

As part of the development process for the Cherry Valley intersection/interchange project, a public involvement open house meeting was held on November 22, 2010. During this event, guests were asked to comment on various proposals and submit comments via mail, email or at the meeting. Below is a summary of the various comments and questions that were received.

Removal of the Granville Road Ramps

The Granville Road ramps are recommended to be removed because they are too close to the existing Country Club Drive interchange and the proposed Cherry Valley Road interchange to operate safely and efficiently. The recommended minimum spacing for interchanges in urban areas is one mile to allow for proper signing of exits, and to allow merging traffic from entrance ramps to safely enter the traffic stream with minimal interference with vehicles exiting at the next ramp. Signing upcoming exits is critical to inform drivers which lanes they must use for their intended destination with sufficient time to maneuver into the lane safely. The distance from the Granville Road ramps to the Country Club Interchange is 0.9 miles. The distance from the Granville Road ramps and the proposed interchange is 0.5 miles.

The eastbound entrance ramp from Granville Road to State Route 16 is a left-hand entrance that is undesirable because of the difficulty for a driver to merge into the higher speed traffic lane by using only the passenger side mirror to position themselves to enter safely. The right-hand exit at Country Club Drive requires several lane changes in a relatively short distance and leads to poor operation and a movement called "weaving" that causes turbulence in the traffic stream that contributes to crashes when drivers misjudge the necessary space needed to safely change lanes. Similarly, in the westbound direction, the entrance ramp from Country Club Drive is so close to the Granville Road exit ramp that the lane from Country Club Drive actually becomes the exit lane for Granville Road. This short distance creates weaving at a higher rate than the eastbound direction because the distance is so much less for westbound vehicles. Even though the Granville Road ramps were constructed very close to the Country Club Drive interchange and have been there for many years, our current knowledge and understanding of highway operations and safety would not allow them to be built that way today. Since the new interchange at Cherry Valley Road will likely be placed midway between the Cherry Valley Road intersection and the Granville Road interchange, it will serve to replace movements at both locations. Although the ramps would be closed to Granville Road at the current location, the connection from Granville Road to SR 16 will essentially be relocated to the Cherry Valley Road interchange. The connection between Granville Road and SR 16 will actually be improved because missing movements at the existing interchange will be provided at the new Cherry Valley Road interchange. The missing movements are eastbound SR 16 to Granville Road, and Granville Road to westbound SR 16.

(See the website for a visual showing the interchange spacing)

In Addition to a New Interchange, Construct an Off-ramp at Existing Cherry Valley Road

An off-ramp at existing Cherry Valley Road cannot be constructed in addition to the proposed interchange because this ramp would be too close to the proposed interchange to operate safely and efficiently. The recommended minimum spacing for interchanges in urban areas is one mile to allow for proper signing of exits, and to allow merging traffic from entrance ramps to safely enter the traffic stream with minimal interference with vehicles exiting at the next ramp. Signing upcoming exits is critical to inform drivers which lanes they must use for their intended destination with sufficient time to maneuver into the lane safely. The distance from the proposed interchange to the existing intersection

of Cherry Valley Road and State Route 16 is approximately one half mile. The new interchange will serve to replace all movements at the existing intersection of Cherry Valley Road and State Route 16.

Concern Regarding Removal of the Country Club Drive Westbound On-ramp

This ramp will not be affected by the project. There will be no changes to the Country Club/Church Street interchange as part of this project.

Suggestion to Connect Newark Granville Road with Granville Road

As part of the project development process, a connection between Granville Road in Newark and Newark-Granville Road in Granville was considered. The main issues related to creating this connection revolves around the cost of construction, future maintenance costs, environmental impacts, and social impacts. The estimated cost to construct this connector ranges from \$4.3 to \$4.8 million. The topography results in a difficult environmental in which to construct a connector and would result in future on-going maintenance issues for the city of Newark due to the possibility of rock falls. A connection would have a significant impact to the park and ride lot and would impact almost 1000 feet of stream as well as have impacts to the floodway. In addition, a connector would be costly to construct due to topography.

Dislike Loop On-Ramp

Construction of a diamond interchange, Alternative 1, would result in the eastbound on-ramp impacting wetlands, floodplain/floodway, Raccoon Creek, and the existing multi-use path. In an effort to reduce these environmental impacts, the eastbound on-ramp was converted to a loop ramp. As this loop ramp will be handling traffic getting on State Route 16, the speeds should be relatively low and should not cause a safety concern.

Suggestion for the Names of New Roadway and Existing Cherry Valley

As these roadways lie within the jurisdictional boundaries of Newark and Granville, the decision as to what to name these roadways will lie with Newark and Granville. No decision has been made at this time.

Extend the Multi-Use Path East along Granville Road

The purpose of the interchange project is based on the existing congestion on State Route 16 and the resulting safety problem. The ODOT recommended interchange (Alternative 5) addresses this need. The multi-use path connection was included in the interchange proposal as it is often difficult to create connections across a limited access highway such as State Route 16 if the connection is not considered as part of the original construction. In addition, the proposed connection provides a good location connection as it connects to the existing multi-use paths on the north and south.

Extending the multi-use path along Newark-Granville Road is not a part of the purpose of the project. In addition, extending the multi-use path along Granville Road would need to be addressed by the local governmental entities as it is a local roadway. As a result, these comments will be forwarded to the Village of Granville and the city of Newark for their consideration.

Take State Route 16 over Cherry Valley

Taking State Route 16 over Cherry Valley Road was considered during the preliminary development of the project. However, it was dropped from further consideration for a number of issues. One of the main considerations is that it would be very difficult to maintain traffic on State Route 16 during construction. In addition, the cost would be substantial due in large part to the fact that walls would need to be constructed to carry State Route 16 and the associated ramps. Future maintenance cost of these walls was also a consideration.

Multi-use Path should Bridge Granville Road

This crossing is proposed to be at-grade as the other crossings on Granville Road are at-grade. A tunnel or pedestrian bridge is much more expensive and would require more right-of-way to be purchased to accommodate the structure and the slope of the approach needed to be ADA compliant. In addition, the traffic volume on Granville Road on the east side of this intersection should be relatively low. In addition, if a signal is installed at this intersection, there will be a separate timing phase on the signal to allow pedestrians to cross.

Is there a Noise Difference between a Roundabout and a Regular Intersection?

This question was posed to our noise experts in our ODOT central office. Their response indicated that roundabouts are potentially quieter than a traditional intersection because traffic is required to slow down before and thru the intersection.

Concern Regarding Noise Level

A noise analysis is required for a proposed project if the project consists of a new highway built on a new location, an existing highway that is significantly altered by substantially changing the horizontal or vertical characteristics of the road, or the number of through lanes is increased. The noise analysis only considers noise sensitive land uses within 500' from the edge of pavement of the proposed project.

A "noise sensitive receiver" (defined as homes, parks, schools, churches, etc.) is considered impacted by noise if either future noise levels approach or exceeds the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Noise Abatement Criteria, or if there is a substantial increase in future noise levels over existing noise levels from a proposed ODOT project as described above.

A noise barrier must be both feasible and reasonable if it is to be constructed with a highway project. Feasibility and reasonableness are determined by criteria that are quantifiable but flexible, and judgments for special and/or unusual circumstances are made on a case-by-case basis. As a result, noise mitigation is not automatically provided where noise impacts have been identified. A barrier is feasible if it can be constructed without major engineering or safety issues and provides a substantial noise reduction to the adjacent receivers. Reasonableness deals with whether or not the barrier can be constructed in a cost-effective manner, the number of receivers benefited from the noise barrier, overall noise levels and noise level increases, and the desires of the community. ODOT's current policy is if the cost of a noise barrier is \$35,000 per residence or less, the noise barrier is deemed cost reasonable. For example, if a noise barrier will benefit 10 residences and the total cost of the noise barrier is \$350,000 or less, the noise barrier is deemed cost reasonable.

A noise study was recently completed for the project. Based on the noise modeling, there are no predicted design year noise impacts associated with the project since the design year noise level do not exceed or approach the Federal Highway Administration Noise Abatement Criteria of 67 dBA. In addition, the difference between existing and design year noise levels is not > 10 decibels for all receivers.

Renaming the Corridor that include State Route 161/37/16/United States 36 to 161

The Ohio Department of Transportation is working with representatives from the Columbus to Pittsburgh Corridor in considering various naming or rebadging options. Currently, the ramifications to these various route designations are being considered.

A One Lane Roundabout is Too Small and/or Interchange is Too Big

The number of through lanes and turn lanes required for the interchange, as well as the number of lanes required for a roundabout or a traditional intersection at the tie-in points with existing Granville Road and Cherry Valley Road was determined based on predicted traffic for the year 2035. Modeling future 20 year traffic helps to ensure that the facility will remain functional for a long period of time; even though sometimes it may seem that the facility is overbuilt originally. Traffic is modeled or predicted through the use of mathematical equations that consider existing traffic volumes, existing and future land uses, population forecasts, and projected economic forecasts as part of predicting future traffic volumes. Mathematical estimates of the numbers of trips made by each household, how those trips are distributed (i.e. where people may choose to shop, work, attend school, etc.), and the transportation mode by which people get to their destination are taken into account. In addition, these mathematical equations take into account the route a driver might choose to get to their destination as well as the potential affect the distribution of traffic may have on the transportation links (i.e. congestion may result on a transportation link causing drivers to choose alternate routing).

The methods by which the Ohio Department of Transportation performed our traffic modeling are in keeping with the Federal Highway Administration standards and practices. The Ohio Department of Transportation certifies all projects requiring traffic modeling in conformance with Federal Highway Administration standards and practices.

Protect the Indiana Bat

The US Fish and Wildlife Service has concurred with ODOT's determination that the project as proposed, "may affect but is not likely to adversely affect" the Indiana bat. As part of the environmental process, all potential bat roosting habitat trees were identified in the study area. In order to ascertain whether Indiana bats were present in the area, the Ohio Department of Transportation performed bat mist-net surveys on three separate dates. While five different species of bats were caught, documented, and released, no Indiana bats were captured. To minimize potential effects to the bat and to avoid any direct take of bats, the Ohio Department of Transportation has committed to following the US Fish and Wildlife Service's recommended seasonal tree clearing restrictions.

Build the Interchange at the Existing Intersection of Cherry Valley Road/State Route 16

The interchange is recommended to be built to the east of the existing Cherry Valley Road/State Route 16 intersection. Building the interchange at the existing intersection was considered and dismissed for a number of reasons. One of the two main reasons is that the right-of-way cost for constructing the interchange at the existing location is more than double the right-of-way cost to construct the interchange east of the existing interchange. The second reason is that the interchange alternatives that are centered on the existing intersection results in negative environmental impacts to Raccoon Creek. The impact to Raccoon Creek results in a difficult and expensive environment to build and maintain.

(See the matrix on the website for additional information.)

There is no Need for the Project

There are three main reasons for the project-poor traffic operations, safety, and access to the region. The intersection experiences long delays and suffers from a poor level of service (LOS E) during the peak travel periods. (LOS is measured similarly to a report card. A LOS A means that traffic flows unimpeded. A LOS F means that it is failing operationally.) The poor operation of the intersection has resulted in lengthy queues that reach as far back as 1500 to 2000 feet on State Route 16. This poor operation has led to safety problems. Between 2006 and 2008, 91 crashes were reported. This crash rate is nearly 4.5 times the statewide average for signalized intersections on four-lane highways. In addition, continued access to Cherry Valley Road and the surrounding areas is an important need for the project.

(See the full Purpose and Need on the website for additional information)

Request for Lighting to be used in Moderation

Currently, the Ohio Department of Transportation has agreed to complete the preliminary development phase of work only. No work will occur on detailed design until funds have been obtained for right-of-way or construction. Future lighting of the interchange is a consideration to be addressed during the detailed design phase of the project and is dependent on funding availability. This comment will be considered when the project advanced to detailed design.

Plant Landscape Buffering or Build a Barrier between Welsh Hills School and New Roadway

Currently, the Ohio Department of Transportation has agreed to complete the preliminary development phase of work only. No work will occur on detailed design until funds have been obtained for right-of-way or construction. The planting of landscaping as part of the project is a consideration to be addressed during the detailed design phase of the project and is dependent on funding availability. This comment will be considered when the project advanced to detailed design.

A limited access fence will be erected along the entire new roadway from Granville Road to existing Cherry Valley Road.

The Project is Too Expensive to Justify Building

Cost is an important part of the project matrix that compared each alternative. One of the reasons that Alternative 5 is ODOT's recommended alternative is that its cost is one of the less expensive alternatives.

The Interchange Will Induce Sprawl

There are already numerous residential and commercial developments in the vicinity. One of the main reasons this project is being pursued is to respond to an already congested intersection resulting in safety issues.

Land use and development is controlled at the local level and plays a key role in how the area will grow/change. The local jurisdictions are responsible for developing land use, zoning, and long range plans to deal with future changes. It is recommended that concerns about future development be directed to the local jurisdictions.

The Interchange will Reroute Traffic Away from Thriving Local Downtown Businesses

With any project, there may be negative effects. However, this project will allow for better access to downtown businesses or other business locations.

Are Business Owners Not Directly Impacted by the Project Entitled to Loss of Business Income?

Businesses that do not have property needing to be acquired are not entitled to compensation.

How Long is Construction Expected to Last? Will the Existing Intersection Remain Open During Construction?

Construction of the interchange would be expected to take approximately two construction seasons to complete. With the construction of Alternative 5, the existing intersection of Cherry Valley/State Route 16 will remain open until the new interchange is completed.

Impacts to the Environment, Historic Areas, and Air Quality have not been Considered

Impacts to the environment including historic properties, archaeology, ecological impacts, social impacts, hazardous waste, and potential noise impacts are all addressed through the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process and coordinated through the applicable agencies. The NEPA document that will be developed for the project will document and disclose our studies and our coordination with these agencies.

(See the matrix on the website for additional information.)

Concerned the Number of Signals on New Roadway will not allow for Efficient Movement of Vehicles and/or Add a Continuous Movement On-ramp for Northbound Cherry Valley to Westbound State Route 16

The traffic signals on new Cherry Valley will be coordinated and properly spaced to work with each other and will improve operations. In addition, the traffic modeling has shown that the proposed interchange configuration will handle the traffic projected for year 2035.

Construct a Barrier between Multi-Use Path and Roadway

A barrier is not included as part of the plan as the multi-use offset from the traveled roadway meets AASHTO (American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials) recommended standards and the new roadway will be low speed, 35 mph. In addition, the proposed multi-use path will connect to the existing path that runs along Granville Road that is closer to the traveled roadway than the proposed multi-use path. The portion of the path that is on the bridge structure will include a barrier.

Build a Connector to Thornwood

This is a separate project. However, the cities of Heath and Newark in conjunction with the Licking County Engineer's Office are nearing the finalization of a plan to upgrade Thornwood Drive (currently not funded). In addition, Newark has obtained funding to begin a study to address the existing Cherry Valley Road Bridge. These two projects, Thornwood Drive and the Cherry Valley Road Bridge, in conjunction with the interchange should allow for this direct connection.

Preserve the Existing Cherry Valley Road Bridge

This is a separate project. However, funding to begin preliminary development to address the condition of this bridge is a few years away and will be led by the city of Newark. Funding for construction has not yet been obtained.

Remove the Signals at Marne Road and Dayton Road

This is a separate project. The Cherry Valley Road/State Route 16 project has been moved forward ahead of the other two intersections because the volume of traffic and the associated crashes are greater than at the other two intersections.