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[www.EasternCorridor.org](http://www.EasternCorridor.org)

## FACT SHEET

### SR 32 Improvements: Eastern Corridor Segment II/III (US 50/Red Bank Corridor Area to I-275/SR 32 Interchange)

#### **THE SR 32 RELOCATION PROJECT – WHERE WE’VE BEEN**

The relocation of SR 32 was proposed as part of the Eastern Corridor’s program of multi-modal projects to improve mobility and connectivity between downtown Cincinnati and communities extending east through Hamilton County and into western Clermont County. The project was recommended for further evaluation based on the results of a comprehensive series of studies and an extensive public involvement process.

Originally, the project involved:

- Shifting the western end of existing SR 32 from where it currently ends at SR 125 (Beechmont Levee) to a new direct connection with US 50 (Columbia Parkway) and the Red Bank business corridor;
- Reshaping SR 32 into a controlled access, four-lane, boulevard-style roadway;
- And constructing a new bridge across the Little Miami River that could support multiple transportation modes (car/truck, rail transit, bike, pedestrian).

#### **PROJECT DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY**

In 2006, a series of roadway corridor options for relocating SR 32 within the Little Miami River Valley were identified for further evaluation (*Eastern Corridor Tier 1 Record of Decision, June 2006*). The results of studies conducted between 2010 and 2013 reduced the number of study corridors, and the remaining options recommended for further analysis were presented in the *SR 32 Relocation (Segment II/III) Feasibility Study, March 2012*. Comments received were subsequently addressed in an *Addendum to the Feasibility Study*, completed in December 2012.

Following the completion of the Feasibility Study, conflicting interests arising among various transportation, environmental, and historic interest agencies and several local communities led the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to put further project development on hold and conduct a comprehensive assessment of stakeholder interests and concerns pertaining to the project.

ODOT and FHWA engaged the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution and a facilitation team from the Consensus Building Institute as neutral, outside entities to review the project and complete a Situation Assessment to help determine possible next steps. Completed in November 2014, the Assessment summarized key viewpoints from over 100 stakeholder interviews and identified key perspectives about the project. During that time, ODOT and FHWA continued coordination with federal-recognized Native American tribes and various resource agencies interested in the Little Miami River and performed a risk assessment analysis on the project.

The results of these efforts identified significant concerns with relocating SR 32 within the Little Miami River Valley at this time. Key concerns pertain to regulatory permitting challenges, potential impacts on archaeological resources and the need for tribal concurrence, design and construction challenges, hazardous materials liabilities, anticipated high construction costs and local community opposition.

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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.*

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD**

In consideration of the information gained through further study of the proposed SR 32 Relocation options and resource agency and public input, ODOT has concluded that a new roadway alignment through the Little Miami River Valley is not a reasonable solution due to the potential for significant environmental impacts and higher costs.

However, congestion, delay and travel safety issues still exist through this portion of the Eastern Corridor and transportation improvements within Segment II/III are needed to address regional network inadequacies and poor linkage to important economic, recreational and employment centers.

Therefore, ODOT recommends the following actions for further development of the Segment II/III project:

- Do not expend additional time and resources studying previously considered new alignment corridors for SR 32 in the Little Miami River Valley [see the *Moving Forward (2015)* project area map handout].
- Revisit and update the project's Purpose and Need to verify and prioritize problem areas, redefine the study area as needed, and focus on what can be reasonably addressed by the project given the significant environmental constraints.
- Consider alternatives that have the potential for lower overall impacts, focusing on improvements to existing transportation corridors (SR 32, US 50 and other roadways). Options could include: adding turn lanes, interchange improvements, widening to enhance capacity; minor realignments; improving signal timing and/or coordination; installing new signal(s); and other improvements.
- Investigate the possibility of separating roadway Segment II/III of the Eastern Corridor Program into independent projects:
  - Segment III, extending east from the Newtown area to the I-275/SR 32 interchange, would involve developing transportation improvements to help support economic development opportunities in the Ancor area. Segment III has far less potential for major environmental impacts and could be ready for implementation much quicker than Segment II.
  - Segment II, extending west from the Newtown area to the US 50/Red Bank corridor area, would involve an expansion of the original study area to include portions of existing SR 32, SR 125/Beechmont Levy, Wooster Road, and US 50 through Mariemont. Although many of the same environmental constraints occur in these corridors as along the Little Miami River valley, the potential for major impacts along existing alignments is expected to be lower.

## **NEXT STEPS**

ODOT's goal is to better integrate and balance regional transportation needs with environmental protection, public interest in the quality of life in their communities, and the ability to support economic development opportunities of the broader region. Next steps for moving forward include:

- Public Information Meeting – review and comment on ODOT's recommended plan: *August 6, 2015*
- Finalize the recommended plan for moving forward: *late August 2015*
- Update the Project Purpose and Need: *August 2015 to Early 2016*
- Hold a series of public outreach opportunities to obtain Purpose and Need input: *August 2015 to Early 2016*

Following completion of the updated Purpose and Need, specific study details and schedules will be developed for each project to complete environmental clearance and detailed design. Project construction will be phased to address priority needs and available funding. Additional details will be provided as they become available.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

Public involvement has been a key effort in the development of the Eastern Corridor Program since its inception. An active and evolving group of stakeholders from local communities, local and regional government, environmental interest groups, and state and federal agencies was engaged through all phases of project development to date. ODOT carefully considered stakeholder concerns to develop its recommended plan for moving forward with this important component of the Eastern Corridor and public involvement will continue to be an integral part of the project development process. For more information, please visit the project website at [www.EasternCorridor.org](http://www.EasternCorridor.org).