FRA-270 Trench Aesthetics
The Birth and Life of an Environmental Commitment
FRA-270 Trench Aesthetics

What are Environmental Commitments (ECs)

For all federally-funded projects, as part of the NEPA process, ODOT makes EC’s to protect, restore, or enhance the environment.

ECs are developed based upon the need to:

- **Avoid** the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action.
- **Minimize** impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation.
- **Rectify** the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment.
- **Reduce** or eliminate the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action.
- **Compensate** for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.
Where do ECs Come From?

EC’s can be “birthed” from the following sources during the NEPA process:

- Programmatic Agreements
- Project-Specific Permits and Approvals
- Project-Specific Agreements
- Project- Specific Coordination
- Stakeholder Engagement/Input
- Environmental Studies and Analyses
- ODOT Construction Materials and Specifications*
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Where do ECs Come From?

ECs can be generated throughout the entire ODOT PDP process. This includes:

- Planning: Project planning and scoping
- Preliminary Engineering: During the development of the NEPA studies and agency coordination
- Environmental Engineering: From stakeholder input
- Final Engineering/ROW: From design considerations
- Construction: In construction or maintenance phases of a project
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Project Overview

• ODOT identified the North-Central Outerbelt section of I-270 in Franklin County as the fourth most congested/high crash location in Ohio.

• ODOT developed a strategy to address the physical and operational deficiencies at the interchanges of I-270 with SR 315, US 23, and I-71.

**US 23 - From I-270 to Flint Rd.**
Project created a grade-separated, northbound-only roadway which by-passes the signals on US 23 between I-270 and Flint Rd. The grade separated roadway would be below normal grade, and located between the northbound and southbound "surface" roadways.
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Birth of a Commitment

Development of the Project Aesthetics (including the “trench” retaining walls):

• As part of ODOT’s project stakeholder engagement process the City of Worthington raised questions concerning how this project would look when constructed.

• ODOT coordinated with the City of Worthington to create the aesthetic renderings and estimates.
  • The project aesthetics were presented several times during the City of Worthington Council meetings.
  • Approved by Worthington’s Architectural Review Board.

• The City of Columbus was also involved in the review/approval process.
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ODOT’s Project Development Process

- Planning (PL)
- Preliminary Engineering (PE)
- Environmental Engineering (EE)
- Final Engineering / ROW (FE)
- Construction (CO)


Designer incorporates EC into Plans (2005 - 2012)

Project Sells

Construction of the Retaining Walls (2012 – 2016)
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How did we do?

Documentation of EC
• Aesthetic Treatment was incorporated in the design and subsequent approved plans.
• Aesthetic Treatment design was included in project PI efforts (website).
• Commitment not discussed in CE document.

EC Tracking
• Commitment was not included in ECF or other tracking documents.
• Multiple Project PM’s and District DEC’s.
• Commitment was not included in the Environmental Commitment Tracking System (ECTS).
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How did we do?

Implementation of EC
• EC was included as a plan note with details in the approved project plans.
• Not properly reviewed from a constructability standpoint.
• Contractor had a hard time with construction of the retaining wall (due to difficult “terrain” of the shale sidewalls in the trench and abundance of groundwater seepage).

Public Concern
• Questions have been raised due to current condition of the retaining walls.

Status
• Final repair, painting & acceptance of all project retaining wall expected 2017?
FRA-270 Trench Aesthetics Pictures
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How do we do better?

Environmental Commitment Procedures Manual

- ODOT is developing comprehensive ODOT standard operating procedures for the development, implementation, and documentation of ECs.
- This manual and training will set Departmental expectations and responsibilities, and will provide ODOT personnel and consultants the tools to develop, integrate, communicate, implement, and track ECs successfully.

Environmental Commitment Tracking System (ODOT)

- Developed the ECTS to track ECs through the NEPA process, design and construction.
- The ECTS provides a web-based multi-user database that provides users the ability to submit compliance reviews.
- ECTS is a conceptual model for a future tracking mechanism which will be incorporated into EnviroNet.*
Thank You!

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