



The Link

Fall 2010 • Volume 1 • Number 1

PROGRESS REPORT ON CLEVELAND'S OPPORTUNITY CORRIDOR

What is the Opportunity Corridor and what is its purpose?

ODOT and the FHWA, in cooperation with the City of Cleveland and Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP), are developing the Opportunity Corridor Transportation Study.

ODOT and FHWA are responsible for the planning and design of the transportation facility and are coordinating closely with the City of Cleveland and GCP to establish a vision for future land use and potential economic development opportunities in the project study area and beyond.

The Opportunity Corridor study area is shown on page 3 of this newsletter.

The purpose of the Opportunity Corridor Project, which was developed in collaboration with local stakeholders and public officials, is to:

- Create a transportation infrastructure to improve access to the southeast section of Cleveland and its eastern suburbs;
- Connect University Circle to the interstate system; and
- Support the revival and redevelopment of large tracts of vacant industrial and residential land.

As currently envisioned, the Opportunity Corridor would be a 3.5-mile boulevard connecting Interstate 490 at East 55th Street and Interstate 77 on its west end to East 105th Street at Chester Avenue in the University Circle area on its east end.

The multi-lane boulevard would have traffic signals, a median and accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The sample boulevard rendering and typical section shown to the right, should help visualize the physical characteristics of a typical boulevard.

What Public Meetings are scheduled for the Opportunity Corridor?

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) will conduct six public meetings in the beginning of October 2010 to engage local residents, businesses and other stakeholders in the Opportunity Corridor project planning process.

The meetings will be conducted at various locations within a one-week period to maximize the opportunity for public participation. Exhibits and formal presentations will be the same at all meetings.

The presentations will summarize the engineering and environmental analyses completed since the previous public meetings in September 2009. They also will identify the alternatives recommended for further study in the next step of ODOT Project Development Process (PDP).

The meetings will be held in an open house format to allow Opportunity Corridor area residents and others to view exhibits and ask questions of the project study team, including ODOT, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the consultant staff.

A formal presentation will also be made, which will include an overview of the findings of the work completed since the last public meetings.

Afterward, the public will have the opportunity to comment about the project via an open microphone session. Verbal comments will be limited to three minutes or less. They will be recorded and transcribed into the official project record. Following the open microphone session, the public can review exhibits and ask additional questions of the project study team.

MEETING #1

Tuesday, October 5
Mt. Sinai Baptist Church
7510 Woodland Avenue
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Presentation: 6:30 p.m.

MEETINGS #2 AND #3

Wednesday, October 6
Kenneth L. Johnson
Recreation Center
9206 Woodland Avenue
#2 Time: 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.
Presentation: 8:30 a.m.
#3 Time: 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Presentation: 11:30 a.m.

MEETING #4

Wednesday, October 6
Edgewood Park
3215 E 55th Street
Time: 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Presentation: 6:30 p.m.

MEETINGS #5 AND #6

Thursday, October 7
John Hay High School
2075 Stokes Boulevard
#5 Time: 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.
Presentation: 4:30 p.m.
#6 Time: 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Presentation: 6:30 p.m.

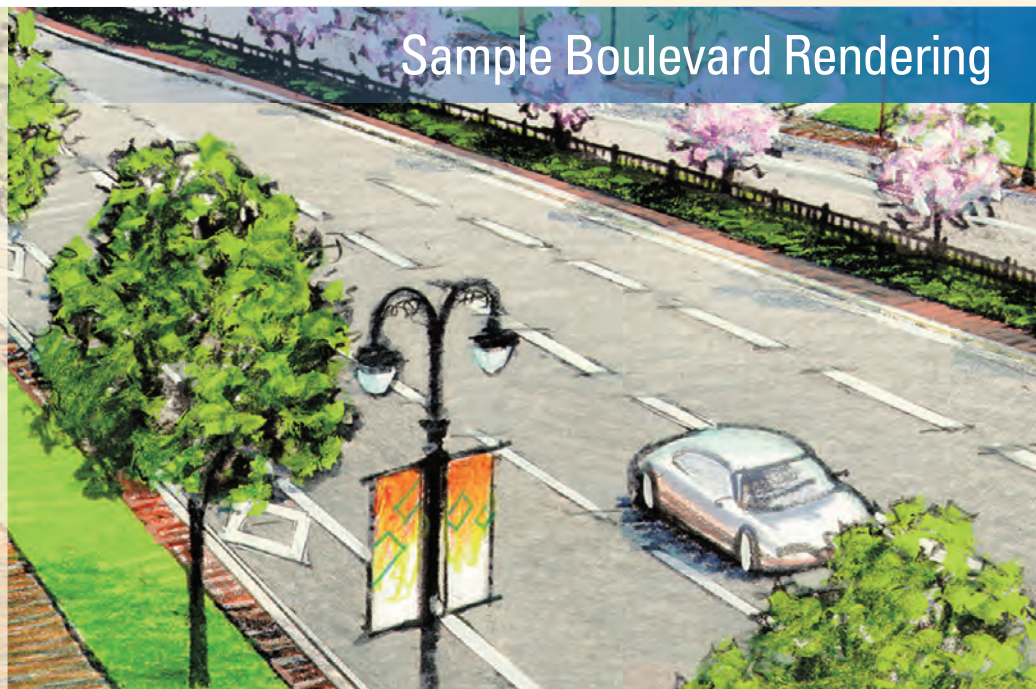
A TRANSPARENT PLANNING PROCESS

Find Answers in This Newsletter

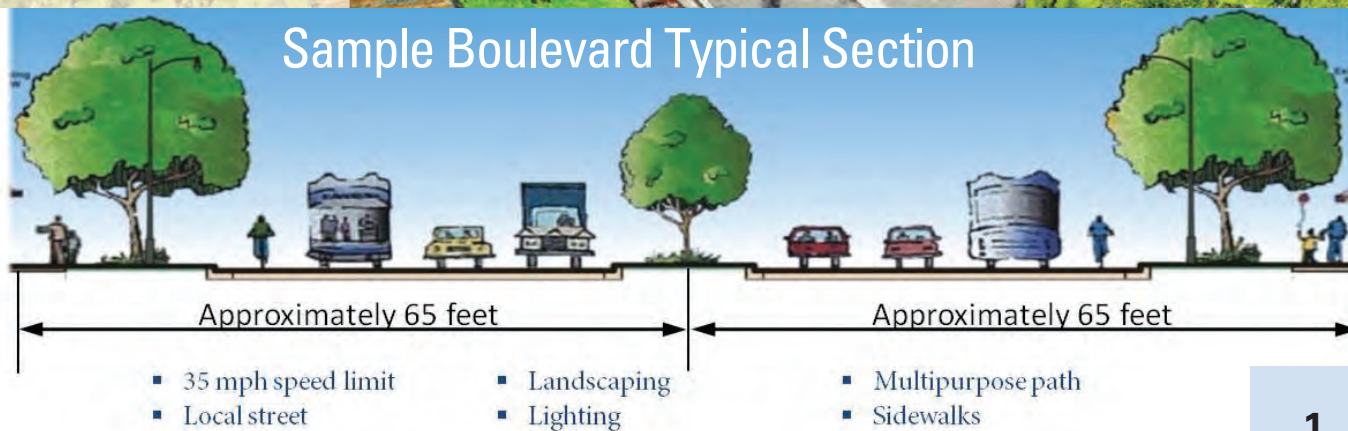
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What is a Boulevard?

A boulevard is a multi-lane roadway divided by a median. It includes landscaping and provides for bicycle and pedestrian usage.



Sample Boulevard Rendering



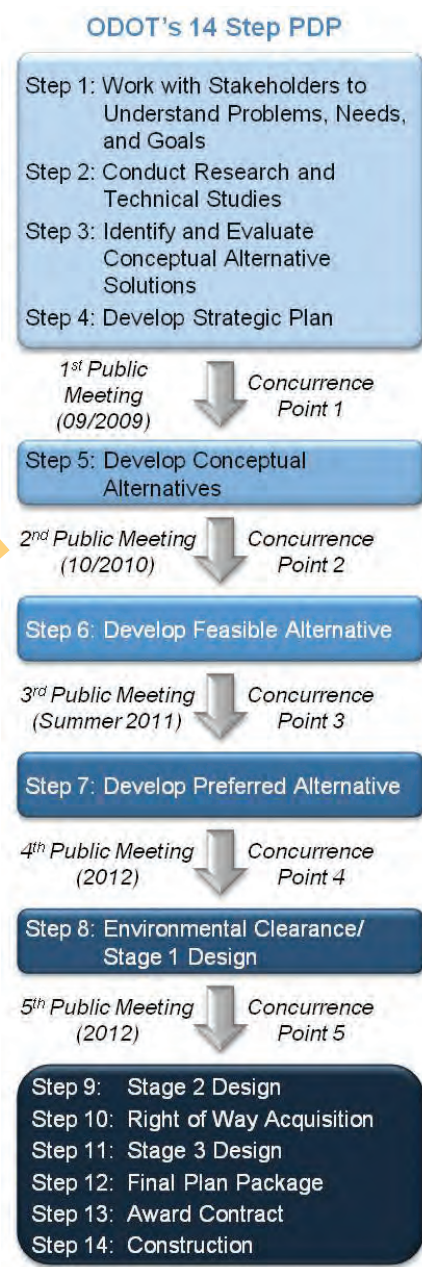
Sample Boulevard Typical Section

Where is the Opportunity Corridor Project in the planning and design process?

ODOT uses a 14-step Project Development Process (PDP) to guide the implementation of transportation projects from concept to construction and operation. The PDP is shown on the graphic to the right.

The Opportunity Corridor Project is in Step 5 of the PDP, which identifies and evaluates Conceptual Alternatives. The result of Step 5 is to recommend Conceptual Alternatives for further study.

Step 6 will further develop the Conceptual Alternatives based on public and agency comments, environmental impact, and design criteria.



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What alternatives are being considered for the project and how were they developed?

In Steps 1 through 4, four Conceptual Alternatives were developed and evaluated on their ability to improve access and mobility within the study area, as well as their potential to maximize economic development of the surrounding land.

The Conceptual Alternatives were also evaluated to determine impacts (both positive and negative) to the environment and community resources in the project study area. Construction costs were also taken into consideration.

ODOT presented the Conceptual Alternatives at two Public Meetings on September 22, 2009. Residents and stakeholders who attended these meetings provided the project study team valuable feedback. Since the September 2009 public meetings, ODOT, the City of Cleveland, the Greater Cleveland Partnership, and the consultant team have also met with many stakeholders within the project study area.

The input from these meetings, along with results of the engineering and environmental analyses, was used to determine which Conceptual Alternatives should be carried forward for additional study.

The results of the public involvement activities of September 2009 and the Step 5 analysis are summarized in the Conceptual Alternatives Study Report. This report can be reviewed during the upcoming public meetings. Electronic copies of the report will also be available on the project website (www.buckeyetraffic.org/OpportunityCorridor). Hard copies will be available at the Woodland, Martin Luther King Jr., and Garden Valley branches of the Cleveland Public Library.

Based on this information, ODOT, in coordination with the Project Steering Committee, decided to proceed with combinations of two alternatives for further study during Step 5. The Step 4 recommended Conceptual Alternatives are shown on the figure to the right.

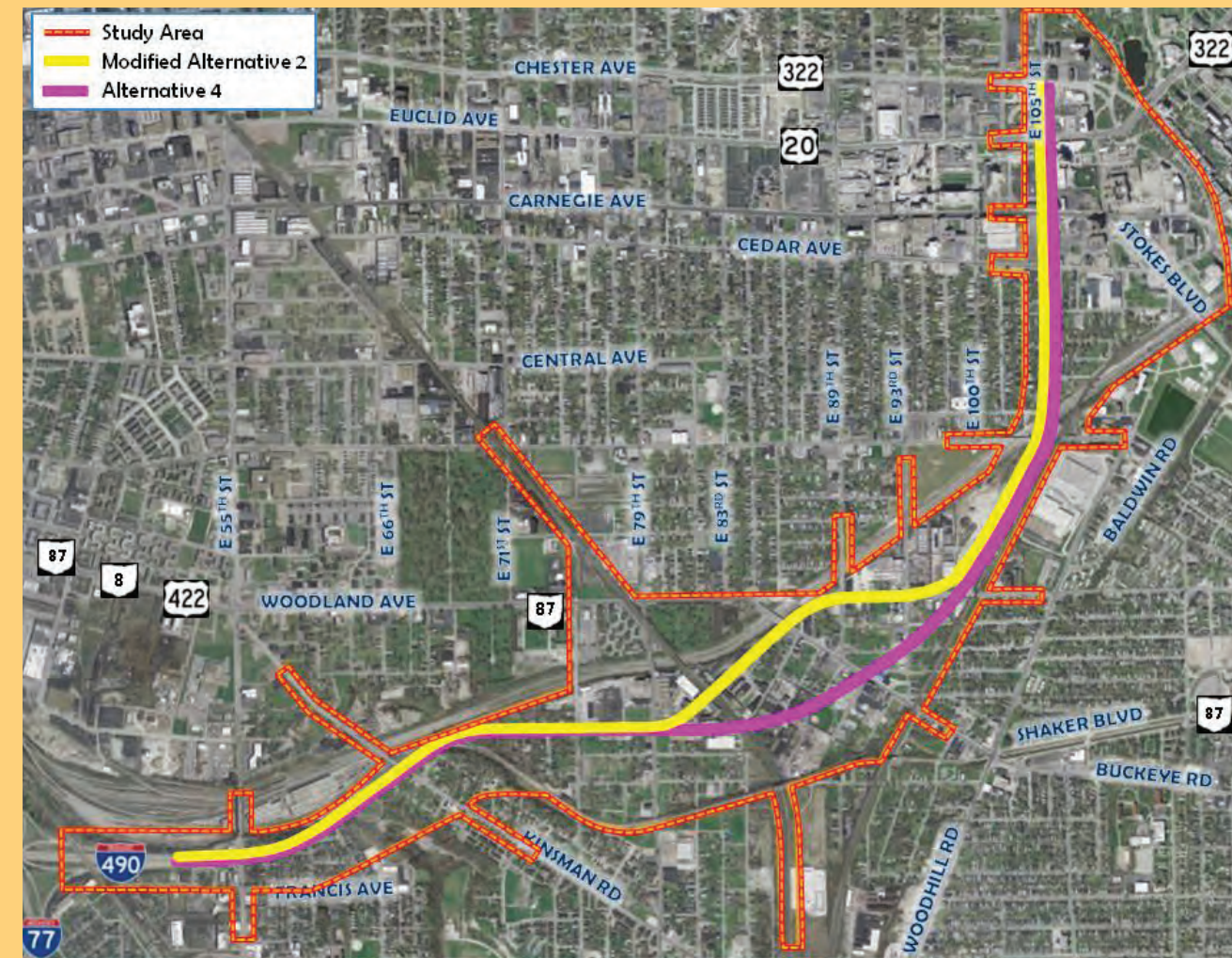
During Step 5, the recommended Conceptual Alternatives were advanced to a higher level of engineering design detail. The work completed during Step 5 included environmental field studies to inventory existing conditions and identify possible impacts on:

- Community facilities and neighborhood features
- Historic properties
- Archaeological sites
- Potential hazardous waste and contamination sites.

The study team also reviewed the geometric design details of the Conceptual Alternatives to better understand how the project would fit in with the community.

Work during Step 5 also identified additional roadway alignments and intersection configurations to avoid and minimize potential impacts to the surrounding community. These additional alternatives included:

STEP 4 RECOMMENDED CONCEPTUAL ALTERNATIVES



- One new alternate to address traffic operations and access concerns at the intersection of I-490, East 55th Street, and proposed Opportunity Corridor Boulevard.
 - One additional alignment alternate between East 75th Street and Quincy Avenue.
 - Three separate alignment alternates for widening East 105th Street between Quincy Avenue and Chester Avenue.
- Other minor alignment modifications were also explored to minimize effects to study area resources. Moreover, in order to simplify the alternatives evaluation process, the study area was divided into three geographic sections:

- West – between I-77 and East 75th Street
- Central – between East 75th Street and Quincy Avenue
- East – along East 105th Street from Quincy Avenue to Chester Avenue.

Within each geographic section, three alternates were developed and evaluated. They were evaluated on:

- Impacts to man-made and natural resources
- Impacts to the surrounding and adjacent communities
- Impacts to existing surface streets, including accessibility
- Impacts to freight and passenger rail operations
- Traffic operations and
- Costs.

Using these screening criteria, it is being recommended that two alternates in the west section; two alternates in the central section and one alternate in the east section be further studied in Step 6. These alternates are shown in the figures below. In addition, a No Build alternative will be carried forward for comparison to the build alternatives.

The recommended Conceptual Alternatives, as well as the screening criteria and analysis leading to their recommendation, will be presented at the October 2010 public meetings.

Who is on the Opportunity Corridor Steering Committee?

- Harriet Applegate** North Shore Federation of Labor
- Anthony Brancatelli** City of Cleveland Council
- Peter Buszuk** Slavic Village Resident
- Bob Chalfant** University Circle Resident
- The Honorable Phyllis Cleveland** City of Cleveland Council
- James D. Ireland** Early Stage Partners, LP (Co-Chair)
- Vickie Johnson** Fairfax Renaissance Development Corporation
- Mark Barbash** Ohio Department of Development
- Joseph A. Calabrese** Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority
- Joe Dennis** Buckeye Resident
- Terrance Egger** The Plain Dealer (Co-Chair)
- Frank Jackson** Mayor, City of Cleveland
- Marie Kittredge** Slavic Village Development Corporation
- Joyce Hairston** Slavic Village Resident
- John Hopkins** Buckeye Area Development Corporation
- Lieutenant Governor Lee Fisher** State of Ohio
- Paul Lewis** Fairfax Resident
- Robert Lucas** Kinsman Resident
- Mamie Mitchel** City of Cleveland Council
- John Anthony Orlando** Orlando Baking Company
- Joseph A. Roman** Greater Cleveland Partnership
- Timothy L. Tramble** Burten Bell Carr Development Corporation
- Joseph Lopez** New Era Builders
- Jolene Molitoris** Ohio Department of Transportation
- James Rokakis** Cuyahoga County Recorder
- Chris Ronayne** University Circle, Inc.

Aesthetic Elements and Sustainable Design

ODOT is committed to developing a sustainable transportation system through the study area that is aesthetically pleasing and sensitive to protecting and enhancing the environment. The alternatives developed to date are still conceptual in nature and do not fully illustrate these features.

Sustainable design concepts could include:

- Best management practices for water quality
- Innovative storm water treatment
- Small parks or green space

Aesthetic treatments could include:

- Decorative lighting
- Architecturally coordinated finishes/materials
- Lighting/signage/traffic signal standards
- Public art and gateway features
- Wayfinding elements for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Landscape features

Sustainable roadway features and aesthetic treatments will be identified and evaluated throughout the process based on public comment and stakeholder input. The photos below illustrate some of the aesthetic features and themes being considered for the project. These will be discussed at the public meetings in October 2010 and the discussion will continue in upcoming public involvement activities.



Wayfinding signage



Architecturally coordinated finishes and materials



Small parks and green space



Streetscape features



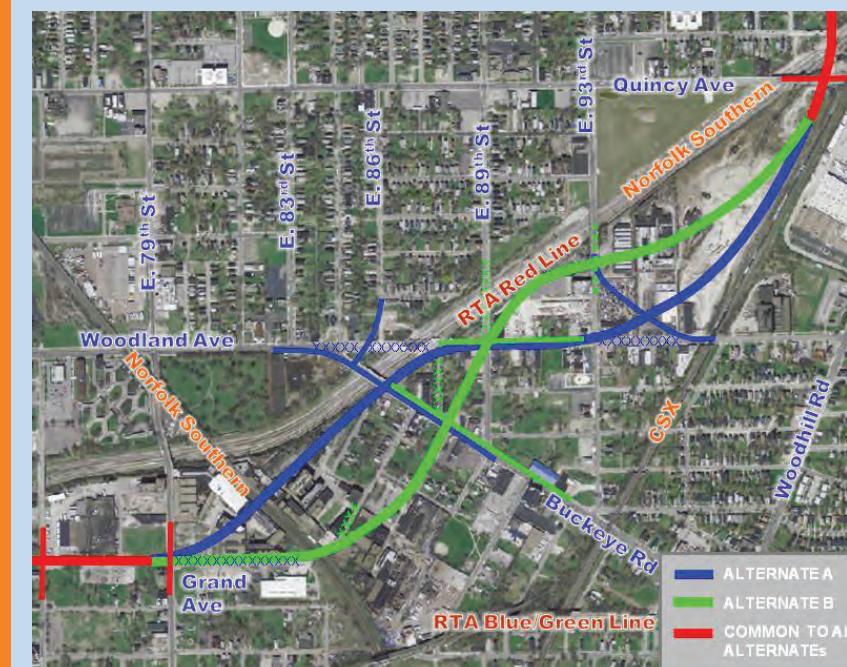
Gateway features

STEP 5 RECOMMENDED CONCEPTUAL ALTERNATIVES

WEST SECTION



CENTRAL SECTION



EAST SECTION





OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
5500 TRANSPORTATION BOULEVARD
GARFIELD HEIGHTS, OH 44125

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What types of questions and comments were received at the September 2009 public meetings? How is this information being incorporated into the project planning and design process?

ODOT is committed to providing meaningful opportunities for public participation in the planning and design of the Opportunity Corridor. Public comments are reviewed and summarized by ODOT and its consultant team for consideration prior to moving to the next step of the Project Development Process (PDP).

To date, ODOT has held two general public meetings on Tuesday, September 22, 2009. The purpose of the September 2009 meetings was to obtain agreement and acceptance of the Step 4 recommended Conceptual Alternatives (see map on pages 3 of this newsletter). Afterward, a business community meeting was held along with neighborhood meetings in Fairfax, University Circle, Slavic Village, Kinsman



The 2009 public meetings were well-attended.

and Buckeye neighborhoods. Consistent information was presented by ODOT, the City of Cleveland, and Greater Cleveland Partnership at each meeting.

At each of the meetings, stakeholders provided ODOT with a variety of comments and concerns for consideration during the development of alternatives. These comments included questions or concerns about community involvement during the planning and design process, impacts and benefits to the community, impacts to property owners, alternatives development, and aesthetic elements along the new roadway. A handout providing information on how these comments or concerns were taken into consideration throughout the planning and design process will be provided at the fall 2010 public meetings.

What are the next steps for the Opportunity Corridor Project?

ODOT will conduct a series of public meetings in early October to summarize the engineering and environmental analyses and to discuss the alternatives recommended for further study in Step 6.

All comments received during the October 2010 public meetings will be summarized and considered by ODOT prior to making any decisions to advance the project to Step 6. If the comments received during the public meetings indicate general agreement and acceptance of the recommended Conceptual Alternatives, they will be advanced for design refinement in Step 6. These refinements will focus on improving access and traffic flow and minimizing potential impacts to community and environmental resources as much as possible. These additional environmental and engineering studies conducted during Step 6 would result in Feasible Alternatives (Summer 2011) that would be carried forward for further environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in Steps 7 and 8. This environmental review will be summarized in an environmental document that will be made available for public review in 2012.

Public involvement activities will continue to be conducted throughout Steps 6, 7, and 8 and include stakeholder meetings to fully understand community interests and preferences with regard to the proposed improvements, and a public meeting as part of each of the three steps.

How can I provide my input or ask questions regarding the Opportunity Corridor Project?

We encourage you to become involved in the planning of the Opportunity Corridor project. ODOT welcomes public comments at any time during the project development process and all comments received are considered by the study team as the project advances. As part of the project development process, we work very hard to provide multiple opportunities for the public and identified stakeholders to become actively engaged in the project. All comments received help direct the outcome of the planning and design process. To keep current on upcoming public involvement opportunities or to submit comments at any time, please visit our project website: www.buckeyetraffic.org/OpportunityCorridor

Questions or comments regarding the project can also be submitted via e-mail to Jocelynn.Clemings@dot.state.oh.us or via mail service to:

ODOT District 12
Attn: Jocelynn Clemings
5500 Transportation Boulevard
Garfield Heights, Ohio 44125

www.buckeyetraffic.org/OpportunityCorridor