OPEN HOUSE PUBLIC INvolvEMENT MEETING
Celebration Church
688 Dan Street, Akron, Ohio

Tuesday, July 14, 2015
5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

State Route 8 Bridge Replacement Project

Existing Bridge

Future Bridges: Steel I-Girder Bridge Type
Future Bridges: Concrete Segmental Bridge Type

INFORMATIONAL HANDOUT

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DISTRICT 4
2088 SOUTH ARLINGTON ROAD
AKRON, OHIO 44306-4243
330-786-3100
WWW.ODOTDISTRICT4.ORG
State Route 8 Bridge Replacement Project

MEETING FORMAT

Open house format; no presentation will be made. Project representatives from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) District 4 and Gannett Fleming (project consultant) are available to discuss the alternatives, the right-of-way acquisition process, environmental considerations, as well as address any questions or concerns you may have regarding this proposed transportation project.

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

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

To replace the 1,500-ft long blue-painted steel bridge, known as the North Expressway Viaduct, carrying State Route 8 (SR-8) over various railroads, North Street and the Little Cuyahoga River Valley in the City of Akron.

Two bridges will replace the one existing bridge. Below and to the right is the preliminary plan for construction phases:
1. A new bridge (#1) will be built next to the existing bridge.
2. SR-8 traffic will be shifted to new bridge #1.
3. The existing bridge will be removed and new bridge #2 will be built.
4. When new bridge #2 is finished, SR-8 northbound traffic will travel on new bridge #2 while SR-8 southbound traffic will travel on new bridge #1.

Traffic Congestion. The existing bridge has three lanes in each direction. The new bridges will have four lanes in each direction to improve traffic congestion. The additional lanes are known as auxiliary lanes. For SR-8 north, the northbound entrance ramp from Perkins Street will essentially be extended across the bridge to become the exit ramp for the Glenwood Avenue interchange. For SR-8 south, the southbound entrance ramp from Glenwood Avenue will extend across the bridge to the exit ramp for the Perkins Street interchange.

Alternative Designs. A Feasibility Study (2015) documented the investigation of various alternative roadway and bridge designs to a level of detail that enabled the assessment of potential project impacts. Impacts were examined for the proposed roadway and bridge footprint, span configurations and potential pier locations. The need for right-of-way, utilities and retaining walls was provided. Cost estimates were calculated for each bridge type alternative and then compiled to develop a probable opinion of total construction costs in 2020 dollars. The Feasibility Study generated two questions:

Where to build the new bridges? Next to the existing bridge, but which side? The West Alignment (Alternative 1), which has been recommended for further study, involves building new bridge #1 west of the existing bridge. Building bridge #1 east of the existing bridge or expanding the existing bridge were considered in the Feasibility Study, but these alternatives had more impacts and construction issues so they were not recommended for further study.

What type of bridge structure should be built? Two bridge types are feasible and recommended for further study: Steel I-Girder and Concrete Segmental.

See attached graphic representations of the West Alignment (Alternative 1), the Steel I-Girder and the Concrete Segmental bridge types at the end of this handout.

Project Construction. At this time, the project is in the study phase. Public input is needed to proceed with more detailed project design. ODOT is committed to replacing the bridge as soon as possible, but available funding is very tight. The bridge replacement is expected to occur around 2020 at a cost exceeding $120 million.
HOW WILL THIS PROJECT AFFECT RESIDENTS?

- The project will provide modern bridges for current and future traffic.
- Traffic will be allowed along SR-8 during construction, however temporary lane and ramp closures may occur.
- Some houses and buildings will be removed. Residents and businesses affected by the project will be contacted by ODOT.

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND NEED

The bridge was constructed in 1953 to provide a grade separation for the Akron Expressway (now SR-8) as it crossed over the Little Cuyahoga River, five railroad corridors, the Pennsylvania and Ohio Canal, and North Street.

To extend the life of the bridge, numerous maintenance activities have been performed. While the bridge is safe for travel and routinely inspected, it continues to deteriorate, is over 60 years old and needs to be replaced. Maintenance activities will be performed as needed until the bridge is replaced.

SR-8 at the bridge is a six-lane urban freeway that carries over 115,000 vehicles per day. It is a vital component of the transportation infrastructure in Northeast Ohio and provides a critical link for commuters and commerce to the government, medical, university and other commercial facilities in downtown Akron and beyond.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Preliminary environmental studies have been conducted for the project. More detailed studies will begin in Summer 2015 on the study area for the recommended alternative. The purpose of these studies is to identify potential sensitive resources or areas of concern which may be affected by the proposed bridge replacement 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 resources and issues identified in the preliminary environmental studies.

Ecological Resources (including wetlands, streams, aquatic and terrestrial habitats, and threatened and endangered species):

One wetland was identified and delineated within the project study area. The wetland is classified as a Category 1 (low quality) wetland.

Three watercourses were identified within the project study area: the Little Cuyahoga River, a small, intermittent stream that flow into the Little Cuyahoga River, and the former Pennsylvania and Ohio Canal. The Pennsylvania and Ohio Canal, also known as the P & O Canal, the Cross Cut Canal, and the Mahoning Canal, was a shipping canal which operated from 1840 until 1877 (though the canal was completely abandoned by 1872). The canal was approximately 82 miles in length and ran from New Castle, Pennsylvania to Akron, Ohio. The canal flows underneath the existing SR-8 bridge and drains into a concrete structure and then into the Little Cuyahoga River.

Summit County is within the known range of four federally listed threatened/endangered species, including the Indiana Bat, Northern Long-Eared Bat, Northern Monkshood, and Bald Eagle. Potential habitat for these species will be investigated in Summer 2015.
Public Parks: One public park is located within the project study area at the corner of Lookout Avenue and Parkview Avenue and borders SR-8. This park is owned by the City of Akron and is commonly referred to as “Lookout Park”.

Cultural Resources (including historic sites, archaeological sites, and historic architecture): The existing SR-8 bridge is not eligible to be listed as a historic on the National Register of Historic Places. However, the Pennsylvania and Ohio Canal that runs under the bridge is considered to be historically significant. 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 known cultural resources in the vicinity of the project. Cultural resources include prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, historic bridges, historic buildings, sites and districts.

Hazardous Materials/Wastes (sites with potential hazardous material concerns): A future review of available regulatory database information and field investigations will identify sites with elevated potential for contamination.

Air Quality: The State of Ohio has developed State Implementation Plans (SIPs) for targeted pollutants which define how the State will comply with the Clean Air Act (CAA) and improve air quality. Because the proposed project will utilize Federal Funding, conformity with the SIPs must be demonstrated with respect to carbon monoxide (CO), ozone (O3), particulate matter (PM 2.5/PM 10), and Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSATs).

Noise (analysis of traffic noise and feasibility of noise abatement): Noise sensitive receptors, predominantly residences, have been identified throughout the study area. A preliminary noise analysis, conducted in accordance with the latest ODOT policy, will begin in Summer 2015 within the project area. The noise analysis will determine if noise walls are recommend as part of the project.

Social and Economic/Community Impacts (including businesses, residences, emergency services, travel patterns, schools, recreational activities, etc.): The project study area is within three City of Akron neighborhoods: North Hill, Elizabeth Park, and Middlebury. It is a highly urbanized area with a mix of residential and commercial development. The project team will work with stakeholders and engage the public throughout project development to avoid and minimize impacts, which are unclear at this early stage of project development. Selection of a recommended alternative and further plan development will help the project team and stakeholders to identify impacts. However, no substantial impacts to human health and educational facilities, recreational facilities/activities, religious institutions, public transportation or pedestrian and bicycle facilities are expected. Future public involvement activities will focus on community resources/activities, local business outreach, meetings and stakeholder activities.

Environmental Justice: Environmental Justice is defined as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, sex, 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 extensive public involvement outreach efforts involving community resources/activities, local business outreach, public meetings and by addressing public comments received. An Environmental Justice Analysis Report may be produced to determine if the project will result in disproportionately high and adverse impact to minority or low-income populations.
RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION

To accommodate construction of the new bridges and associated roadway improvements, the purchase of additional permanent right-of-way, construction easements and/or temporary right of way will be required. The extent of additional right of way takes will be determined during the future detailed design phase of plan development.

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 the project. Operated in accordance with Chapter 163 of the Ohio Revised Code and Public Laws 91-646 and 100-17, the Relocation Assistance Program 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 the project to the owner and the effect of the 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

Comments may be submitted in the following ways:

- Spoken or submitted in person during the open house public involvement meeting
- By phone to Robert Lang, ODOT District 4 Environmental Specialist, at 330-786-4975
- By email to Robert.Lang@dot.state.oh.us
- By mail to:
  
  Edward W. Deley, Jr.
  District 4 Environmental Coordinator
  Ohio Department of Transportation
  2088 S. Arlington Road
  Akron, OH 44306-4243

The final date to submit comments is Friday, July 31, 2015.

If you are unable to attend the public involvement meeting, the meeting materials will be available for review at ODOT District 4, 2088 South Arlington Road, Akron.

Additional project information, including the public involvement meeting handout and displays, will be available on the ODOT District 4 website: www.dot.state.oh.us/districts/d04 by selecting the “Public Meetings/Public Involvement” heading on the left side menu.

A summary of public comments received during the public comment period and responses to those comments will be available by request and posted on the ODOT District 4 website by September 30, 2015.
State Route 8 Bridge Replacement Project

State Route 8
ALTERNATIVE #1 - WEST ALIGNMENT

Legend:
- Potential Impact Limits
- Proposed Edge of Shoulder
- Potential Retaining Wall

Proposed Bridge #1
Proposed Bridge #2
Existing Bridge (to be removed)
Bridge Type - Steel I-Girder