OPEN HOUSE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MEETING
ROOTSTOWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
4190 STATE ROUTE 44, ROOTSTOWN, OHIO

Thursday, May 11, 2017
5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Intersection Improvement Project

State Route 44 at Tallmadge Road

ODOT Project: POR-SR44-7.71; PID 102204
Rootstown Township, Portage County, Ohio

INFORMATIONAL HANDOUT

Ohio Department of Transportation
District 4
2088 South Arlington Road
Akron, Ohio 44306-4243
330-786-3100

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.
The purpose of this open-house public involvement meeting is to present information and solicit public comment on proposed improvements at the intersection of State Route 44 and County Road 18 (Tallmadge Road) in Rootstown Township, Portage County, Ohio.

No formal presentation will be made. However, project representatives from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) are available to discuss the proposed project, environmental considerations as well as address any questions and concerns you may have regarding this proposed transportation improvement project.

You are invited to comment regarding the project’s design and social, economic and environmental impacts on residences, businesses and the community.

In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (codified as 36 CFR 800), ODOT also requests information regarding the presence of any cultural resources in the vicinity of the project. Cultural resources include prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, historic bridges and buildings sites and historic districts.

The State Route 44/Tallmadge Road intersection experiences heavy traffic volumes during peak hours with queues developing on State Route 44 contributing to congestion and rear end crashes. Between 2012-2014, seventeen crashes were recorded at the intersection; 9 rear end, 5 left turn, and 3 angle crashes. Fifty-three percent of all reported crashes were rear end crashes, sixty-five percent of all crashes involved injuries, and all occurred on dry pavement between 7 AM and 7 PM. Rear end crashes are likely due to congestion as they all occurred during peak times. In 2015, eleven crashes were recorded at the intersection; 5 Rear end; 4 Angle; 1 Fixed Object; and 1 Sideswipe Passing. Forty-five percent of all reported crashes were rear end crashes and forty-five percent of all crashes reported in 2015 involved injuries.

Due to numerous appearances on the safety program and previous safety studies completed, several intersection improvements have been implemented over the years. These improvements include the installation of an eastbound left turn lane on Tallmadge Rd in 2004 and numerous signal improvements, which include protected/permissive left turn phases and pedestrian signal heads with pushbuttons.

Proposed intersection improvements include the installation of a new southbound right turn lane on State Route 44, lengthening the existing southbound left turn lane on State Route 44 by restriping, and replacement of the existing intersection traffic control signal and appurtenances. The new signal installation will also include back plates to increase the visibility of the signal heads. The project includes installation of new curb and gutter and storm drainage along State Route 44 and pavement repair and resurfacing within the established project limits. The purpose of the proposed project is to reduce traffic congestion on State Route 44 and improve safety at the intersection of State Route 44 and Tallmadge Road in Rootstown Township, Portage County, Ohio.

A preferred alternative will be selected following completion of public involvement and preliminary environmental studies. Currently, construction of the project is anticipated to begin in summer 2020. The project estimate is $490,000 with funding from federal and state sources.
Traffic will be maintained in each direction on State Route 44 and Tallmadge Road during pavement widening operations. However, it will be necessary to institute short duration daily lane closures to accommodate installation of a new traffic control signal and during pavement resurfacing operations.

Construction and detour information will be posted prior to the start of construction and access shall be maintained to all intersecting roads and adjacent properties at all times during project construction.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Various environmental studies have been or will be conducted for the proposed project. The purpose of these studies is to identify potential environmentally sensitive resources or areas of concern that may be affected by the project. Impacts to these features must be assessed and mitigated in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and other pertinent federal, state and local regulations. Below is a summary of these studies:

Cultural Resources: Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their actions on historic properties. In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (codified as 36 CFR 800), ODOT requests information regarding the presence of any known cultural resources in the vicinity of the project. Cultural resources include prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, historic bridges, historic buildings, sites and districts.

As part of the identification phase of the Section 106 process, a Combined Phase I/II History/Architecture Report (ODOT, 2016) was prepared for the POR-44-7.71 intersection improvement project (PID 102204) study area. Three architectural properties within the project study area of potential effects (APE) were determined eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP):

- 4193 Tallmadge Road (POR-190-04);
- 4220 Tallmadge Road (POR-192-04); and
- 4136 Tallmadge Road (POR-1065-04).

The remaining architectural properties within the APE were determined not eligible for inclusion on the NRHP. The project will not require right-of-way from within the historic boundaries of the identified historic properties or otherwise result in impacts to the identified historic properties. No contributing features will be removed or altered and land from within the historic boundary of the three identified historic properties will not be incorporated into the project undertaking.

On July 15, 2013, the project was coordinated with the Ohio State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). No archaeological resources were reported in the project APE and no further archaeological investigations were recommended for the project undertaking.

Based on the results the history/architecture survey, previous consultation, magnitude of the undertaking, and in accordance with 36 CFR Section 800.4(d)(1), the ODOT Office of Environmental Services (ODOT-OES) has determined a finding of “no historic properties affected” is applicable to the subject undertaking based on the following:

- No contributing features of an architectural property listed on the NRHP or eligible for listing on the NRHP will be removed or altered by the project undertaking.
- No further archaeological investigations are warranted due to previous disturbance and modern development.
Hazardous Materials/Wastes: Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) screening was performed on the project study area to determine the presence of sites with potential hazardous material concerns. This ESA Screening included a review of readily available historical land use information, regulatory database information, and a visual inspection to identify any properties within the project study area, or any adjacent properties, that would pose potential environmental concerns to the project.

Four (4) sites, all likely former gasoline stations, were recommended for additional investigation in the form of a Phase I ESA. One (1) of the four (4) properties (Site 13) was identified as containing recognized environmental conditions (RECs) during the Phase I ESA process, therefore, further assessment in the form of a Phase II ESA was recommended.

Based on the findings of this Phase II ESA, petroleum constituents were identified above applicable soil and groundwater action levels at Site 13. Field observations and analytical results are suggestive of a past release of gasoline at Site 13 and further recommendations for Site 13 include petroleum contaminated soils (PCS) plan notes for contaminated soil and/or groundwater encountered during construction activities; plan notes for possible underground storage tank removal as per Construction and Material Specifications (CMS) 202.08, and plan notes for low strength mortar backfill for new subsurface storm drainage at 4169 Tallmadge Road (Site No. 13).

Social and Economic/Community Impacts: State Route 44 and Tallmadge Road will be improved in a positive manner with enhanced capacity and safety features. The project will not result in impacts to human health and educational facilities, recreational facilities/activities, religious institutions, public transportation, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and/or connectivity between the neighborhoods. Coordination with police/fire/emergency medical services and other public services will continue throughout project development.

Environmental Justice: Environmental Justice is defined as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. There are three fundamental environmental justice principles:

- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.
- To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

The project team is working to identify and address potential impacts to low income and minority populations through public involvement outreach efforts involving community resources/activities, local business outreach, public meetings and by addressing public comments received.

Traffic Noise (analysis of traffic noise and feasibility/reasonableness of noise abatement): The project will be evaluated to ensure compliance with NEPA, the FHWA Highway Act of 1970 and the USEPA Noise Control Act, as appropriate.
Air Quality: The project will be evaluated to ensure compliance with the Clean Air Act, NEPA, and state plans for meeting and maintaining national ambient air quality standards, as appropriate.

Ecological Resources: A Level I Ecological Survey was conducted for the project study area to determine whether the project will potentially impact wetlands, streams, aquatic and terrestrial habitats, and/or threatened and endangered species/habitats.

Based on the results of the Level I Ecological Survey, the ODOT Office of Environmental services determined the project will not impact any streams, wetlands, other waters of the U.S., known populations of state or federally listed threatened or endangered species, or suitable habitat for state or federally listed species and that no further ecological coordination is required for the project.

**RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION**

To accommodate the roadway widening and utility relocations, the purchase of additional permanent right-of-way and/or construction easements and temporary right-of-way will be required. The extent of additional right-of-way takes will be determined during the detailed design phase.

ODOT operates under the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 and amendments of 1987. The main objective of this Act is to ensure that every effort is made to acquire the needed right-of-way in a fair and equitable manner. This Act provides advice and financial assistance to persons whose residence, business, farm, and/or non-profit organization may be acquired as part of a project. Operated in accordance with Chapter 163 of the Ohio Revised Code and Public Laws 91-646 and 100-17, the Relocation Assistance Program (RAP) ensures fair and equitable treatment of each individual, family, business, farm, and non-profit organization. Basic policies have been established in this effort by the Federal Highway Administration and ODOT.

- All property must be appraised before acquisition is started. This is done by qualified appraisers who are familiar with real estate values in the area.

- Upon determination of the fair market value, an ODOT Real Estate representative will contact the owner for an appointment. At this time, the representative will explain a project to the owner and the effect of a project on the property, and will present the offer based on the appraisal, both orally and in writing.

It is hoped that any needed right-of-way would be acquired through successful negotiations. However, if an agreement cannot be reached, property owners have recourse through the local judicial system where compensation will be determined by a jury, if necessary.

This is a basic overview of the right-of-way procedures. It is the intent of ODOT that every effort will be made to obtain a mutual agreement with the owner and to see that the owner is justly compensated for the property. This will be accomplished by consistent and fair treatment of all owners.
PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PROJECT INFORMATION

Your comments are an important part of the planning process for this project. Comments may be spoken or submitted in writing during the public meeting or emailed / mailed to:

    e-mail to Brian.Peck@dot.ohio.gov

Brian Peck, Environmental Specialist
ODOT District 4
2088 S. Arlington Road
Akron, Ohio 44306-4243

(Telephone: 330-786-493)

Please submit written comments by June 12, 2017.

Project information, including this meeting handout and the meeting exhibits, will be available on the ODOT District 4 website home page: www.Transportation.Ohio.Gov/Dist4 (scroll down, and select “Public Meetings / Public Involvement” from the list in the left margin. A summary of public comments received during the public comment period and responses to comments will be prepared and will be posted on the ODOT District 4 website.
OPEN HOUSE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MEETING
Rootstown Elementary School, 4190 State Route 44, Rootstown, Ohio

Thursday, May 11, 2017
5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

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COMMENT SHEET
-Please Print-

Name: ____________________________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________________________
Phone / email: ______________________________________________________

Please write comments in the space provided below. To assist us with implementation of the project, we would like to know what you like about the project and what you think could be improved. Use additional sheets if necessary.

_________________________________________________________________
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Please return this comment sheet during the meeting, e-mail to Brian.Peck@dot.ohio.gov, or mail by Monday, June 12, 2017 to:

Brian Peck, Environmental Specialist
ODOT District 4
2088 S. Arlington Road
Akron, Ohio 44306-4243

(Telephone: 330-786-4931)

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