



Ohio Department of Transportation, District 8
505 South State Route 741
Lebanon, OH 45036
(513) 932-3030

www.EasternCorridor.org

SR 125/SR 32 Focus Area Workshop
Thursday, May 5, 2016, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Mt. Washington Recreation Center
1750 Beacon Street, Mt. Washington

Workshop Summary

This ODOT public workshop focused on community and transportation issues in the SR 125/SR 32 area (this includes the Beechmont Levee / SR 32 interchange and SR 32 east to the Village of Newtown). It was attended by 15 participants from the area and surrounding communities. This was the last of six similar public workshops addressing different focus areas in the region.

Welcome and Introductions

Tommy Arnold, ODOT Project Manager for Segments II and III of the Eastern Corridor, opened the workshop by welcoming participants and introducing himself and other members of the workshop planning team. He stressed that community feedback and engagement is critical to the success of the Eastern Corridor project. He then presented on the purpose of the workshop in the context of the Eastern Corridor program. Slides and detailed notes from Mr. Arnold's presentation are available on the Eastern Corridor website. A copy of the presentation is attached.

Key points from Mr. Arnold's presentation included:

- The Eastern Corridor Program is an active series of regional transportation improvement studies and projects in varying stages of planning, construction and completion. The Program has four core segment areas: Segment I (Red Bank Corridor), Segments II and III (Red Bank Corridor to the I-275/SR 32 Interchange), Segments IV and IVa (Eastgate Area to Batavia) and the Oasis Rail Transit project. Tonight we are talking about Eastern Corridor's Segments II and III, which previously included the possibility of realigning State Route 32 (SR 32) through the Little Miami Valley. ODOT is no longer pursuing that alternative; instead, Segments II and III projects will focus on improving existing roads to meet transportation needs.

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.

- The first step to improving existing roads in Segments II and III is to establish the Purpose and Need. This includes analyzing traffic and crash data, and gathering public input. To gather public input, ODOT is conducting an online survey and is hosting six focus area workshops. The objectives of these workshops are to:
 - Learn about transportation needs and community values from community members
 - Explain ODOT's new approach to addressing transportation needs in this area
 - Understand how the community evaluates trade-offs between transportation benefits and other values such as cost, environmental impacts and benefits, cultural and historical resources
 - Identify views about setting priorities.

Mr. Arnold also recognized a project partner who was in attendance, Martha Kelly with the City of Cincinnati.

Next, Toby Berkman and Carri Hulet, workshop facilitators from the Consensus Building Institute (CBI), introduced themselves, explained the role of the facilitation team, and reviewed the agenda for the workshop. Mr. Berkman noted that CBI would be producing a workshop summary that would be available online. He then broke the participants into three small groups and provided them with a few minutes to introduce themselves and get to know each other.

Project Development Overview

Mr. Arnold presented on ODOT's project development process, how ODOT's current focus on Purpose and Need in Segments II and III fits into the process, and how input from the communities can influence the process. See the presentation slides for details.

Key points from Mr. Arnold's presentation:

- ODOT's project development process consists of five phases. For Segments II and III, we are in Phase 1, Planning, during which we are revisiting the Purpose and Need for transportation improvements within the study area. From the information gained, ODOT will identify potential projects to address the identified needs. Some will advance quickly through the preliminary engineering and environmental engineering phases (Phases 2 and 3, respectively); others take longer. Larger, more complex projects take five to seven years to go through the process. Medium-sized projects that do not require any property acquisition can take three to five years, and very small projects can be done in as little as a year.
- Ohio is a "Home Rule" state. ODOT maintains interstates and state and US routes outside of municipalities, but cities and villages control roads within their boundaries. For example, Newtown has jurisdiction over SR 32. Villages can

enter into agreements with ODOT to share responsibilities (such as maintenance).

- We currently have funding for the first phase (planning), and some for preliminary design and environmental studies, but we don't have funding to build right now. It will be a priority to secure funding as we move along in the project development process.

Community Values and Priorities

Ms. Hulet from CBI led the participants through a small group work session. In their small groups, participants created a list of key community values and priorities that contribute to their quality of life in this area. Each small group then shared its list with the larger group.

The groups noted the following community values and priorities:

- A desirable downtown area
- There are nice, walkable sidewalks. The business district and neighborhoods as a whole are very walkable, although there are opportunities for more walkability.
- The community changes at a relatively slow rate. This means in places like Anderson Township, the Mount Washington Business District, and elsewhere, there is a nice mix of new and old. When you look at neighborhoods and buildings, there is history.
- The neighborhoods are accessible. You can get anywhere you need to go very quickly, whether it be downtown, the airport, Kenwood, or even the Red Bank corridor. You might encounter a traffic jam but you can get where you are going within 20 minutes. A lot of thought was put into the roads 40 to 50 years ago when they were developed. SR 32 and I-275 provide a nice, quick, direct drive into the city.
- Attractive parks, nature, and recreation options
- Beautiful natural features like farms, hills, and green spaces, as well as the Little Miami River.
- Great local festivals
- There are nice, compact business districts that are close to everything.
- People care about each other. They are welcoming and friendly, and family-focused. This is unique for a city. People who come here tend to want to stay in this area.
- People work at a medium pace. The community is in "the middle" with its attitudes, development, and lifestyle.
- The scenic view through the valley on SR 32
- The towns are clean and small. The area is really a collection of small towns.
- The towns are close to city but have a suburban feel. When you arrive you feel like you are getting away from the city.

- There are wonderful churches, and park spaces, and the Mt. Washington Recreation Center that members of community raised money to build.
- Great schools
- There is an eclectic housing stock, and a huge spectrum of housing choices and costs. There are very expensive houses down to \$75,000 houses. Some streets are very quiet while others have more of a city feel.
- Good transit (and opportunities to expand it)

Ms. Hulet brought this first work session to a close by noting the importance of understanding community values and priorities before discussing the details of potential projects. It is key to understand what the community cares about and why before making specific transportation decisions. When ODOT decides whether and how to address specific traffic needs, it can use the values and priorities that the communities have articulated in these sessions as criteria by which the impacts and benefits of potential projects can be evaluated.

Transportation Needs

Next, Mr. Berkman from CBI led participants through a second work session. This session focused on how regional and local transportation networks could be improved. In their small groups, participants worked directly with local and regional maps, discussing areas where they thought improvements could be made. In setting up the conversation, Mr. Berkman suggested that participants could start by noting their “pet peeves” regarding traffic in the area. He also suggested that they think about tying their discussion of local issues to regional needs. Given ODOT’s mandate to solve regional problems while addressing local needs, it could be persuasive to ODOT if a potential local project would have regional impacts. Copies of the maps annotated at the workshop are attached.

After participants discussed these issues in small groups, representatives from each small group shared items from their list with the larger group. They highlighted the following transportation issues, organized by area of focus:

- Big picture issues
 - Even though there will not be a highway through the valley, there still need to be connections to get downtown or to I-71, so it is possible to easily go from neighborhood to neighborhood. The intersections need to be cleaned up to create a safer system with better flow.
 - Overall we could be doing more to create walkability. A number of sidewalks end or feel unsafe, in particular in Mt. Washington, and should be improved.
 - SR 32/Beechmont and the other side of the levee need to connect directly to Columbia Parkway, downtown, and possibly Red Bank. Those are the bottlenecks for traveling west. The Linwood and Madisonville connections also should be a focus.

- There should be more directional signs.
 - Getting to uptown is difficult.
 - Overall, we need good, safe access to attract developers and promote economic development.
- Beechmont Avenue (SR 125)
 - The system from SR 32 to Beechmont Levee should be looked at together.
 - Traffic flow along Beechmont Avenue from Elstun Road to Burney Lane should be improved.
 - Overall, there are numerous accidents as you approach the hill on Beechmont, primarily during peak hours.
 - There is currently work being done on a traffic study about the “chicken lane” or center turn lane on Beechmont, which has caused a lot of crashes. This will be an item of discussion at next Mt. Washington community council meeting.
 - There should be consistency with the number of lanes going up or down the hill on Beechmont. Currently, there is a center turn lane and then not a lane, which causes problems as people transition to and from the turn lane sections.
 - The reduction of two lanes into one in is a choke point.
 - The bike lane going up the hill on Beechmont make it impossible to put in a complete turn lane, and compromise traffic safety.
 - It might be possible to use the Metro buses (near UDF) so that bike riders could safely put their bikes on buses and ride up the hill. That would increase space for the turn lane (because the bike lane could be removed) while still facilitating biking.
 - There may need to be a left turn arrow from Sutton onto Beechmont (if one is not already there).
 - There should be a left turn lane at Beacon and Beechmont. Currently, the lack of a turn lane backs up everything.
 - The truck traffic on Beechmont conflicts with bikes and cars
 - The lack of sidewalks in certain places on Beechmont is unsafe.
 - The area at Wilmer/Wooster is especially confusing. It looks like you can turn left there, but you cannot.
 - There should be more destination signs to provide clarity.
- SR 32/SR 125 interchange
 - The merge onto westbound Beechmont Levee from SR 32 is dangerous.
 - The SR 32/SR 125 interchange is a strange design and should be reconfigured.
 - At times the ramps flood and then you have no access to SR 32 under SR 125.
 - Visibility on the ramps at SR 125 and SR 32 should be improved.
 - A second exit lane from eastbound SR 125 to SR 32 would be helpful.
- Biking, Transit, and Walkability

- More should be done to expand public transportation options to connect regional points of interest.
- SORTA has talked about getting more point-to-point service by adding smaller shuttles. It would be helpful to increase Metro by adding smaller shuttles, similar to campuses.
- Overall, there should be improved bus access and stops.
- Link smaller business districts together through transit.
- Have a transit center at the bottom of the hill, so long-distance commuters would enjoy fewer stops.
- There should be more bus rapid transit (BRT) routes. For example, there should be BRT on Madison so people can get to the hospitals.
- The bike trail should be completed into downtown.
- There could be a connection with the Little Miami Trail to cross the river, since there is a trail on both sides. There could also be connections to the east and into the business district, and in areas that line up with bus stops so people can have a multi-modal commute.
- Link the Little Miami Bike Trail with Armleder and Lunken trail (Beechmont over the Little Miami River), to facilitate biking.
- There could be a shared use path connection between the business district and the Little Miami Scenic Trail, behind the Speedway.
- There should be more off-road trails, not just sidewalks.
- There are no sidewalks on SR 125 between SR 32 and Ranchvale.
- Need connections from Saddleback to SR 32 and Clough to SR 125.
- Additional problems and suggestions
 - There are bottlenecks on SR 125 at Amelia
 - There should be improvements to the Clough Pike interface with SR 32 to address safety issues
 - There are traffic queuing issues at Clough and SR 32
 - Better pavement markings on the bridge over the Little Miami River
 - The “S” curves on SR 32 by the sod farms are an issue
 - The speed near the soccer fields on SR 32 is unsafe

Mr. Berkman wrapped up this second work session by noting that it was encouraging to hear participants articulate not only traffic problems, but also ideas for solutions.

Closing

Mr. Arnold closed the meeting with a final presentation (see the presentation slides for details). He made the following key points:

- This is a regional project. As we go through the workshops, we are looking for local fixes that add up to overall improvement in the region. To identify those local fixes, ODOT will compile and analyze the public input from the meetings

and the survey, and the traffic and safety data to create the Purpose and Need document.

- Mr. Arnold shared some preliminary data and analysis on crash locations and travel times to illustrate the kind of data ODOT will be using to help establish purpose and need. He noted that ODOT is one of the first states in the country to adopt safety methodologies that compare the number of crashes expected at a site to the number of crashes that actually occur. In response to a question, he noted that the severity of a crash could be flagged in the program. He also showed an example of Operation Based Data that will be used to help calculate how long it will take to travel from one location to another. This data is similar to the data that Google and other GPS devices use to calculate how long it will take you to travel from one place to another.
- The immediate next steps include these public workshops (six in total) and an online survey. All of the workshops are open to the public, and the Segments II and III online survey (located at www.EasternCorridor.org) will be open until mid-June for any additional input that participants want to provide. The survey has a mapping function that enables you to drop a pin at a specific location and include a comment on it (Tommy encouraged survey takers to “please comment!” The pin is not helpful without an explanation of the problem.)
- Over the summer, ODOT will process all that we’ve heard and analyze updated traffic counts. This information will be used to develop the Purpose and Need statement, which will be then shared with the public for review and response in a public meeting to be held this fall. We expect to begin developing alternatives to address transportation needs outlined in the Purpose and Need report by the end of the year.
- Mr. Arnold encouraged folks to visit www.EasternCorridor.org for more information, including historical data, information on current meetings, and the link to the current online survey.

One participant added a final comment suggesting that the controversy over building a road through the Little Miami River Valley may have damaged the Eastern Corridor brand. The name “Eastern Corridor” may create negative feeling for some in the communities. The participant suggested that ODOT might consider using different names for different, specific areas. A representative from ODOT confirmed that when specific projects have been identified and begin to move forward, it may make sense to give them specific, project-focused names.

Mr. Arnold thanked participants for their time and their thoughtful contributions, and adjourned the meeting.

Meeting Participants:

Nathan Alley
Tom Caruso
Chris Curran
Pat Curran
Jon Doucleff
Susan Doucleff
David Haldeman
Dick Hewitt
Wade Johnston
Rich Jordan
Martha Kelly
Andy Moran
David Peterson
Adam Wissman
Greg Wissman

Project Team Members in attendance:

Jacqueline Annarino, ODOT
Tom Arnold, ODOT
Tim Hill, ODOT
Charlie Rowe, ODOT
Caroline Ammerman, Stantec
Steve Shadix, Stantec
Laura Whitman, Rasor Marketing
Communications

Meeting Facilitators:

Toby Berkman, CBI
Carri Hulet, CBI



The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried-out by ODOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 11, 2015, and executed by FHWA and ODOT.

**SR 125/SR 32
Focus Area Workshop
Presentation**





Segments II and III Focus Area Workshop

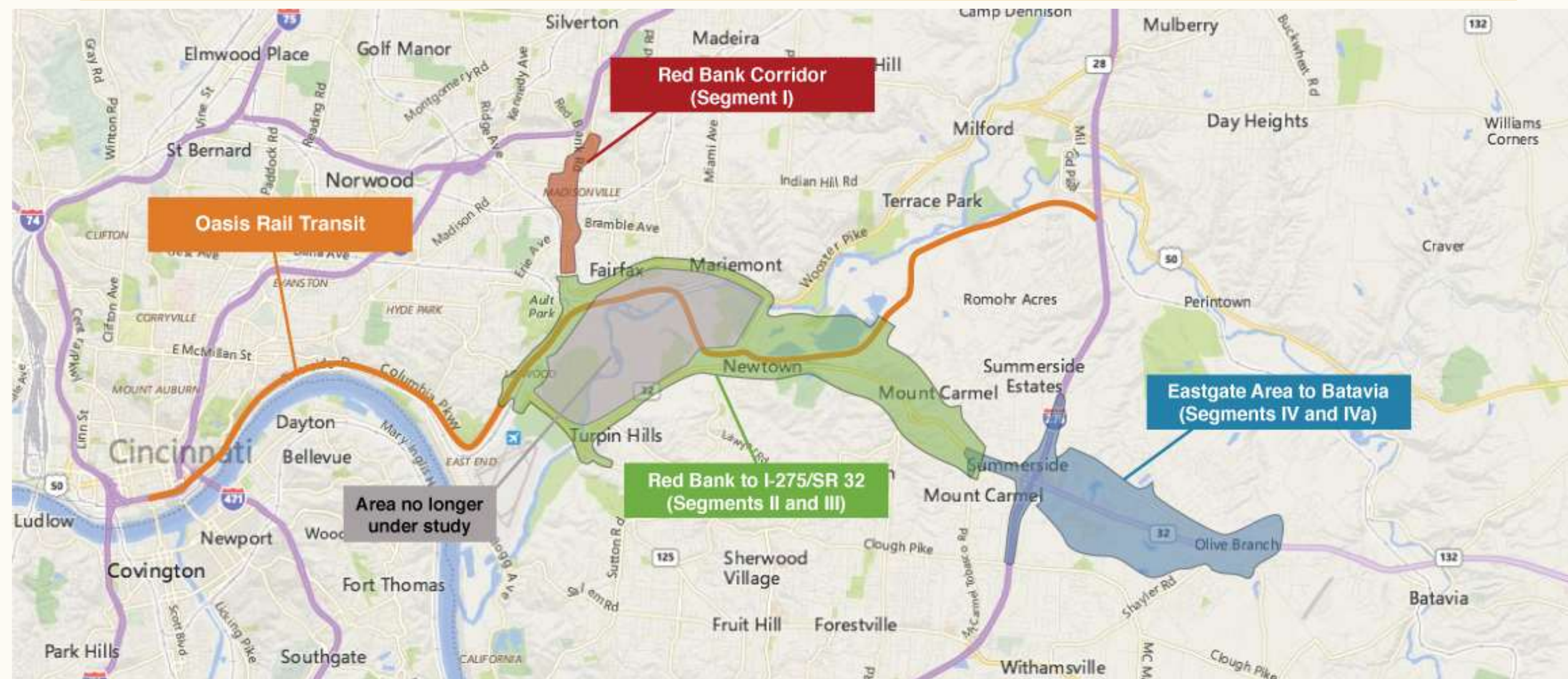
SR 32 & SR 125 Interchange Area

Mt. Washington Recreation Center

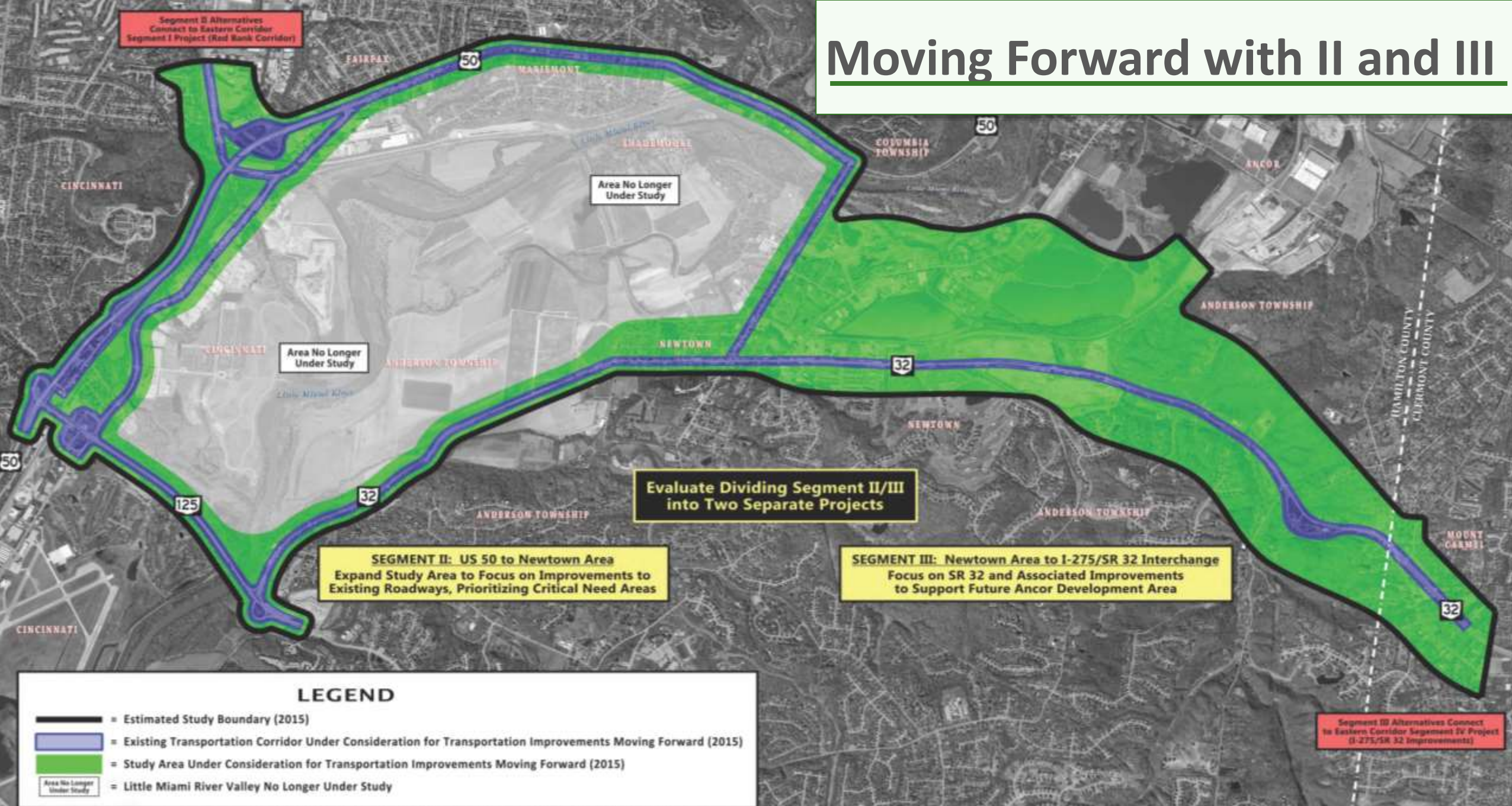
May 5, 2016

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

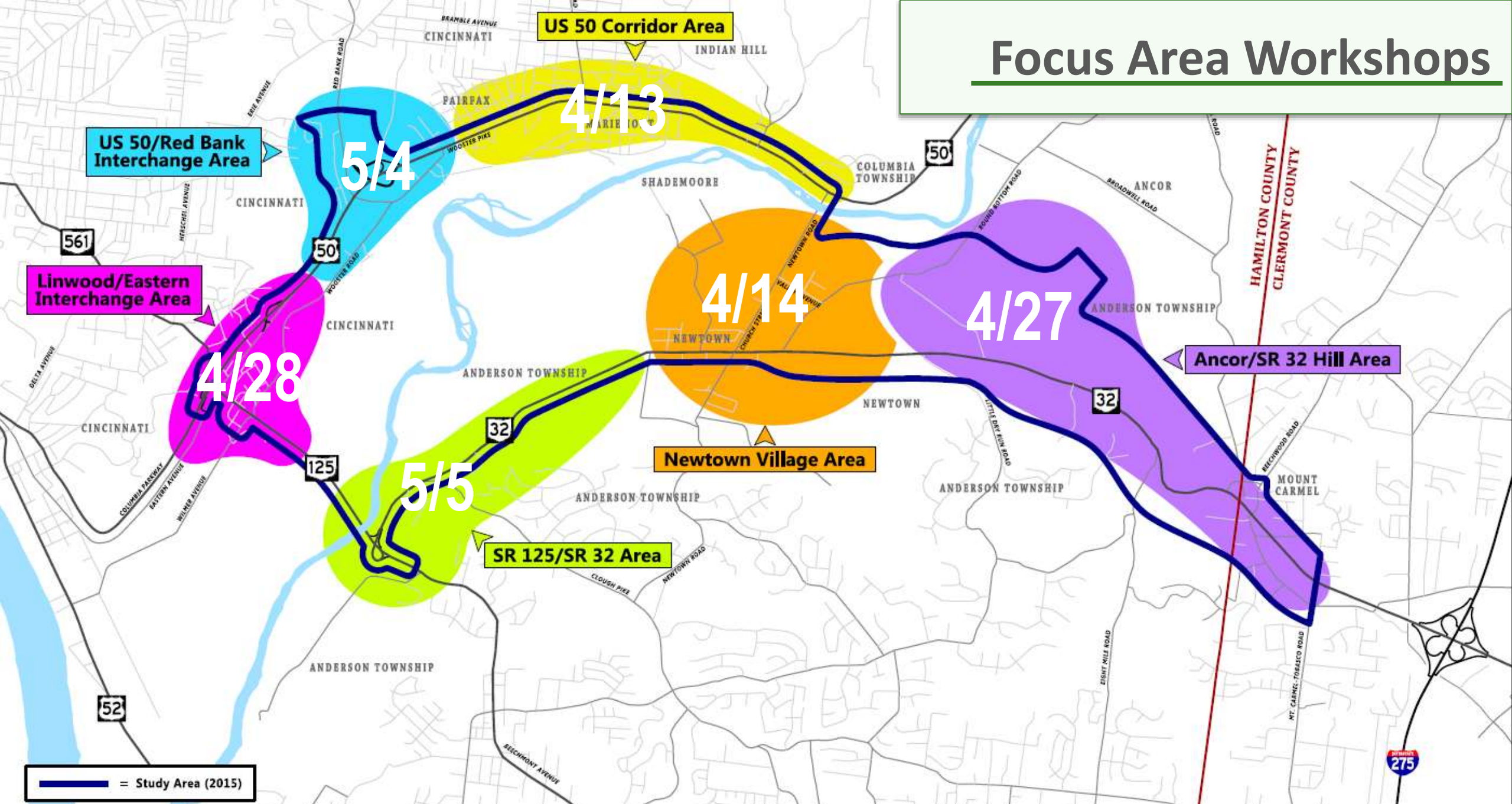
What is the Eastern Corridor Program?



Moving Forward with II and III

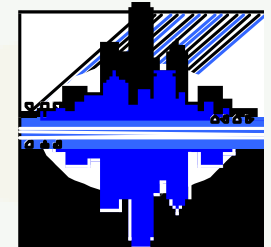


Focus Area Workshops

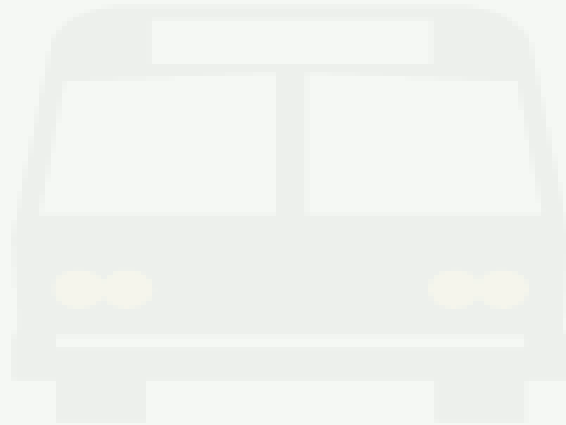
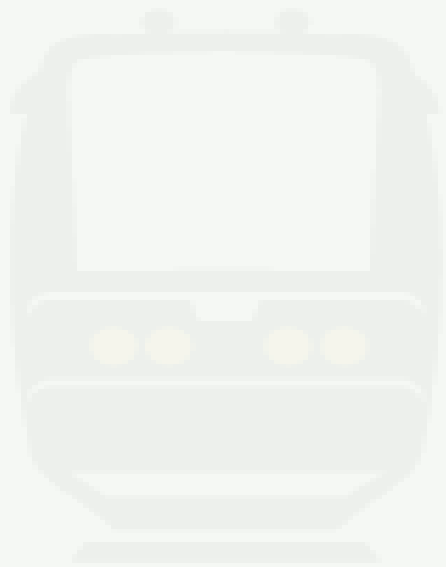


Tonight's Objectives

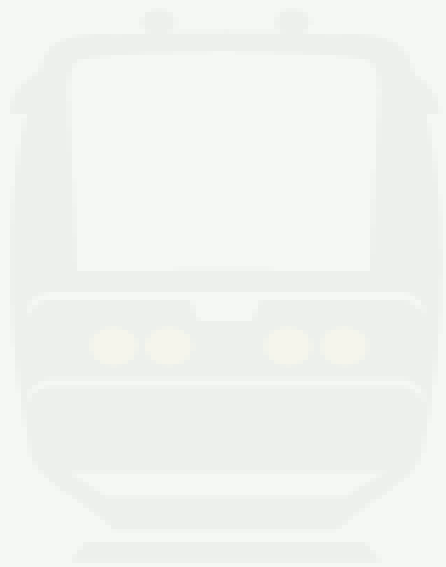
- Learn about transportation needs and community values from community members
- Explain ODOT's new approach to addressing transportation needs in this area
- Understand how the community evaluates trade-offs between transportation benefits and other values such as cost, environmental impacts and benefits, cultural and historical resources
- Identify views for setting priorities



Opening Exercise



Project Development Overview



Project Development Process



Planning

- The first step is to revisit the Purpose and Need of the project
- The Purpose and Need focuses on an understanding of the issues that will need to be addressed by this project
 - *Traffic Data*
 - *Crash Analysis*
 - *Other goals (promote economic vitality, bike/ped accomodations, etc.)*



PLANNING
(PL)

Ohio “Home Rule” Transportation Roles

ODOT



Interstates



U.S. & State Routes
(outside municipalities)

Municipalities

LOCAL ROUTE



including designated U.S. & State Routes
(inside municipalities)

Ohio Turnpike Infrastructure Commission



Counties / Townships

LOCAL ROAD

Local Routes



Funding Options



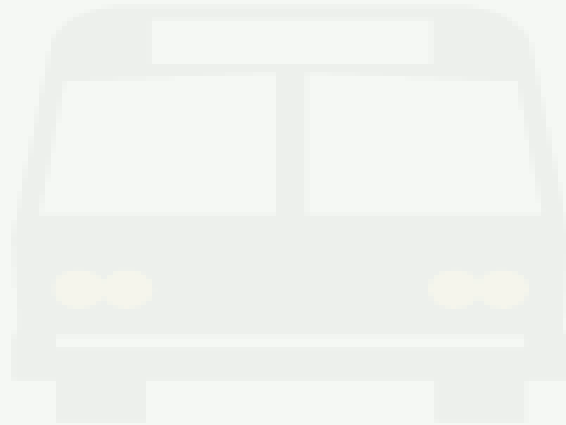
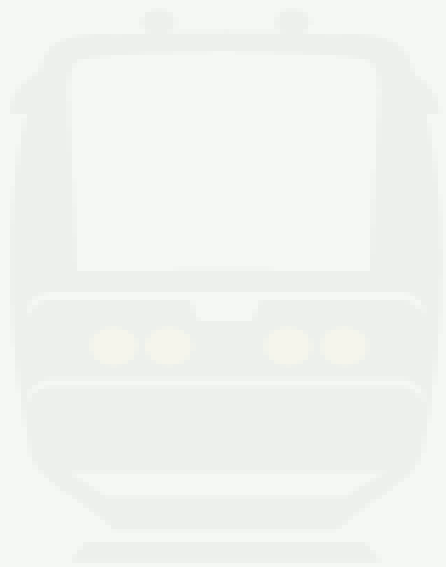
- Transportation Alternatives (TA)
- Surface Transportation Program (STP)
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)



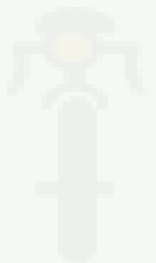
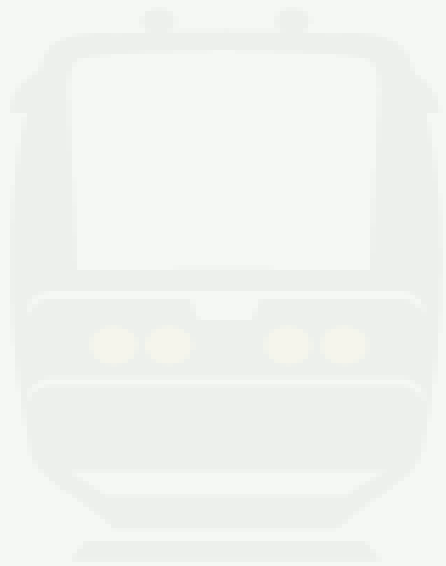
- Highway Safety Improvement (HSIP)
- Safe Routes to School (SRTS)
- Major New (TRAC)

Work Session:

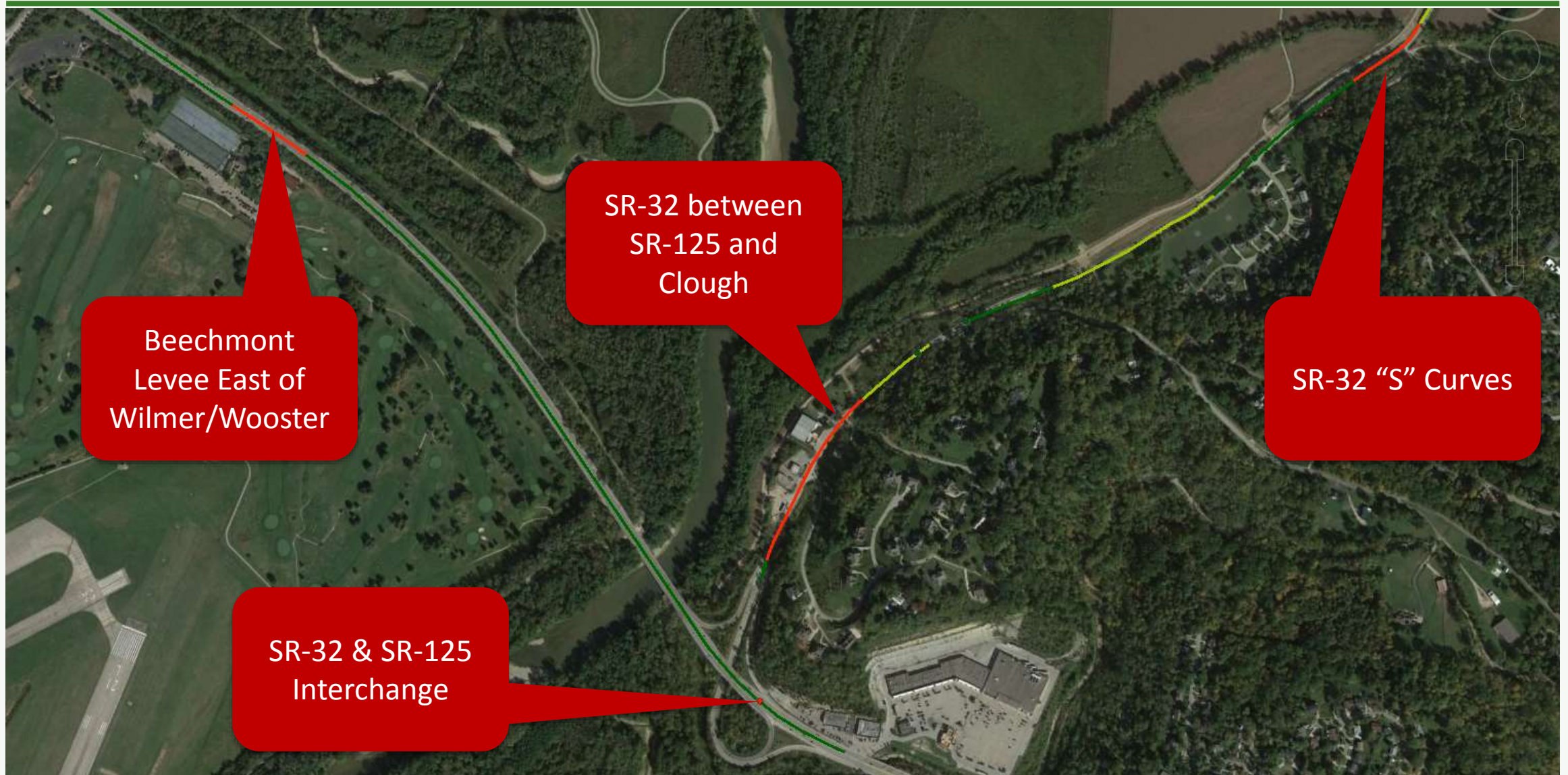
Community Values and Priorities



Work Session: Transportation Needs



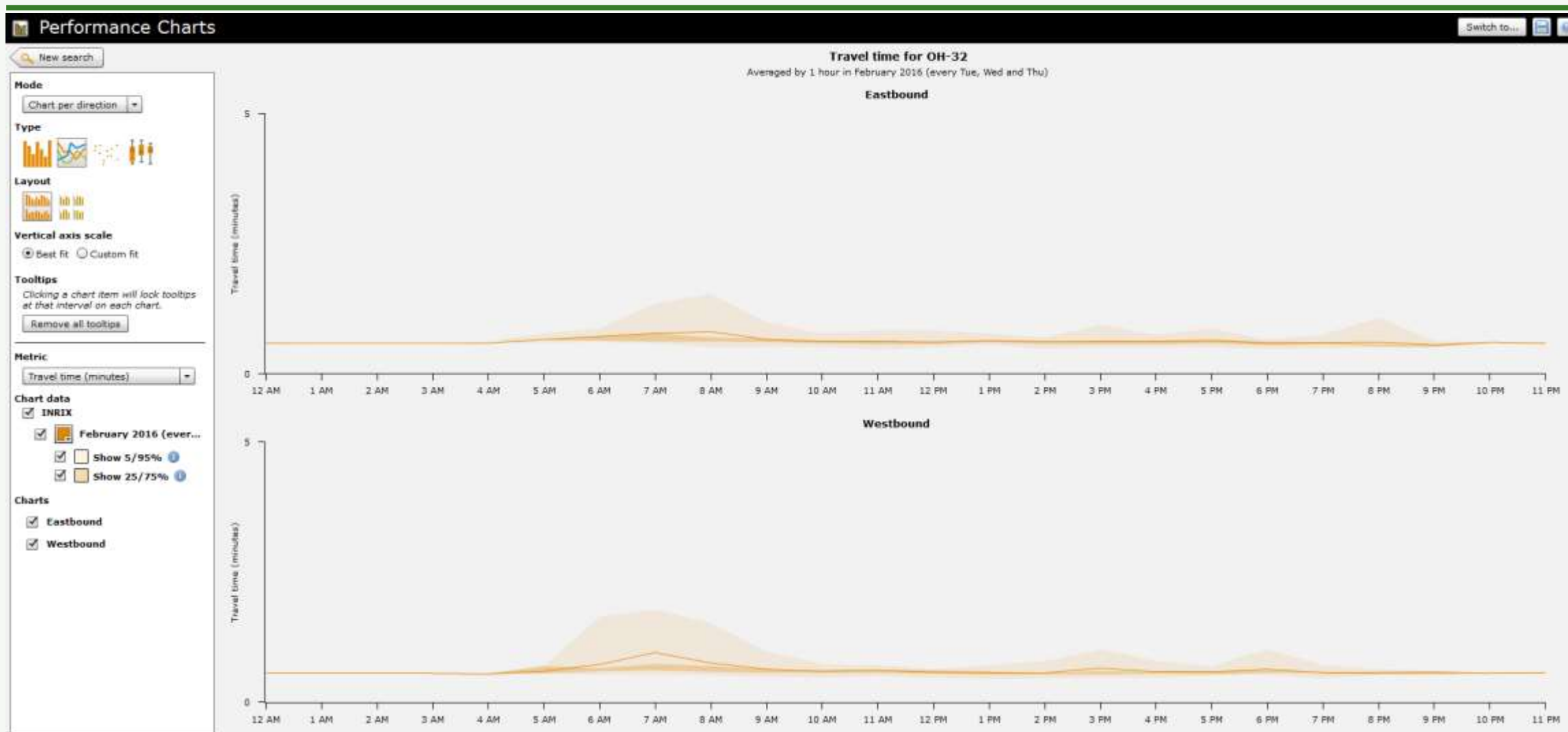
Safety



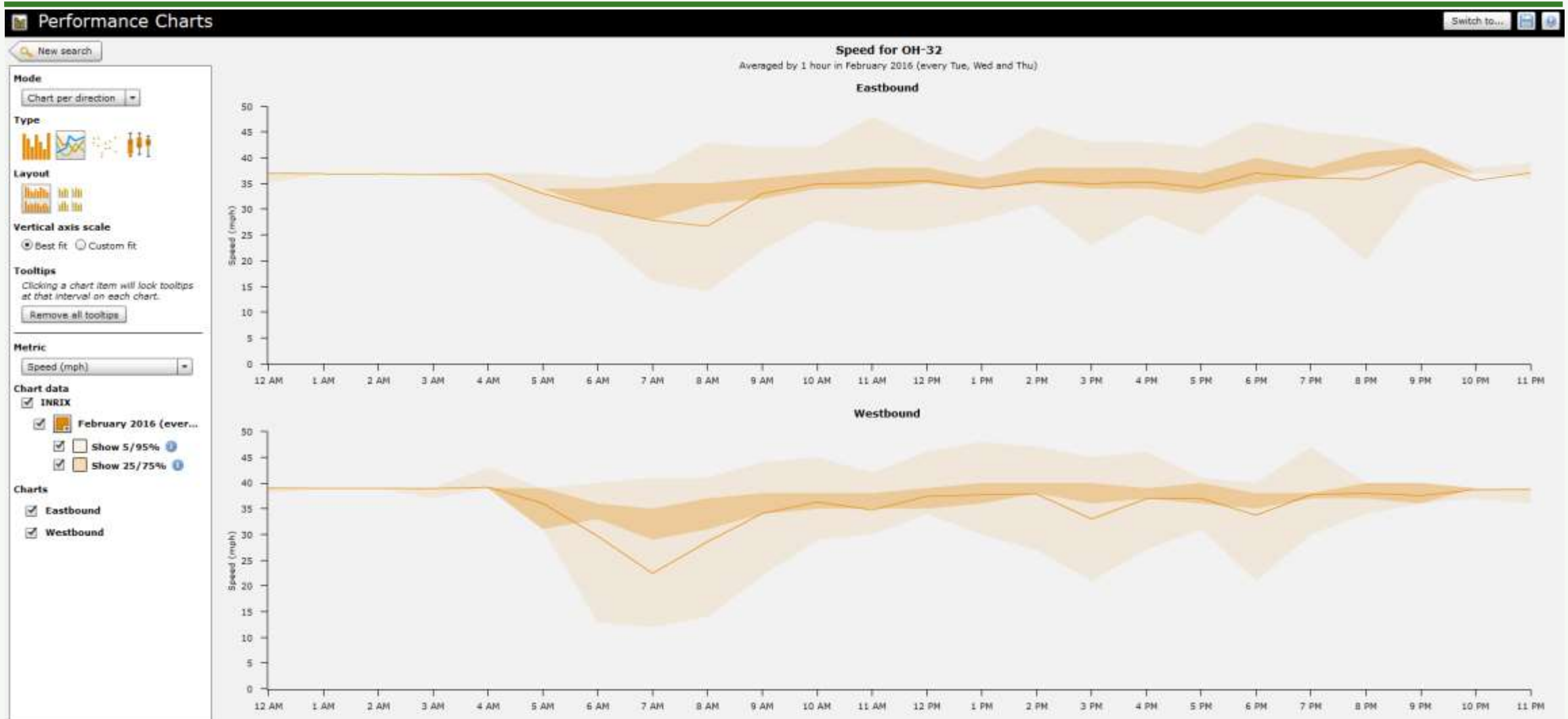
Traffic Flow: SR 32



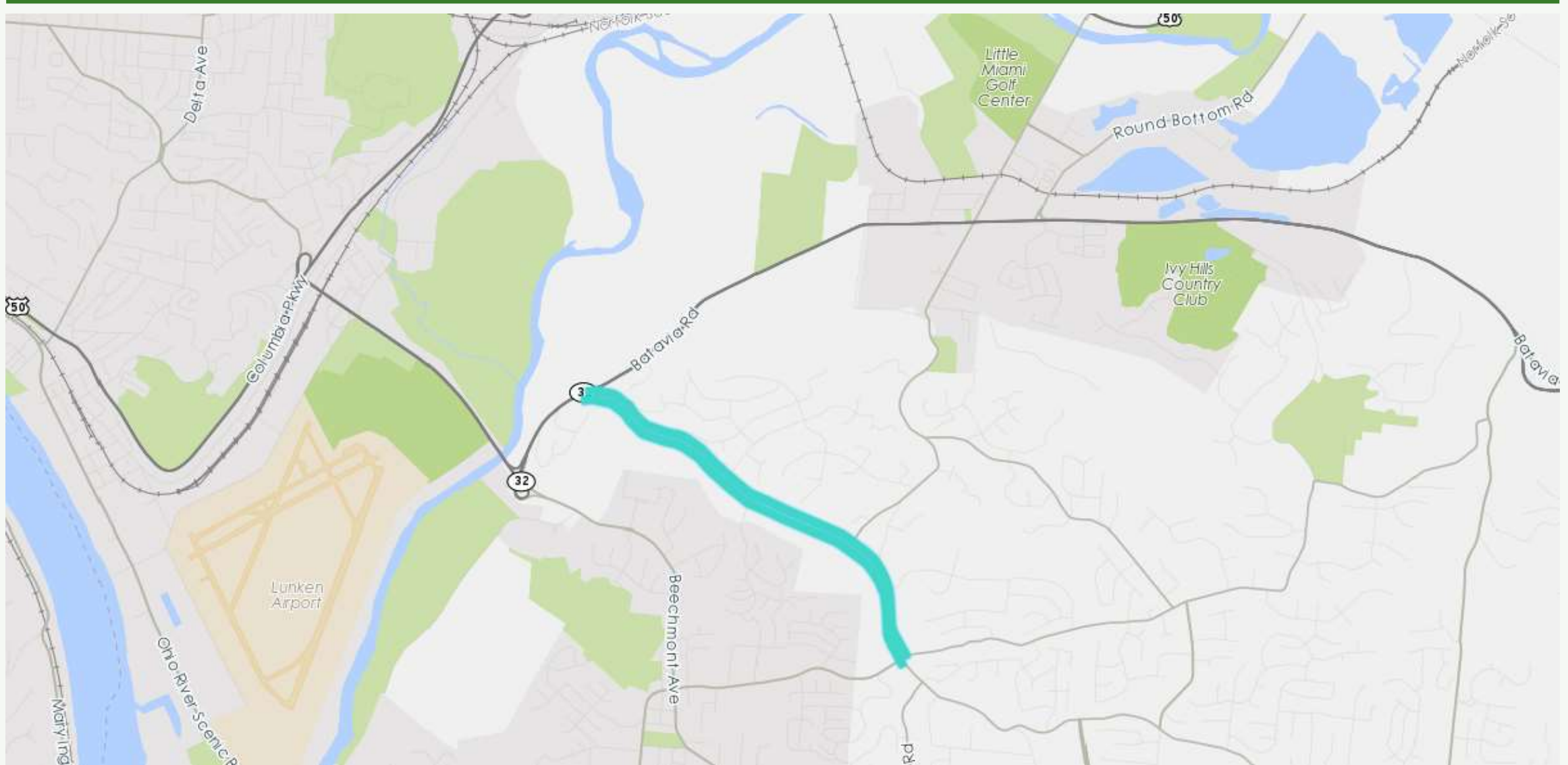
Travel Time: SR 32 from SR-125 to Clough



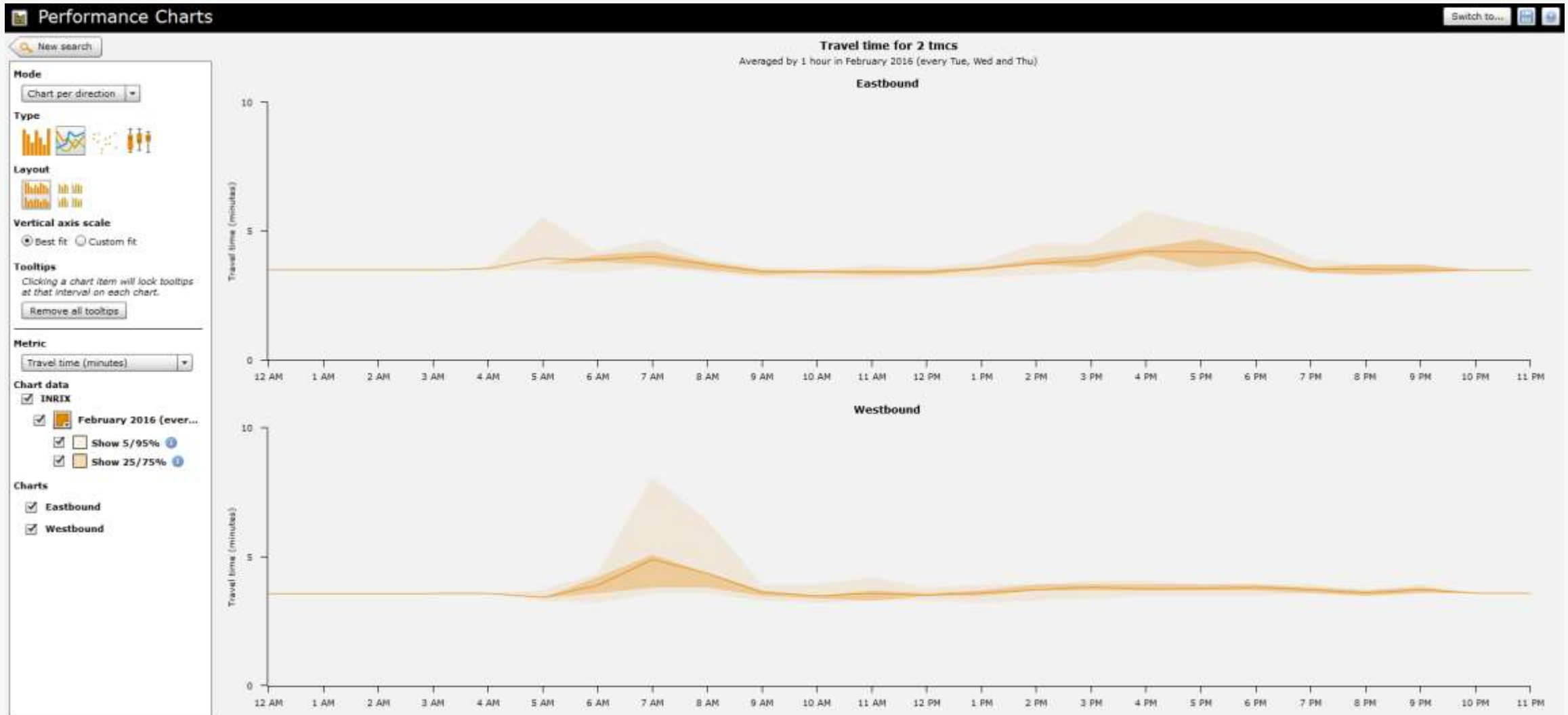
Speed: SR 32 from SR-125 to Clough



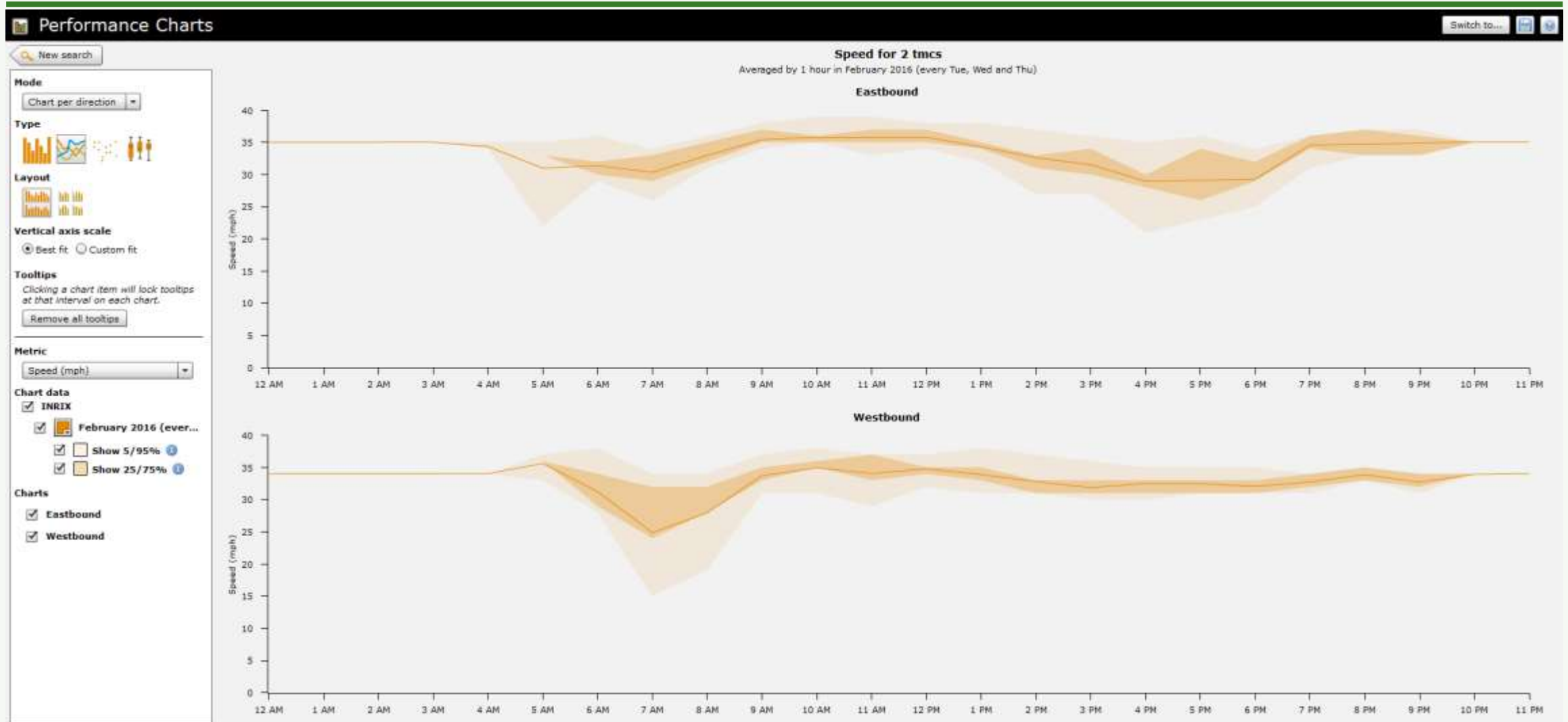
Traffic Flow - Clough



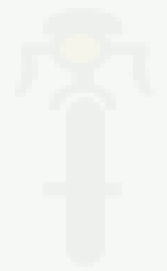
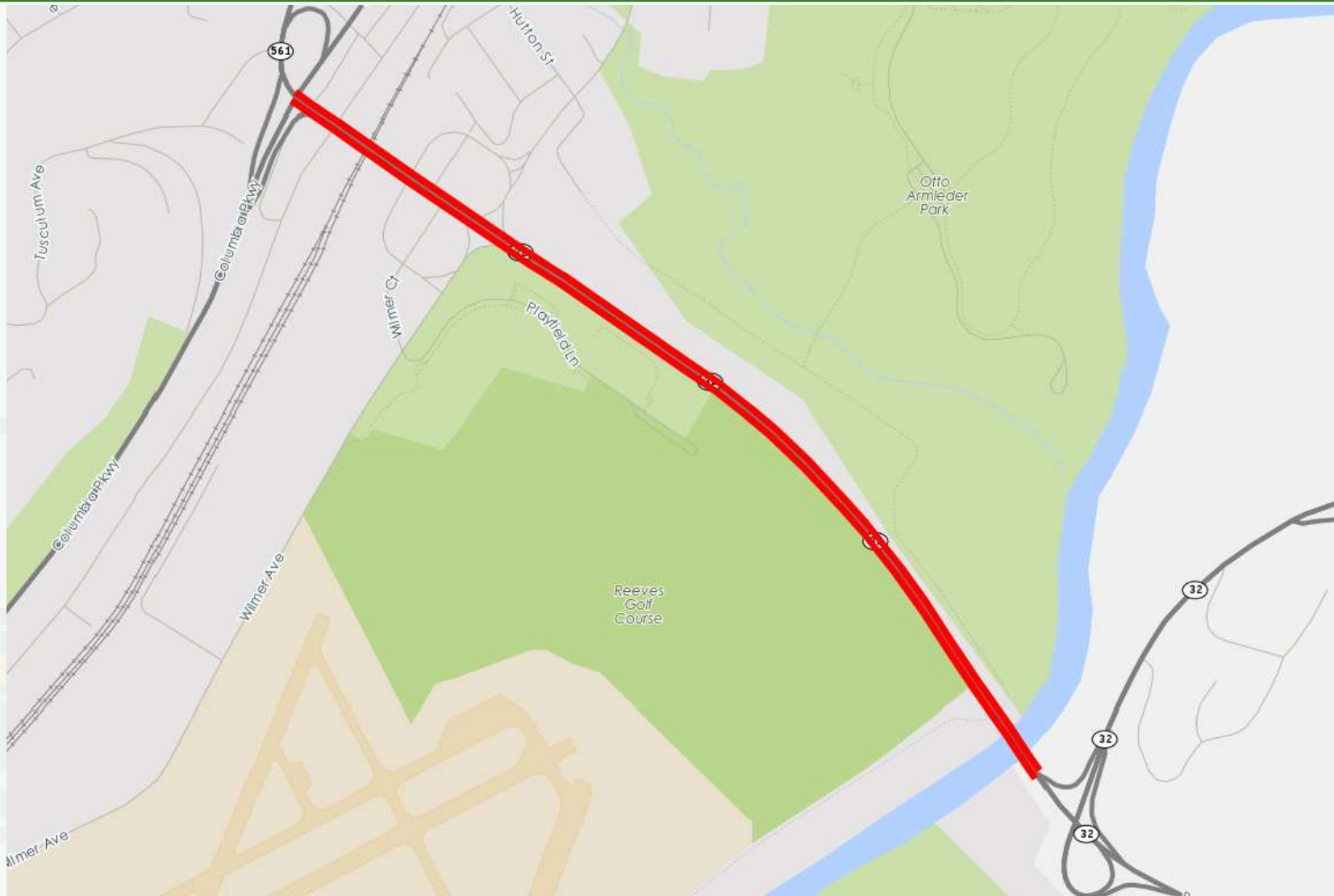
Travel Time - Clough



Speed Clough



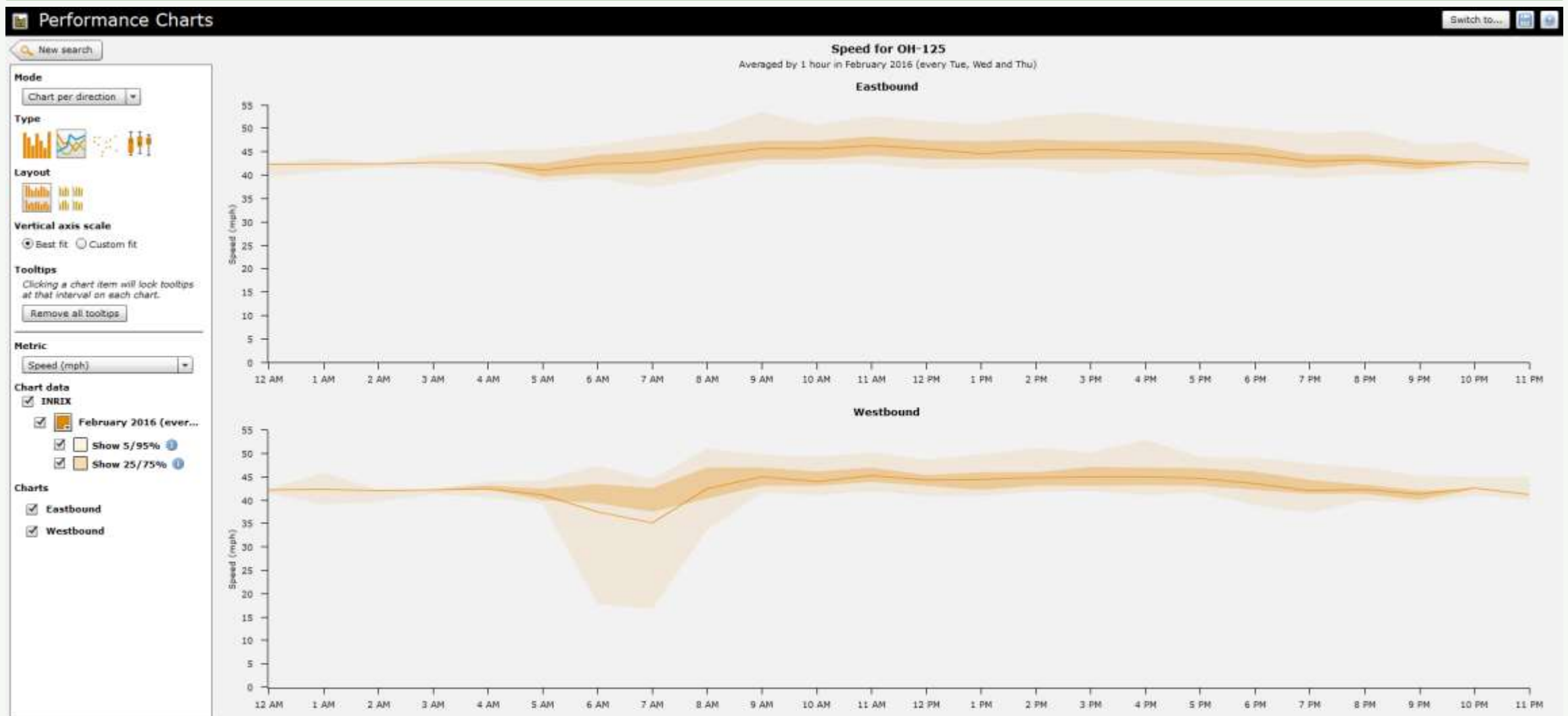
Traffic Flow – Beechmont Levee



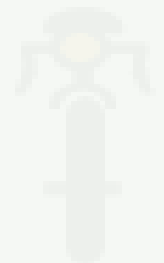
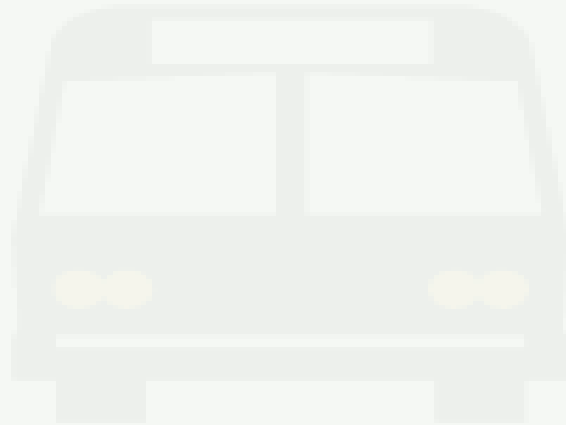
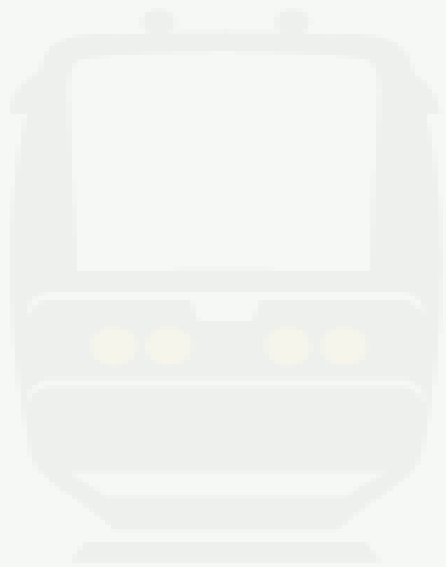
Travel Time: Beechmont Levee



Speed: Beechmont Levee



Workshop Wrap Up



Public Engagement

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

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The Eastern Corridor

RED BANK CORRIDOR
(SEGMENT I)

RED BANK TO I-275/SR 32
(SEGMENTS II AND III)

EASTGATE AREA TO BATAVIA
(SEGMENTS IV AND IVa)

OASIS RAIL TRANSIT

EASTERN CORRIDOR VIDEO Q&A

Contact Us

(513) 888-7625
EasternCorridor@EasternCorridor.org
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Home

Home

JOIN THE DISCUSSION

How do you travel within and through the central Eastern Corridor area? What problems do you experience? What improvements should be made?

ODOT is asking the region to join the discussion about how we can improve travel within and through the Eastern Corridor's [Segment II and III Study Area](#). To help get us started, take a few minutes and share your thoughts using the survey link below. The answers you provide will help shape transportation investments in this region. Survey results will be shared on this website and in a public meeting to be held in September.

Take the survey
CLICK HERE TO BEGIN

This April and May, ODOT will host six Focus Area Workshops in [the Segment II and III area](#) that are open to the public. Anyone interested is encouraged to come and work alongside ODOT, Hamilton County, Clermont County, the city of Cincinnati, SORTA, and help shape improvements. [Click here to learn more.](#)

THE EASTERN CORRIDOR PROGRAM

Providing essential east-west connectivity for the Greater Cincinnati region

The Eastern Corridor Program is a regional effort that integrates roadway network improvements, new rail transit options, expanded bus service, bikeways and walking paths to improve travel and access between Greater Cincinnati's eastern communities and its central employment, economic and social centers.

Current Updates

[Public input workshops for Segments II and III begin April 14. Click here for more info and the Workshop schedule](#)

[Materials from the latest Eastern Corridor Development Team Meeting are now available](#)

[Ohio Rail Transit Open House materials are now available](#)

[New Ohio Rail Transit Project reports are now posted online](#)

[The Public Involvement Meeting Summary for the August 6, 2015 SR 32 Improvements Public Meeting is now posted](#)

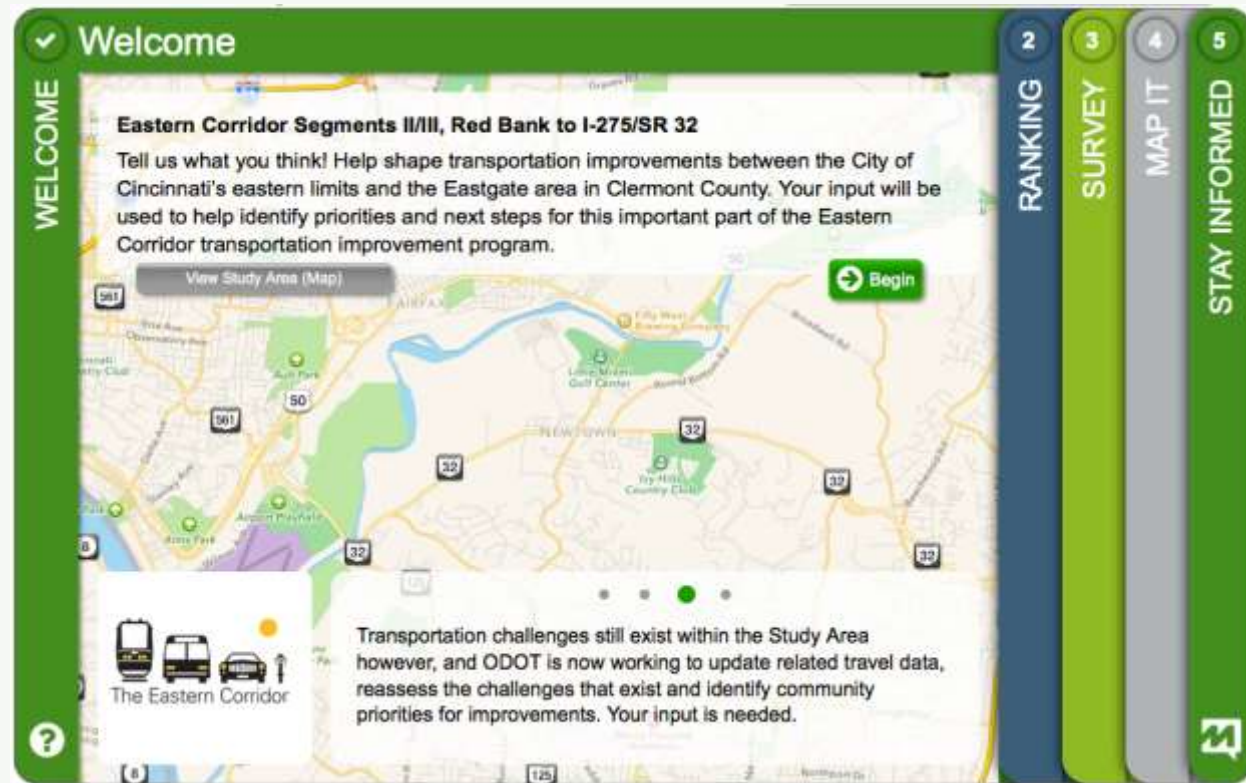
[Materials from the August 6 Public Meeting for the SR 32 Improvements are now posted](#)

[Materials from the Public Information Meeting for the Duck Creek Connector project in Madisonville are now posted](#)

The Eastern Corridor Website

This website contains information about current and past Eastern Corridor Program development efforts. Questions and feedback can be shared any time by sending an email to:

Public Engagement



Public Engagement

WELCOME

RANKING

3 SURVEY

4 MAP IT

Mark The Map

What to do

Next Task

5 STAY INFORMED

Please select, drag and drop the markers on the map.

Roadways

Public Transit

Pedestrian Access

Bicycle Needs

Other

What is the issue/need?:

Comment...

Submit

Map data ©2016 Google

Terms of Use

Report a map error

Red Bank to I-275/SR 32 (Segments II and III)

www.EasternCorridor.org



www.EasternCorridor.org

EasternCorridor@EasternCorridor.org

**SR 125/SR 32
Focus Area Workshop
Annotated Maps**



SR 125 / SR 32 Area

Google™ earth

2016 Google

4000 ft

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N

m, MapmyIndia ©

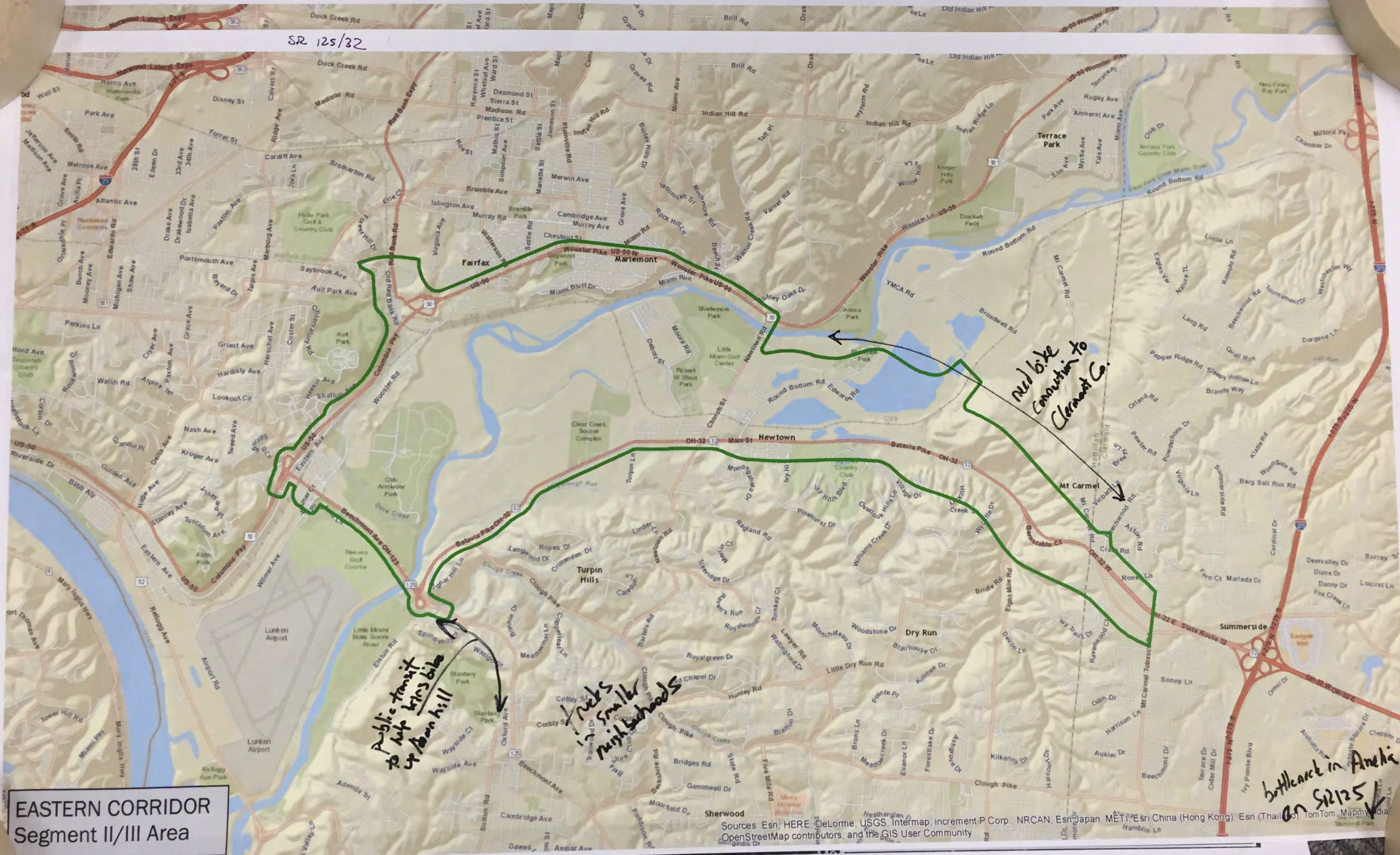
10/10/10



Figure 1

EASTERN CORRIDOR

SR 125/32



EASTERN CORRIDOR
Segment II/III Area

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), TomTom, Mapbox, OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

EASTERN CORRIDOR

SR 125 / SR 32 Area



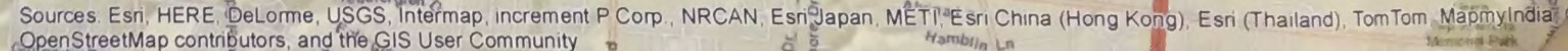
Google earth

Google

SR 125/32

Webb

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[illegible]

SR 125 / SR 32 Area

SR 125 / SR 32 Area

Google™ earth

Digitized by Google

4000 ft

use the track!

Updated
Newtown Rd
to improve
in Newtown

could
be a
new
park
at
this
location
521 & 25
4th St

to get a
new
city

EASTERN CORRIDOR
Segment II/III Area 5/12/13

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community