



# Avon Interchange Proposal

- Complex
- Unique
- Challenging
- Controversial
- Politically sensitive
- Time sensitive
- Diverse and powerful stakeholders



# About NOACA

- Conducts, reviews and assists with multimodal transportation & environmental planning
- Programs federally funded transportation projects, plus major projects using local or state funding
- Determines how federal transportation dollars will be spent in Northeast Ohio

- Serves five counties

- Cuyahoga
- Geauga
- Lake
- Lorain
- Medina



# About NOACA

- Governed by 38 elected and appointed officials
- Manages federal transportation investments for N.E. Ohio
- Works with many partners





# Committees & Subcommittees

---

- TAC
- PAC
- RTIS
- Transit Council
- Bicycle Council
- Freight and Logistics
- TransWAC



# Avon Interchange Proposal

---

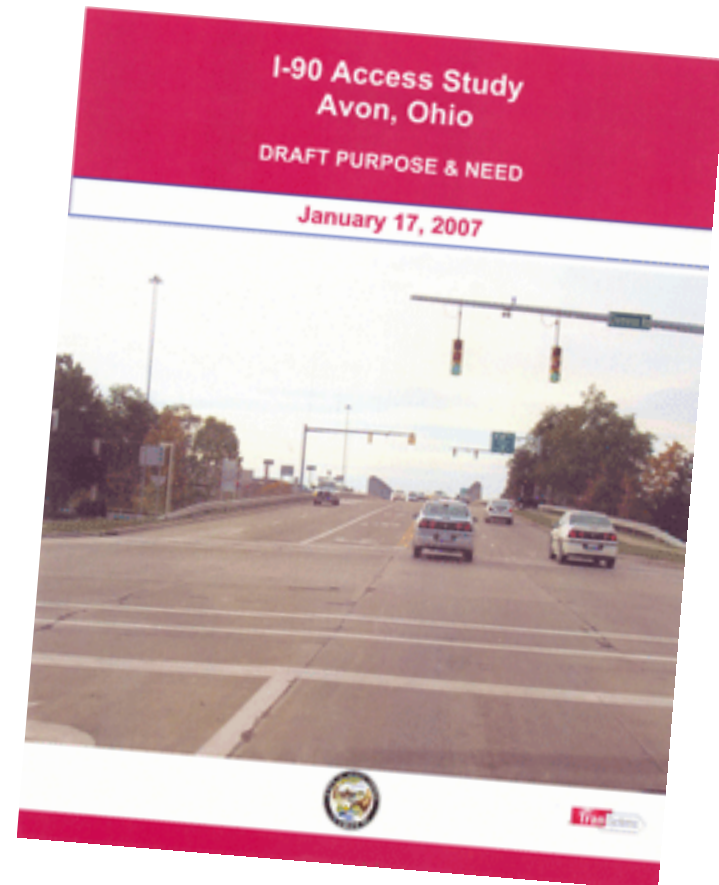
- Project Sponsor: City of Avon
  - New I-90 interchange proposal
  - Unique project: *No federal money*
  - Mix of private sector and local funding
  - Twofold purpose: Economic development and relieving traffic congestion
  - Support from Jacobs, Henkel, Cleveland Clinic and other business interests
  - Opposition/serious concerns expressed by neighboring communities, City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, GCRTA and others

# Controversies Surrounding the Avon Proposal

- Avon: Fastest growing community in Lorain County
- Just across the line from the central county
- Sprawl issues
- In a region with virtually no job or population growth, does one community's growth necessarily come at the expense of its neighbors?
- Does regionalism mean cooperating in your neighbor's success, even if you don't share in it?

# Avon Interchange Study

- Part of city's thoroughfare plan
- Local land use
- NOACA worked with Avon consultant on planning study
  - Study conducted by Transystems
  - Much give and take on study requirements and timetable
  - NOACA staff provided traffic projections and other data
  - Study began spring 2003; completed May 2007



# Economic Impact Assessment

- Board Authorized Study
  - Determined economic impact and consistency with NOACA goals and principles
  - \$100,000 study
  - Executive Committee selected consultant and provided oversight
    - Consultant made progress reports to Exec Committee
  - Completed September 2007
  - Part of Project Planning Review Process





# Project Planning Review

---

- Three month review process
  - Public review
  - Committee and advisory council review
  - Staff review
  - Intergovernmental review
  - Culminates in:
    - Recommendations to Governing Board
    - Board action



# Impact Study: Spring 2007

---

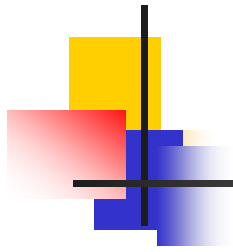
- Political expectations required that we expedite the RFP, consultant selection and study completion
  - Distributed RFP in mid-March
  - Entered into contract with D.B. Hartt on May 10
  - Final study delivered September 14
- Staff avoided going beyond the expressed wishes of the Board in determining the study's scope
- Staff didn't wish to constrain the consultant in their methodology or approach



# Impact Study Scope

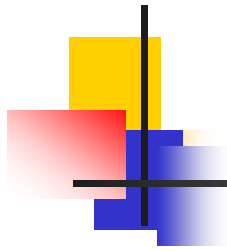
---

- Establish development assumptions, limitations and options
  - Compare development impacts with and without new interchange
  - Examine regional and sub-regional development patterns
- Assessment of direct impacts/cost analysis
- Assess indirect impacts
- Assess interchange proposal with regard to NOACA Goals and Principles
- 2030 horizon



# Impact Study 2030 Findings: Development

	Without Interchange	With Interchange	Difference With
Residential units	1,336	975	-361
Retail acres	18	112	94
Office acres	50	181	131
Industrial acres	308	393	85
Total value	\$650 m	\$970 m	\$320 m



# Impact Study 2030 Findings: Transportation

---

- Interchange cost: \$19.3 million
- Cost of additional needed improvements if interchange is built: \$2.7 million (City of Avon pledged to make these improvements)
- Total daily volumes will increase by 2030 if the interchange is built, however, better circulation alternatives would result in less congestion

# Impact Study 2030 Findings: Economic

## *Jobs: The Point of Contention*

- Projected 2030 total job gain for Avon: 9,121
- Projected 2030 job shift from Cuyahoga & Lorain Counties: 7,174
- Projected annual job shift from Cuyahoga & Lorain Counties: 311
- Approximate total jobs in Cuyahoga & Lorain: 873,000
- Job loss will be mitigated by “back-filling”





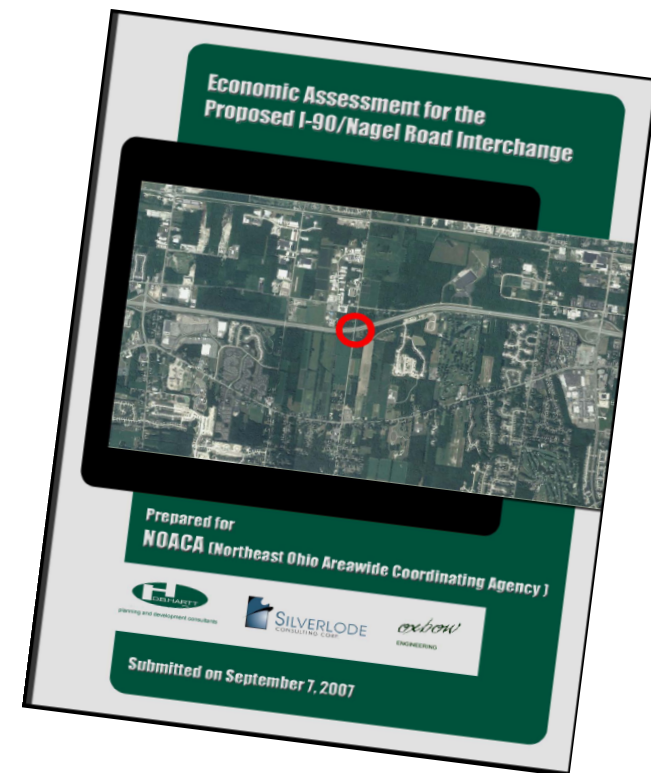
# Impact Study 2030 Findings: Goals and Principles

- 11 Planning Principles
- 10 Transportation Plan Goals
  - Study asserts that the proposed interchange project is not in direct conflict with these goals and principles
  - This finding was the subject of much debate



# Key Impact Study Conclusions

- The City of Avon will benefit by:
  - Reduced traffic congestion overall
  - Increased tax revenue
  - Short-term economic benefit from construction jobs





# Key Impact Study Conclusions

---

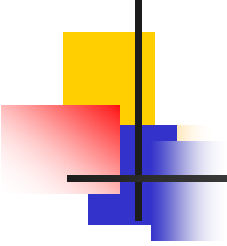
- Interchange will have “no material impact” on the region, since:
  - It will not affect the size, nature, or rate of growth of the regional economy
  - Jobs and development will grow within the region with or without the interchange
  - Redistribution of incremental development represents less than two-tenths of one percent of the region’s existing industrial square footage
  - Shifts in development will be mitigated by “back-filling”



# NOACA Staff Role

---

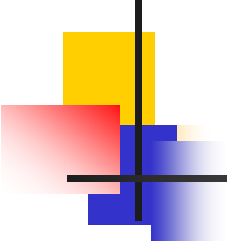
- Help the project sponsor with early planning
- Keep the process on track
  - Meet federal requirements
  - Meet local expectations
  - Ensure the process is conducted properly and on-schedule
- Provide good information to Board
  - Avon Interchange Study
  - Economic Impact Assessment
  - Project Planning Review
    - Staff review
    - Committee and advisory council review
    - Public involvement
    - Intergovernmental review
- Provide forum for informed discussion and decision-making



# Intergovernmental and Public Comments

---

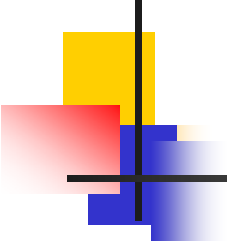
- “Back-filling” will amount to “check cashing stores and other Class C businesses” – *First Suburbs Coalition*
- While the interchange, when viewed in isolation, could be seen as a small cut, the real harm to the region “is more akin to a death by a thousand cuts” – *City of Cleveland*



# Intergovernmental and Public Comments

---

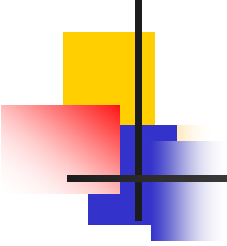
- “We must end turf wars in favor of cooperative economic growth.”  
– *Matt Lundy, Ohio Rep., 57<sup>th</sup> District*
- “Constructive criticism that improves the project is welcome, but opponents must examine their motives and be careful not to become anti-regional.”  
– *Lake County Engineer*



# Intergovernmental and Public Comments

---

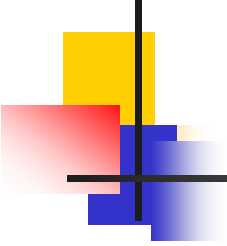
- “Who will benefit and who will ultimately pay for the interchange and development? The Westshore communities and the surrounding communities of Lorain and western Cleveland will all feel the pain as hundreds of jobs are shifted. The legacy of the decision on this proposal could be the “Raiding of the Region.” – *City of Westlake*



# Intergovernmental and Public Comments

---

- “As land in Westlake has become more and more scarce, companies looking to expand are naturally looking to Lorain County. As a region, we should do everything possible to assist and support growth companies. Despite (Westlake’s) assertions to the contrary, regionalism by definition does not stop at the borders of Cuyahoga County.” – *City of Avon*



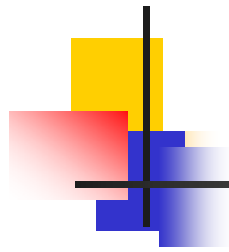
# Intergovernmental and Public Comments

---

“The Jacobs Group’s conceptual master site plan clearly depicts a mixed-use project – not a large retail complex as (Westlake) and others have suggested. Anyone who is even vaguely familiar with the retail industry is well aware that the market potential simply does not exist for another major retail development.

Crocker Park and Avon Commons are both very attractive, well-planned developments that will be successful for many years to come. Far from being a detriment to Crocker Park, we believe the new interchange would be of great benefit to the entire area by helping to reduce the heavy congestion that currently exists at the Crocker/I-90 interchange.”

– *Richard Jacobs*



# Intergovernmental and Public Comments

---

“As the largest employer in Northeast Ohio and the second largest employer in Ohio, we understand our expansion plans impact the communities in which we reside and serve.

Our recent and continuing investments represent significant growth in Cuyahoga County. Our workforce growth in the outer ring suburbs and counties is not at the expense of the inner core, but rather it is in addition to the continued growth in the inner core.

We ask you to approve the construction of the Lear Nagel Road interchange at I-90.”

– *Cleveland Clinic*

# Project Planning Review Recommendations

## ■ Transit

- Find a dedicated source of funding for Lorain County Transit
- Incorporate transit oriented design
- Build park and ride lot in the area
- Include transit waiting environments and other amenities
- Plan transit access for new development
- Work with NOACA Transit Council



# Project Planning Review Recommendations



- Bike and Pedestrian
  - Provide pedestrian access to development sites
  - Include bike facilities on Nagel Road
- Traffic
  - Connect municipal streets north and south of the interstate to Westlake
- Taxes
  - Lorain and Cuyahoga County governments should enter into a discussion of tax base sharing

# The Upshot of All This...

- In the months before October 12<sup>th</sup>, the NOACA Board deliberated extensively
- Immediately prior to October 12<sup>th</sup>, interested parties negotiated an agreement regarding the interchange proposal

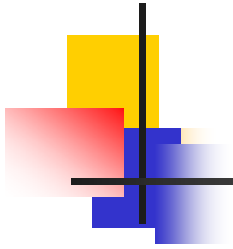




# The Outcome

---

- On October 12<sup>th</sup>, the NOACA Governing Board approved the Avon Interchange project, contingent on:
  - A good faith effort to pursue the PPR recommendations
  - The creation of a joint economic development zone (JEDZ) agreement, which provides that:
    - 15 communities are included in the agreement
    - Commercial and industrial tax abatement is limited to a 75 percent maximum for 10 years in Avon
    - There will be no income tax abatements in Avon
    - If a major business from a signatory to the JEDZ agreement moves to Avon, that community will receive 50 percent of the income tax revenue generated from that business for five years
    - The Cleveland Clinic is exempt from this agreement up to a cap of 500 jobs



Questions?