



# Red Bank Corridor Project

HAM-32F-0.00

PID 86461

## Red Bank Corridor

# SUMMARY REPORT

## for the

# OCTOBER 17, 2018

# OPEN HOUSE MEETING

Prepared for

Ohio Department of Transportation, District 8  
505 South SR 741  
Lebanon, Ohio 45036

Prepared by

Rasor Marketing Communications  
7844 Remington Road  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45242  
(513) 793-1234

AECOM  
564 White Pond Drive  
Akron, OH 44320

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# MEETING OVERVIEW

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On Wednesday, October 17, 2018, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) held an Open House meeting to share with the public current plans and environmental study results for transportation improvements along the Red Bank Corridor, Eastern Corridor Segment I. The meeting focused on the following elements of Red Bank Corridor improvements:

- The reconstruction of “Old” Red Bank Road
- The extensions of Babson Place and Hetzel Street to Red Bank Expressway
- Mainline improvements to Red Bank Expressway
- Accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians

Each of these local roadway network improvements were identified in the *Red Bank Corridor Preferred Alternative Implementation Plan (December 2013)* as near-term solutions to address local traffic congestion<sup>1</sup>, connectivity needs and to improve accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians. These concepts were developed following extensive project studies and in coordination with Red Bank Corridor area stakeholders, which include local communities, businesses, schools and interest groups.

At the Oct. 17 Open House meeting, participants were able to learn more about how each of the planned improvements would operate and look, the impacts of each and projected costs. Project team representatives were present to discuss planned improvements with visitors and to answer questions. Participants were also provided with forms to formally submit questions and comments to ODOT and the project team.

The Open House was held at the Madisonville Recreation Center, 5320 Stewart Road, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45227. Visitors were invited to come any time between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. Feedback received from the public during the Open House and the following 30-day public comment period will be reviewed and considered by ODOT prior to finalizing the plans and releasing them to the City of Cincinnati for funding and implementation.

## **About the Red Bank Corridor Project**

The Red Bank Corridor project area extends approximately between US 50 (Columbia Parkway) in Fairfax and the Interstate 71 ramp in Madisonville. Its primary route, Red Bank Expressway, is one of the region’s most heavily traveled north-south thoroughfares east of I-71 and the local roadway network supports multiple areas that are experiencing a resurgence of development and growth.

The goal of the Red Bank Corridor project is to create a balance of mobility and access to better serve local communities, businesses and neighborhoods while at the same time, improving travel along this important community connector. The project will do this by:

- Reducing existing congestion and delays along Red Bank Expressway, particularly at major intersections with Madison, Duck Creek and Brotherton roads
- Improving accessibility, safety and flow of traffic

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<sup>1</sup> Additional capacity will be needed in the future to adequately address long-term congestion issues.

- Re-establishing and enhancing local roadway network connections to address local transportation needs and provide additional opportunities for congestion management
- Providing accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians

The Red Bank Corridor project is one of four core Eastern Corridor Program projects. The Eastern Corridor is a program of integrated, multi-modal transportation investments. Eastern Corridor projects are enhancing the regional transportation network by improving travel and connections between downtown Cincinnati and communities extending east through Hamilton County into western Clermont County. Program elements include improvements to existing road networks, new and expanded roadways, future rail transit, 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).

## MEETING NOTIFICATION

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Meeting notifications were distributed to the public through a variety of communications channels, as described below. Copies of public notification materials are provided in Appendix A: Meeting Notification Materials.

- E-blast announcement sent to Eastern Corridor Program stakeholders; the Eastern Corridor Stakeholder Database includes approximately 1,500 individuals and contacts at local media outlets (Sept. 17)
- Eastern Corridor website postings (Sept. 17)
  - Eastern Corridor homepage
  - Eastern Corridor Public Involvement page
  - Red Bank Corridor Overview page
  - Red Bank Corridor Public Involvement page
- Legal ad placement in the *Cincinnati Enquirer* (Sept. 18)
- Email/telephone notifications provided to key Red Bank Corridor stakeholders including:
  - Luke Brockmeier, former Madisonville Community Council president
  - Tom Fiorini – General Manager, Cincinnati Sports Complex and Virginia Avenue Business Association representative
  - Robert Horne, Director of Finance and Operations, Seven Hills School
  - Jenny Kaminer, Administrator, Village of Fairfax
  - Dr. Kimberly Mack, Principal, John P. Parker Elementary School
- Self-published calendar announcement on Enquirer.com (Oct. 1)
- Meeting announcement sent to the editor of Eastside Community Press papers (Oct. 4)

- Self-published article on the Cincinnati Community Page of Enquirer.com (Oct. 8)
- Reminder Eblast sent to Eastern Corridor Program stakeholders and media contacts (Oct. 11)
- Media alert distributed to local print, TV and radio media outlets (Oct. 15)
- Series of social media posts on Eastern Corridor's Facebook and Twitter pages

## ATTENDANCE

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A total of 55 people signed in at the meeting. However, several attendees chose not to sign in and some couples signed in under one name. As a result, meeting attendance was slightly higher, though it is not known by how much.

## MEETING FORMAT AND MATERIALS

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The Open House meeting was held between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. at the Madisonville Recreation Center, at 5320 Stewart Road in Madisonville. Participants were invited to come any time to review the planned improvements, discuss them with project team representatives, ask questions and submit comments. Meeting materials, plus an online comment form, were posted on the Red Bank Corridor Public Involvement pages immediately prior to the meeting.

### **Meeting Handouts**

Upon entering the meeting space, attendees were given a Red Bank Corridor fact sheet and a comment form. Copies of these materials are included in Appendix B: Meeting Materials.

### **Meeting Visuals**

Meeting visuals consisted of a combination of information boards that provided project information, renderings of key project areas and detailed, map-based schematics of the reconstructed "Old" Red Bank Road, Babson Place and Hetzel Street extensions, and mainline improvements along Red Bank Expressway. An automated, looped presentation that provided an overview of the Eastern Corridor Program and the Red Bank Corridor project was also playing throughout the Open House session. Project team members were positioned near the boards and maps to provide additional information, answer questions and receive comments. A list of all boards exhibited is provided below.

#### Information Boards

- Purpose and Need – Highlighted the purpose and need for the reconstruction of "Old" Red Bank Road and the extensions of Babson Place and Hetzel Street to Red Bank Expressway
- Project Descriptions – Highlighted key elements of the "Old" Red Bank Road reconstruction and the Babson Place and Hetzel Street extension projects
- Environmental Features - Highlighted key environmental features present in the project areas

### Renderings

- Hetzel Street Extension Rendering – Current View: Present day view of the Hetzel Street and Red Bank Expressway intersection, looking east
- Hetzel Street Extension Rendering – Proposed View: Future view of the Hetzel Street and Red Bank Expressway intersection once construction is complete, looking east
- Babson Place Extension Rendering – Current View: Present day view of the Babson Place and Red Bank Expressway intersection, looking northwest
- Babson Place Extension Rendering – Proposed View: Future view of the Babson Place and Red Bank Expressway intersection once construction is complete, looking northwest
- Red Bank Expressway – Current View: Present day view of Red Bank Expressway, looking north towards the Red Bank Expressway and Madison Road intersection
- Red Bank Expressway – Proposed View: Future view Red Bank Expressway, looking north towards the Red Bank Expressway and Madison Road intersection

### Schematics/Maps

- Babson Place and Hetzel Street Extensions Schematic
- “Old” Red Bank Road Reconstruction Schematic
- Red Bank Expressway Schematic

Copies of the information boards, renderings, schematics and presentation are included in Appendix B: Meeting Materials.

## **COMMENT FORMS**

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Meeting participants were given the opportunity to share comments with the project team by completing and submitting a Comment Form. The forms asked for respondents' names, addresses, email addresses, and comments. Respondents were also asked how they heard about the Open House meeting.

Nine comments forms were collected at the Open House meeting. Two forms were completed and submitted online during the subsequent 30-day comment period.

- Seven respondents live in the 45227 zip code (which includes the Madisonville, Fairfax and Mariemont communities). One respondent is from Mt. Lookout and the other is from Anderson Township. Two respondents did not provide addresses or zip codes.
- Eight respondents said they heard about the Open House meeting through Eastern Corridor emails. The remaining respondents did not answer the question.

Table 1 (next page) includes the comments received as well as responses from ODOT. Content of the comments varied, but two points were mentioned more than once and outlined concerns with widening Red Bank Expressway and trash building up around the proposed median on Red Bank Expressway.

**Table 1. Comments Received and ODOT Responses Provided**

COMMENT RECEIVED	ODOT RESPONSE
<p>100% in support of Big Picture.                      - Babson/Hetzel connection is concerning                          - Izzy's: busiest store in chain &amp; creates 20+ jobs plus tax base                          - CCC has 25 - 30 FTE + plus tax base                          - QCSS - Removes 3 buildings which generates tax</p> <p>All of those will likely be expensive to acquire for real estate as well as business. Doesn't seem to be a good value given the anticipated traffic flow on new road for Babson/Hetzel.</p> <p>Recommend using existing Hetzel on Red Bank. Keep alignment &amp; rebuild as needed. Make the exception to standards similar to many other streets in Cincinnati. Better use of funds and more tax revenue in the long run.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The alignment of Babson-Hetzel connection provides the most direct and safely-crossable connection between Madison Road on the west and "Old" Red Bank Road on the east. This connection allows traffic to bypass the Red Bank Expressway/Madison Road intersection and provides easier access to properties on the east and west sides of Red Bank Expressway. The City desires to relocate their maintenance facility near "Old" Red Bank which allows better use of this City-owned property. While the securing commercial right-of-way required for this alignment will be a major cost, property owners will be compensated for their properties as well as for relocation costs. Property owners will control their own relocation and there are ample opportunities to relocate within the Red Bank corridor itself. This new connection also provides additional access to remaining land for development or redevelopment, which can enhance the tax base of the area.</p>
<p>Clearly label with large lettering all the streets, especially the primary ones.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>
<p>*Concerned with the turning lanes on Madison Rd. further dividing the community.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>
<p>* Suggestion - allow Madison Rd. to pass over Red Bank</p>	<p>An overpass at Madison Road and Red Bank Expressway was explored in coordination with the Red Bank Community Partners Committee during the project development process. ODOT review of the concept determined that significant grade changes would be necessary to construct an overpass, resulting in substantial impacts to businesses and the environment. Associated costs were also determined to be substantial. ODOT shared this information with the community but because it was not well-received, the project team determined not to pursue overpass concept further at this time and instead focused its attention lower-build options. ODOT also conveyed it would likely be necessary to revisit the overpass in the future to address increasing traffic levels.</p>
<p>The concrete divider in the middle of the expanded Red Bank Expressway will quickly look just as awful as the one that was recently removed further North. A much more attractive and maintenance free divide is called for - and something that won't collect trash. Madisonville</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. We have shared your concern with the city of Cincinnati which will be responsible for developing final project designs and implementing the project.</p>

**COMMENT RECEIVED****ODOT RESPONSE**

won't settle for just good enough there!

Not satisfied with changing Red Bank into a 4 lane as this will create additional traffic during rush hour. It's already very busy!

Thank you for your comment. Additional lanes are needed to accommodate both near-term traffic levels (which appears to be growing) as well as predicted future traffic levels. We have shared your concern though with the city of Cincinnati's Department of Transportation and Engineering which will be responsible for developing final project designs and implementing the project.

Shared use path on RB Expressway/width?  
10' recommended for 2-way bike traffic

Thank you for your question. The shared-use path on Red Bank Expressway is currently designed to be 10 feet wide.

Anything to reduce cut through traffic in Mt. Lookout works for me!

Thank you for your comment.

Why is all this being done . . . Eastern Corridor has been rejected by Fairfax, Mariemont, Newtown, etc. - Why does ODOT, Feds, etc. keep planning this road to nowhere?

The Eastern Corridor Program is not a single project. Rather, it is comprised of a comprehensive series of transportation improvements that are in varying stages of planning, development and design, and many projects have already been completed.

The Eastern Corridor has been divided into four segments; Red Bank Corridor is Segment 1. The project you are referring to was the proposed relocation of SR 32 in Eastern Corridor Segments II and III. Previous transportation improvement recommendations for the Segments II and III area focused on shifting the western end of SR 32 from where it currently stops at SR 125 (Beechmont Avenue) to a new, direct connection with US 50 (Columbia Parkway) and the Red Bank corridor. After completing in-depth studies, however, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) determined that relocating the roadway through the Little Miami River Valley has potentially significant environmental impacts, high construction costs, and public and resource agency concerns. Therefore, it is no longer considering doing so at this time.

The planned improvements identified for the Red Bank Corridor, as presented at the Oct. 17 Open House meeting, are not part of the SR 32 relocation project. They are key components of the *Red Bank Corridor Preferred Alternative Implementation Plan (December 2013)*, which was developed in coordination with local Red Bank Corridor stakeholders (local communities,

## COMMENT RECEIVED

## ODOT RESPONSE

businesses, schools, and interest groups) as near-term solutions to address traffic congestion and connectivity needs and to improve accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians along the Red Bank Corridor. More information is available at <http://easterncorridor.org/projects/red-bank-segment-i/overview/>.

Interested to know if 5' sidewalk along Madison (west of Medpace way) is extended or partnered with another project, as recently heard it would extend to Whetsel, but is not depicted in plan. Purpose would be to facilitate shared walk/bike path. This is well used currently, and would be used more, noting other shared spaces are not really used that much. High traffic area, Madison road crosswalk was site of several fatal pedestrian accidents.

The sidewalks shown in these plans were coordinated with the City of Cincinnati to be in accordance with the City long-term plans and policies. The City will manage implementation as funding becomes available.

Red Bank Expressway:

1) Adding extra turn lanes at Madison Rd & Red Bank Expressway - Not In Favor - it is already extremely dangerous for Pedestrians to cross Red Bank Expwy here. Two more lanes to cross is untenably [sic]! Please do not add more lanes for pedestrians to cross.

2) The concrete median on Red Bank Expressway should be mulched with low bushes or greenery. NO CONCRETE MEDIANS - TOO UGLY

Thank you for your comment. We have shared your concern with the city of Cincinnati's Department of Transportation and Engineering which will be responsible for developing final project designs and implementing the project.

Madison Road at Red Bank Expressway

- Please remove the billboard at the corner
- It is too close to the proposed pedestrian walkway
- It is too ugly
- Move it to Mariemont ☺

1. For a long time, the Red Bank corridor has been envisioned as a "parkway" that would include significant landscaping, especially in the median. This was not represented in the plans and should be. We do not need more concrete barriers that break and collect garbage. 2. I do not support widening Red Bank from 6 to 9 lanes. This will make pedestrian crossing intimidating and dangerous. This reminds me of the seas of concrete I see when traveling in south Florida. It is too much in the middle of a neighborhood where people walk, bike, and run. We will be seeing and want to encourage more pedestrian activity as development continues on both sides of Red Bank and in the heart of Madisonville. Requiring pedestrians to cross 9 lanes of traffic is too much.

Thank you for your comment. We have shared your concern with the city of Cincinnati's Department of Transportation and Engineering which will be responsible for developing final project designs and implementing the project.



