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Eastern Corridor Public Involvement Meetings Scheduled *Meetings to Focus on Oasis Rail Transit and SR 32 Relocation Projects*

CINCINNATI (July 9, 2012) – Public involvement meetings have been scheduled for two of the Eastern Corridor Program’s core projects—Oasis Rail Transit and the State Route (SR) 32 Relocation project. At these meetings, local residents will have the chance to learn more about multi-modal transportation improvements being planned to ease congestion, enhance economic development opportunities and improve connectivity within the eastern half of the Greater Cincinnati region.

Meetings about the Oasis Rail Transit project will be held on the evenings of July 31, August 1 and August 2. Although held in different locations, each meeting will have the same content. A meeting about the SR 32 Relocation project will be held in conjunction with the Oasis meeting on August 2. Specific meeting times and locations are listed below:

OASIS MEETING	OASIS MEETING	COMBINED OASIS/SR 32 RELOCATION MEETING
Tuesday, July 31, 2012 Milford High School 1 Eagle’s Way Milford, OH 45150	Wednesday, August 1, 2012 LeBlond Recreation Center 2335 Riverside Drive Cincinnati, OH 45202	Thursday, August 2, 2012 Nagel Middle School 1500 Nagel Road Cincinnati, OH 45255
6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Q&A session: 7 p.m.	6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Q&A session: 7 p.m.	5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Q&A session: 7 p.m.

The meetings will be organized as open houses which people can attend any time during the meeting period. For the July 31 and August 1 Oasis meetings, the meeting period will be between 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. To better accommodate the combined Oasis Rail Transit and SR 32 Relocation meeting on August 2, the meeting period will be expanded one hour and begin instead at 5:00 p.m. A Question-and-Answer session will be held at 7:00 p.m. each evening. Comment cards will be available for members of the public who wish to provide feedback in written form.

“A series of information stations will highlight key project elements and project representatives will be available at each station to discuss the information, answer questions and receive comments,” said Andy Fluegemann, Planning Engineer for the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) District 8. “No final decisions have been made for the current Tier 2 study phase of these Eastern Corridor projects. Getting public input is an integral component of the project development process and is something we value and take seriously.”

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Eastern Corridor Implementation Partners

Hamilton County Transportation Improvement District • Clermont County Transportation Improvement District • City of Cincinnati
Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments • Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority • Ohio Department of Transportation

The Eastern Corridor Program is administered by the Ohio Department of Transportation in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Eastern Corridor Implementation Partners.

Hamilton County Commissioner Todd Portune emphasized the importance of public participation at the meetings:

“We need people to describe for us the kind of a multi-modal, integrated, regional transportation system they want, and what kinds of transit improvements they will use including passenger/commuter rail service, smart system traffic management, new roadway enhancements, and bicycle and pedestrian trails. With the public’s input, we hope to learn which of those, singly or in combination, will best generate a better quality of life in their community, spark economic and transit oriented development and create the jobs that come with transit oriented development.”

Portune added: “What we do today, if done right, will ease traffic congestion, reduce air pollution and set the stage for community improvement and benefit for the next hundred years.”

Mr. Fluegemann noted that the public will have multiple opportunities to provide input at the meetings by visiting multiple information stations and speaking with project team representatives, completing written response forms and by participating in one of the open forum Question and Answer sessions held each evening. Comments can also be submitted before and after the meetings through the Eastern Corridor website and by email. The Eastern Corridor Program’s website address is www.EasternCorridor.org and its email address is EasternCorridor@EasternCorridor.org.

Individuals needing interpretation or special assistance services should contact Kaity Dunn, Rasor Marketing Communications at (317) 379-9601 three to five days prior to the meetings. All meeting locations are ADA accessible.

About the Oasis Rail Transit Project

The Oasis Rail Transit project will provide a new transportation mode alternative for the Eastern Corridor region, moving residents, workers and visitors between downtown Cincinnati, the City of Milford and the communities that lie in between. The proposed rail corridor extends 17 miles, travels along a combination of existing and new tracks and will be served by multiple stations.

“Rail-based transportation is integral to the future of our region,” said Portune. “The Oasis line will establish a much-needed transportation alternative between central Cincinnati and its eastern communities and create a foundation upon which future passenger rail lines can be added. It will also serve as a strong catalyst for community enhancement and economic growth—particularly in regards to development around the rail stations.”

Information pertaining to the Oasis project that will be presented and discussed at the public involvement meetings is outlined below. Public feedback is being sought on each topic:

- Proposed Rail Service – Commuter and special event service are being proposed as the initial service types to be provided by the Oasis line.
- Rail Station Locations – Ten rail stations were previously proposed for the Oasis line. Based on projected service needs and requirements, the number of stations recommended for advancement at this time may be reduced.
- The Station Area Planning process – Rail stations offer significant community enhancement and transit-oriented development opportunities. Information will be shared on the opportunities this presents for the Eastern Corridor region and what the next steps in planning will be.

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- Rail Vehicle Technology – Based on length of the Oasis line, its service needs and projected costs, low-emission, low-noise regional rail vehicles powered by modern diesel multiple unit technology have been identified for use on the Oasis rail line. Information about this technology will be shared and discussed.

About the SR 32 Relocation Project

From the intersection of SR 32 and I-275 and extending west, the SR 32 Relocation project would shift the roadway from its current alignment to a new connection with US 50 (Columbia Parkway) and the Red Bank business corridor. The new road is being planned in conjunction with portions of the Oasis Rail Transit corridor, including potential new rail transit stations in the Fairfax and Newtown vicinities, and would include accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians. A new clear-span bridge would be built to cross the Little Miami River.

“The vision for the relocated SR 32 is not a highway like I-71, but rather a road that looks and feels more like a boulevard or parkway – two lanes traveling in each direction, a grassy or landscaped median in the middle, and possibly trees or other aesthetic treatments lining the road” said Hamilton County Engineer Ted Hubbard. “A bicycle and pedestrian path would travel along one side and portions of the Oasis line could travel along the other. Stoplights placed at key intervals along the road’s corridor would manage access on and off the roadway.”

When the Tier 1 phase of the Eastern Corridor study concluded in 2006, the study area for the SR 32 Relocation project encompassed 21 preliminary corridors to be further evaluated. Based on the results of recent studies that evaluated the natural, social and historic environment and considered public input, the project team is recommending that many of these preliminary corridors be eliminated from consideration.

The recommendations would focus further studies on two to three revised corridors located primarily north and northwest of Newtown, with the potential new river crossing located upstream (east) of the river’s horseshoe bend. The revised corridors represent a broad area within which detailed roadway alternatives will be developed and evaluated as the next step in the study process. No specific road alignments have been identified yet, nor has a preferred alternative or the No Build been selected. Additionally, no roadway designs have been developed at this time. These will be prepared with public input as the project advances in the project development process.

The project team’s recommendations and rationale for the refined study corridors will be highlighted and discussed at the combined public involvement meeting held on Thursday, August 2. In addition, information about the project’s purpose and need, development history, current status, next steps and funding will also be presented and discussed.

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The Eastern Corridor is a program of integrated, multi-modal transportation investments. The Program will enhance our regional transportation network by improving travel and connections between central Cincinnati and the communities extending east through Hamilton County into western Clermont County. Program elements include improvements to existing road networks, new and expanded roadways, rail transit, expanded bus routes and improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists. The Eastern Corridor Program is administered by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Eastern Corridor Implementation Partners: Hamilton County Transportation Improvement District (HCTID), Clermont County Transportation Improvement District (CCTID), City of Cincinnati, Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) and the Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority (SORTA).