



July/August 2012 Meetings

# PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MEETINGS SUMMARY REPORT

for the

Oasis Rail Transit Project and  
State Route 32 Relocation Project

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# SUMMARY

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On July 31, August 1 and August 2, 2012, the Eastern Corridor Implementation Partners held three public involvement meetings designed to:

1. Update the public on the progress of the Oasis Rail Transit and State Route (SR) 32 Relocation projects
2. Provide information and gain public feedback about the proposed Oasis Rail Service plan, the rail station locations, the Station Area Planning (SAP) process and rail vehicles technology being considered for the Oasis line
3. Provide information about the refined SR 32 Relocation project study corridor and associated SR 32 Relocation Feasibility Study and collect public feedback
4. Set community expectations for the current phases of the project studies and next steps
5. Allow participants to meet program/project representatives, ask questions and make comments and suggestions about the projects and their components

The public involvement meetings were held at three locations:

- Tuesday, July 31: Milford High School in Milford
- Wednesday, August 1: LeBlond Recreation Center near downtown Cincinnati
- Thursday, August 2: Nagel Middle School in Forest Hills

The July 31 and August 1 meetings focused on the Oasis Rail Transit project. The August 2 meeting was a combined meeting that focused on both the Oasis Rail Transit project and the SR 32 Relocation project.

## MEETING FORMAT

The format of each meeting was the same. Held in the evening, the meetings were organized as open houses. Attendees visited a series of information stations focused on various facets of the projects. Project team representatives were available at each station to answer questions and collect comments.

A Question and Answer session was also held as part of each meeting. Joe Vogel of the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) District 8 served as moderator and representatives from the Eastern Corridor Implementation Partner organizations and project consultant teams addressed questions and comments (see the Public Input section for more detail).

Notes from the Question and Answer session discussions were recorded by Rasor Marketing Communications and approved by ODOT and the Eastern Corridor Implementation Partners. Copies of the notes taken are provided in Appendix B: Public Input.

## MEETING ATTENDANCE

A total of 235 citizens signed in at the public meetings. Actual attendance numbers were slightly higher as some attendees chose not to sign in. The meeting at Nagel Middle School had the highest attendance (137) and the meeting at Milford High School had the lowest (41).

## PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Attendees at the public involvement meetings contributed feedback through one-on-one discussions with Eastern Corridor representatives at the information stations, by participating in the Question and Answer sessions and by completing and submitting comment forms. Additional feedback was received via mail, through email submissions to the Eastern Corridor website and through the Eastern Corridor Telephone Hotline. Input received from the regional community is detailed in the Public Input section of this report.

## PUBLICITY

To publicize the public involvement meeting dates and locations, the Eastern Corridor Communications Team utilized multiple tactics including media outreach, email notification, postcard mailers, Internet communications and social media networking.

### ***Media Outreach***

Beginning the week of July 9, 2012, the Communications Team distributed and followed up on a press release announcing the public meetings to key local media outlets including the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, *Business Courier*, *Clermont Sun*, and Community Press papers as well as local TV and radio stations. A reminder alert was distributed on July 30 and 31. The Eastern Corridor Communications Team confirmed seven public meeting announcements and/or Program-related articles published in the print editions of *Cincinnati Enquirer* and Community Press papers and several Clermont County papers. Stories and information about the project and upcoming meetings were also published in the online versions of the papers as well as on a number of local community websites, TV news websites, community-focused blogs and bicycling sites. The Communications Team also tracked five stories on local TV stations and public radio stations, airing between July 26 and August 2.

### ***Email Announcements and Meeting Notification Postcards***

Meeting announcements were distributed via email to more than 850 stakeholders the weeks of July 16 and reminder emails were sent on July 25, 2012. Stakeholders represented Eastern Corridor communities, business associations, historic preservation and environmental groups, resource agencies, environmental justice organizations and other interested parties. A copy of the email announcement is provided in Appendix C: Publicity. In addition, a meeting notification postcard was sent via mail to property owners located within the SR 32 Relocation project area and within a one-mile radius of each of the proposed Oasis Rail Station locations. Approximately 1,300 postcards were sent out on July 16, 2012. An additional 100 mailers (approximately) were placed in various locations in the Newtown area.

### ***Website and Social Media Postings***

The Eastern Corridor Communications Team worked to post public involvement meeting announcements on websites belonging to the Eastern Corridor Program, Hamilton County, Clermont County, City of Cincinnati and ODOT. Information was also sent to multiple blogging sites focused on local community issues. In addition, the Communications Team promoted the public involvement meetings through multiple postings on the Eastern Corridor Facebook site and through the Eastern Corridor's Twitter account.

### ***Eastern Corridor Development Team***

An announcement about the upcoming meetings was shared with Eastern Corridor Development Team members, most of whom have leadership roles in their respective communities. The Eastern Corridor team requested that the ECDT members also share information about the upcoming public meetings with their constituents.

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The following report provides a summary of the public involvement meetings: their format, content and publicity efforts. This report also summarizes input gained from the public at the meetings, both as part of the discussions held and from the comment forms submitted. Representations of the meeting and publicity materials, media coverage, and Q&A session meeting notes can be found in the appendices.



# MEETING FORMAT

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The Oasis Rail Transit meetings were held July 31, August 1 and August 2, 2012. The August 2, 2012 meeting was a combined meeting that focused on both the Oasis and SR 32 Relocation projects. The meetings took place at three different locations along the project corridor:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>
Tuesday, July 31	Milford High School	1 Eagles Way, Milford, OH
Wednesday, August 1	LeBlond Recreation Center	2335 Riverside Drive, Cincinnati, OH
Thursday, August 2	Nagel Middle School	1500 Nagel Road, Cincinnati, OH

The first two meetings were held between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. and the final combined Oasis/SR 32 Relocation meeting was held from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. All meetings were organized in an open house format. During the first hour of each meeting (first two hours of the Aug. 2 meeting), attendees visited a series of information stations highlighting different elements of the projects (see Information Stations for more detail). Project team representatives were positioned at each station to provide further information about the station topics, answer questions and receive comments.

A Question and Answer (Q&A) session began at 7 p.m. each evening. Joe Vogel (Planning and Engineering Administrator for ODOT District 8) moderated the sessions and Eastern Corridor Program team representatives served as panelists for addressing questions and comments received. More detail about these sessions is provided in the Public Input section of this report. Following the Q&A sessions, participants were invited to return to the information stations for further review of the information boards and discussion with Eastern Corridor Program representatives. The meetings concluded soon after.

## ATTENDANCE

A total of 235 people signed in at the meetings.<sup>1</sup> A breakdown of how many people signed in at each meeting location is provided below:

<u>MEETING LOCATION</u>	<u>NO. OF SIGN INS</u>
Milford High School	41
LeBlond Recreation Center	57
Nagel Middle School	137

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<sup>1</sup> A number of visitors to the meetings opted not to sign in, however, the project team was not able to quantify how many. Therefore, those individuals are not included in the overall attendance count.

## MEETING LOCATION SELECTION

The community meeting locations were selected to be convenient for people located through out the project corridors. Location decisions were based on proximity to affected communities, size (must have space for at least 150 people); accessibility (in terms of both location and ADA accessibility); availability; cost; and availability of equipment needed for the meetings (tables, chairs, microphone system, etc.).



ODOT District 8 Deputy Director Steve Mary shares opening remarks at the combined SR 32 Relocation and Oasis Rail Transit meeting on August 2, 2012 at Nagel Middle School.



Meeting attendees listen to the Question and Answer discussion at the public involvement meeting at LeBlond Recreation Center on August 3, 2012.



Hamilton County Engineer Ted Hubbard discusses accommodations for bicycles with a meeting attendee at the public involvement meeting at Milford High School on July 31, 2012.



Stantec's Deb Osborne shares information about the SR 32 Relocation project with a meeting participant at the July 31 public involvement meeting at Milford High School.

# INFORMATION STATIONS

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A Welcome Table and a series information stations were set up at each community meeting. In addition, tables were placed around the meeting spaces at which people could sit down and complete comment forms provided to them at the Welcome Table. The information stations, which generally consisted of information boards on easels, highlighted different elements of the Eastern Corridor Program, with specific emphasis on the Oasis Rail Transit and SR 32 Relocation projects. Stations providing an overview of the SR 32 Improvements, Eastgate Area and Red Bank Corridor projects were also on exhibit. Project team representatives were positioned at each station to discuss the information being shared, answer questions and listen to comments. Handouts related to the projects were distributed to attendees upon entry to the meeting space.

Below is a description of the information shared at each of the Information Stations and handouts provided. Copies of materials shared at the public involvement meetings are posted on the Eastern Corridor website and representations are provided in Appendix A: Meeting Materials (copies of the comment forms are included in Appendix B: Public Input).

## WELCOME TABLE

Upon entering the meeting space, participants were greeted by project team representatives who asked them to sign in, provided them with an information packet, meeting handouts and comment forms. Eastern Corridor team members staffing the table verbally outlined the format of the meeting and timing of the Question and Answer sessions. The greeters also stressed the importance of completing and returning the survey/comment forms before participants left for the evening.

### *Station Staff (varied by each evening):*

- Sharon Smigielski, ODOT District 8
- Betty Hull, Rasor Marketing Communications
- Kaity Dunn, Rasor Marketing Communications
- Bill Leopold, Stantec

### *Handouts Provided:*

- **Eastern Corridor Program Fall/Winter 2011 Newsletter** (all meetings) – Provided an overview of the Tier 2 Eastern Corridor Program and each of the four core projects.
- **Eastern Corridor Program Comment Form** (July 31 and August 1 meetings) – Assessed meeting participants' travel habits through the Eastern Corridor, issues of most

importance to respondents and issues of most concern. Also provided space for free response comments.

- **Oasis Rail Project – Fact Sheet** (all meetings) – Provided an overview of the Oasis project
- **Oasis Rail Transit Project – Overview and Findings four-page brochure** (all meetings) – Provided a summary of the rail vehicle, rail station location, station evaluation process and station type information that was being shared at the public involvement meetings
- **Oasis Rail Transit Project – Regional Rail Vehicles Fact Sheet** (all meetings) – Provided information about the rail vehicle technology being considered for the Oasis line
- **Oasis Rail Transit Comment Card** (all meetings) – Assessed participants’ commuting habits and likelihood of using the Oasis line and how. Also collected input on the proposed rail service schedule and provided an space to share free response questions and comments.
- **SR 32 Relocation Project – Fact Sheet** (all meetings) – Provided an overview of the SR 32 Relocation project
- **SR 32 Relocation Project – Frequently Asked Questions** (August 2 meeting) – Outlined a list of frequently asked questions and associated answers.
- **SR 32 Relocation Comment Card** (August 2 meeting) – Assessed the importance of multiple project components to respondents and preferences for a “Modes Together” or “Modes Split” alignment for the road and rail projects. Also provided space for free response comments.

## EASTERN CORRIDOR PROGRAM STATION

A single Eastern Corridor Program station provided an overview of the Eastern Corridor Program, the tiered study approach and the study area. The station also provided information about funding for the Eastern Corridor Program. Station staff varied by meeting, but generally included:

- Andy Fluegemann, ODOT
- Ted Hubbard, Hamilton County
- Jeff Wallace, Parsons Brinckerhoff
- Laura Whitman, Rasor Marketing Communications

*Information boards shown:*

- Eastern Corridor Program Overview
- Eastern Corridor Program Study Area
- A Tiered Study Approach
- Eastern Corridor Funding
- Funding Quick Facts

## OASIS RAIL TRANSIT STATIONS

The Oasis Rail Transit portion of the meeting consisted of three information stations: Project Overview, Rail Service, and Station Area Planning. All Oasis information stations were on exhibit for each of the three public involvement meetings. Persons staffing the Oasis stations included:

- Steve Bergman, HDR
- Richard Dial, HDR
- David Taylor, HDR
- Steve Carroll, HDR
- Debra Hemple, HDR
- Clarence Wong, HDR

### **Oasis Rail Transit Station 1: Overview**

The Oasis Rail Transit Station provided an overview of the project including its purpose and need and preliminary station locations. Maps highlighting the locations of existing rail and freight corridors were also exhibited at this station.

#### *Information boards shown:*

- Oasis Rail Transit Project – At A Glance
- Oasis Rail Transit Purpose and Need
- Oasis Rail Corridor – Station Locations Identified in the 1006 Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement
- Regional Transit System – Existing Rail Corridors
- Existing Freight Railroad Network within the Eastern Corridor

### **Oasis Rail Transit Station 2: Rail Service**

Oasis Station 2 focused on providing an overview of the proposed rail service. Information presented included an initial service schedule (weekday morning and evening commuter service with one mid-day roundtrip), proposed rail vehicle technology, estimated travel times and ridership levels associated with the proposed technology and rail station locations, and next steps. In addition, several boards highlighted information about the ability to integrate bus routes, quiet zones and bicycle facilities into rail line operations. A looped video showed trains similar to those being considered for the Oasis line in operation.

#### *Information boards shown:*

- Oasis Rail Transit Service Schedule
- Oasis Rail Transit Service – Vehicle Technology
- Other Cities Using Diesel Multiple Unit Rail Vehicles
- Oasis Rail Transit Service - Diesel Multiple Units in Service

- Oasis Rail Transit Service – Estimated Travel Times
- Oasis Average Weekday Ridership Forecasts, 2016/2035
- Ridership of Comparable Commuter Rail Systems to Oasis
- Oasis Rail Transit Service – Potential for Quiet Zones
- Oasis Rail Transit Service – Network of Bus Feeder Routes
- Oasis Rail Transit Corridor – Examples of Active Transportation Facilities
- MAP – Bicycle Related Facilities in Eastern Corridor Region
- Oasis Rail Transit Corridor – Incorporating Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities
- Oasis Rail Transit Service – Tier 2 Study Next Steps

### **Oasis Rail Transit Station 3: Station Area Planning**

Oasis Station 3 focused on defining Transit Oriented Development and the Station Area Planning process. Boards at this station explained station planning concepts, the role that transit oriented developments can play in community development and enhancement and the three station types being considered for the Oasis line (regional, district and community). In addition, a series of boards displayed the results of the preliminary station area evaluation the project consultant team (HDR) performed on the 10 rail stations proposed in Tier 1.

#### *Information boards shown:*

- Oasis Rail Transit Corridor – Land Use Vision
- Livability Principles for Sustainable Communities
- Role of Station Area Planning
- Transit Oriented Developments (TODs)
- Transit Oriented Development – Desired Features
- Oasis Rail Station Locations
- Oasis Rail Station Evaluation – Development Capacity Potential
- Station Area Development Capacity & Rating
- Station Evaluation Criteria and Ratings
- Oasis Rail Transit Station Types – Regional, District, Community
- Station Types, Continued
- Oasis Corridor Showing Station Types by Location
- Oasis Station Area Planning – Next Steps

## **SR 32 RELOCATION INFORMATION STATIONS**

The SR 32 Relocation information stations provided an overview of the SR 32 Relocation Project – its history, purpose and need and current project status, a summary of the SR 32 Relocation Feasibility Study Report and its recommendations, as well as an overview of next steps. In addition, the concepts

of building the relocated roadway and rail next to each other (“Modes Together”) or running along separate alignments through a portion of the study area (“Modes Split”) were presented for the public’s consideration and input.

All SR 32 Relocation information boards listed in the stations described below were on display at the combined SR 32 Relocation and Oasis Rail Transit public meeting held on August 2. However, due to the anticipated level of interest in the SR 32 Relocation project, a selection of key SR 32 information boards were also on exhibit as a single SR 32 Relocation station at the July 31 and August 1 Oasis public involvement meetings. Stantec’s Deb Osborne staffed this station. Boards on displayed at these meetings included:

- 2006 Tier 1 Study Corridors Evaluated in the Feasibility Study
- 2012 Alternative Corridors Recommended for Advancement
- SR 32 Relocation Study – Next Steps Overview
- Alternatives Development Strategy for Tier 2: “Modes Together”
- Alternatives Development Strategy for Tier 2: “Modes Split”
- SR 32 Relocation Project Schedule

Persons staffing the SR 32 Relocation Stations at the August 2 meeting included:

- Deb Osborne, Stantec
- Steve Shaddix, Stantec
- Ted Hubbard, Hamilton County Engineer
- Andy Fluegemann, ODOT

### **SR 32 Relocation Station 1: History**

Information at SR 32 Relocation Station 1 provided an overview of the SR 32 Relocation project’s evolution by reviewing the goals of the Eastern Corridor Program as defined by the 2000 Major Investment Study, explaining how the Eastern Corridor projects are being developed using a context-sensitive framework and providing an overview of the 2006 Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) study and its results.

*Information boards shown:*

- SR 32 Relocation History
- Major Investment Study (MIS) – 2000
- Context Sensitive Framework
- Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – 2006

### **SR 32 Relocation Station 2: SR 32 Relocation Overview**

SR 32 Relocation Station 2 provided information about the process being used to develop the project and where the project team is in that process. The station also defined the purpose and need for the project and provided graphic representations of current and projected transportation challenges within the project area (these boards primarily consisted of data superimposed over aerial views of the project area).

*Information boards shown:*

- SR 32 Relocation Project Status
- Purpose and Need Summary
- Future No Build Traffic Volumes
- High Crash Rate Locations

### **SR 32 Relocation Station 3: Feasibility Study**

Station 3 highlighted the SR 32 Relocation Feasibility Study, its key results and recommendations. The station identified the proposed 21 study corridors identified in the Tier 1 EIS study and presented the results of the recent evaluation of each of these corridors. The station also presented recommendations for a refined study corridor that were made based on the finding of the Feasibility Study. This information was presented both as text and in a graphic (map-based) format.

*Information boards shown:*

- Feasibility Study Overview
- 2006 Tier 1 Study Corridors Evaluated in the Feasibility Study
- 2012 Alternative Corridors Recommended for Advancement

### **SR 32 Relocation Station 4: Next Steps**

SR 32 Relocation Station 4 provided information about how the project team will be moving forward in the project development process. Information was shared about how feasible alignments will be developed (including the No Build alternative), the process of collecting the information that will be used in developing the alternatives and the role of public input in the alternative development process. Also presented were conceptual drawings and written descriptions of what the project could look like as well as preview of the project schedule.

*Information boards shown:*

- SR 32 Relocation Study – Next Steps Overview
- SR 32 Relocation study – Alternatives Development and the No Build
- Alternatives Development Strategy for Tier 2: “Modes Together”

- Alternatives Development Strategy for Tier 2: “Modes Split”
- SR 32 Relocation Project Schedule

## **SR 32 IMPROVEMENTS, EASTGATE AREA STATION**

The SR 32 Improvements, Eastgate Area station provided an overview and status update of the Segment IV project and an overview of the Segment IVa (I-275/SR 32 Interchange) project. The station was staffed by Keith Smith, ODOT District 8, on July 31 and by Jay Hamilton, ODOT District 8, on August 1 and August 2.

*Information boards shown:*

- SR 32 Improvements, Eastgate Area – At A Glance
- SR 32 Improvements, Eastgate Area – Project Status
- I-275/SR 32 Interchange Project – At A Glance

## **RED BANK CORRIDOR PROJECT STATION**

The Red Bank Corridor station provided a general overview and status update of the Red Bank Corridor project. The station also included a board that highlighted the project’s alternative development process. The station was staffed by Keith Smith on July 31 and August 2, and by Jay Hamilton on August 1.

*Information boards shown:*

- Red Bank Corridor – At A Glance
- Red Bank Corridor – Project Status
- Alternative Development Process



# PUBLIC INPUT

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Attendees at the public involvement meetings contributed feedback through one-on-one discussions with Eastern Corridor representatives at the information stations, by participating in the Question and Answer sessions and by completing and submitting comment forms. Additional feedback was received via mail, through email submissions to the Eastern Corridor website and email address and through the Eastern Corridor Telephone Hotline.

## QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSIONS

Following is a summary of the Question and Answer (Q&A) Sessions held at the public involvement meetings.

### **Session Format**

Q&A sessions were held at each meeting, beginning at 7:00 p.m. The sessions were held in the same room as the information stations. Seating was provided for 50 to 100 people, depending on the facility and space available.

Session participants were asked to raise their hands and keep their questions and comments to less than two minutes in length. Participants stayed in their seats and a project team member brought a cordless microphone to use when speaking. The session moderator and panelists (see next page) used a second microphone to answer questions and respond to comments.

Following the Q&A sessions, some participants returned to the information stations to further discuss questions, comments and concerns directly with project team representatives. In general, however, the meetings concluded when the Q&A sessions ended.

### **Discussion Overview**

Joe Vogel, ODOT District 8, served as moderator for each of the Q&A sessions. After welcoming participants and briefly explaining the purpose and format of the public information meetings, Mr. Vogel introduced key Eastern Corridor Implementation Partner representatives in attendance and invited them to share some opening remarks. Following opening remarks, Mr. Vogel introduced the project representatives that would be addressing comments and questions. Panelists varied by meeting, depending on meeting location and discussion topics. Persons making opening remarks and serving as Q&A panelists are listed below.

## Question and Answer Session Opening Remarks and Panelists

### **Milford High School Tuesday, July 31**

**Steve Mary**  
Deputy Director  
ODOT District 8

**Todd Portune**  
Hamilton County  
Commissioner  
and HCTID Chair

**Andy Fluegemann**  
Planning Engineer  
ODOT District 8

**Ted Hubbard**  
Hamilton County Engineer

**Richard Dial**  
Transportation Planning  
Lead for HDR

### **LeBlond Recreation Center Wednesday, August 1**

**Steve Mary**  
Deputy Director  
ODOT District 8

**Todd Portune**  
Hamilton County  
Commissioner  
and HCTID Chair

**Larry Fronk**  
Clermont County Transportation  
Improvement District Chair

**Andy Fluegemann**  
Planning Engineer  
ODOT District 8

**Ted Hubbard**  
Hamilton County Engineer

**Richard Dial**  
Transportation Planning  
Leadfor HDR

**Michael Moore**  
Director of the Department of  
Transportation and Engineering, City  
of Cincinnati

### **Nagel Middle School Thursday, August 2**

**Steve Mary**  
Deputy Director  
ODOT District 8

**Todd Portune**  
Hamilton County  
Commissioner  
and HCTID Chair

**Andy Fluegemann**  
Planning Engineer  
ODOT District 8

**Ted Hubbard**  
Hamilton County Engineer

**Richard Dial**  
Transportation Planning  
Lead for HDR

**Deb Osborne**  
SR 32 Project Manager  
Stantec

**Jim Bednar**  
NEPA Specialist  
CH2M Hill

Upon conclusion of the introductions, participants were invited to ask questions and share their comments. Session lengths varied by meeting depending on the number of questions and comments being shared:

### **Meeting Location: Duration Of Q&A Session**

Milford High School: Approx. 25 minutes

LeBlond Recreation Center: Approx. 40 minutes

Nagel Middle School: Approx. 60 minutes

### **Question And Answer Session Meeting Notes**

The discussions held as part of the Q&A sessions are documented in a series of Question and Answer Session Notes, one set for each meeting. The meeting notes contain a summary of the questions asked and comments made during the Q&A sessions, as well responses given. While the material captures the primary discussion points, they are not transcripts and questions, comments and responses were not recorded verbatim. Copies of the Question and Answer Session Notes are provided in Appendix B: Public Input. The Session Notes are also posted on the Eastern Corridor website for public review. Topics of key interest at the Q&A session discussions included:

**Ridership** – Meeting participants asked about the level of ridership needed to justify establishment of the Oasis Rail Transit line. Some questioned whether or not the preliminary ridership numbers presented at the meetings were too low. Some participants also stated that when considering the currently proposed rail schedule combined with the time required to get to a station and travel from a station to their final destination, potential users would likely instead choose to use their personal vehicles. Other respondents, particularly younger persons, however expressed their desire to have a regional rail option available in Greater Cincinnati that would fulfill their travel needs.

**Reach of Rail** – Multiple participants indicated that they liked or supported the idea of rail service in the Greater Cincinnati area but would like have service for areas outside of the proposed Oasis corridor.

**Expanded Rail Service** – Many participants expressed interest in expanding the Oasis rail schedule to provide evening, weekend and special event service. Some discussion was also held pertaining to participants' interest in reverse commute service.

**Impact Of Rail On Neighboring Properties** – Several property owners raised concerns about the proximity of the proposed Oasis rail line to existing homes and community resources (such as a swimming pool, recreation centers) and asked how that situation would be addressed.

**Time of travel** – When providing estimates for the time required to travel on the Oasis line, several meeting participants encouraged the planning team to also include the time required to travel to a rail station, wait for a train, travel on the train and then get to their final destination.

**Impacts on Newtown** – Much discussion was held regarding concerns about potential project impacts on Newtown, the surrounding area, local businesses and property owners. Several participants also wanted to know when the project team will know which properties will be affected and how property owners will be compensated.

**Impacts on Mariemont** – Several participants expressed concerns about the narrowed SR 32 Relocation study corridor and its potential impacts on Clare Yards and residences along Mariemont’s Miami Bluff Road. Noise impacts in these areas were also briefly discussed. One participant also asked if the narrowed study corridor can be changed.

**Impact on Environmental and Cultural Resources** – Some questions were raised about the impact the SR Relocation project would have on the Little Miami River and both historic and archaeological resources.

## COMMENT FORMS

Upon entry to the public meetings, participants were given comment forms on which they could document their responses to specific questions as well as any additional comments or questions they may have. Participants at the Oasis Rail Transit meetings were given a general Eastern Corridor Program comment form and an Oasis Rail Transit project comment form to complete. Participants at the combined Oasis and SR 32 Relocation meeting were given the Oasis Rail Transit project comment form and a SR 32 Relocation project comment form to complete (the Eastern Corridor Program comment form was not distributed at the combined meeting in an effort to encourage more responses to the project-specific comment forms).

Following are the numbers of comment forms received at the meetings. Nearly 150 additional SR 32 Relocation comment forms were received by ODOT by mail after the public meetings but prior to the close of the comment period on September 2, 2012 (however, comment forms and letters postmarked by September 7 were included this summary). No additional Eastern Corridor comment forms or Oasis Rail Transit comment forms were received after the public meetings.

### **Number of Comment Forms Received**

Eastern Corridor Comment Forms	36
Oasis Rail Transit Comment Forms	56
SR 32 Relocation Comment Forms	
During Public Meetings	32
After the Public Meetings	146

Copies of the project comment forms are provided in Appendix B: Public Input. Individual summary reports were prepared for each project comment form and were submitted separately to ODOT and the Eastern Corridor Program Implementation Partners. The following offers an overview of findings from each of the individual comment form summary reports.

### **Eastern Corridor Program Comment Forms**

The Eastern Corridor Program comment form consisted of eight questions designed to assess respondents' travel habits through the Eastern Corridor region, which aspects of the Program are most important to them and what their primary concerns are, if any. The form also provided space for free response comments. Thirty-six people completed and submitted the comment form. Following is a summary of information gained from their responses:

- A majority of respondents reported traveling through the Eastern Corridor daily (60%) and living and/or working in Eastern Corridor communities (54%).
- When provided a list of options to choose from, the following options were most frequently selected as most important to respondents:
  - Reduced Congestion - 50% of respondents
  - Improved Travel Throughout the Region - 39%
  - New Rail-Based Transportation System - 39%

Improved bus service, more accommodations for pedestrians and reduced emissions/ environmental benefits were the least frequently selected options.
- When provided a list of options to choose from, the most frequently selected concerns were:
  - Impact on existing communities/neighborhoods – 55% of respondents
  - Impacts on homes/businesses located within project alignments – 27%
  - Effect on my property value – 27%
- Sixteen people (44%) submitted free-response comments. Most comments pertained to the Oasis Rail Transit project, many of which expressed support for the project. Several commented on the fact that the rail technology information shared at the meetings only included DMUs and expressed concerns that diesel-fueled rail vehicles are not responsive enough to meet local needs. Several additional comments stated that more rail stops would be needed if diesel technology is used. Topics of the remaining comments received varied widely, ranging from support for implementing a regional transportation solution to concerns for property values and provision of sufficient bike and pedestrian amenities.

### **Oasis Rail Transit Comment Forms**

The Oasis Rail Comment Form contained 12 questions and was designed to assess respondents' commuting habits and likelihood of using the Oasis line and how. The survey collected input on the proposed rail service schedule and provided respondents with the opportunity to submit free response questions and comments. Fifty-six people submitted Oasis Rail Transit comment forms. Following is an overview of the responses received.

- The majority of individuals completing comment forms reported living and/or working in Eastern Corridor communities.
- Nearly all drive to work and approximately 88% don't pay for parking.
- Approximately 66% of respondents to Question 6 [How likely would you be to use the Oasis Rail transit line to travel to and from work?] reported that they Definitely Would Not or Probably Would Not use the Oasis Rail Transit line to travel to and from work. Reasons offered for why respondents would not use the Oasis line for commuting include:
  - They don't live/work near the rail corridor/stations
  - The rail line does not go where they need it to go
  - They need their vehicle for work

Reasons offered for why respondents would use the Oasis line for commuting included cost-savings and convenience.

- Approximately 77% of respondents to Question 7 [How likely would you be to use the Oasis Rail Line to travel for weekend, evening or special event transportation?] said they would either be Very Likely (51%) or Somewhat Likely (26%) to use the Oasis line for weekend, evening and/or special event travel. Approximately 84% of respondents to Question 10 [What changes, if any, should be made to the proposed Oasis schedule BEFORE or AFTER initial service begins?] said that special event service should be added to the rail service schedule before service begins and 47% said that evening service should be added before service begins.
- Although a large percentage of respondents said they would not use Oasis for commuting, 24% of those who provided feedback on Question 10 [What changes, if any, should be made to the proposed Oasis schedule BEFORE or AFTER initial service begins?] said additional commute trips should be added before service begins and 37% said additional midday trips should be added before service begins. Approximately 55% of those who answered the question said that additional commute trips should be considered AFTER initial service begins and 45% said additional midday trips should also be considered. A notable portion of free response comments also suggested that additional commute and midday trips be added to the rail service schedule.

- Twenty-one people (nearly 60% of respondents) said they are interested in participating in Station Area Planning workshops and provided their contact information.
- Forty-seven free responses were received that relate to the Oasis Rail Transit project. Of these, the most frequent topic addressed pertained to the proposed rail service schedule (discussed in 34% of free responses) and most of these requested an expanded commuter schedule or the addition of evening, weekend or special event service. Nineteen percent of the responses addressed accessibility/connectivity of the rail line in terms of station locations, the line's integration with other transit modes or an expansion of the Oasis line. Another 19% of comments expressed some form of support for the Oasis line or the rail transit concept. Only one comment was received that expressed a lack of support for the rail line.

### **SR 32 Relocation Comment Forms**

The SR 32 Relocation Project Comment Form included four questions designed to gather respondents' input on the importance of 16 specific project elements and their preferences on whether or not the transportation modes should travel along the same alignments ("Modes Together") or be separated ("Modes Split"). The form also provided respondents with the opportunity to document any additional questions and/or comments.

Thirty-two people submitted completed SR 32 Relocation comment forms at the public involvement meetings. An additional 146 comment forms and five letters were received by ODOT and one by the Hamilton County Engineer's Office via mail during the public comment period that followed the meetings and concluded on September 2, 2012 (comment forms post-marked by September 7, 2012, were also included). Based on a review of contact information provided on the forms, comments submitted at the meeting were primarily from residents of the Newtown, Shademoore and Cottage Park communities (65%), Anderson Township (15%), and the greater Cincinnati area (20%). By comparison, 95% of the Comment Forms received after the meeting were submitted by Mariemont residents in response to a targeted community effort to get residents to submit comments on the project and its potential impact on the Mariemont Gardens (also referred to as the South 80 or Bottom 80 acres).

Following is an overview of responses received.

- The importance of project elements varied greatly between responses received at the public meetings and responses received after the meetings (primarily from Mariemont). Respondents were allowed to check more than one answer:

### Most Important Project Elements (from Responses Submitted AT Meetings)

Reduce local congestion and traffic delays	61%
Provide a park-and-ride facility at the transit station	61%
Increase travel safety	55%
Provide connections to the regional bikeway network	55%
Minimize noise impacts from the relocated roadway	52%

### Most Important Project Elements (from Responses Submitted AFTER Meetings)

Preserve existing community character	97%
Minimize impacts to the natural environment and historic properties	94%
Minimize impacts to parks and greenspace	93%
Minimize impacts to existing businesses and residences	84%
Minimize noise impacts from the relocated roadway	83%

Respondents both at the public meetings and after the meetings provided similar answers regarding 'Least Important' project elements, which included consolidating access, encouraging new economic development and the location/walkability of rail stations.

- Of the respondents who commented on whether or not the road, rail and bike/walking paths should be built side-by-side ("Modes Together") or are should be split among different routes ("Modes Split"), 59% preferred splitting the modes, 36% were Not Sure and five percent preferred that the modes be kept together. Approximately half of respondents (67 people) offered responses as to "Why?" and predominate issues cited were related to:
  - Impacts (70%): "Modes Split" results in narrower roadway width and respondents cited concerns over property, community and/or business impacts of a wider corridor. Approximately one-third of respondents made specific references to avoiding "Mariemont" or the park/gardens area.
  - Aesthetics/safety (25%): Respondents suggested that "Modes Together" results in poor aesthetics from path user's perspective (i.e., "why would we want to run/ride along roadway/rail traffic?") and safety and health issues associated with pedestrians located immediately adjacent to roadway/rail.
  - Accessibility (13%): "Modes Split" provides opportunity for a rail transit station to be closer to communities (Newtown core) for easier rider access.

- One hundred thirty-two people provided written comments. Predominant issues and concerns related to:
  - Park/Greenspace (primarily Mariemont Gardens) (50%) – All comments in this category were associated with the Mariemont Gardens area and were submitted by Mariemont residents after the public involvement meetings. Comments mentioning impacts to the Mariemont Gardens were generally opposed to a project corridor through this area, citing impacts to bike/walking paths, special event use, gardening, and viewsheds.
  - Historic/Archaeological Resources (39%) – All but one of these comments came from residents of Mariemont who were concerned about the project’s potential impacts to the integrity of the Mariemont National Register Historic District and National Register Landmark designations, on Native American archaeological sites along the Little Miami River bluff and Mariemont bottom area, and the need to coordinate with the National Park Service and historical groups. Several comments noted the need to add the National Landmark boundaries to the project mapping presented in the Feasibility Study.
  - Community Character/Aesthetics (33%) – Approximately 95% of written comments relating to community character/aesthetics were from Mariemont residents and five percent were from Newtown/Shademoore residents. In general, respondents were concerned about the project disrupting existing community qualities, citing elements such as ‘quiet’, ‘peaceful’, ‘fine’, ‘historic’, and ‘downtown character’. These comments were more associated with the overall community (not a particular impacted location), although many of these same respondents also mentioned concerns about impacting the Mariemont Gardens.
  - Property Values and Business/Residential Impacts (32%) – Approximately two-thirds of these comments were submitted by Mariemont residents concerned that the project’s proximity to Mariemont would decrease property values and reduce the overall tax base of the community. The remaining comments were from a mix of Mariemont, Newtown and Shademoore/Cottage Park residents concerned about the project’s direct impacts on businesses and/or residences.
  - Noise Impacts (24%) – Comments pertaining to noise were submitted primarily by Mariemont residents concerned that the project would increase noise levels, especially for those living along the Mariemont bluff.
  - Bluff Stability (22%) – Comments about the Little Miami River bluff were primarily from Mariemont residents concerned that the project would exacerbate existing instability issues in this area of their village.
- A total of 165 respondents provided contact information to be used for project updates and meeting notifications. Of these, approximately 80% were from the Mariemont, Madisonville,

Fairfax area (45227) and another 10% were from the Newtown, Mt. Carmel, Anderson Township and Ancor area (45244).

- In addition to the comment forms received for the SR 32 Relocation project, six letters from five individuals were also received (two of the letters were from the same individual). Submitted by representatives of Mariemont (three letters), Newtown (one letter), the Sierra Club (one letter) and the Little Miami River Inc. (one letter), these addressed a variety of issues ranging from the historic/cultural and environmental value of the land and resources located within the recommended project corridor and study area; impacts on existing neighborhoods, businesses, communities and natural/cultural resources; concerns about how comments from the public are being considered; to comments questioning the validity of the studies being completed and the need for the projects.

## **EASTERN CORRIDOR EMAIL/HOTLINE**

During the period of July 22 and August 31, 2012, 26 people contacted the Eastern Corridor through either the Program's EasternCorridor@easterncorridor.org email address (18 people) or the Program's telephone hotline number (8 people). It is not known if these contacts were made as a result of the public meeting, but because they were made during the meeting publicity and public comment periods, they are included in this Public Involvement Meeting summary report.

### **Eastern Corridor Email**

Slightly more than half of the emails received were requests to be added to the email update and meeting notification list. Additional emails expressed support for the Program (3 people) or requested additional information (3 people). One email requested better notification of the public meetings and another requested more frequent updates on the Eastern Corridor Program website. One email suggested a transit alternative to be considered by project planners and was forward to the appropriate project team representatives. An email from Little Miami Inc. Executive Director Eric Partee outlined social, economic and environmental benefits of the Little Miami River (LMR) and the organization's requests that Eastern Corridor Program planners focus on transit-oriented projects and not support the proposed LMR bridge crossing.

### **Eastern Corridor Telephone Hotline**

The majority of phone calls received (5) were from people requesting information about the SR 32 Relocation project and its status. Two calls received were from people requesting information about the Oasis Rail Transit project. The remaining caller asked for copies of handouts shared at the Public Involvement Meetings.

A Public Involvement Meeting Email/Telephone Hotline Contact Log that documents the emails and phone calls received, questions asked and responses provided is included in Appendix B: Public Input.

# PUBLICITY

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The Oasis Rail Transit and SR 32 Relocation public meetings were publicized through the channels described below.

## INTERNET-BASED COMMUNICATIONS

The Eastern Corridor Communications Team publicized the public meetings online through a series of postings on key websites and through email announcements.

### **Website Postings**

Information about the meetings was posted on the following websites:

- Eastern Corridor website
- Cincinnati.com (self-published article and calendar announcements)
- Hamilton County website
- Clermont County website
- Ohio Department of Transportation website

### **Email Announcements**

Public meeting email announcements were sent out to approximately 850 Eastern Corridor stakeholders on July 16, 2012. A reminder email was distributed on July 25, 2012. Stakeholders represented Eastern Corridor communities, business associations, historic preservation and environmental groups, resource agencies, environmental justice organizations and other interested parties (from previous website or other contact). Developed using Constant Contact and originating from the EasternCorridor@EasternCorridor.org email address, the email announcement outlined the public involvement meetings purpose as well as dates, times, locations. The announcement also included a link to additional information and the media release posted on the Eastern Corridor website. A copy of the email announcement is included in Appendix C: Publicity.

### **Social Media**

The Eastern Corridor Communications Team publicized the public meeting dates through the Eastern Corridor Program Facebook page and through Twitter. Information about the meetings was posted multiple times a week during the month prior to the meetings.

## EASTERN CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT TEAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Eastern Corridor Development Team met two weeks prior to the public information meetings. Information about the public meetings was shared with ECDT members and ODOT requested that they forward information about the meetings and the emailed meeting announcements to their constituents. The Communications Team was unable to confirm if ECDT representatives forwarded the information as requested.

## MEETING NOTIFICATION MAILERS

The Eastern Corridor Communications Team prepared and managed production and mailing of approximately 1,300 5.5" x 8.5 full-color meeting notification mailers. The mailers were sent to owners of properties located within the Tier 1 SR 32 Relocation study area as well as those located within a one-mile radius of the 10 Oasis rail stations proposed in the Tier 1 FEIS. A copy of the notification mailer is included in Appendix C: Publicity.

## MEDIA RELATIONS

The Eastern Corridor Communications Team prepared and distributed a media release about the upcoming public information meetings to the *Community Press* papers, the *Enquirer*, the *Business Courier*, the *Clermont Sun*, local TV news stations and key talk radio stations. The release outlined the purpose of the public involvement meetings and the meeting dates, times and locations. The release also provided an overview of the Oasis and SR 32 Relocation projects and topics to be discussed at the meetings. A copy of the release is provided in Appendix C: Publicity.

Prior to the public meetings, several Eastern Corridor Program representatives met with media reporters to provide background on the Eastern Corridor projects and the public meetings and to be interviewed for media stories:

- Andy Fluegemann and Todd Portune met with Forrest Sellers representing the Community Press newspapers
- Todd Portune interviewed with Jeff Hirsch, WKRC Channel 12
- Andy Fluegemann interviewed with Tana Weingartner, WVXU-FM
- Andy Fluegemann interviewed with Steve Hirschberg, WNKU-FM

### **Print Media**

The Eastern Corridor Communications Team sent the meeting release to the following print media outlets:

- *Business Courier*
- *Cincinnati Enquirer*
- *Cincinnati Herald*
- *Cincinnati Profile Magazine*
- *Cincinnati Magazine*
- *City Beat*
- *Clermont Sun*
- *Community Press newspapers*
- *The Spanish Journal (La Jornada Latina)*
- *Valley Courier*

Placements of meeting announcements or articles were confirmed in the following print publications:

- *Cincinnati Enquirer*
- *Eastern Hills Journal*
- *Forest Hills Journal*
- *Clermont County Journal*
- *Milford Miami Advertiser*
- *North Clermont Community Journal*
- *Hamilton Journal News*

### **Television/Radio**

Public meeting information was sent to the following television and radio outlets. The Communications team actively followed up with TV and key radio stations to ensure receipt of information and to pitch promotion of the meetings.

- WCPO-TV, Channel 9
- WKRC-TV, Channel 12
- WLWT-TV, Channel 5
- WXIX-TV, Channel 19
- WLW-AM
- WVXU-FM
- WDBZ-AM
- WKRC-AM
- WNKU-FM

Although the Communications Team was not able to monitor coverage on all stations, placements were confirmed on the following:

- WCPO-TV, Channel 9
- WKRC-TV, Channel 12
- WVXU-FM
- WNKU-FM

### **Online**

In addition to print and broadcast media, public meeting information was sent to the following local blogs:

- Cincywhimsy.com
- UrbanCincy.com
- Building Cincinnati Blog
- 5chw4r7z.blogspot.com
- Cincinnati Development Blog
- Cincinnati Black Blog
- Clark Street Blog

Postings about the Oasis and SR 32 Relocation community meetings were confirmed on the following websites:

- Cincinnati.com (Cincinnati Enquirer website)
- Cincinnati.com (Cincinnati Enquirer calendar pages)
- Bizjournals.com (Cincinnati Business Courier website)
- Kypost.com (Kentucky Post website)
- WVXU.org (WVXU website, calendar postings)
- Clermontpatriotlocal.wordpress.com (The Patriot – Local, online version)
- Communitypress.cincinnati.com (Community Press website)
- Facebook.com/easterncorridor (Eastern Corridor website)
- [Facebook.com/madisonvilleohio](https://www.facebook.com/madisonvilleohio) (Madisonville Community Council Facebook page)
- Facebook.com/ODOTDistrict8 (ODOT District 8 Facebook page)
- Hamiltoncounty.org (Hamilton County website)
- Newtownohio.org (Village of Newtown website)
- ODOT.state.oh.us (ODOT website)
- Sheeser.blogspot.com (Courtney Sheeser, Mariemont)
- Yelp.com

A detailed summary of the confirmed media hits is provided in Appendix C: Publicity.

# APPENDIX A: MEETING MATERIALS

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## *Handouts*

- Eastern Corridor Program Fall/Winter 2011 Newsletter
- Oasis Rail Project – Fact Sheet
- Oasis Rail Transit Project – Overview and Findings four-page brochure
- Oasis Rail Transit Project – Regional Rail Vehicles Fact Sheet
- SR 32 Relocation Project – Fact Sheet
- SR 32 Relocation Project – Frequently Asked Questions

## *Information Boards*

- Eastern Corridor Information Boards
  - Oasis Rail Transit Information Boards
  - SR 32 Information Boards
  - SR 32 Improvements, Eastgate Area Information Boards
  - Red Bank Corridor Information Boards
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# APPENDIX B: PUBLIC INPUT

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## *Contents*

- **Question and Answer Session Notes**
  - **July 31 Meeting at Milford High School**
  - **August 1 Meeting at LeBlond Recreation Center**
  - **August 2 Meeting at Nagel Middle School**
- **Public Involvement Meeting Email/Telephone Hotline Contact Log**
- **Eastern Corridor Program Comment Form**
- **Oasis Rail Transit Comment Form**
- **SR 32 Relocation Comment Card**

# APPENDIX C: PUBLICITY

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## *Contents*

- **Email Announcements**
- **Notification Mailer**
- **Media Release**
- **Media Coverage Summary Report**