fact that you're not giving us much in the way
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1 of answers and none of this has been really thought
2 through.
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6 MR. FLUEGEMANN: Thank you.
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8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I want to make sure
9 that your answer gets clarified because I had the
10 same question. The alternatives that you have
11 shown on the maps here are old alternatives that
12 show the existing Oasis corridor and shows some
13 variations off that corridor on a major Redbank
14 Road expansion. But tonight when I walk around
15 these tables some people said, well, if you change
16 the technology that's electric, it could go in the
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1 streets, and if it could go in the streets then it
2 could go to neighborhoods, go through the middle of
3 Fairfax, Mariemont, Terrace Park and Old Milford.
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7 So, to answer the question, is that alternative

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going to be studied or not? It's still in the Oasis corridor. Is it an alternative for ridership like that or not? I think that's the question we'd like clarified.

MR. FLUEGEMANN: The comments that will be made and will be looked at is you're talking about technology. If you come back with comments about

technology and a better way of doing something and we go through this process, we will see what the technology is and how to make this happen. But I just want to make sure you understand we have not identified any alternatives or any alignments. This is part of the process. So, please make your comments very clear to us so that we can address them as we go along.

And, you know, one of the things that appears to be a common thing is that we don't have anything here that's new. That is correct. The last federal action on this project, the corridor, was in 2006. So, five years have passed. We are

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brushing that information off, presenting it, bringing in new information that we have, and to get your input to update the public's input and get your comments so we can go forward with the process. And I really appreciate your time today.

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Are there any other questions?

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UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: With all due respect,
most people in this audience are not transportation
engineers, so how are we supposed to come up with
alternative technologies and alternative routes
when you're agencies and you're consulting firms
and are supposed to be doing the work and looking
out for our best interest.

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MR. FLUEGEMANN: That's why we're going
through the process. We're not to your part in the
process yet. You're jumping ahead. We will go
through the process in the next 12 months.

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MR. PARK: I'm Bob Park. I live up the hill
in O'Bryanville. I'm totally in favor of mass
transit. I don't want to see any more highways.
The problem with this proposed set of alignments is
it makes it look like the Clermont County transit
system. For that to be viable in Cincinnati it's

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got to pick up a few people in Cincinnati. The
current plan does not do that. If it went over the
Wasson line, for example, and picked up some other
existing rights-of-way maybe it can service lots of
Cincinnati neighborhoods. It doesn't look like
it's doing that now.

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MR. FLUEGEMANN: Thank you.

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18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: My name is (inaudible).
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20 I've been going to meetings about this project
21
22 since the late 1990s with the (inaudible) and OKI.
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24 It is pretty frustrating to sit here and hear that
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1 you don't have answers to these questions when this
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3 has been studied for better than ten years. And
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5 before that the highway alternatives has been
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7 journalized on the books for decades. I just want
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9 to say that I'm firmly opposed. We don't have to
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11 have the highway. We don't have the money to
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13 build. And furthermore we've had serious problems
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15 with global warming and climate change and they're
16
17 not going to get better if we have more highways
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19 and driving. We need mass transit that works for
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21 communities, works with people, that works with the
22
23 neighborhoods, not that goes through the
24
25 neighborhoods as so many of our highways already

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2 have.

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4 MR. SCHNEIDER: My name is John Schneider.
5
6 I'm a resident of Downtown Cincinnati. I would
7
8 like to see you set a specific alternative of the
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10 Cincinnati streetcar lines, not use a Transit
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12 Center which is removed from Downtown Cincinnati
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14 and send the Cincinnati streetcar line out along
15
16 this. I don't think diesel is the answer in these

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21 kind of neighborhoods. I think they will allow

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23 freight trains and operate if they design this

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25 project. Cincinnati streetcar industry and

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2 right-of-way would be a much more neighborhood

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4 friendly alternative. We do need to (inaudible).

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6 You should probably keep them out of the city.

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8 MR. FLUEGEMANN: Thank you for your comment.

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10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Chris (inaudible). I

11

12 live in Anderson. I've been out there since '84,

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14 so I've done the Eastern Avenue community, Columbia

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16 Tusculum route, and I know that transit option

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18 would be very advantageous for our children and

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20 grandchildren because all three of my daughters are

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22 asthmatic, as I am, and the last thing we want is

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24 diesel next to where people are exercising. So,

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1 I'd be happy to give you information, as much

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3 information on that as you'd like. So, the

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5 electric option makes a lot of sense. It's quieter

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7 for the neighborhoods. I don't see the connections

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9 through the east side to Xavier, to UC where a lot

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11 of students go. A transportation plan, a mass

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13 transit plan that connects the major work centers

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15 and educational centers is one that works. And

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17 it's frustrated me for years that this project was

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19 not in synch with the Cincinnati streetcar. These

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projects have to be planned together and then they
make sense. They build the foundation for our
future that serves us. And think about the
alternative. We need to have an option for them.
It's not safe for them to be in cars after a
certain point. And young drivers, we have to have
options for them. It doesn't have to be in a car.
So, having the transit option is important and I
don't want to see that lost in concern over
(inaudible).

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MR. FLUEGEMANN: Thank you.

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MR. LESS: My name is Gary Less (sp.). I live
at Captain's Watch, Downtown. I really wanted to
ask the audience. Let's assume they haven't done
their due diligence to find out. Let's assume that
the product, being the line, is going to go in. Is
there anybody here that wants heavy diesel trains
on the line?

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UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No.

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UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No.

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UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No.

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UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. Number two, is
there anybody here that is against a bike trail
being associated with this corridor?

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UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No.

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UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No.

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UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

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MR. FLUEGEMANN: Thank you. Are there any

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other questions?

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UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: This might be a simple

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question, but the route that you're proposing is

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basically Metro Route 28. Has that been looked at,

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what the ridership of that is? I know that it only

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goes out to Fairfax until like six o'clock and

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doesn't go out all the way out to Milford after

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6:00 p.m. I'm guessing there's a reason for that.

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How has that been evaluated in conjunction with

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this?

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MR. FLUEGEMANN: That's a good comment and

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we're going to look into that, to answer you're

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comment.

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MR. OSTENFELD: My name is Gary Ostefeld.

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And as a local welder I am very much in favor of

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the whole commuter mindset, however this project

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here I think needs to be looked at from a business

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perspective as Mr. Borts pointed out. The first

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two issues should be what is it going to cost and

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what's the benefit. I look at other cities like

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Atalanta, probably one of the most successful mass

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transportations in the entire country. The density

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of (inaudible) is extremely dense the entire way

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and it's ridden throughout the night every night.

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Look at the density on all these maps. There is

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none. This is going right through the dense part

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of the city.

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So, another question that I would pose, if I

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were you the first thing I would do rather than try

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and make a guinea pig out of Cincinnati and

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reinvent the wheel is I want to look at 50 cities

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in the country that represent Cincinnati such as

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St. Louis in age, size, demographics, and look at

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their systems. And I'm not an expert on that, but

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what I do know is I don't know any cities this size

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that have mass transportation. Why do we have to

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be a guinea pig? Let's do a simple business

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approach before we spend hundreds of thousands of

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dollars on research for 20 years and get nowhere.

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MR. FLUEGEMANN: Thank you for your comment.

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Any more questions? We'll, I want to thank you

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very much, very, very much. This was very, very

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helpful to me. I'm glad you guys were able to stay

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here and engage your comments. We will have all

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these comments included in the record. I do

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encourage you to make -- fill out written comments

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3 and send them in. You can check the website
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8 easterncorridor.org and look at the Oasis line
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10 portion of it. There will be two other public
11
12 involvement meetings identical to this one, one
13
14 tomorrow night in Fairfax, Fairfax Community
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16 Center, and then there's another one on Thursday
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18 evening at the Milford High School. So, those are
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20 just repeats of tonight. We're just taking it to
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22 the other portions of the corridor. So, thank you
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24 again very much.
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1 (Public hearing concluded at 8:00 p.m.)
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I, Kelly A. Graff, do hereby state that I was authorized to and did stenographically report the foregoing proceedings and that the typewritten transcript is a true record of said proceedings.

Dated this 8th day of May, 2011.

Kelly A. Graff

OASIS COMMUTER RAIL PROJECT

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

PUBLIC HEARING

APRIL 6, 2011

7:00 P.M.

VILLAGE OF FAIRFAX

RECREATION CENTER

TRI-COUNTY COURT REPORTING & VIDEOTAPE SERVICE
886 Bradbury Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45245

Tricountycourt@aol.com

PHONE (513) 732-1477

FAX (866) 275-8791

MS. HALL: Good evening, everyone. If I could have your attention just for a minute. Thank you, all, so much for coming out tonight, giving us a few minutes of your time on this gorgeous evening. I'll keep track of the Reds game; if anyone is interested we'll send out scores throughout the night.

We're going to get started with the public comment and Q-and-A portion of the evening. All boards are going to stay here for the rest of the night, so feel free to get up and wander around as we do that, but we're going to take a few minutes now to get your feedback, which is why we're here tonight. So, thanks again for coming. Make sure you've got your feedback forms. Leave those with us tonight.

My name is Betty Hall and I'm with the project team and I'm going to introduce you to Steve Bergman, who's going to take it from here -- or, Andy Fluegemann, who's going to take it from here.

Mr. FLUEGEMANN: Good evening, everyone. Thank you for coming tonight. My name is Andy Fluegemann. I'm the acting plan administrator for ODOT District 8. And we're here tonight to talk

3

1 about the Oasis Commuter Rail. It is one of many
2 components of the multi-modal project called the
3 Eastern Corridor. So, what we wanted to do is
4 actually brush off all the information that we've
5 had. The last action on this was done in 2006.
6 There has been about five years has happened since
7 then, so we're here tonight to get a baseline for
8 this study that we're going to be performing in the
9 next 12 months. All the information here is what
10 has been there from 2006, but it has been updated.
11 So, I hope you've had time to go through all the
12 information and get some ideas about the
13 information that we have presented.

14 But one of the good things is that we're here
15 to get your questions and answers and comments.
16 And we really want to engage you because this is
17 very important for our process, very important to
18 find out what your issues and concerns are and if
19 you're supportive of the project or not. So, if
20 you want to, we can start taking some questions.

21 MS. HALL: Before we start I wanted to set a
22 couple ground rules. Just make sure when you do
23 have the microphone that you do hold it very close.
24 Last night we had some issues with being able to
25 hear everyone, so we would really appreciate that.

4

1 And also if you could keep your comments to two

2 minutes because we'd really like to hear from
3 everyone who's interested in sharing. So, I'll
4 open it up to the first question or comment. And,
5 too, if you would be interested in saying your name
6 and where you're from.

7 MS. JOHNSON: I'm Laura Johnson. I'm a City
8 of Cincinnati resident. I love to bike. I love to
9 go out in my canoe. I'm a member -- at least I'm
10 on the e-mail list for Ohio River Trail. I just
11 got here. And please stop me at two minutes. I
12 looked at the rail technology poster and it doesn't
13 seem to match up with the e-mail I got from Ohio
14 River Trail that talked about being able to have
15 both a rail-like transportation system along with a
16 permanent bike path. They're talking about street
17 cars that would fit in this 50-foot area that you
18 have allocated for the train. And I'm wondering if
19 that's still under consideration or if that
20 alternative is not being considered any longer.

21 Mr. FLUEGEMANN: Well, tonight what we're here
22 for is to do the kickoff and to get information.
23 In the next 12 months we'll be looking at
24 technologies. So, what we're here for is the
25 overall project. What we still need to find out is

5

1 what kind of ridership, what kind of operation are

2 we looking at, what kind of vehicle technology.
3 You know, you mentioned the different ones. We do
4 have a board back there that shows all the
5 different type of technologies available today.
6 But we need to get your concerns and issues to find
7 out what is the right technology to do the Oasis
8 Commuter Rail.

9 MS. JOHNSON: Well, I assume some of them can
10 accommodate a co-located permanent bike path and
11 some can't. I think having the co-located bike
12 path would be a phenomenal asset to the community
13 recreation-wise, economic-wise, health-wise. I
14 think you only have to look at what's happened with
15 the Little Miami River Trail and it's a huge
16 resource for this community, unlike any in the rest
17 of the country I'd say. Thank you.

18 Mr. FLUEGEMANN: Thank you for your comments.

19 MS. HALL: Anyone else?

20 MR. RILEY: Thank you. I just want to repeat
21 comments that I made last night at the LeBlond
22 Community Center. I'm Rick Riley (sp.). I'm a
23 real estate developer. And I don't think you
24 realize what an opportunity this Eastern Corridor
25 study is offering us. Besides building a road that

6

1 will alleviate some of the congestion, this whole
2 idea of rail on the eastern side can do a lot of

3 things for us if we pick the right technology and
4 right route. And they have to study this.

5 So, here's one idea the people in the Fairfax
6 and Madeira and Mariemont and Terrace Park and Old
7 Milford should consider. If you look at the map
8 and all the streets and density, it's all in the
9 old communities. That's where the people are right
10 now. And 50 is one idea where this rail track
11 could go, right in the street, using the same lanes
12 as cars just like Minneapolis, Denver, Charlotte,
13 Portland, you name it. If you've been to any of
14 these cities, their streetcars or light rail go
15 right with the cars in the street. And every time
16 they have a station there's this huge development
17 that occurs, you know, apartments, condominiums.
18 Because there's already a walkable community with
19 retail there, you don't have to build it.

20 So, if you want to have ridership that's
21 immediate and you want to have economic
22 development, that is easy to do because there's
23 already assets nearby that you can walk to if you
24 want to put this on 50 right near the center of
25 town. And people that are living in Mariemont,

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1 that seemed to work out good there with the condos,
2 they can go to work down at P&G, get rid of the
3 car. If you're aging, you don't have to have

4 somebody driving to the train station; you can walk
5 to the train station.

6 So, anyway, it's a big opportunity if you want
7 to look at the benefits of this new technology that
8 can serve old communities or we can do the
9 corridor, the commuter train, and it will create
10 some new development as well as brand new
11 development. There's the same number of stops as
12 there would be in Old Milford, Terrace Park,
13 Mariemont, Fairfax. This is the same four stops
14 and brand new areas near gravel pits, near open
15 space that would create new urban communities with
16 the same kind of services, but a brand new
17 development which is good, too.

18 So, you have to decide whether you want to get
19 the development if you live in these older
20 communities or you want additional development to
21 occur in the Little Miami Valley. It's a real
22 simple choice, but it requires you to understand
23 what this technology offers, electric technology
24 versus the commuter train typical of diesel
25 technology. So, it's a big decision. They're

8

1 offering you a chance to look at new alternatives,
2 not the old technology, not the old alternative
3 that was just along a roadway.

4 MR. MORAN: My name is Chris Moran. And I'd

5 like to carry that idea forward. I would like to
6 see -- under one of the purposes is to have system
7 linkage, and it would seem to me that system
8 linkage would be enhanced if the same rail transit
9 that goes out into this area could connect with the
10 Cincinnati streetcar rail transit so that you would
11 have system linkage and you could take people to
12 various spots once they get in and out of the urban
13 area out here or from here back in the urban area.
14 So, something on that order. I think an electric
15 streetcar is also quieter and easier on the
16 environment in terms of air pollution. Thank you.

17 MR. BERGMAN: Just to clarify that question a
18 little bit, the commuter rail service that we're
19 looking at or the passenger rail service is from
20 Milford and will end up at the Riverfront Transit
21 Center which is on Second Street. And the
22 streetcar is just above that, one level above that.
23 So, there is some linkage there. The Boathouse to
24 the Transit Center is a length that we need to fill
25 in, obviously. So, there's really no existing line

9

1 in that area, so we're looking at a new rail
2 alignment through there.

3 MR. MORAN: I'm suggesting that it would be
4 easier not to forget the new rail line, which is
5 such a challenge and has been on the books as

6 challenging for years with this project, and go
7 right through the center of town, connecting it
8 with the Cincinnati rail line so you don't have to
9 climb the hill.

10 MR. DAWSON: My name is David Dawson. I live
11 in Mt. Lookout. And I, too, agree, that it seems
12 to me it would be really wise for the rail
13 component of this to study a closer linkage with
14 the Cincinnati streetcar project as it is currently
15 envisioned, because when you do have to switch
16 modes, even if it's switching from the Transit
17 Center and going upstairs -- the folks with the
18 (inaudible) well know, you lose riders.

19 And also I believe you'll run into a lot less
20 objections, fewer objections if you have electric
21 streetcar which can operate up to 45 or I believe
22 50 miles per hour in open right-of-way compared
23 with running diesel DMUs especially down along
24 Eastern Avenue or Riverside Drive. So, I hope that
25 will be considered.

10

1 MR. BERGMAN: Yeah, there are actually a
2 number of different things that we're going to be
3 looking at, not only technology-wise, but, you
4 know, what kind of service, what kind of capacity
5 are we going to have, what's the ridership, what's
6 the station, how many stations. So, there's a

7 number of criteria we're going to be looking at
8 which will help us determine what is the right
9 technology. So, that's what we're going to be
10 doing in the next phase of this project and be
11 coming back to you with a lot of that information
12 and hopefully get more feedback.

13 MS. MALOTT: Hi. My name is Paige Malott
14 (sp.) and I'm from Newport, Kentucky. And I
15 actually worked on a documentary about the
16 Cincinnati subway system, which you all might know
17 had a dismal end. I'm really excited to see light
18 rail being proposed in Cincinnati. And hopefully
19 this goes well. This will be the first leg of many
20 routes to come in the City. So, if you're looking
21 at it, well, maybe I'd like it to go here, there,
22 if you're on board with the first leg of it, then
23 we can expand. And I'd really like to see that
24 happen, go out to Kentucky, go out to other areas.

25 And one of the most important things to

11

1 remember is economic development does occur around
2 these rail lines. Businesses can come in and bring
3 new things to the community, revitalize
4 communities, help people get around easier.

5 My folks live out on the East End here and
6 they are the aging generation. One of my concerns

7 is helping them get around in their older years
8 when they're unable to drive. And I think that
9 light rail coming out to this end of town, allowing
10 them to get around and have more freedom is a
11 wonderful opportunity for them.

12 MR. KEPKE: My name is Martin Kepke (sp.).

13 I'm a resident of Mariemont. And I want to
14 corroborate with what -- your name again --

15 MS. MALOTT: Paige Malott.

16 MR. KEPKE: -- Paige just said. I think it's
17 real important that this rail, if we're going to
18 have economic development, I'd like the existing
19 communities that have development or struggling
20 with development trying to create economic
21 development to benefit from this system rather than
22 have competition or a competing economic
23 development happening out beyond the existing
24 communities.

25 And aging in place, those residents of

12

1 Mariemont can then walk to these stations within
2 their community and don't have to drive down to a
3 park-and-ride kind of a situation, is I guess what
4 I'm thinking might happen if this happens out in
5 the valley or in the flood plain down there.

6 MS. DALL: Thank you. My name is Elizabeth
7 Dall (sp.). I actually live in Fairfax here and I

8 work Downtown. And I'm in favor of the rail
9 system, several of the different options for many,
10 many reasons, but I also want to point out I don't
11 know how many people here live on the corridor and
12 also work either Downtown or in other nearby
13 neighborhoods, but my parking downtown just
14 increased from \$75 a month to \$125 a month and I
15 think that that is only going to continue to
16 increase. And it's become a huge problem. The
17 spaces are running out. There are waiting lists
18 for most of the lots that I've looked at and most
19 of the garages that I looked at. There are some
20 new parking garages planned now Downtown, but
21 frankly I don't want to live in a city that's just
22 full of parking garages. So, I would almost rather
23 there not be more parking built and new
24 transportation alternatives instead.

25 So, I thank you for working on this project

13

1 and I just hope that you understand that there are
2 people like me who really support it. Thank you.

3 MR. PADGIN: My name is Chris Padgin (sp.).
4 And to kind of echo the anti parking garage
5 sentiment, I would like to take that a step forward
6 and kind of bring forth anti highway development,
7 as well. I think a rail option, whatever the
8 option may be for these eastern communities, will

9 help take the cars off the road, decrease the need
10 for an intrusive highway that really would not
11 benefit any of the communities it goes through.
12 Whereas a rail line, whether that be surface road
13 or light rail, would have a benefit for the
14 communities it runs through and obviously be less
15 intrusive than a 300-foot highway cutting through
16 small communities.

17 Mr. FLUEGEMANN: Any other comments?

18 MS. ARE: I got here late and didn't have a
19 chance to look at everything. So, first I'd like
20 some clarification to be sure I understand some
21 matters based on what these other ladies and
22 gentlemen have had to say.

23 By the way, my name's Pat Are (sp.). I'm a
24 resident of the Village of Fairfax since 1965. And
25 my first husband's family was a resident since 1900

14

1 and have a deep interest in the Village itself.

2 They mentioned this electric streetcars and I
3 assume they run on batteries and they do not need
4 tracks and they don't need anything but just their
5 own power unit within the streetcar itself. Is
6 that correct, gentlemen? Is that what was being
7 referred to or not?

8 MR. BERGMAN: Streetcars as we refer to the

9 modern streetcar is electrified. It has an
10 overhead wire typically and a catchment, but it
11 does run on a track. So, that's typically -- now,
12 some of that technology is changing, as all
13 technologies are, so there are some alternatives
14 that are being developed.

15 MS. ARE: Well, I'm going to be giving away my
16 age. I had the opportunity to ride one of those
17 streetcars when I was a young child, and down there
18 at Mitchell and Vine -- I grew up in St. Bernard --
19 that was a big intersection for a lot of the
20 trolley lines, and the cars didn't seem to have any
21 difficulty navigating with the rails in the street
22 that I can recall, but being a child you don't
23 observe everything.

24 The other issue I have is I don't know if you
25 two gentlemen or anyone else in the Eastern

15

1 Corridor work in connection with ODOT or confer
2 with ODOT? Okay. So, you're aware that ODOT has
3 told Village of Fairfax in order to get the grant
4 to revitalize Wooster Pike we have to reduce our
5 speed limit to 25 miles per hour from Columbia
6 Parkway up to the border of Mariemont where we're
7 going to end our redevelopment. At least that's
8 what I was told by Jenny Kaminer. And as anyone
9 from Fairfax knows, she's our city administrator

10 who works closely with the ODOT people.

11 Mr. FLUEGEMANN: I'm aware of the project. I
12 don't know the details. I'm hoping to have maybe a
13 different discussion with you on that. We're here
14 about the Oasis Commuter Rail, so I'd like to keep
15 it to that.

16 MS. ARE: Well, my point is I would like to
17 see the electric cars come through Fairfax for the
18 development that this gentleman mentioned and some
19 other people mentioned, that we do get the
20 development here in Fairfax, Mariemont and Madeira
21 and even the East End of Cincinnati rather than
22 having to compete with other faces because it took
23 a different route.

24 But can we do it if ODOT's going to tell us to
25 reduce our speed limit to 25 miles per hour? I

16

1 think there's a conflict between what Eastern
2 Corridor wants to do and what ODOT has told us.
3 That was my point in bringing that up.

4 Mr. FLUEGEMANN: Okay. I can't answer the
5 question right now because I'm trying to -- like I
6 said, I don't know the details of the
7 25-mile-an-hour speed limit that you're speaking
8 of. What we really could do is if you could put
9 that in a written comment or talk about it and get
10 it down so I can understand better but right now --

11 I'm not up to speed on your project. I understand
12 that there is one there on Wooster Pike and there's
13 a lot of revitalization that will go on with
14 Wooster Pike in the Village of Fairfax, I
15 understand that. I'm just not fully up to speed on
16 your 25-mile-an-hour speed limit issue.

17 To go back on the streetcar I just want to
18 make sure we're clear here that we have not picked
19 any alignments, we have not picked any
20 technologies. So, we're not saying that it's going
21 to be a streetcar, we're not saying that it's going
22 to be on the street or on the rail. We're here
23 right now as a face to get information and concerns
24 or issues that you would like so that we can go
25 through our process in the next 12 months and find

17

1 out what is needed for the Oasis Commuter Rail and
2 what kind of issues and vehicle technology is
3 needed for it to operate properly. So, I just want
4 to make sure we're clear on that. All right.

5 MS. ARE: Two more comments quickly. The cost
6 of electric versus diesel powered probably would
7 not be -- hopefully would not be a factor because
8 you said it's overhead rather than battery like
9 some of the new automobiles that have these
10 expensive batteries and expensive to maintain.

11 Also, if this service comes in I would like to

12 be able to stay in Fairfax until I'm 105, which is
13 quite some time from now. Would I be able to get
14 on this, whichever it is, if it does come through
15 Fairfax, and get off down at Mariemont Kroger and
16 do my shopping, get back on, or is there going to
17 be limited stops?

18 Mr. FLUEGEMANN: That's why we're here, to get
19 the information and what kind of things that you're
20 looking for, what are your issues and concerns. If
21 it's the transit stops and things like that, we
22 need to weigh all this as we go through the next 12
23 months to find out what kind of operation ridership
24 feasibility. So, if you can put that in comment
25 form, you know, it's being recorded right now, but

18

1 it would be great if you could take the time to
2 write us a comment or to send it to us in the mail
3 so that we have that for our consideration as we
4 move forward.

5 MS. ARE: Thank you.

6 Mr. FLUEGEMANN: Anyone else? I really want
7 to say thank you very much. This has been very
8 informative for me. I hope that you do take the
9 time to go through --

10 MR. HUBBARD: Just a real quick comment.
11 Hello. My name is Tim Hubbard. I'm the chief
12 deputy Hamilton County engineer. And I do want to

13 make a comment on behalf of the County Engineer's
14 Office. We have been involved in the Eastern
15 Corridor project since the major investment study
16 was started in the mid 1990s. I have to tell you
17 this is a remarkable project in that it is unique
18 in that it is really based on a land use vision
19 effort that was completed in 2001. What you're
20 seeing here is actually the result of previous
21 input that we've gotten from the communities as
22 well as major investments, being a 65 member task
23 force that guided how the project was going to
24 advance.

25 What's really unique about this project and we

19

1 find very interesting is that the various modes
2 work together to provide benefit. When you look at
3 the rail alone, I mean, the rail provides a
4 multimodal choice for commuters and it is
5 extremely -- that's extremely important. And the
6 installations for the most part are in existing
7 areas, they're in existing developed areas. The
8 highway actually -- the highway has been developed
9 in such a fashion so that it provides expanded
10 market areas and expanding connectivity to our
11 existing business areas, but does not -- we've got
12 a real strong mandate that we're not going to be a
13 pass-through community for areas outside the

14 region, so it would be a part-way type facility is
15 what's being explored.

16 My point in all this is that we see that this
17 connectivity actually reduces the vehicle miles
18 traveled by 50 million vehicle miles per year.
19 That's unusual for a lot of projects, especially
20 projects that involve highways. The existing
21 system today is very secureless and I think quite
22 frankly it actually encourages -- the existing
23 system encourages urban sprawl. This project I
24 don't believe does.

25 The comments you have are great because they

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1 will help refine the project, but I just wanted to
2 let you know that the work that's been done thus
3 far has evolved as a result of tremendous,
4 tremendous public input. So, we're very proud to
5 be part of it and we're very thankful that you
6 folks showed up to make your comments known.

7 MR. NEWBERRY: How you doing? My name is
8 Isaiah Thomas Newberry. I've been doing trains
9 since I was two years old. And I studied the
10 history about trains. And I like the project on
11 this commuter this rail system and I totally agree
12 with you, all. We definitely need a rail system
13 here because traffic is only going to get worse

14 before it gets better. It's like this. I think if
15 they want to build a station -- they said -- are
16 you all going to build a station at the bottom of
17 Redbank; right?

18 MR. BERGMAN: There were some preliminary
19 stations that were identified as the original work.
20 We are reevaluating those stations for a number of
21 different reasons. But, you know, we want to make
22 sure that they're supporting the appropriate land
23 use and there's opportunities around those stations
24 that we can try to capture.

25 MR. NEWBERRY: Okay. I think that, now, if

21

1 they're going to build a station on Redbank I think
2 that they should go ahead and also expand it from
3 Redbank on that stretch, that part of the line
4 there, like go towards -- go to West Chester and
5 Sharonville because there is plenty of room to add
6 enough tracks there because that's where all the
7 business is at West Chester and Sharonville. The
8 majority of the people, a lot of them don't live
9 here in Cincinnati, 100 percent of the majority
10 live on the outside, and I think it ought to be
11 expanded from Redbank station towards Sharonville
12 and ease congestion on the interstates.

13 MR. BERGMAN: Thanks.

14 MS. LORWOR: Thanks. My name is Louise Lorwor

15 (sp.). I'm an Anderson Township resident. And I'm
16 uncertain on whether the project is a rail and
17 highway project or are they two separate elements
18 that may or may not be combined?

19 Mr. FLUEGEMANN: Well, the Eastern Corridor is
20 a program of projects and it had four different
21 components to it. One was highway capacity. One
22 is the rail transit, which is the Oasis line, which
23 we're here about tonight. And then there's TSM,
24 which is improvements to intersections and things
25 on the existing infrastructure. And then there's

22

1 the enhanced bus and then there's bicycle and
2 things like that, bicycle trails and that. We're
3 here about the commuter rail or rail transit
4 component.

5 There will be other public involvement
6 meetings for the Redbank Road segment of highway
7 capacity. There's probably going to be some public
8 involvement coming up shortly on that. The segment
9 2, 3, they're still gathering some information on
10 that and that's the highway connection between
11 Fairfax over to Mt. Carmel-Tobasco over on top of
12 the hill. That will be happening very shortly,
13 too, once we get all the information that we need
14 to come out to the public involvement for. And
15 then if you're out there, familiar with the

16 Eastgate area, there's been some public involvement
17 meetings for the IVa, which is to take care of the
18 Glen Este Withamsville intersections out in that
19 area. So, those are all independent. But as a
20 program it is to address the need of moving people
21 from the east into the Downtown Cincinnati and vice
22 versa.

23 So, it's a program. We're trying to make sure
24 that we address it long term and not just build
25 highways. We're here for the multimodal portion of

23

1 it, so tonight we're really wanting to get your
2 input on the rail transit portion, you know,
3 support, concerns, things like that.

4 Any other comments? Once again, I want to say
5 thank you very, very much for your time coming out
6 tonight. And please take the time to give us your
7 comments. We are here to hear them and to listen
8 to them and try to address them as we go through
9 the process. And we'll be back probably later on
10 this summer or fall with more information on what
11 your comments have given us. We'll be coming back
12 with alternatives and different solutions to the
13 problem. And at the end of this, in 12 months we
14 should either have a preferred alternative with
15 technologies and business cases and financial plan
16 or we may come up with something that's not

17 affordable and we'll have to come up with a
18 no-build type alternative and just say it's not
19 feasible. We're hoping in 12 months we'll have
20 that information for you.

21 So, once again, thank you very much. Don't
22 forget to give us your comments or you can go on
23 the easterncorridor.org website and provide us
24 comments there or mail them in. Thank you.

25 (PUBLIC MEETING CONCLUDED AT 7:32 P.M.)

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I, Kelly A. Graff, do hereby state that I was authorized to and did stenographically report the foregoing proceedings and that the typewritten transcript is a true record of said proceedings.

Dated this 2nd day of May, 2011.

Kelly A. Graff

OASIS COMMUTER RAIL PROJECT

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

PUBLIC HEARING

APRIL 7, 2011

7:00 P.M.

MILFORD HIGH SCHOOL

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1 MS. HALL: Thank you, all, so much for coming
2 out tonight. We're here tonight to hear your
3 feedback. Hopefully you got a lot of questions
4 answered and got some good information from all the
5 boards and information around the room. We're
6 going to take a few minutes now, we're going to be
7 here until about eight o'clock, but we would like
8 at this point to hear your comments and your
9 questions and concerns. And my name is -- I didn't
10 say -- my name is Betty Hall. I'm with the project
11 team. And we're just very grateful that all of you
12 took some time out of this gorgeous Thursday
13 evening to spend with us and find out more about
14 this important project in your neighborhood.

15 This is Sarah and she's going to come around
16 with the mic as we get questions. And at this
17 point I'd like to introduce to you one of your
18 project partners and your Hamilton County
19 Commissioner, Mr. Todd Portune, who's going to give
20 us a few comments. But thank you, all, again for
21 coming out tonight and sharing your feedback with
22 us. We really, really appreciate it.

23 MR. PORTUNE: Betty, thank you very much.
24 Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to
25 thank all of you for coming out tonight and

1 spending your evening to share your ideas and input
2 about the Eastern Corridor Multimodal
3 Transportation and Land Use Project. It's a
4 project that's been under study and review and
5 advancement and a lot of work by five key funding
6 partners, which are Hamilton County, Clermont
7 County, the City of Cincinnati, SORTA and ODOT,
8 advanced for the better part of a decade or more.
9 But we are continuing to advance the project and we
10 made an awful lot of progress and tonight is an
11 important part of that process because, while
12 studies have been done and certain preliminary
13 suggestions have been made, an awful lot has
14 happened while this project has been under review
15 and under advancement. There have been major
16 progresses in technologies, the kind of vehicles
17 that you could put on the rail line for example.
18 The region has continued to grow and to evolve.
19 And so we really need to update the study here from
20 all of you to see whether certain assumptions are
21 still valid or not and to really bring the project
22 into a current mode.

23 So, on behalf of all the funding partners, I
24 want to acknowledge as well Dave Spinney, who's the
25 Clermont County administrator who's here today.

4

1 The project has very, very strong bipartisan
2 support, multi-jurisdictional support from the two
3 counties and 17 political jurisdictions that cover
4 the entire width of the corridor.

5 And, again, we thank all of you very, very
6 much for being here tonight. I'm very excited, as
7 a representative of one of the funding partners, to
8 hear what you have to say here tonight as well as
9 getting all the survey results in from this evening
10 and the other two public hearings that we've had,
11 and to continue to work on this project in
12 everyone's best interest.

13 So, thank you for coming out tonight, look
14 forward to your comments and questions. Betty, who
15 gets the mic now? Steve? Steve Bergman from HDR,
16 who's doing the study. Steve, it's all yours.

17 MR. BERGMAN: Thank you very much for coming.
18 What I'd like to do is introduce Jay Hamilton with
19 the Ohio Department of Transportation. Is that
20 right, Jay?

21 MR. HAMILTON: Yeah, that works. I just got
22 to check this out. Can you guys hear me? No.
23 Dang. All right, I'll use this thing. Jay
24 Hamilton, Ohio Department of Transportation. I'd
25 like to thank you, all, for showing up tonight. I

5

1 know a lot of people think that public involvement
2 is just something we do to -- what do I want to
3 say -- because we got everything figured out. We
4 don't and we really, really need your input. I
5 know a lot of the stuff that you see out here
6 tonight a lot of you guys have seen that before.
7 It is some of the stuff you've seen before. But as
8 far as the process going, we need to update
9 everything. We need to know if there's some stuff
10 that we're missing with the time period that's
11 passed along. So, we really, really need your
12 input tonight and it's very appreciative. And you
13 would be surprised if you were on our end how
14 valuable the input that we get from you is.

15 Just so that we all understand, this is part
16 of the Eastern Corridor project. This is the rail
17 portion of this project. I keep going back to the
18 same thing, stressing over and over that how much
19 input that we get from the public you would be
20 surprised how much we might miss without your
21 input. I've had stuff go along on projects where,
22 as simple a stuff as a septic system that we were
23 going to run through -- I know that sounds simple
24 and something no big deal, but it was a big deal to
25 the homeowner, you know. And it's stuff like that.

6

1 So, welcome. Thank you very much. I want to turn

2 it over to Steve now to give you a little bit more
3 update I think, or just go right into questions and
4 comments.

5 MR. BERGMAN: I just wanted to add, this
6 project is a multimodal project. It includes
7 highway, transportation system management, which
8 are capacity enhancements projects. It could be
9 intersection, bikeway type of projects, expanded
10 bus service. It includes the commuter rail
11 service. I want to emphasize that all of these
12 projects work together, so one plus one equals
13 three on the Eastern Corridor. I want to make that
14 clear.

15 So, we will take questions or comments, either
16 one.

17 MS. SCHNEIDER: Before we get started I just
18 wanted to clarify that when you do have the
19 microphone please keep it close to your mouth
20 because in past meetings we've kind of had some
21 trouble hearing everybody's comments because of the
22 way they hold the mic. So, please keep that in
23 mind. And we do ask that everybody keeps their
24 comments and questions to two minutes just to be
25 kind to everybody else and ensure everyone here has

7

1 an opportunity to share their comment if they have

2 one. So, we'll get started right here.

3 MS. HARDY: I just wanted to support the idea
4 of the commuter rail. I think it's a great thing.
5 And we're at a really critical point now with the
6 fact of destructive climate change. It's already
7 happening in other countries where people are
8 losing their livelihood because their water is
9 becoming salinated, the glaciers are melting and
10 are going to lose their source of water. So, we
11 have to do something now, and light rail is a great
12 way to get our cars off the road and reduce the CO2
13 we're putting in the air. I'm not in favor,
14 however, of extending the highways. I think we
15 need to drive less and have more alternatives.

16 MR. BERGMAN: Thank you. Some rules for
17 tonight. If you could introduce yourself and the
18 general area where you're from or community. And
19 also keep your comments to two minutes so we can
20 make sure to get everybody -- give everybody
21 adequate time to respond and talk. Thanks.

22 MS. SCHNEIDER: Did you want to do your home
23 town and name?

24 MS. HARDY: Ruth Hardy, Anderson.

25 MS. SCHNEIDER: Thank you, Ruth.

8

1 MR. FESLER: Hi. My name is Jake Fesler
2 (sp.). I'm actually from Northern Kentucky, but

3 we're all kind of in the same region, so it affects
4 me, too. I want to start out my comments by saying
5 that I'm in no way a rail naysayer. In fact, I've
6 worked diligently to get the Cincinnati streetcar
7 up and running. But these commuter rail projects
8 worry me as far as the area, because if you don't
9 plan them perfectly it can become political fodder
10 for rail projects don't work. I mean, in Austin
11 they just built a commuter rail project. It's 600
12 people riding it a day. And, I mean, those -- like
13 I said, it's just political fodder.

14 And I want to throw out the idea, especially
15 in the more urban areas that this project is going
16 to run through, that an inter-urban type streetcar
17 or light rail project would suit the area better,
18 because if you build these things out the commuter
19 rail project it's not a sense of if you build it
20 they will come, because if people have to get in
21 their car and drive a long time to the station a
22 lot of times statistically it's shown that they
23 just go ahead and get on the highway. So, I mean,
24 and especially for the urban areas I think that the
25 project needs to be considered in a different form

9

1 of rail transportation. Thank you.

2 MR. BERGMAN: In response to that, just to let

3 folks know, at tonight's meeting we're generally
4 showing information that's been done in the past
5 combined with some current updating that we've
6 done. We're using this as a jumping-off point to
7 look at specific alternatives including
8 technologies based on service requirements, station
9 locations, ridership and things like that. So, we
10 have not pre-determined any technology at this
11 point. Thank you.

12 MR. COLLINS: Hi. My name is Bill Collins. I
13 live in the City of Cincinnati, Oakley/Madisonville
14 area. There's two points that I wanted to make.
15 One is that I'm delighted to hear that there's a
16 lot of planning that's going into bikeways. One of
17 the things I noticed when I moved to Cincinnati 20
18 years ago is that a lot of other cities I lived in,
19 Sioux Falls, South Dakota for example where they
20 have bikeways, a tremendous more usage of bikes
21 than you see here for recreation and commuting,
22 which it's also flat there. But anything that can
23 make it easier for people to use their bicycles to
24 get to real places, not just ride around but
25 actually get to a store, get to work, whatever

10

1 destination, is really important. And in an area
2 like ours where it's so hilly and we don't have the
3 infrastructure bike paths like out in Xenia, other

4 places, that's really important.

5 The other point I wanted to make is that I
6 agree with this gentleman here. I'm really
7 concerned about the technology that might be used
8 for this project, because if you go the diesel
9 route, in the City of Cincinnati it means that the
10 train comes to a stop and a diesel engine including
11 a chug-a-chug-a, slow to start, makes a lot of
12 noise. You have to sound the horn, as I understand
13 it. You know, people who live in some of the east
14 side communities want to have a commuter rail
15 blowing when the train comes in. Also diesel fumes
16 along the Ohio Valley. Probably the way to go is
17 to use some kind of electrified system so that it
18 has a lot of advantages, but also when it gets to
19 Downtown it has the potential to actually go on the
20 streets and drop people off block by block near
21 where they work. If you use that transit terminal
22 down there at the Freedom Center you have to walk
23 up that tall hill, and if they work on Seventh or
24 Eighth you might have to walk eight or nine blocks
25 to work, but if it ties into the streetcar line

11

1 that's planned or another type of system like the
2 mini line in Minneapolis, it actually drops people
3 off a block or so from where they work. So, I hope

4 that's part of the plan, as well. Thank you.

5 MR. BERGMAN: I do appreciate those comments.
6 Just to be clear, in the original study they talked
7 about diesel multiple units. Now, that was a while
8 ago. Technology has come a lot further since then,
9 so there are various hybrid options that we will be
10 looking at which should mitigate some of the
11 concerns with the diesel and the lighter vehicles.
12 So, there are options that we'll be looking at as
13 part of this.

14 In addition, just to let folks know, we're
15 talking about going from Milford to the Transit
16 Center, the Transit Center under Second Street. I
17 know a lot of folks don't know where that's at.
18 But just above that on Second Street is the linkage
19 to the streetcar system Downtown. Now, whether you
20 like that idea or not, it does provide the linkage
21 from this end point, the end of this project, and
22 you can access other areas of the City by using the
23 streetcar. So, it is an overall system that we're
24 talking about. Thanks.

25 MR. COLLINS: But the streetcar is not

12

1 proposed to actually tie into the transit system
2 because it's underground, is that why?

3 MR. BERGMAN: The Transit Center is under
4 Second Street. The streetcar runs on Second

5 Street.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hi. My name is Steve.
7 I currently live here in Milford. I moved here
8 about three years ago from Portland, Oregon, where
9 they have a light rail system in place. And I have
10 to say that that was one of the driving reasons
11 that pulled us to the Portland area in the first
12 place, was the availability of the light rail
13 system. It allowed us to live in the suburbs and
14 easily make our way into the downtown area. But
15 one of the key features that needs to be in place
16 is the ability to get to the places that people
17 want to go. So, if it's winding through areas that
18 are away from the centers of business, you're going
19 to find that people don't want to have to hop off
20 and then walk a significant distance to try and get
21 to where they're wanting to go.

22 And as far as like the technology, the light
23 rail system in Portland uses the overhead
24 electrical system and it was very nice, it was
25 quiet. I can't say enough positive about it.

13

1 The other nice thing about it was the
2 availability for people who use bicycling to get
3 around to easily put their bikes onboard, move from
4 place to place, and then bicycle from there. I'm

5 all for it if it's done right and that's what we're
6 hoping to see.

7 MR. BERGMAN: The optimal solution here is a
8 station that's multimodal, you know, to get our
9 ridership to work correctly. You mentioned bikes.
10 I mean, we want to link those systems with the
11 stations. Also have bus service that serves those
12 stations, as well. So, you know, a truly
13 multimodal operation to support this type of
14 investment.

15 MR. HEIDT: Hi. Lee Heidt (sp.), Loveland.
16 Tonight is all about rail. Will there be a meeting
17 about the highway piece of this at another time?

18 MR. BERGMAN: Yeah. You know, I don't want to
19 lose sight. You know, at this point we've broken
20 the projects up a little based on potential funding
21 sources and planning processes, but our overall
22 attempt here is to not lose sight that this is a
23 multimodal program all working together. So, it
24 includes, like I said, highway, expanded bus,
25 transportation system management, and the commuter

14

1 rail system. So, there will be subsequent meetings
2 on each of these projects.

3 MR. MARCHANT: Gary Marchant (sp.) from
4 Milford. I just had a question. What time frame
5 are we thinking about this would be implemented?

6 MR. BERGMAN: I don't like to give the
7 specific times. We've got a process we need to go
8 through. We need to answer a lot of questions,
9 like I said before. Ridership, station locations,
10 different alternatives associated with the commuter
11 rail system. We're also looking at different
12 alternatives with the highway system. We've got an
13 environmental process we need to follow for federal
14 because we may be using federal funds. You know,
15 if everything went right it could happen sooner
16 than later. That's all I can say at this point. I
17 know it's not specific, but I hate to give a time
18 and then all of a sudden people get discouraged
19 because we haven't met that time line. Without
20 knowing exactly what's out there as we get into
21 more detail I can't really give you a time frame
22 right now. Sorry.

23 MR. FESLER: Once again, I'm Jake Fesler from
24 Northern Kentucky. I have a question. As far as
25 the more suburban areas of Hamilton County and

15

1 Clermont County, what are the county governments
2 considering doing as far as zoning changing?
3 Because transit is definitely not compatible with
4 1950's era sprawl and things like that and it's
5 really difficult to get to the place you want to

6 get. And like I said, that leads to what I was
7 talking about before. It's just not convenient
8 because it just doesn't work with the way that
9 things are set up. Have any of the county
10 governments considered that or the cities that it
11 will run through?

12 MR. BERGMAN: There has been an Eastern
13 Corridor land use vision plan that's centered
14 around the different modes that came out of that
15 plan. In addition to that, we have a transit
16 oriented development station. I suggest you stop
17 by that, because that's a completely different type
18 of usage around those stations. We're aware of the
19 benefits that this could bring in terms of land use
20 and we're exploring all those opportunities.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible) letter
22 several years ago that proposed it goes into
23 Cincinnati and it would bus -- after you get off
24 you would get on a bus and go to certain streets
25 and you might want to deal with Downtown and

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1 Northern Kentucky, you might want to solve the
2 problem with University of Cincinnati, per se.
3 It's going to be an immediate area where people
4 work outside, work Downtown. If they work
5 someplace else then they'll have a drive. And my
6 wife, she grew up on -- right next to the railroad

7 back when they had steam locomotives and she said
8 they got to where they didn't pay much attention to
9 the diesel engines. And the diesel engines they
10 have nowadays, there are probably more technologies
11 and run on batteries and such.

12 MR. BERGMAN: Are there any more questions?
13 We'll be sticking around a little bit afterwards,
14 so feel free to talk to folks as we continue to
15 eight o'clock.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Perhaps the gentleman
17 over there can answer the question better, but if
18 somebody could give us a little short primer about
19 some of the technologies like buses and lines, like
20 the older diesel, the newer diesel? I think a lot
21 of people seem to be interested in that. It would
22 be interesting to hear.

23 MR. BERGMAN: I'd like to introduce Steve
24 Carroll. He's with HDR, as well. He's from our
25 Charlotte office, currently working on the commuter

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1 rail system down there, and he can probably answer
2 your question.

3 MR. CARROLL: Your question was, sir?

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Just could you give us
5 a little primer on some of the basic technology
6 being considered between diesel and electrified,

7 what you see as the plusses and minuses.

8 MR. CARROLL: Obviously there's a wide variety
9 of vehicles out there today. You have some that
10 are smaller, some that are larger, some that
11 obviously carry more people. The technologies that
12 we've shown over there in white, if you get a
13 chance to look at it, are those that are more
14 typically seen being used in the United States
15 today.

16 They include what's known as the push pull,
17 which would be a locomotive pulling coaches
18 essentially. They also include diesel units that
19 are we'll call them European diesel. They're much
20 smaller. They're approximately 160 to 200 feet
21 long. They have the ability to run a much cleaner
22 diesel because the engine in them is much smaller
23 than what would be on a diesel train or push pull
24 situation. And they actually have an electric
25 generator that hooks onto that diesel engine. It

18

1 basically generates electricity. Imagine the new
2 Mercedes that's out there today. When a diesel
3 Mercedes goes by, 2010, 2011, do you smell it? Do
4 you see it? Do you see the diesel? Do you see the
5 black smoke? I bet you don't because these are
6 European engines. They're much cleaner. And the
7 European standards for diesel engines are far

8 greater. And they've been building them for years
9 to do that. They also use the generated
10 electricity to power the wheels that make the
11 vehicle go, what's known as traction motors.

12 Now what's evolving today like in your
13 automobiles, how many have you seen Prius? How
14 many of you have seen the new hybrid cars? You're
15 seeing the same things now that are evolving into
16 these rail vehicles, vehicles that can operate on
17 batteries for a distance and then transition to
18 diesel to charge the batteries. The braking
19 systems on these vehicles also charge the
20 batteries. It's known as regenerative braking and
21 they also charge the batteries. So, there's all
22 these technologies that are out there.

23 Now, there are some places, if you have a huge
24 demand -- if you've been to Long Island in New York
25 City where people commute, there's thousands of

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1 people. In many cases they will use an electric
2 powered piece of equipment. So, it becomes a
3 function of how -- what the operation is, how many
4 do you need to move what size vehicle that kind of
5 dictates the size of the vehicle, how often do we
6 need to run. So, all of these things start to
7 factor into which technology might be more

8 appropriate for this system. That's why we're not
9 saying -- that's why we put all these technologies
10 up there. You can see they're all different sizes
11 and they do all kind of different things. And even
12 that can't keep up with the changes in technology
13 that we're seeing today. So, I hope that answers
14 your questions.

15 MR. KIRBY: John Kirby. I live in Madeira.
16 When I think of traffic in Cincinnati, and I grew
17 up here, I think of like 32 and 125, not so much
18 28. I mean, why hasn't there been kind of a look
19 to the populations that are out 125 and get them
20 off the road -- I'm just curious -- instead of
21 veering towards Milford? Which I don't live in
22 Milford, but my ignorant opinion, it seems like
23 there's more people stuck way out 32 and 125 that
24 populate the rail or different systems.

25 MR. BERGMAN: Like I said, there's been a lot

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1 of previous work done as part of the Eastern
2 Corridor project and I believe it was a 65-member
3 committee representing all of the jurisdictions.
4 They were presented with a vast amount of
5 information, and out of that information they came
6 up with these specific projects to address those
7 future deficiencies within that Eastern Corridor.
8 Now, some of those, like I said, are highway, for

9 example Redbank Road and Route 32, these
10 transportation system management improvements,
11 right-of-ways, pedestrian signal timing
12 improvements. Also expanded bus service and then
13 the commuter rail line.

14 So, all I can say is there was extensive
15 analysis done. These are the projects which came
16 out of that to address those critical concerns well
17 into the future. That doesn't mean that there
18 won't be individual improvements along those
19 specific roads or routes that you mentioned, but
20 for the Eastern Corridor these are primarily the
21 projects we're talking about.

22 MR. HARDY: Hi. I'm Mike Hardy, Anderson
23 Township. Just if you could expound on the TSM
24 project. I'm not that familiar with it. I'd like
25 to know in particular on the Beechmont Road.

21

1 MR. BERGMAN: Deb, do you have more
2 information onto TSM type of improvements? Deb
3 Osborne. She's studying the highway part and has
4 been involved with it with this project for quite a
5 while, so maybe she can answer your question.

6 MR. HARDY: Just to reiterate, I had a
7 question about -- I'm not familiar with the TSM
8 project and I'm looking, particularly since we live

9 in Anderson, at the highway improvement. And it
10 refers to it on the map here as the TSM project and
11 the roadway corridor improvement. I'd just like if
12 you have some details on what that really means for
13 Beechmont.

14 MS. OSBORNE: The transportation management
15 improvements, we compiled those projects by
16 coordinating with all of the local jurisdictions
17 and they provided us with the information about the
18 local projects that they have going on right now.
19 And the initial work that was done with this study
20 compiled all of those improvements. And they will
21 be updated, as well. We'll get back again with the
22 local jurisdictions as the project moves forward
23 and update those and decide which projects to move
24 forward with TSM. So, that's also being evaluated
25 as part of this work.

22

1 MR. BERGMAN: Just to clarify, when we say TSM
2 improvements, it's kind of a designation out of the
3 federal highway. They're typically low cost
4 solutions. They might be signal timing solutions,
5 intersection improvements. We've also bumped that
6 in with bikeway and pedestrian improvements in this
7 project. They're more isolated, individual type,
8 low cost improvements, turn lanes, things like
9 that.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

11 MR. KIEDEL: Good evening. My name is Mark
12 Kiedel (sp.). I live in Miamiville, which is in
13 Clermont County. Probably won't come anywhere near
14 my house. The questions I have are twofold. The
15 first one is I saw -- and I didn't get to a chance
16 to read everything -- that some existing rail line
17 would be used for the commuter rail. I'm assuming
18 that means that there is some portion of it that is
19 not yet built or has property devoted to that. If
20 that's correct, I'd like to know how that's going
21 to be financed to purchase that land, build the
22 rail and then institute it. Those are going to be
23 the static costs. And I know you said earlier we
24 had federal tax money to be applied to it, state
25 tax money to be applied to it and probably local

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1 tax money to be applied to it.

2 The second portion of that is operating costs,
3 how are the operating costs going to be financed?
4 Because I'm sure ticket prices are not going to
5 cover all the operating costs that will be
6 necessary for this rail project. And if this is
7 true, then what kind of input will each individual,
8 either township, city or some sort of municipality,
9 county, have towards those operating costs that are

10 going to be paid? I know that's a whole bunch of
11 questions.

12 MR. BERGMAN: I hope I can remember the whole
13 question. I'm getting older. To answer your
14 question, we are looking at different alternatives,
15 so some of the alternatives may include using the
16 existing freight rail network, maybe a parallel
17 system through the Newtown area, it may be in
18 conjunction with the new highway alignment. So,
19 there are different alternatives that we're going
20 to be looking at moving forward. In terms of
21 funding, there are potential funding sources out
22 there. You know, I mentioned a couple, federal,
23 state, local. We're going to be developing a
24 financing plan as part of this project looking at
25 capital, which would be the hard infrastructure and

24

1 operations. Depending on the funding source, you
2 could handle each one of those differently. Some
3 funding can't be used for operations. We know that
4 and we'll be coming up with an overall plan to make
5 sure this is financially feasible.

6 We'll also be looking at the opportunities
7 associated with land development. You know, public
8 makes an investment in infrastructure, they use
9 their public money, and the benefit comes down to
10 the property owners particularly at stations. Now,

11 it only makes sense that if the public is
12 investing, that there be likewise investment by the
13 private sector. When we talked about the DOT
14 that's generally the concept we're going to be
15 looking at to capture some value to support the
16 investment by the public. Does that help?

17 MR. KIEDEL: Somewhat. The part that's
18 missing is are there any private industry that will
19 be recipient of these benefits that has come
20 forward to say, yes, we like that such that we will
21 give you our corporate funds to provide for either
22 the operating expenses or the outlay of the
23 original capital? Because what I understood from
24 your answer is that it might follow this it, might
25 follow that, therefore it's not yet built, probably

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1 therefore also not yet purchased. So, what kind of
2 corporate support do you have for such a project?

3 MR. BERGMAN: At this point I would suggest
4 that it's too early to really get corporate
5 support. But our intent is to make sure that it's
6 feasible from a financial perspective and that's
7 going to be part of our follow-up work here. So,
8 we'll come back to the public, give you information
9 on what we found to date and hopefully answer that
10 question sooner than later. Thank you.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: My name is Bill. I
12 live in Miami Township. I've looked at most of the
13 placards over here and the different surveys that
14 have been done and the one that was especially
15 interesting was the number of households without an
16 automobile. Has there been a survey done of how
17 many people along that corridor actually work in
18 Downtown toward Cincinnati or how many people live
19 in Cincinnati and work in Milford or Terrace Park,
20 how many actual daily commuters are there?

21 MR. BERGMAN: I don't have an exact number
22 today. That's going to be part of our follow-up
23 work. I don't want to get too technical, but
24 there's a regional travel demand model. We're
25 going to be incorporating our information into that

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1 model and what that does is kicks out ridership
2 numbers so it will actually tell us what kind of
3 ridership we could expect based on certain
4 circumstances. So, that's the information we're
5 going to try to gather to help us make decisions on
6 station locations, alignments, service hours,
7 communities served, you know, a number of those
8 parameters. I can't give you an answer now. I
9 will give you an answer.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That doesn't so much
11 matter who's living in the house now; it's more

12 like five or ten years from now who's going to live
13 in my house when I'm somewhere else when we get
14 older. So, that's a selling point, so we're on
15 track.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I guess maybe some
17 clarification. I was wondering, there have been
18 all the studies on Delta, Eastern Avenue, all of
19 the corridors coming west. Has there been a study
20 stating how much of that traffic is Cincinnati the
21 terminus or how many then get on 75 or 71 and go
22 north or south? Is Cincinnati the ultimate goal?

23 MR. BERGMAN: I think, you know, the main
24 purpose of this project is to improve connectivity
25 between the eastern and the central city. Also

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1 looking at economic development opportunity. I
2 don't have the exact numbers. I'm sure that came
3 out of the original study. I think they were
4 talking originally about, what, 6,000 riders per
5 day; is that correct? That came out of the initial
6 study. We're going to try to verify those numbers,
7 see if those numbers are accurate based on some
8 future conditions. But I'll be happy to talk to
9 you afterwards if I didn't answer your question.

10 MR. FESLER: I just want to apologize in
11 advance. My mom tells me I talk too much.

12 MR. BERGMAN: Northern Kentucky; right?

13 MR. FESLER: Yes. I know I talk too much,
14 but, oh, well. One of my questions was, you have
15 the board up about zero-car households, and that
16 kind of ties into my question. I know that this is
17 a study that was done prior to 2002 in the Metro
18 Moves thing. But my question is, I think it's a
19 legitimate argument that these funds -- I mean, I
20 think I saw that the project could cost somewhere
21 around 400 to \$500 million -- that these funds
22 would be better used in areas -- especially if
23 you're talking about no-car households, transit
24 dependent or more likely to take transit, they
25 would be better used closer to the city. I mean, I

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1 live in the far suburbs, too, so I'm in no way
2 trying to give suburban people the boot, either,
3 but as far as more bang for your buck and efficient
4 use of these funds for transportation, seems like
5 it would be better to start off developing a center
6 city infrastructure. That's what DC did with
7 metro. It started out in the city and then
8 eventually went out to the suburbs. And the reason
9 the metro works in Chicago is once you get to the
10 city there's already the existing infrastructure.
11 So, seems like these funds might be better used
12 somewhere else. Just a thought. Thank you.

13 MS. SCHNEIDER: Do we have any other
14 questions?

15 MR. HEIDT: Lee Heidt. He mentioned something
16 and I'll mention, I lived in Los Angeles, Chicago,
17 Detroit, Boston, all over the place, and his point
18 is a very good one. The Chicago system works very
19 well because we could take the northwestern
20 downtown, catch the EL, we could go everywhere.
21 The same in Boston. So, inner-city transportation
22 is pretty important to this whole puzzle.

23 MR. ABRAHAM: Joe Abraham, Milford. Some
24 observations here. One, I don't see that many
25 buses going from Milford Downtown. Two, a rail

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1 system is inflexible once it's in place, it's very
2 hard to move, whereas buses you can easily change
3 the route.

4 And another thing to think of, too, it isn't
5 like it was 80 years ago when you went straight to
6 work and straight home. I suspect a lot of people
7 after they leave work they have to go to some other
8 part of town, pick up kids at a soccer game, ball
9 game or something, and then go home, or they got to
10 go to classes for further education to keep their
11 job performance up. And I really question the
12 effectiveness of using a rail system instead of

13 using buses. The buses need to be up to capacity
14 before you can justify the cost of doing a rail
15 system. That's my opinion.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm Steve. I used to
17 live in Portland. One of the key factors that made
18 that system work there was that the bus systems
19 tied in so nicely with the rail system.
20 Essentially you didn't have to catch -- well, to
21 get into Portland from the suburbs where we were
22 living you would probably have to ride a series of
23 buses, switching periodically, and we were taking
24 quite a while to make the journey in. The nice
25 thing about there is the bus systems could be

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1 geared towards getting you to the light rail system
2 and then the light rail system funnels the traffic
3 in and out of the city effectively. So, as long as
4 the infrastructures put in place to get people to
5 the stops where the light rail would be connecting
6 then I think it could be effective. But I agree
7 with the other people that if that's not in place,
8 if that's not a part of it, people aren't going to
9 want to drive a significant distance to get on the
10 light rail when just a little bit further they can
11 just drive into Downtown.

12 MR. BERGMAN: We're aware of that challenge
13 and we hope to address that. But, you know, the

14 stations are going to be the nodes, the multimodal
15 nodes. That is the whole approach here.

16 MR. PUCKETT: Cyril Puckett (sp.) from
17 Milford. Do we have some history on other
18 communities specifically what a light rail system
19 has done to their local tax, state tax, for either
20 starting it or ongoing operations?

21 MR. BERGMAN: Steve, do you want to try to
22 respond to that? Like I said, Steve's got a little
23 more experience than I do, so I'd like to call him
24 up again.

25 MR. CARROLL: Let me make sure I understand

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1 your question, sir. You wanted to know is there a
2 history or is there evidence out there that light
3 rail, how it is affected by taxes?

4 MR. PUCKETT: How it affects the taxes of the
5 communities and the state.

6 MR. CARROLL: So, economic benefit? Because
7 ultimately the only way you're going to get -- the
8 only way you're going to get any benefit of a tax
9 benefit is if, for example, your property values go
10 up or you have economic development. That's the
11 only way that you're going to see those taxes go
12 up. It might benefit the state or the system.

13 MR. PUCKETT: I would suspect that wherever

14 light rail is in operation today that many cases --
15 most cases it's not self-sustaining and therefore
16 the communities and the state, and if you get
17 federal funds, will be financing that. And I
18 wondered if we have some historical evidence of
19 what kinds of increases in property taxes or state
20 taxes are encumbered by that.

21 MR. CARROLL: First off, there are no transit
22 systems really operating in this country that are
23 self-sustaining. Nobody argues that point. There
24 are other benefits. Every light rail system that's
25 been built in this country has been extended. You

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1 know, I would use the example of cities like Dallas
2 where they've taxed themselves five times to build
3 a passenger. They've seen their property values go
4 up.

5 You know, it's kind of a catch 22. Someday
6 when you decide you want to sell your house you
7 want it to be up. You invest in your home and you
8 want it to be an asset that provides you return.
9 Unfortunately we all are adverse to taxes, so we
10 don't really want to pay the increased taxes that
11 go with the value of the property increasing.
12 Property around light rail stations that you talked
13 about, yes, it goes up, property values go up. It
14 hasn't stopped people from buying and building

15 around it despite that. So, it really doesn't come
16 into state taxes, you know, it's coming into your
17 local taxes. And I hope that helps because, you
18 know, these systems do get subsidized, but most all
19 the subsidy that you see is coming from local,
20 whether it's through tax increment financing,
21 taking an increment out of the value of the taxes
22 that went up to help support operations.

23 You know, in most cities -- for example,
24 Charlotte chose to use sales tax to pay for and
25 operate their system. Some cities use property

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1 taxes, some use sales tax. I know out in I think
2 Portland they don't have sales tax and they use
3 property tax. So, it's a miss wherever you go. I
4 hope that answers your question.

5 MR. BERGMAN: Well, again, I thank everybody
6 for coming out on behalf of the funding partners.
7 Ohio DOT is managing this project. I appreciate
8 everybody coming out and providing comments. There
9 is a form in your packet, if you would please fill
10 that out, we're interested in hearing from you.
11 And we will be around for a little bit here if you
12 want to stop by the stations and ask some detailed
13 questions. Thank you.

14 MS. SCHNEIDER: I thank you all for taking the

15 time to fill in your forms. If something comes up
16 that you think of tomorrow, a week from now, please
17 get onto the Eastern Corridor website. It's
18 www.easterncorridor.org. And there is -- I'm
19 sorry, www.easterncorridor.org. And on there there
20 is a feedback link and you click on that and there
21 is a form that you can click for Oasis and add any
22 additional comments that might come up after
23 tonight. Thank you very much.

24 (PUBLIC COMMENT CONCLUDED AT 7:48 P.M.)

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I, Kelly A. Graff, do hereby state that I
was authorized to and did stenographically report the
foregoing proceedings and that the typewritten
transcript is a true record of said proceedings.

Dated this 3rd day of May, 2011.

Kelly A. Graff