

Last summer, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) completed a Transportation Needs Analysis for Segments II and III of the Eastern Corridor. Developed in coordination with local communities and interest groups, the analysis identified and prioritized transportation issues that need to be addressed throughout the Segments II and III study area. During the next phase of planning, ODOT will use information from the analysis to develop recommended solutions for the Primary Needs identified in the report. Secondary Needs will be addressed as opportunity and funding allow.

To help guide its planning efforts, ODOT has formed Advisory Committees based on Segments II and III's six focus areas (see the attached Focus Area map). Each focus area has its own Advisory Committee, with the exception of the Linwood/Eastern Interchange and US 50 Red Bank Focus Areas, which are represented by one committee. Advisory Committee members include elected officials, transportation planning professionals, and community and interest group representatives. Committee members will assist with identifying, evaluating, and prioritizing recommended solutions for transportation needs within their assigned Focus Area(s), as well as developing strategies for implementation.

Advisory Committees will convene for four work sessions throughout this process. Recommendations from the Advisory Committee meetings will be presented at a public meeting to be held later this year at which time the general public will have an opportunity to review and provide input on the recommendations before they are finalized.

The meeting held on Friday, Feb. 9, 2018 was the first meeting of the SR 125/SR 32 Focus Area Advisory Committee.

MEETING NOTES

MEETING OBJECTIVES

The objectives for this Advisory Committee meeting were to:

- Review transportation needs identified for the SR 125/SR 32 Focus Area [as presented in the *Eastern Corridor Segments II and III Transportation Needs Analysis Final Report (July 2017)*]
- Identify evaluation criteria
- Brainstorm preliminary concepts/solutions to be explored

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Tom Arnold, ODOT project manager for Eastern Corridor Segments II and III, opened the Advisory Committee meeting by welcoming participants and thanking them for their participation. He outlined the structure of the meeting and emphasized that these meetings are intended to be collaborative working sessions. Advisory Committee members should feel comfortable asking questions or commenting at any point during the presentation or workshop portion of the meeting. Additional questions may be submitted to ODOT by email following the meeting. Mr. Arnold then invited participants to introduce themselves and the organizations they represented. A list of meeting participants is provided with these notes.

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

Using a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Arnold provided a brief overview of the Eastern Corridor Program and its component projects, as well as the evolution of Eastern Corridor Segments II and III. He reviewed tasks that were recently completed and used to develop the <u>Eastern Corridor Segments II and III</u> <u>Transportation Needs Analysis report</u>. He then reviewed the role of the Advisory Committees prior to discussing how roadway management responsibilities are coordinated between ODOT and local jurisdictions. Mr. Arnold also provided an overview of ODOT's Project Development Process (noting that Segments II and III are currently in the planning phase), reviewed capital projects already being planned within the Segments II and III study area and briefly discussed possible funding avenues. Key points from Mr. Arnold's presentation included:

- The Eastern Corridor is not just a single project. Instead, it is a program of many projects and investments in our regional transportation network that are in various stages of completion. Much work has already been completed in Eastern Corridor Segments IV and IVa (Eastgate to Batavia) and the new Duck Creek Connector, a component of Segment I (Red Bank Corridor), opened in late 2017.
- Previously, ODOT evaluated the proposed realignment of SR 32 through Segments II and III (Red Bank Corridor to I-275/SR 32). ODOT determined that this option is not feasible due to potentially significant environmental impacts and construction costs. Instead, the project has changed course to focus on making improvements to the existing roadway network.
- Transportation needs in Segments II and III were identified based on the results of updated technical studies and comprehensive public outreach efforts. Public input was gathered through six focus area workshops (approximately 100 participants), a regional online survey (approximately 1,200 responses), a public meeting (approximately 100 attendees) and comments submitted online. At the same time, technical data including traffic counts, an analysis of travel times and travel patterns, roadway geometry analyses and crash data were revisited and updated.
- The role of the Advisory Committees is to guide the development, evaluation and refinement of recommended solutions to address Primary Transportation Needs that have been identified within Segments II and III. Committee members are to represent their communities/ organizations, share information with them and bring their concerns back to the planning table. The Committees' role is not to make decisions; their involvement is one part of a process that also will require looking at integration into the broader transportation system and impacts, coordinating with local governments and Native American tribal communities, and seeking further public input. Rather, the Committee's role is to help guide the process, represent local interests and provide recommendations regarding which concepts should be advanced through the solution development process.
- Ohio is a "home rule" state. This means that ODOT maintains interstates and U.S. routes outside of municipalities. Individual municipalities themselves are responsible for local routes and designated U.S. and state routes. ODOT values its relationships with local agencies and partners with them on the development and implementation of transportation projects. Because many of the roads within Segments II and III are under local jurisdiction, funding for such projects will likely come from a variety of local and regional sources, supplemented by state and federal funds.

- Every potential project involving federal monies must go through the ODOT Project Development Process, which consists of five phases: planning, preliminary engineering, environmental engineering, final engineering and construction. The speed at which projects move through this process depends on their complexity. A simple project may move through the process in a year or two; projects that require right-of-way acquisition may take between three and five years; complex projects, such as highway interchanges, often take between five and seven years. We are currently in the planning phase for transportation improvements in Eastern Corridor Segments II and III.
- Currently, funding exists just for the early stages of project development. Ninety percent of ODOT's funding goes toward taking care of the current network of roadways and bridges. ODOT also has funding for projects that improve safety and ensure safe routes to schools. TRAC funding is available for larger projects (generally \$12 million or more). Most projects require multiple funding sources. We are fortunate to have OKI (Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments) in our region to serve as a conduit for federal transportation funds. OKI is responsible for approving every project needing federal transportation dollars in our area. Transportation funding is highly competitive, and decisions are typically data-based to ensure the best of the best projects rise to the top.
- ODOT District 8 operates according to a six-year work plan that is updated annually. Most of these projects involve roadway resurfacing and minor bridge rehabilitation. There are a number of capital projects within this focus area that already have been approved and funded, including:
 - Connecting the Lunken Airport Bike/Walk Trail to the Little Miami Scenic Trail.
 - Resurfacing US 50 (scheduled for 2019)
 - Study to widen SR 32 for turn lanes east of Little Dry Run in Newtown (near Burger Farm)
 - Improving SR 32 at Bell's Lane in Clermont County (construction to begin this summer)
 - Researching the possibility of providing travel time information on non-freeways (e.g., major local roads, such as SR 32)

ODOT will consider these planned projects as opportunities for broader coordination with potential Eastern Corridor initiatives.

WORKSHOP SESSION

Following the presentation, the meeting shifted to a guided conversation about the transportation needs identified within the Focus Area and possible solutions to be further studied. To facilitate the conversation, these needs were organized into four main themes:

- Theme #1: SR 32 Clough Pike to Newtown
- Theme #2: SR 32 SR 125 to Clough Pike
- Theme #3: SR 125/Elstun
- Theme #4: Bicycle and Pedestrian

Advisory committee members were provided with a worksheet summarizing the identified needs pertaining to each theme and draft evaluation criteria. Preliminary concepts for possible solutions were also provided to help jumpstart discussion. Committee members were asked to provide feedback on the concepts shared to help the planning team further develop the concepts or eliminate them as options, if needed. Members were also invited to brainstorm additional concepts that weren't already on the list.

A copy of the worksheets provided to Committee members, along with notes made at the meeting, is attached. Summaries of the discussions held for each theme are presented below.

THEME #1: SR 32 – CLOUGH PIKE TO NEWTOWN

The Committee reviewed the Needs and Evaluation Criteria (see Worksheet for detail). No changes were suggested to the Evaluation Criteria.

The Committee then reviewed and discussed potential concepts to address the identified needs. All concepts outlined on the worksheet were accepted for further consideration. A few additional ideas were added to the list based on the Advisory Committee discussion (see below); these new ideas have been added in red on the attached worksheet. All concepts listed for Theme #1 will undergo preliminary analysis (performed by Stantec) to determine their potential viability and impacts. Results will be shared with the Advisory Committee at the next meeting, currently scheduled for later this Spring.

Discussion points for Theme #1:

- Currently, traffic on SR 32 between Clough and Newtown is generally free flowing and additional lanes are not needed. (Note: There are eastbound PM peak hour delays due to signal timing issues in Newtown and in both directions during soccer events at Clear Creek Park)
- Traffic turning into the soccer fields at Clear Creek Park backs up on to SR 32, especially on • weekends. The right turn lane is short. At this time, there is only one way in and one way out of the park which impedes traffic flow. Even though there have been changes made to how games are staggered, the drop off is a bottleneck because of the sheer volume of traffic accessing the 20 fields, as well as the fact that traffic stops inside the entrance so that those being dropped off don't have to walk as far. A police detail is used for special events but not for regular weekday and weekend games. While it is difficult to design for short-term disruption of event traffic, ODOT could provide feedback on internal circulation within the park (drop-off portal, etc.) to help mitigate issues. Traffic coming out of Clear Creek Park desiring to turn left often gets forced to the right. These drivers turn around at the Speedway and then come all the way back to go through Newtown. The Committee discussed the possibility of installing a U-turn location that could help alleviate this problem. Based on data, a location for a U-turn by itself would be hard to find. Perhaps the road could instead be configured with a new access point into the Turpin Lake subdivision located on the east side of SR 32, north of Clough. Clough is too far away for a U-turn.

Additional Concepts To Be Evaluated for Theme #1:

- Improve the internal flow of Clear Creek Park.
- Make Clear Creek Park exit right only and supply U-turn location on SR 32 in conjunction with pedestrian crossing location.

THEME #2: SR 32 - SR 125 TO CLOUGH PIKE

The Committee reviewed the Needs and Evaluation Criteria (see Worksheet for detail). No changes were suggested. The Committee then reviewed and discussed potential concepts to address the identified needs. Each of the concepts outlined on the worksheet were accepted for further

consideration. A few additional ideas were added to the list; these new ideas have been added in red on the attached worksheet. All concepts listed for Theme #2 will undergo preliminary analysis (performed by Stantec) to determine their potential viability and impacts. Results will be shared with the Advisory Committee at the next meeting, currently planned later in the Spring.

Discussion points for Theme #2:

- Although traffic can be heavy on Beechmont levee/SR 125, it generally flows well, suggesting that another lane does not need to be added. The interchange itself works well from a travel perspective.
- The only planned land use change in the area is a possible redevelopment of the Skytop Pavilion shopping center (which contains Remke grocery store) into residential units. This change may affect traffic volumes. No changes are planned for the smaller two shopping centers located immediately northeast of Skytop.
- The steep grade of the hillside on the northeast corner of the Clough Pike and SR 32 intersection will be a challenge if the number of lanes at the intersection is modified (such as adding dual left turn lanes from Clough to SR 32)
- Backups regularly occur on Clough Pike as it approaches SR 32. People sometimes use Newtown Road to travel around this area. Generally, though, there is not a high demand for alternative routes from SR 32 to Clough Pike (the most significant destinations between Clough Pike and Newtown Road is a small subdivision and the 20 soccer fields at Clear Creek Park).
- Is it possible to reconfigure the SR 32 and Clough Pike intersection into a continuous flow intersection, similar to the one at SR 125 and Five Mile? If so, would that cause backups at the next intersection?
- There are fixed object crashes and merging issues at SR 32 and SR 125. The lanes feel narrow. A potential consideration is to extend the merge lane, potentially using the shoulder on the levee.
- The SR 32 access ramp traveling under SR 125 has flooded in the past, though not last year. ODOT suggests looking at the benefits of installing a drainage pump or other flood control to help keep water off the roadway.
- The Committee discussed adding a lane on SR 32 between SR 125 to Clough Pike. Currently, problems are encountered when people are looking over their shoulder when trying to merge onto SR 32 but the vehicle in front of them has stopped prior to turning into Speedway or other lot. Similar issues exist for left turns onto Signal Hill Ln. Widening to provide a center turn lane or providing two lanes in each direction might allow vehicles to bypass turning traffic.
- Recently, the team looked at a high level at the possibility of making SR 32 and SR 125 an intersection, but that doesn't work.
- The Committee discussed the possibility of constructing a roundabout at the SR 32/Clough Pike intersection. A Committee member suggested that roundabouts are generally safe and efficient but won't work if there is too much conflicting traffic. ODOT mentioned that roundabouts are typically built on a flat area and the SR 32/Clough Pike intersection area may be challenging at this location. Traffic coming in from SR 32 would have to slow down to go through a roundabout.

Additional Concepts to be Evaluated for Theme #2:

- Roundabout at Clough/SR 32
- Improve Clough/SR 32 intersection to allow full movements; possible green tee intersection

THEME #3: SR 125/ELSTUN

The Committee reviewed the Needs and Evaluation Criteria (see Worksheet for detail). No changes were suggested. The Committee then reviewed and discussed potential concepts to address the identified needs. Each of the concepts outlined on the worksheet were accepted for further evaluation. A few additional ideas were added to the list; these new ideas have been added in red on the attached worksheet. All concepts listed for Theme #3 will undergo preliminary analysis (performed by Stantec) to determine their potential viability and impacts. Results will be shared with the Advisory Committee at the next meeting, currently planned later in the Spring.

Discussion points for Theme #3:

- Looking at the turn lane changes at Elstun and Beechmont, extending the northbound left turn lane on Elstun and adding a westbound right turn lane would address getting vehicles that are slowing down out of the route of through traffic.
- There is a well-used bus stop at Skytop Pavilion. As a result, Skytop is being used as a de facto park and ride station. There also are no connections for pedestrians between the many rental properties near the Elstun/SR 125 area and the Skytop shopping area.
- A question was asked whether it's a concern to upgrade the interchange to current day standards. Mr. Arnold said that ODOT will focus on addressing the primary needs. Performance issues vs. upgrading to design standards will be evaluated as part of this process.
- The City of Cincinnati expressed concern about the configuration of the road along Beechmont levee, stating that its size, length and design encourages speeding. This is especially a concern once drivers reach the Skytop area and continue through to Mt. Washington. The City would like to explore possible options (aesthetic changes, warning signs, etc.) for calming traffic as it travels across the levee and approaches Mt. Washington.
- A continuous flow intersection at Elstun and SR 125 (similar though not identical to the one at SR 125 and Five Mile Road) was suggested to help slow traffic traveling up Beechmont hill by providing more controlled access.
- Access to the two small shopping centers west of Skytop Pavilion is awkward. Its wide driveways are confusing and an exit drive to the far west of the development (past the All Creatures Animal Hospital) deposits drivers onto the ramp to SR 32, resulting in safety concerns.

Additional Concepts to be Evaluated for Theme #3:

• Modify ramp connections from SR 32 to/from SR 125 on the east to be a signalized intersection. Could eliminate stop controlled ramp with poor sight distance. Could also allow for bike/pedestrian connection on existing Clough Creek bridge.

• Reduce "freeway" feel of SR 125 approaching Beechmont Hill to calm traffic entering 35 mph zone, possibly with aesthetic treatments.

THEME #4: BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

The Committee reviewed the Needs and Evaluation Criteria (see Worksheet for detail). No changes were suggested. The Committee then reviewed and discussed potential concepts to address the identified needs. None of the concepts outlined on the worksheet were removed from consideration. All concepts listed for Theme #4 will undergo preliminary analysis (performed by Stantec) to determine their potential viability and impacts. Results will be shared with the Advisory Committee at the next meeting, currently planned later in the Spring.

Discussion points for Theme #4:

- A bike connection is needed between the Little Miami Scenic Trail and Mt. Washington.
- The Committee discussed the challenge of providing safe access from homes located on the east side of SR 32 to the Little Miami bike trail on the west side of SR 32. Anderson Township would also like to connect the Little Miami Scenic Trail to the Five Mile Trail. Although there is a connector coming off Patterson Farms Lane that provides residents to access to their homes when SR 32 floods, but there is a paved, private, gated drive next to the connector that poses some challenges to using it on a regular basis. Consider new access from Ropes Drive to Little Miami Trail.
- The Green Umbrella organization is pleased that funding has been received to connect the Lunken/Armleder trail with the Little Miami Scenic Trail (PID 107295). They see the trail's connection to Elstun/Mt. Washington as a next logical bike/pedestrian connection for this Focus Area and would like to see that prioritized in the short term. They also feel it's important that the connection be built to federal minimum standards for width (minimum 10 to 12 feet wide). The Mt. Washington Community Council also shares this view.
 - It was noted that Great Parks had this connection in their bike path plans; the planning team will reach out to Great Parks to learn more about the connection and its status.
 - Another bridge may be needed over Clough Creek where the SR 32 ramp merges with SR 125 to complete the link. It was suggested that a large sidewalk connector tied into the sidewalk along the south side of Beechmont could facilitate this connection.
 - The City of Cincinnati would like to have a wide path established on the south side of Beechmont between Elstun and Ranchvale. Currently, there is a climbing lane on the south side of the road beginning just past Elstun and going into Mt. Washington.
 - Along Elstun, between Spindlehill and SR 125, there aren't any pedestrian facilities.

Additional Concepts to be Evaluated:

- New bike/pedestrian connection from Turpin Hills (Ropes Drive) to Little Miami Trail
- New bike/pedestrian connection from 5-mile trail to Little Miami Trail
- Add sidepath along south side of SR 125 between Elstun Road and Ranchvale Drive

• Adjust lane widths on SR 125 to get bike/pedestrian path on existing bridge over Clough Creek (in conjunction with creating a ramp signalized intersection, as noted in concepts for Theme #3, SR 125/Elstun).

CLOSING AND NEXT STEPS

The meeting ended at 11:30 a.m. Mr. Arnold thanked participants for their time and contributions. He noted that presentation materials and a meeting summary would be posted to the Segments II and III Advisory Committee page of the Eastern Corridor website (<u>http://easterncorridor.org/projects/red-bank-to-i275-sr32-segments-ii-and-iii/advisory-committee/</u>).

Committee members are invited to submit additional feedback and comments until Monday, March 19 (two week following the distribution of meeting minutes).

Stantec will evaluate the concepts discussed/suggested at today's session and share their results at the next Advisory Committee meeting.

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

Caroline Ammerman, Stantec Jacque Annarino, ODOT OES Tom Arnold, ODOT Brad Bowers, Anderson Township Matt Crim, Stantec Tim Hill, ODOT OES Wade Johnston, Green Umbrella Martha Kelly, Cincinnati DOTE Bob Koehler, OKI Ken Kushner, Anderson Parks District Heather McColeman, ODOT OES Richard Porter, Forest Hills School District Charles Rowe, ODOT Steve Shadix, Stantec Christa Skiles, Rasor Marketing Communications Laura Whitman, Rasor Marketing Communications

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 Dec. 11, 2015, and executed by FHWA and ODOT.

Red text represents edits made at Advisory Committee Meeting #1 held on 2/9/2018.

Theme #1: SR 32 - Clough Pike to Newtown

Needs	Evaluation Criteria	Concepts
 Primary Address eastbound PM peak-hour delays. Address deficiencies at the 'S' curve. Secondary Address deficient roadway grade east of Turpin Lake Place. Correct deficient roadway curve at Newtown Corporation Limit. Address roadway flooding issues. 	 Provide more efficient travel patterns and destination linkages. Augment capacity and provide congestion relief. Reduce travel times and delays. Improve vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian safety. Improve regional connectivity and accessibility to regional destinations including the airport, downtown Cincinnati, Kenwood, and the Red Bank Corridor. Support and facilitate bus, rail, and TSM investments. Support existing and planned land use. Minimize environmental and community impacts. 	 Improve signal timing. Add EB/WB through lanes on SR 32. Correct 'S' curve with new horizontal geometry and consider vertical adjustment to alleviate flooding issue in this area. Investigate traffic flow in Clear Creek Park to reduce backup on SR 32. Possible drop off area or 2nd drive. Make Clear Creek Park exit right only and supply U-turn location on SR 32 in conjunction with pedestrian crossing location.

Red text represents edits made at Advisory Committee Meeting #1 held on 2/9/2018.

Theme #2: SR 32 - SR 125 to Clough Pike

Needs	Evaluation Criteria	Concepts
 Primary Address westbound AM peak-hour delays. Address rear end crashes Address capacity issues and long queues on Clough Pike approach to SR 32. Address fixed object crashes on the ramps from SR 32 to westbound SR 125 and eastbound SR 125 to SR 32. Address merging traffic deficiencies on the ramp from SR 32 to westbound SR 125. Secondary Address ramp flooding issues. Address deficient vertical grade under the SR 125 overpass and at the SR 125 ramps. 	 Provide more efficient travel patterns and destination linkages. Augment capacity and provide congestion relief. Reduce travel times and delays. Improve vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian safety. Improve regional connectivity and accessibility to regional destinations including the airport, downtown Cincinnati, Kenwood, and the Red Bank Corridor. Support and facilitate bus, rail, and TSM investments. Support existing and planned land use. Minimize environmental and community impacts. 	 Improve signal timing. Add additional EB/WB through lanes. Install dual left turn lanes from Clough onto SR 32 in conjunction with a 2nd receiving lane on SR 32. Remove signal at Clough, add a flyover from Clough to SR 32 westbound. Verify this does not create merging bottleneck at ramps to levee. Modify all existing ramp at interchange to meet current standards. Extend merge length. Add westbound through lane extending to Wooster. Install drainage pump for rain water and block backup water from River, under bridge. Roundabout at Clough & SR 32. Improve Clough & SR 32 intersection to allow full movements. Possible green tee intersection.

Red text represents edits made at Advisory Committee Meeting #1 held on 2/9/2018.

Theme #3: SR 125/Elstun

Needs	Evaluation Criteria	Concepts
 Primary Address capacity issues for northbound left- turn movement and westbound approach. Secondary Address deficient roadway grade at strip mall. Address deficient roadway grade. 	 Provide more efficient travel patterns and destination linkages. Augment capacity and provide congestion relief. Reduce travel times and delays. Improve vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian safety. Improve regional connectivity and accessibility to regional destinations including the airport, downtown Cincinnati, Kenwood, and the Red Bank Corridor. Support and facilitate bus, rail, and TSM investments. Support existing and planned land use. Minimize environmental and community impacts. 	 Improve signal timing. Extend NB left turn lane and add WB right turn lane. Address limited access to strip mall via access at Elston Road Modify ramp connections from Clough to/from SR 125 on the east to be a signalized intersection. Could eliminate stop controlled ramp with poor sight distance. Could also allow for bike/ped connection on exiting Clough Creek bridge. Reduce "freeway" feel of SR 125 approaching Beechmont Hill to calm traffic entering 35 mph zone, possibly with aesthetic treatments.

Red text represents edits made at Advisory Committee Meeting #1 held on 2/9/2018.

Needs	Evaluation Criteria	Concepts
 Primary Connect Little Miami Trail to Lunken Trail.* Address pedestrian and bicycle connectivity from the Turpin Lake subdivision to the Little Miami Trail. Secondary Address pedestrian and bicycle connectivity from Elstun Rd to Little Miami Trail. Address pedestrian connectivity between rental properties on Elstun Rd and bus stops along SR 125. Address pedestrian and bicycle connectivity from Newtown to Clear Creek Park. 	 Provide more efficient travel patterns and destination linkages. Improve vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian safety. Improve regional connectivity to existing and planned bike/ped facilities. Support existing and planned land use. Minimize environmental and community impacts. 	 Make connection from Turpin Lake subdivision to Little Miami Trail with "mid-block" pedestrian crossing. Connect SR 125 sidewalk to Little Miami Trail. Add sidewalk to connect bus stops on SR 125 with rental properties on Elstun Rd. New bike/ped connection from Turpin Hills (Ropes Dr) to Little Miami Trail. New bike/ped connection from 5-mile trail to Little Miami Trail. Add sidepath along south side of SR 125 between Elstun Rd and Ranchvale Dr. Adjust lane widths on SR 125 to get bike/ped path on existing bridge over Clough Creek. (In conjunction with creation of ramp signalized intersection noted in SR 125/Elstun Concepts)

