



Ohio Department of Transportation
Opportunity Corridor
Updated February 9, 2010

OPPORTUNITY CORRIDOR:

Cleveland Opportunity Corridor is an economic development project aimed at connecting I-490 to the University Circle neighborhood. The Opportunity Corridor encompasses nearly 1,000 acres on Cleveland's southeast side and is anchored by University Circle and the Cleveland Clinic. The area between I-490 and University Circle has become known as the "Forgotten Triangle" due to the lack of economic activity. Outside of the transportation benefits it could bring to the Cleveland area, this effort opens the potential for new economic development, new jobs and a new identity for the community.

An Opportunity Corridor Steering Committee was formed which represents ODOT, the City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, Community Development Corporation, Greater Cleveland Rapid Transit Authority, business owners and other local stake holders.

OPPORTUNITY CORRIDOR: Study Goals

There are three primary needs that have been identified by the Opportunity Corridor study:

- Improving mobility from the Interstate system to University Circle.
- Improving access from the Interstate system to the Forgotten Triangle.
- Supporting community and economic development.

OPPORTUNITY CORRIDOR: Project Overview

In 2004, ODOT retained a consultant team led by HNTB to conduct the Opportunity Corridor Study. In working with local stakeholders and public officials, the purpose of the project was developed. The purpose is to:

- 1) Create transportation infrastructure to improve access to the southeast portion of the City of Cleveland and its eastern suburbs.
- 2) Connect University Circle to the Interstate system.
- 3) Support the revival and redevelopment of large tracts of vacant industrial and residential land.

The project follows ODOT's Project Development Process (PDP) for major projects. The 14-step PDP is a project management and transportation decision-making procedure that outlines project development from concept through completion.

During steps 1 through 4, four conceptual alternative solutions were developed and analyzed. A steering committee and local stakeholders evaluated the alternatives. It was recommended only two alternatives be carried forward for further study.

Those two alternatives include variations of a new alignment completely south of the existing railroad trench. To address local concerns over high volumes of traffic at the E. 55th Street intersection, it is also recommended that this intersection be further studied as both an at-grade intersection as well as a grade separated interchange.

OPPORTUNITY CORRIDOR: Schedule

Through the Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) process, \$5.3 million was budgeted to this Tier II project to begin Planning and Preliminary Engineering. During the summer of 2009, ODOT was awarded another \$10 million in TRAC funding in order to complete the full Preliminary Development Phase. To date, ODOT has completed the planning study phase of this project and is currently developing and assessing the final two feasible alternatives.

These acquired TRAC funds will take the project through Step 8 of ODOT's Preliminary Development Process which will result in an approved environmental document or Record of Decision and will allow detail design to continue using federal dollars.

OPPORTUNITY CORRIDOR: Cost

- ODOT has committed approximately \$15.2 million to the preliminary development of the project.
- Preliminary estimates project the project could cost upwards of \$375 million.

OPPORTUNITY CORRIDOR: Project Challenges

- Up to 123 residential units (includes individual units in multi-resident buildings) in an economically depressed area.
- Rail issues: proposed corridors run along Norfolk Southern, GCRTA (all three lines) and CSX tracks
- Relocation of cemeteries at several locations if proposed alignments at *existing E. 55th Street/Woodland* and *North of the tracks* were to be considered.
- Cost