APPENDIX A: AGENCY COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

- Appendix A1: Summary of DEIS Agency Comments and Responses
- Appendix A2: Agency DEIS Comments (Original Documents)
- Appendix A3: Participating Agencies
- Appendix A4: Transit
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APPENDIX A1:
SUMMARY OF DEIS AGENCY COMMENTS AND RESPONSES
## Summary of DEIS Agency Comments and Responses

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<tr>
<td>A-1</td>
<td>Federal Transit Administration (FTA)</td>
<td>A-1-1</td>
<td><strong>Chapter 2 – Purpose and Need.</strong> Include a brief history of the development of the purpose and need, including input and comments from cooperating agencies and the public (23 U.S.C. 139(f)(1). Relevant sections of Appendix A9: Participating Agency Coordination should be cited, particularly the sections directly related to developing the purpose and need statement.**</td>
<td>To date, no public or agency comments have been received regarding the project purpose and need. No cooperating agencies have been identified for this project. Coordination with participating agencies is discussed in Chapter 5 of the DEIS and included in Appendix A-9. Public involvement is also summarized in Chapter 5. In addition, the Opportunity Corridor Public Involvement Summary (January 2013) is included on the accompanying CD and is incorporated by reference into the DEIS. The Public Involvement Summary provides a detailed description of all public comments. A summary of the public comments received and how they were addressed is included in FEIS Chapter 5. Detailed responses to comments are included in FEIS Appendix A and Appendix B.</td>
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<td>A-1-2</td>
<td><strong>Figures 4-11 through 4-19.</strong> Clearly identify the points at which the proposed roadway links to public transportation.**</td>
<td>Figures 4-1 and 4-2 in the FEIS show existing public transportation within the project area in relation to the proposed boulevard.</td>
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<td>A-1-3</td>
<td><strong>Page 2-6 – How do “goals and objectives” fit into purpose and need?</strong> The first sentence in this section may be a source of some confusion during the public comment period and the reviewer recommends revising it. “Objectives” are derived directly from the need statement and, therefore, can be considered needs that must be satisfied by the project. According to 23 U.S.C. § 139(1)(3), a clear statement of identified objectives that the proposed project is intended to achieve for improving transportation conditions is a requirement of the NEPA process.**</td>
<td>Chapter 2 of the DEIS is consistent with the methodology utilized by ODOT and FHWA to document purpose and need. Project needs define existing and future conditions and outline outcomes that must be satisfied by the project. Goals and Objectives are optional and discretionary elements of a purpose and need. Goals and objectives arise from planning activities and reflect a community perspective. They are consistent with and follow local plans and aid in developing context sensitive solutions. Because the DEIS documents the project Purpose and Need, including goals and objectives, according to accepted ODOT and FHWA practices, no revisions were made.</td>
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<td>Federal Transit Administration (FTA)</td>
<td>A-1-4</td>
<td><strong>Page 3-1 – What is the purpose of this chapter?</strong> This section can provide a clearer statement of purpose with regard to the evaluation of reasonable alternatives. For example, 40 C.F.R. 1502.14 suggests an important function of the discussion is to facilitate a rigorous exploration and objective evaluation of all reasonable alternatives. A subsequent section appears to cover the full range of alternatives considered and alternatives eliminated from further analysis and the reasons for their elimination (see Page 3-4 - What other alternatives were studied but are no longer being considered?).</td>
<td>A detailed description of the alternatives considered, the evaluation factors and rationale for dismissing alternatives or carrying them for further study was included in FEIS Section 3.3. This section also addresses how the public and other stakeholders were involved in the decision-making process.</td>
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<td>A-1-5</td>
<td><strong>Page 3-1 – How were the alternatives developed?</strong> The last paragraph on Page 3 - 1 summarizes the basis of the impact analysis of the preferred alternative and states: &quot;The impacts described in this DEIS are based on the amount of land needed to build the new roadway.&quot; This summary may be interpreted as limiting and incomplete. For example, environmental impacts may be more related to the geographical location of the project and the location of valued components of the natural and built environment. The reviewer suggests rephrasing this sentence to accurately convey the basis of the impact assessment and to better enable public understanding of the DEIS.</td>
<td>To address this comment, the following sentence was included in Section 3.2 of the FEIS: “The project will create direct impacts from its construction and operation. The direct impacts are described in the DEIS and this FEIS and are based on the amount of land needed to build and operate the new roadway, the location of the new roadway and the location of the natural and human environmental resources. The DEIS also considers potential indirect and cumulative effects.”</td>
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| A-1 | Federal Transit Administration (FTA) | A-1-6 | Page 3-9 – How will the preferred alternative meet the project goals and objectives? To facilitate public understanding, the goals and objectives derived from the need statement should be used consistently in the DEIS. For example, the objective of supporting redevelopment plans that could increase patronage within the transit system is not included in Chapter 2 (Page 2-6). The reviewer suggests identifying all goals and objectives in Chapter 2 and using them on a consistent basis throughout the evaluation of alternatives and the DEIS, where applicable. | See the response to Comment A-1-3 for a discussion of goals and objectives as they relate to purpose and need. Correlations between goals and objectives on DEIS pages 3-9 and 2-6 are consistent, see below:  
- DEIS Page 2-6: A goal of the project is to provide better connections to [GCRTA] stations.  
- DEIS Page 3-9: [The project will] improve connectivity among transit facilities such as GCRTA stations.  
- DEIS Page 2-6: The project should also support planned economic development that will increase the number of GCRTA riders.  
- DEIS Page 3-9: [The project will] support redevelopment plans that could increase patronage within the transit system.  
- DEIS Page 2-6: A goal of the project is to support [local] efforts by providing safe bike and pedestrian facilities. This will also provide people that live in the neighborhoods with choices about how to travel.  
- DEIS Page 3-9: [The project will] provide multiple transportation mode options by including safe bicycle and pedestrian-friendly facilities.  
- DEIS Page 2-6: Another goal of the project is to improve connections to existing and planned pedestrian and bike paths.  
- DEIS Page 3-9: [The project will] improve connections to existing and planned multimodal facilities in and near the area. Furthermore, FEIS Sections 3.3 and 3.6 discuss how the goals and objectives for the project were identified, addressed through the alternatives evaluation process and met by the preferred alternative. |
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<td>A-1</td>
<td>Federal Transit Administration</td>
<td>A-1-7</td>
<td>Page 4-23 – How would public transportation be affected? This section suggests the proposed project &quot;... would increase use of the existing public transportation system over the long-term.&quot; To enhance transparency and public understanding of the DEIS, quantitative terms should be used whenever possible to accurately communicate to the public the magnitude of the benefit or risk of the proposed action.</td>
<td>Section 4.6 of the FEIS includes an expanded discussion of how public transportation would be affected by the project. Impacts and benefits are quantified to the greatest extent possible. The FEIS addresses impacts to GCRTA Bus Route 10 and Bus Route 11 – including number of impacted stops and potential re-routing – and commitments to maintain service. It also addresses bus service along the new Opportunity Corridor and the provision of enhanced bus shelters. Finally, the FEIS addresses funding for accessibility and operational improvements to the GCRTA E. 105th Street-Quincy Avenue train station.</td>
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<td>A-1</td>
<td>Federal Transit Administration</td>
<td>A-1-8</td>
<td>Pages 4-27 and 4-28 – Would low-income and minority populations be affected? &quot;Benefits expected to result from the proposed project. ... &quot; are listed on Pages 4-27 and 4-28; however, the extent to which specific items in the list apply to the analysis of Environmental Justice and minority and low-income populations is unclear. For instance, how does the proposed project improve public transportation connections for low-income and minority populations affected by the project? Similarly, the list of proposed mitigation measures beginning on Page 4-28 is unclear about how mitigation will target low-income and minority populations. The reviewer recommends revising the lists of benefits and mitigation measures to reflect specific and quantifiable benefits and mitigation that directly apply to minority and low-income populations affected by the project. The discussion in this section of the DEIS should be framed such that it speaks directly to minority and low-income populations. Figures 4-10 through 4-19 on pages 4-8 through 4-17 in the DEIS show areas of known impacts such as changes in access, relocations and land acquisition. The figures also show locations of proposed mitigation measures such as pedestrian bridges. The FEIS includes further detail regarding environmental Justice and mitigation measures in Section 4.7. A complete list of the mitigation measures for the project is included in Table A of the Record of Decision (ROD).</td>
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<td>A-1</td>
<td>Federal Transit Administration (FTA)</td>
<td>A-1-9</td>
<td>Pages 4-27 and 4-28 – Would low-income and minority populations be affected? On Page 4-28, succinctly explain how the project was found to have a disproportionately high and adverse effect to low-income and minority populations. Refer the reader to the methodology used to assess whether or not there are disproportionate impacts to minority or low-income populations. In general, the impact analyses summarized in Chapter 4 should refer the reader to the specific methodologies used in the evaluation of each resource category (i.e., Environmental Justice, Traffic, Noise, etc.)</td>
<td>Page 4-28 of the DEIS states, “Despite the benefits expected to result from the project, low-income and minority populations will be affected more than other populations. Because of this, the project was found to have a disproportionately high and adverse effect to low-income and minority populations. (Footnote: Because the impacts will affect low-income and minority populations more than others, they are considered disproportionately high and adverse according to Executive Order 12898, which governs federal agencies in how to treat environmental justice issues.) The Opportunity Corridor Environmental Justice Technical Memorandum (April 2013), which is on the CD included with the DEIS and incorporated by referenced states, “Despite [avoidance and minimization] efforts, unavoidable impacts would still occur as a result of the proposed project. These impacts would be predominantly borne by low-income and minority populations; therefore, the Opportunity Corridor project would result in disproportionately negative effects to low-income and minority populations. The Environmental Justice Technical Memorandum also describes specific methodologies used to analyze Environmental Justice impacts. This included assessing eight impact categories with defined quantitative and qualitative evaluation criteria. The impact categories included: displacements, physical aspects, visual environment, land use, economic conditions, mobility and access, provision of public services and safety. The DEIS and the referenced technical reports adequately address Environmental Justice impacts. Therefore, no updates to the findings or the analysis were made in the FEIS.</td>
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<td>A-1</td>
<td>Federal Transit Administration (FTA)</td>
<td>A-1-10</td>
<td>Pages 6-3 and 6-4 – Environmental Justice (Environmental Commitments and Mitigation). This section should be updated to reflect agreements and commitments based on comments from the public and participating agencies.</td>
<td>A discussion of the final mitigation measures for the project is provided in FEIS Chapter 6. A complete list of the mitigation measures is included in Table A of the ROD, which is being combined with the FEIS for this project.</td>
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<td>A-2</td>
<td>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE)</td>
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<td>No response received to date.</td>
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<td>A-3</td>
<td>U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)</td>
<td>A-3-1</td>
<td>No comments.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>A-4</td>
<td>U.S. Department of Interior (DOI)</td>
<td>A-4-1</td>
<td>DOI has no comments on the subject project.</td>
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<td>A-5</td>
<td>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)</td>
<td>A-5-1</td>
<td>While Section 5 does a good job of noting all the meetings the ODOT team attended, the section on page 5-8 &quot;What about the project changed because of Agency and Public Involvement?&quot; is minimal and typical of much of the DEIS. The Final EIS (FEIS) should clearly discuss here and elsewhere how the project termini were selected to benefit both the University Circle/ Medical Center area and the five neighborhoods adjacent to the roadway, how the roadway (with limited access at thirteen signaled intersections along the 3.5 miles) connects these adjacent neighborhoods with best efficiency, and similar topics where meeting the purpose and need can be more fully explained.</td>
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A detailed description of the alternatives considered, the evaluation factors and rationale for dismissing alternatives or carrying them for further study was included in FEIS Section 3.3. This section also further clarifies how the public and other stakeholders were involved in the decision-making process and how the project changed because of their feedback.
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<td>A-5</td>
<td>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)</td>
<td>A-5-2</td>
<td>We also recommend ODOT coordinate further with the Opportunity Corridor Brownfield Area Wide Plan group and local community planners. It is our understanding that this roadway was to not just traverse the corridor neighborhoods, but at some points to more fully enhance access to the areas for economic redevelopment and to improve connectivity of the neighborhoods across this corridor and the adjacent rail corridor. We recommend the FEIS clarify how ODOT will contribute to the ongoing Partnership for Sustainable Communities efforts in the communities traversed by the Opportunity Corridor.</td>
<td>The City’s plan for brownfields redevelopment was closely coordinated with the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor Project throughout its development (see FEIS Section 3.7). These coordination efforts included numerous meetings with staff from the City of Cleveland Planning and Economic Development departments, Greater Cleveland Partnership, and the consultants developing the Brownfield Area Wide Plan. Specific outcomes of this coordination included designing the Opportunity Corridor alignment to accommodate planned expansions for Miceli’s Dairy and the Orlando Baking Company. Furthermore, brownfield redevelopment efforts have been planned around the Opportunity Corridor alignment. ODOT will continue these coordination efforts into the project’s final design. These efforts would assist ODOT in delivering a transportation project that incorporates the most cost-effective solutions that are in the best interests of the community and the environment. ODOT will invite USEPA to future coordination meetings, as appropriate.</td>
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<td>A-5</td>
<td>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)</td>
<td>A-5-3</td>
<td>We recommend that ODOT coordinate further with GCRTA, the City of Cleveland, and HUD to consider TOD opportunities that could be specifically linked to this proposed roadway. Clarification should be provided for how this proposal creates linkages to existing transit and what bus and rail transit changes are being made to improve linkages with and across this new roadway.</td>
<td>One aspect of the project’s purpose and need is to improve the transportation infrastructure to allow future planned economic development to occur. The Opportunity Corridor project will not solely determine future development, including Transit Oriented Development. FEIS Section 3.6 includes an expanded discussion of how the preferred alternative will improve connectivity to public transit stations and stops. This section also discusses how the alignment of the Opportunity Corridor was strategically designed to maximize future development opportunities in the vicinity of GCRTA’s E. 79th Street transit stations. This is also consistent with GCRTA’s desire for the proposed boulevard to support the City’s plan for redevelopment, which could further encourage use of existing major transit investments in the study area. An expanded discussion of public transportation impacts is also included in FEIS Section 4.6.</td>
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<td>A-5</td>
<td>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)</td>
<td>A-5-3</td>
<td>We recommend that ODOT coordinate further with GCRTA, the City of Cleveland, and HUD to consider TOD opportunities that could be specifically linked to this proposed roadway. Clarification should be provided for how this proposal creates linkages to existing transit and what bus and rail transit changes are being made to improve linkages with and across this new roadway. (continued) The decision to provide additional transit routes and stops along the Opportunity Corridor roadway will be made by GCRTA based on user demand and in accordance with its service policies once the project is built. The Opportunity Corridor will be designed so that buses can safely use the boulevard if bus service is added. In addition, ODOT will help construct enhanced bus shelters in areas where existing bus lines will cross the new boulevard. Key intersections being considered include Kinsman Road, East 79th Street, Buckeye Road, and Quincy and Cedar avenues. ODOT will work with GCRTA during final design to identify the specific locations and the design of the shelters. Two pedestrian/bike bridges will also be built - one at East 55th Street and one at East 89th Street - to restore connectivity for pedestrians, including those who use public transportation. Finally, ODOT will fund 80-percent (up to $3.2 million) of a project to improve the existing GCRTA E. 105th Street-Quincy Avenue train station. The improvement project would extend the platform to allow three-car service and construct a new entrance at E. 105th Street. The station improvements would be scheduled to coincide with the construction of the Opportunity Corridor bridge over the GCRTA Red Line to minimize impacts to transit service. However, the project would be independently planned, designed and constructed by GCRTA.</td>
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<td>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)</td>
<td>A-5-4</td>
<td>Further clarification should also be provided on the basis for decisions on the preferred alternative. Several notes indicate some GCRTA stations will require longer access paths.</td>
<td>The text on DEIS page 4-19 describes longer access paths to GCRTA stations. It also includes a reference to DEIS pages 4-28 through 4-30, which discuss mitigation for these impacts. Mitigation includes two pedestrian/bike bridges - one at East 55th Street and one at East 89th Street - to restore connectivity for pedestrians, including those who use public transportation. The selection of the preferred alternative considered the inclusion of mitigation measures to address impacts to transit access and other community considerations. Approximately four bus stops on GCRTA Bus Route 11 and one bus stop on Bus Route 10 would be impacted by the closure of Quincy Avenue. Given the time that will elapse before the project is constructed, it is not possible for GCRTA to identify specific bus route modifications that will be implemented to address the impacts described above. However, all GCRTA service planning and routing is conducted in accordance with its Title VI Program and environmental justice and service change policies. Recently, GCRTA conducted boarding surveys at the stops that will be impacted by the project to determine the origins and destinations of the individuals using the stops. GCRTA is still evaluating the data; however, the preliminary analysis indicates two options to maintain bus service: 1. Pick-up the 10 and 11 bus route passengers at the intersection of Woodhill Road/Woodland Avenue. This option could increase walking distances by a maximum of 1,975 feet for some residents who currently use the bus stop located at Quincy Avenue/Woodhill Road roundabout; or 2. Loop the 10 and 11 bus routes and create new stops in the neighborhood east of Woodhill Road. The bus loop(s) would utilize a combination of existing roadways such as Woodhill Road, Mt. Carmel Road, Baldwin Road, E. 110th Street and/or Woodland Avenue. Under this scenario, walking distances would be less for many users. FEIS Section 4.6 includes an expanded discussion of public transportation impacts.</td>
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| A-5-5|              |     | The DEIS is not clear whether the stations are accessible to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) population and what considerations were given to provide them with other points of access along this corridor.       | Accessibility of transit stations for the ADA population is the responsibility of GCRTA, which has on-going programs to update their facilities for compliance with governing federal regulations and policies.  
In conjunction with the Opportunity Corridor project, ODOT will fund 80-percent (up to $3.2 million) of a project to improve the existing GCRTA E. 105th Street-Quincy Avenue train station. The improvement project would extend the platform to allow three-car service and construct a new entrance at E. 105th Street. The entrance would provide both stair and elevator access to comply with the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). The station improvements would be scheduled to coincide with the construction of the Opportunity Corridor bridge over the GCRTA Red Line to minimize impacts to transit service. However, the project would be independently planned, designed and constructed by GCRTA.  
Finally, in keeping with current design standards, the intersections, sidewalk and multi-purpose path will be designed in accordance with ADA requirements. No additional information regarding ADA accessibility is included in the FEIS. |
| A-5-6|              |     | We recommend the FEIS more fully discuss how each intersection provides and facilitates all modes of traffic accessing the surrounding neighborhoods.                                                                 | Section 4.4 of the FEIS includes an enhanced discussion of bicycle and pedestrian impacts. Features addressed include the use of median refuges, curve return radii, lane widths, the total number of lanes, the spacing of intersections and block lengths, street closures and mobility impacts associated with noise and retaining walls. |
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<td>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)</td>
<td>A-5-7</td>
<td>ODOT should coordinate further with NEORSD to develop additional facilities to capture stormwater run-off from the proposed roadway and integrate those plans into broader strategies to manage stormwater consistent with the EPA-NEORSD decree and plans for area redevelopment. This may even include creating conveyance to retention facilities removed from the roadway project site, such as available brownfield sites. We recommend ODOT coordinate with NEORSD efforts and funding to target this Opportunity Corridor redevelopment area to use the latest stormwater strategies including NEORSD’s Green Infrastructure Plan concepts.</td>
<td>The FEIS includes the following commitment, “Coordination with OEPA and the Northeast Ohio Sewer District (NEORSD) will continue during final design.” Specific details of the coordination will be determined during final design and were not included in the FEIS. The stormwater management for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor Project has been closely coordinated with the NEORSD throughout its development. These coordination efforts have included numerous meetings and have addressed NEOSRD’s Green Infrastructure Plan, the USEPA Consent Decree and stormwater management within both the project area and the larger service area for NEORSD. ODOT will continue these coordination efforts into the project’s final design. These efforts would assist ODOT in delivering a transportation project that incorporates the most cost-effective solutions that are in the best interests of the community and the environment. ODOT will invite USEPA to future coordination meetings, as appropriate. The Opportunity Corridor Stormwater Summary (December 2012) also addresses water quality. This report is on the CD included with the DEIS and incorporated into both the DEIS and FEIS by reference.</td>
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<td>In light of the revised conformity regulations, we recommend ODOT contact our new Transportation Conformity manager for Ohio, Anthony Maietta, at 312-353-8777, to update and confirm understandings regarding air conformity for this project and to discuss the construction emissions management techniques to be used. We recommend that anti-idling measures and clean diesel strategies be adopted during construction. Mitigation measures, including but not limited to tree buffers along the proposed corridor, frontage roads, and new or increased capacity on adjacent roads, should be identified in the FEIS. Any mitigation measures should be coordinated with the affected community and committed to in the record of decision (ROD).</td>
<td>Substantial air quality impacts are not anticipated to result from the project. Specifically, the project will not contribute to any violation of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. All project-level air quality analyses and conclusions were coordinated with Ohio EPA, who concurred with the conclusions. The USEPA also concurred that the Opportunity Corridor project was not a project of air quality concern and has met the statutory requirements of the Clean Air Act in October 2010. In response to this comment, the following commitment has been included in the FEIS, “The contractor will be required to follow local City of Cleveland ordinances for vehicle idling and all current U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) air quality regulations.” A complete list of the mitigation measures is included in Table A of the ROD, which is being combined with the FEIS for this project.</td>
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<td>A-5</td>
<td>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)</td>
<td>A-5-9</td>
<td>The FEIS should identify how the community has been and will be included in the decision-making process. Any commitments made to the community during the development of context-sensitive solutions (CSS) should be documented in the FEIS and committed to in the ROD.</td>
<td>A detailed description of the alternatives considered, the evaluation factors and rationale for dismissing alternatives or carrying them for further study was included in FEIS Section 3.3. This section also further clarifies how the community was involved through the CSS process and how the project changed because of public feedback. Several features have been included in the project to minimize impacts and improve the look of the study area. These features include mast-arm traffic signal supports; combined street and pedestrian lighting; grass tree lawns (parkways); street trees; grassy roadway median with stormwater treatment measures; retaining walls and bridge abutments with form-liner surfaces and colored surface sealer; and designated locations for streetscape amenities such as benches, trash receptacles and bike racks.” Because these features are already incorporated into the design of the preferred alternative, separate commitments were not developed. If the scope of the project changes during final design, the NEPA decision will be re-visited. The FEIS also includes the following commitment: “Public involvement will continue during final design to determine locations and details of community-focused design features. The public will also give input on details to improve the look of the study area such as colored concrete and form liners. This input will be sought through and in coordination with the affected Community Development Corporations (CDCs).” See Table A of the ROD.</td>
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<td>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)</td>
<td>A-5-10</td>
<td>The FEIS should identify which, if any, rail transit stations or bus routes will be eliminated, re-located, or added along the project corridor. If any routes will be temporarily or permanently eliminated or re-located, the FEIS should identify how residents who depend on these routes will be accommodated.</td>
<td>Four stops on GCRTA Bus Route 11 and one stop on Bus Route 10 would be impacted by closing Quincy Avenue. GCRTA will modify bus routes as necessary to maintain access for the transit dependent public housing populations located east of Woodhill Road and north of Woodland Avenue. All modifications to existing public transportation services will be made in accordance with GCRTA’s Title VI Program. In addition, ODOT will fund 80-percent (up to $3.2 million) of a project to extend the platform at and construct a new entrance to the GCRTA E. 105th Street-Quincy Avenue train station. These commitments are documented in Section 4.6 of the FEIS and Table A of the ROD. The decision to provide additional transit routes and stops along the Opportunity Corridor roadway will be made by GCRTA based on user demand once the project is built. The Opportunity Corridor will be designed so that buses can safely use the boulevard if bus service is added. This includes providing intersections that are wide enough so buses can turn without the rear wheels hopping over the curb and onto the sidewalks where pedestrians may be located. In addition to funding accessibility and operational improvements to the GCRTA E. 105th Street-Quincy Avenue train station (see response to Comment No. A-5-5), ODOT will help construct enhanced bus shelters in areas where the existing bus lines will cross the new boulevard. Key intersections being considered include Kinsman Road, East 79th Street, Buckeye Road, and Quincy and Cedar avenues. ODOT will work with GCRTA during final design to identify the specific locations and the design of the shelters. See FEIS Section 4.6.</td>
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<td>A-5-11</td>
<td>EPA encourages consideration of additional transit options for this community, including additional bus routes and stops. This is an excellent opportunity to not only improve personal vehicle-based mobility but also access to public transit in the area. The FEIS should disclose whether local and/or express bus service will use the Opportunity Corridor roadway.</td>
<td>The decision to provide additional transit routes and stops along the Opportunity Corridor roadway will be made by GCRTA based on user demand once the project is built. The Opportunity Corridor will be designed so that buses can safely use the boulevard if bus service is added. This includes providing intersections that are wide enough so buses can turn without the rear wheels hopping over the curb and onto the sidewalks where pedestrians may be located. In addition to funding accessibility and operational improvements to the GCRTA E. 105th Street-Quincy Avenue train station (see response to Comment No. A-5-5), ODOT will help construct enhanced bus shelters in areas where the existing bus lines will cross the new boulevard. Key intersections being considered include Kinsman Road, East 79th Street, Buckeye Road, and Quincy and Cedar avenues. ODOT will work with GCRTA during final design to identify the specific locations and the design of the shelters. See FEIS Section 4.6.</td>
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## Summary of DEIS Agency Comments and Responses

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<tr>
<td>A-5</td>
<td>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)</td>
<td>A-5-12</td>
<td>The FEIS should clarify how mobility will be preserved or increased for the neighborhoods where streets will be blocked off.</td>
<td>The preferred alternative would include closures on some local roads and access points. These closures will affect vehicular traffic only. The majority of the roadways that will be closed are low-volume residential streets that are short in length and do not primarily serve through-traffic movements. The FEIS includes commitments to address the impacts related to street closures. These include extending sidewalks to maintain pedestrian connections; building two bike/pedestrian bridges; helping to create a new entrance to the St. Hyacinth neighborhood; maintaining access to/from East 89th Street via Frederick Avenue and East 86th Street and maintaining access for bicycles, pedestrians and emergency service providers at Quincy Avenue. An expanded discussion of the effects of street closures is included in Section 4.5 of the FEIS.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-5</td>
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<td>A-5-13</td>
<td>The FEIS should identify specific strategies through which surrounding communities will benefit from increased employment opportunities. This includes, but is not limited to targeted recruitment via local high schools and community organizations, training in the communities, and job placement goals. The FEIS and ROD should commit to specific measures with respect to hiring and training.</td>
<td>ODOT will contribute, at a minimum, $500,000 to be utilized for on-the-job training. Federal-aid transportation funds will not be utilized for this mitigation measure. This mitigation measure would target training opportunities for individuals in the immediate vicinity of the project. These could include, but would not be limited to, jobs related to the Opportunity Corridor construction contract(s). By targeting a diverse range of training opportunities, the program will maximize benefits to the impacted communities. For instance, long term benefits would be maximized if individuals who are trained can find permanent jobs. FEIS Section 4.7 includes a discussion of on-the-job training.</td>
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## Summary of DEIS Agency Comments and Responses

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<td>A-5</td>
<td>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)</td>
<td>A-5-14</td>
<td>EPA recommends all necessary noise buffers be installed to reduce noise impacts or present other options to the community that will bring similar results such as vegetated buffers or other alternative materials. If noise walls are pursued, the project team identifies how the noise walls could be designed to fit seamlessly with the existing environment consistent with CSS principles. The FEIS/ROD should commit to these proposals.</td>
<td>The FEIS includes the following commitment, “Noise walls are recommended in three areas to mitigate increased traffic noise. The final decision about whether to build the noise walls will not be made until the project is in its final design stage. In accordance with its noise policy, ODOT will gather input from residents and property owners who would be affected by the noise walls. ODOT will decide whether to build the noise walls based on the desires of the affected people. If noise walls are desired, the people who are affected will help decide how the walls will look on their side of the wall. This could include using transparent materials to increase visibility, as well as other alternative materials to improve the look of the barriers.” Specific details of coordination related to noise barriers elements will be determined during final design and in accordance with ODOT’s noise policy and are not included in the FEIS.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
|      |                                                       | A-5-15    | The FEIS should expand on the comparable housing options that will be available to the families that must relocate, consistent with the Federal relocation policies. The FEIS and ROD should explain how the project will provide for adequate housing for all affected households, including access to transit. We commend the proposed flexibility in citizen relocation sites in various neighborhood selections; but, Table ES-1 should reflect this relocation flexibility. | The following reports are on the CD included with the DEIS and incorporated by reference into both the DEIS and FEIS:  
  - Opportunity Corridor Relocation Assistance Program (RAP) Survey (September 2012)  
  - Opportunity Corridor Environmental Justice Technical Memorandum (April 2013)  

Based on these reports, there are feasible relocation sites for displaced residents available within a five mile radius of the project area. The displacement of existing residences could change access and transportation choices for populations that are heavily dependent upon transit services. However, because appropriate replacement housing exists on the open market, affected residents could be relocated within a five mile radius of their current locations and existing community services, if they so choose. |

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<td>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)</td>
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<td>The FEIS should expand on the comparable housing options that will be available to the families that must relocate, consistent with the Federal relocation policies. The FEIS and ROD should explain how the project will provide for adequate housing for all affected households, including access to transit. We commend the proposed flexibility in citizen relocation sites in various neighborhood selections; but, Table ES-1 should reflect this relocation flexibility. (continued) Relocation within existing financial means is a concern for some residents. Several options exist to address these concerns, including Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act (Uniform Act), “housing of last resort,” ODOT’s Rental Assistance Entitlement program, and a temporary negative equity waiver issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation. The programs listed above will be used by ODOT on a case-by-case basis to assure that relocations would not be a financial hardship to affected owners and tenants. If the USDOT negative equity waiver expires during the course of the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project, ODOT will continue to offer these benefits through the conclusion of the project. An expanded discussion of the relocation process is included in FEIS Section 4.3. In addition, for relocations, ODOT will work to provide replacement housing that has similar access to public transit, as long as those options are currently available in the housing market. Also, ODOT will make all reasonable efforts to relocate residents within the same neighborhood, if that is what they desire. This will mitigate potential impacts to community cohesion. This commitment is documented in Section 4.7 of the FEIS and in Table A of the ROD. We recommend ODOT seek to develop Community Benefit Agreements with each of the five neighborhood communities. These agreements and specific enhancements that are discussed in the DEIS as possibilities should be explicit commitments in the FEIS and ROD.</td>
<td>The project was developed in conjunction with a wide variety of stakeholders. The five neighborhoods were members of the project Steering Committee and were closely involved in the decision-making process. The design elements and mitigation measures incorporated into the preferred alternative were developed through consensus among the stakeholders. Coordination with the project stakeholders will continue in similar fashion during the final design, building consensus on key design and mitigation elements. Additionally, the commitments made during the NEPA process are legally binding. Therefore, Community Benefit Agreements are not required.</td>
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<td>A-5</td>
<td>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)</td>
<td>A-5-17</td>
<td>EPA commends the inclusion of Table ES-1 as an Environmental Resources, Impacts and Mitigation Summary. However the DEIS describes many project plans that could mitigate impacts, but is unclear whether these elements are commitments. All mitigation measures should be explicitly committed to and summarized in the text and charts in the FEIS and ROD.</td>
<td>A complete listing of environmental commitments and mitigation, including those made in response to public and agency comment, are documented in Table A of ROD. Features that are already incorporated into the design of the preferred alternative, as described in the DEIS and the FEIS, are considered part of the NEPA decision. Therefore, separate commitments were not developed. If the scope of the project changes during final design, the NEPA decision will be re-visited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-6</td>
<td>U.S. Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)</td>
<td>A-6-1</td>
<td>The Federal Railroad Administration has no comments.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-7</td>
<td>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)</td>
<td></td>
<td>No response received to date.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-8</td>
<td>Ohio Department of Natural Resources</td>
<td>A-8-1</td>
<td>The project is within the range of the Indiana bat (<em>Myotis sodalis</em>), a state and federally endangered species. If suitable habitat occurs on the project area and trees must be cut, cutting must occur between October 1 and March 31. If suitable trees must be cut during the summer months, a net survey must be conducted between June 15 and July 31, prior to cutting. If no tree removal is proposed, the project is not likely to impact this species.</td>
<td>The FEIS includes the following, “Based on recent coordination with Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), the project is within the range of several state and federally endangered species, including the Indiana bat, piping plover, Kirtland’s warbler, Canada darner, black bear and king rail. However, the project is not likely to impact these species. If trees with suitable habitat for the Indiana bat must be cut, cutting must occur between October 1 and March 31. If the trees must be cut during the summer months, a net survey must be completed between June 15 and July 31, before the cutting.” This commitment is described in Section 4.8 of the FEIS and Table A of the ROD.</td>
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<td>A-8-2</td>
<td>The project is within the range of the piping plover (<em>Charadrius melodus</em>), a state and federally endangered bird species, and the Kirtland’s warbler (<em>Setophaga kirtlandii</em>), a state and federally endangered species. These species do not nest in the state but only utilize stopover habitat as they migrate through the region. Therefore, the project is not likely to impact these species.</td>
<td>See the response to Comment A-8-1.</td>
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<td>A-8</td>
<td>Ohio Department of Natural Resources</td>
<td>A-8-3</td>
<td>The project is within the range of the Canada darner (Aeshna canadensis), a state endangered dragonfly. Due to the location and the type of habitat being affected, this project is not likely to impact this species.</td>
<td>See the response to Comment A-8-1.</td>
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<td>A-8-4</td>
<td>The project is within the range of the black bear (Ursus americanus), a state endangered species. Due to the mobility of this species, the project is not likely to impact this species.</td>
<td>See the response to Comment A-8-1.</td>
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<td>A-8-5</td>
<td>The project is within the range of the king rail (Rallus elegans), a state endangered bird. Nests for this species are deep bowls constructed out of grass and usually hidden very well in marsh vegetation. Due to the location and the type of habitat being affected, this project is not likely to impact this species.</td>
<td>See the response to Comment A-8-1.</td>
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September 12, 2013

Mrs. Naureen Dar, PE
Transportation Engineer
Federal Highway Administration – Ohio Division
200 North High Street, RM 328
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: FTA Review of FHWA / ODOT Opportunity Corridor Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Cleveland,

Dear Mrs. Dar:

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has completed a review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Opportunity Corridor project in Cleveland, Ohio. On September 6, 2013, FTA received the DEIS from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA; federal lead agency).

In a letter dated February 5, 2013, FTA accepted an invitation from FHWA to be a Participating Agency in the environmental review process for the Opportunity Corridor project, pursuant to Section 1305 of MAP-21 (Public Law 112-141, 7/6/2012). FTA’s interest in this project stems from potential impacts to transit-related facilities and projects funded by FTA in Cleveland, Ohio.

Please find enclosed our review comments on the DEIS, along with a brief explanation of the scope of FTA’s review. If FTA can provide any assistance or additional information that would aid in your evaluation of the DEIS, please feel free to contact Steve Clark, Environmental Specialist, at 312-353-2871. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as a Participating Agency on the Opportunity Corridor project.

Sincerely,

Marisol R. Simón
Regional Administrator

ecc: Steve Clark, FTA
    Susan Weber, FTA

Enclosure (1)
CLEVELAND OPPORTUNITY CORRIDOR PROJECT
Draft Environmental Impact Statement (August 2013)
Review Comments
FTA Region V
September 12, 2013

For its part as a Participating Agency in the review of the DEIS, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has focused its review on project elements and impacts related to public transportation, including the following GCRTA facilities:

- E. 55th Street / I-490 rail station and electrical substation
- E. 79th Street rail station
- E. 105th / Quincy rail station

FTA also reviewed Chapter 2 – Purpose and Need, Chapter 3 – Alternatives, and parts of Chapter 4 – Environmental Resources and Impacts (i.e., Page 4-23 – HOW WOULD PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION BE AFFECTED? and Pages 4-27 through 4-31 – WOULD LOW-INCOME AND MINORITY POPULATIONS BE AFFECTED?).

General Comments

Chapter 2 - Purpose and Need. The Purpose and Need provides clear statements of the purpose of the project (why the action is being proposed) and need of the project, along with clear statements of identified objectives that the proposed project is intended to achieve for improving transportation conditions. This chapter should include a brief history of the development of the purpose and need, including input and comments from cooperating agencies and the public (23 U.S.C. 139(f)(1)). Relevant sections of Appendix A9: Participating Agency Coordination should be cited, particularly the sections directly related to developing the purpose-and-need statement.

Figures 4-11 through 4-19. To support the stated project goal to improve public transportation connections and to enhance public understanding, clearly identify the points at which the proposed roadway links to public transportation. For instance, the location of the East 79th Street rapid transit station is not shown on Figure 4-13 (Page 4-11).

Specific Comments

1. Page 2-6 – HOW DO “GOALS AND OBJECTIVES” FIT INTO PURPOSE AND NEED?
The first sentence in this section may be a source of some confusion during the public comment period and the reviewer recommends revising it. “Objectives” are derived directly from the need statement and, therefore, can be considered needs that must be satisfied by the project. According to 23 U.S.C. § 139(f)(3), a clear statement of identified objectives that the proposed project is intended to achieve for improving transportation conditions is a requirement of the NEPA process.

2. Page 3-1 – WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER?
This section can provide a clearer statement of purpose with regard to the evaluation of reasonable alternatives. For example, 40 C.F.R. 1502.14 suggests an important function of the discussion is to facilitate a rigorous exploration and objective evaluation of all reasonable alternatives. A subsequent
section appears to cover the full range of alternatives considered and alternatives eliminated from further analysis and the reasons for their elimination (see Page 3-4 - WHAT OTHER ALTERNATIVES WERE STUDIED BUT ARE NO LONGER BEING CONSIDERED?).

3. **Page 3-1 – HOW WERE THE ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPED?**
The last paragraph on Page 3 -1 summarizes the basis of the impact analysis of the preferred alternative and states: “The impacts described in this DEIS are based on the amount of land needed to build the new roadway.” This summary may be interpreted as limiting and incomplete. For example, environmental impacts may be more related to the geographical location of the project and the location of valued components of the natural and built environment. The reviewer suggests rephrasing this sentence to accurately convey the basis of the impact assessment and to better enable public understanding of the DEIS.

4. **Page 3-9 – HOW WILL THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE MEET THE PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES?**
To facilitate public understanding, the goals and objectives derived from the need statement should be used consistently in the DEIS. For example, the objective of supporting redevelopment plans that could increase patronage within the transit system is not included in Chapter 2 (Page 2-6). The reviewer suggests identifying all goals and objectives in Chapter 2 and using them on a consistent basis throughout the evaluation of alternatives and the DEIS, where applicable.

5. **Page 4-23 – HOW WOULD PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION BE AFFECTED?**
This section suggests the proposed project “…would increase use of the existing public transportation system over the long-term.” To enhance transparency and public understanding of the DEIS, quantitative terms should be used whenever possible to accurately communicate to the public the magnitude of the benefit or risk of the proposed action.

6. **Pages 4-27 and 4-28 - WOULD LOW-INCOME AND MINORITY POPULATIONS BE AFFECTED?**
“Benefits expected to result from the proposed project…” are listed on Pages 4-27 and 4-28; however, the extent to which specific items in the list apply to the analysis of Environmental Justice and minority and low-income populations is unclear. For instance, how does the proposed project improve public transportation connections for low-income and minority populations affected by the project? Similarly, the list of proposed mitigation measures beginning on Page 4-28 is unclear about how mitigation will target low-income and minority populations. The reviewer recommends revising the lists of benefits and mitigation measures to reflect specific and quantifiable benefits and mitigation that directly apply to minority and low-income populations affected by the project. The discussion in this section of the DEIS should be framed such that it speaks directly to minority and low-income populations affected by the project. Refer the reader to a graphic showing the locations of EJ populations in the project area, areas of known or potential impact (i.e., relocations, displacements, etc.) and locations of proposed mitigation measures.
On Page 4-28, succinctly explain how the project was found to have a disproportionately high and adverse effect to low-income and minority populations. Refer the reader to the methodology used to assess whether or not there are disproportionate impacts to minority or low-income populations. In general, the impact analyses summarized in Chapter 4 should refer the reader to the specific methodologies used in the evaluation of each resource category (i.e., Environmental Justice, Traffic, Noise, etc.).

7. Pages 6-3 and 6-4 - Environmental Justice (ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS and MITIGATION)
This section should be updated to reflect agreements and commitments based on comments from the public and participating agencies. Refer to specific comment 6 regarding the EJ analysis and proposed mitigation measures.
No comments were received from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
From: Hoffman, Larry <Larry.Hoffman@dot.state.oh.us>
Sent: Thursday, November 21, 2013 3:39 PM
To: Jodi Heflin
Subject: FW: RE: Opportunity Corridor DEIS - Comments

From: naureen.dar@dot.gov [mailto:naureen.dar@dot.gov]
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 10:59 AM
To: MWAHL@HNTB.com; Benesh, Gary
Cc: Hoffman, Larry; Oesterling, Leigh
Subject: FW: RE: Opportunity Corridor DEIS - Comments

FYI

Naureen I.Dar, P.E. - Phone: (614) 280-6846

From: Carlson, Ross [mailto:ross.carlson@hud.gov]
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 10:21 AM
To: Dar, Naureen (FHWA)
Subject: RE: RE: Opportunity Corridor DEIS - Comments

No comments.

From: naureen.dar@dot.gov [mailto:naureen.dar@dot.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, November 12, 2013 8:43 AM
To: Mark.Assam@dot.gov; westlake.kenneth@epa.gov; Carlson, Ross; andrea.martin@dot.gov; david_sire@ios.doi.gov
Cc: Larry.Hoffman@dot.state.oh.us; Gary.Benesh@dot.state.oh.us; MWAHL@HNTB.com; Leigh.Oesterling@dot.gov; Andy.Blalock@dot.gov
Subject: RE: Opportunity Corridor DEIS - Comments

All,

If you have any comments on the DEIS for the referenced project please respond by Friday 11/15/2013. Please note that even if you do not have any comments please respond with “no comments”.

Thank you,

Naureen

Naureen Dar, P.E.
FHWA - Ohio Division
200 North High Street, Rm. 328
Columbus, OH 43215-2408
Phone: (614) 280-6846
Fax: (614) 280-6876
United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance
Custom House, Room 244
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106-2904

October 29, 2013

9043.1
ER 13/0603

Amanda Lee
ODOT District 12 Public Information Officer
5500 Transportation Blvd.
Garfield Heights, OH 44125

Dear Ms. Lee:

The U. S. Department of the Interior (Department) has no comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Opportunity Corridor Project located in Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, Ohio.

Thank you for the opportunity for comment.

Sincerely,

Lindy Nelson
Regional Environmental Officer
Noel F. Mehlo Jr.,
Environmental Program Manager
Federal Highway Administration
Ohio Division
200 North High Street, Room 328
Columbus, Ohio 43215-2408

Re:   EPA Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (CEQ # 20130270)
Cleveland Opportunity Corridor Project in Cuyahoga County, Ohio

Dear Mr. Mehlo:

In accordance with Section 309 of the Clean Air Act and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed Cleveland Opportunity Corridor Project in Cuyahoga County, Ohio. This project is a new roadway, extending from the intersection of Interstate 77, and Interstate 490, and 55th Street northeast to the University Circle/Medical Center area at Chester Avenue and 105th Street. The University Circle/Medical Center area is a major employment center, with Case Western Reserve University, medical complexes, and cultural institutions. Most of this east side of Cleveland between the two termini was densely populated and highly industrialized decades ago, but has been largely abandoned, leaving only a skeleton of infrastructure. This proposed roadway is part of a wider effort to revitalize the Opportunity Corridor and surrounding areas and facilitate ongoing development of the University Circle and Medical Center area.

EPA, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) participated in a Cleveland Opportunity Corridor Brownfields Area Wide Plan that anticipated this roadway proposal. There has been some coordination between these developments. EPA, the Department of Justice (DOJ), and the State of Ohio have a comprehensive Clean Water Act settlement with the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORSD) that will address the flow of untreated sewage and combined sewer overflows (CSO) into Cleveland area waterways and Lake Erie. The work the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) is proposing here should be coordinated with NEORSD, so that the required remedial control measures defined in the settlement are not negatively impacted. Further, the proposed project is in an area of Cleveland that is in nonattainment for air quality for the 8-hour Ozone standard and Particulate Matter of 2.5 microns and smaller, and is in maintenance status for Sulfur dioxide (SO₂), Lead (Pb), Particulate Matter of 10 microns, and the 1-hour Ozone standard. The DEIS clearly describes the corridor area as a series of communities with environmental justice concerns (EJ).
ODOT has written this DEIS in a new question-and-answer format, supplemented with analysis and data in appendices. We commend this approach as a means to effectively inform the public. However, the document would benefit from more technical information in the body of the EIS. Our comments below are provided under the NEPA headings of Purpose and Need, Alternatives, Environmental Impacts with environmental subheadings, and Mitigation for Impacts.

Based on the provided materials, we have assigned a rating of Environmental Concerns – Insufficient Information (EC-2). A summary of our ratings definitions is enclosed.

**PURPOSE AND NEED**

The Cleveland Opportunity Corridor Project purpose (page 2-5) is "to provide a transportation system that supports planned economic development. To achieve this, the Opportunity Corridor must improve mobility, connectivity and access in the area between I-77 and University Circle." The DEIS focuses primarily on providing ready access from I-77/I-490 to the University Circle/Medical Center area. The DEIS does not describe the efforts ODOT made to address local concerns, or measures ODOT has taken to integrate this project into the redevelopment efforts mentioned above. Further, the DEIS does not clearly describe how the project will benefit the intervening neighborhoods.

**Recommendation:** While Section 5 does a good job of noting all the meetings the ODOT team attended, the section on page 5-8 "What about the project changed because of Agency and Public Involvement?" is minimal and typical of much of the DEIS. The Final EIS (FEIS) should clearly discuss here and elsewhere how the project termini were selected to benefit both the University Circle/Medical Center area and the five neighborhoods adjacent to the roadway, how the roadway (with limited access at thirteen signaled intersections along the 3.5 miles) connects these adjacent neighborhoods with best efficiency, and similar topics where meeting the purpose and need can be more fully explained.

We also recommend ODOT coordinate further with the Opportunity Corridor Brownfield Area Wide Plan group and local community planners. It is our understanding that this roadway was to not just traverse the corridor neighborhoods, but at some points to more fully enhance access to the areas for economic redevelopment and to improve connectivity of the neighborhoods across this corridor and the adjacent rail corridor. We recommend the FEIS clarify how ODOT will contribute to the ongoing Partnership for Sustainable Communities efforts in the communities traversed by the Opportunity Corridor.

**ALTERNATIVES**

The DEIS lacks a robust description of the alternatives considered, what their benefits and drawbacks were, and why options were retained or dropped. While the DEIS mentions coordinating with the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA), there is no discussion of what was coordinated nor how the Opportunity Corridor project will provide linkages to transit or Transportation Oriented Development (TOD) in relation to bus routes, rail
stations, and their parking facilities. Two pedestrian bridges are proposed. However, could additional measures be adopted to enhance bicycle and pedestrian use of existing street crossings? Could other new connections improve connectivity of these modes?

Are the thirteen intersections optimally designed to facilitate traffic getting from the new roadway into the Forgotten Triangle redevelopment (the area within Woodward Avenue, Woodhill Road and Kinsmann Road) or across the rail / GCRTA trench and up to the communities north of this divide? The DEIS (pages 4-18 to 4-25) provides little indication of such connectivity enhancement. Instead the DEIS mostly reflects limitations to cross-corridor-connectivity.

Recommendation: We recommend that ODOT coordinate further with GCRTA, the City of Cleveland, and HUD to consider TOD opportunities that could be specifically linked to this proposed roadway. Clarification should be provided for how this proposal creates linkages to existing transit and what bus and rail transit changes are being made to improve linkages with and across this new roadway. Further clarification should also be provided on the basis for decisions on the preferred alternative. Several notes indicate some GCRTA stations will require longer access paths. The DEIS is not clear whether the stations are accessible to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) population and what considerations were given to provide them with other points of access along this corridor.

We recommend the FEIS more fully discuss how each intersection provides and facilitates all modes of traffic accessing the surrounding neighborhoods.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

WATER RESOURCES

Although this proposal will not directly cross or impact water features, it does lie within the Kingsbury Run watershed. Future redevelopments will have to meet their site requirements regarding stormwater management. The ODOT proposed creation of a reservoir is planned to handle routine storms, but is not sized to handle major storms. These conditions mean the planning for flooding conditions is insufficient to handle the necessary water load and so combined sewer overflows (CSO) will still occur. As noted above, there is a settlement agreement with NEORSD to avoid such occurrences. We estimate that the current proposal does not provide adequate stormwater management capacity.

Recommendation: ODOT should coordinate further with NEORSD to develop additional facilities to capture stormwater run-off from the proposed roadway and integrate those plans into broader strategies to manage stormwater consistent with the EPA-NEORSD decree and plans for area redevelopment. This may even include creating conveyance to retention facilities removed from the roadway project site, such as available brownfield sites. We recommend ODOT coordinate with NEORSD efforts and funding to target this Opportunity Corridor.
redevelopment area to use the latest stormwater strategies including NEORSD’s Green Infrastructure Plan concepts.

AIR QUALITY IMPACTS
EPA amended our Conformity regulations effective December 2012. Prior to that date, EPA had determined that the project conformed to the Ohio State Implementation Plan. We note that air quality during construction will be minimized by dust control measures and following the ODOT CMS (Construction Manual Standards).

Recommendation: In light of the revised conformity regulations, we recommend ODOT contact our new Transportation Conformity manager for Ohio, Anthony Maietta, at 312-353-8777, to update and confirm understandings regarding air conformity for this project and to discuss the construction emissions management techniques to be used. We recommend that anti-idling measures and clean diesel strategies be adopted during construction.

Increased localized air pollution is a concern with increased truck traffic along the Opportunity Corridor.

Recommendation: Mitigation measures, including but not limited to tree buffers along the proposed corridor, frontage roads, and new or increased capacity on adjacent roads, should be identified in the FEIS. Any mitigation measures should be coordinated with the affected community and committed to in the record of decision (ROD).

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Visual The Draft EIS states, “Visual elements such as landscaping and lighting would continue to be coordinated with the project stakeholders” (page 4-26).

Recommendation: The FEIS should identify how the community has been and will be included in the decision-making process. Any commitments made to the community during the development of context-sensitive solutions (CSS) should be documented in the FEIS and committed to in the ROD.

Access to transit The FEIS should explain how the adjacent communities will be able to access transit systems, since those communities are highly dependent on public transportation. Which, if any, rail transit or bus stops and routes will be relocated, added, or eliminated? This project is an opportunity to increase public transit access, not decrease it. Bus re-routing should be done to benefit the surrounding predominately low-income and minority populations.

Recommendation: The FEIS should identify which, if any, rail transit stations or bus routes will be eliminated, re-located, or added along the project corridor. If any routes will be temporarily or permanently eliminated or re-located, the FEIS should identify how residents who depend on these routes will be accommodated. EPA
encourages consideration of additional transit options for this community, including additional bus routes and stops. This is an excellent opportunity to not only improve personal vehicle-based mobility but also access to public transit in the area. The FEIS should disclose whether local and/or express bus service will use the Opportunity Corridor roadway.

**Mobility** The DEIS states there will be increased mobility and local access for all transportation users (page 4-27). This statement is unclear, as several streets and potential access points will be blocked off by the proposed project, reducing cross-corridor mobility in some locations between the local neighborhoods and the corridor.

Recommendation: The FEIS should clarify how mobility will be preserved or increased for the neighborhoods where streets will be blocked off.

**Employment** In order for low-income and minority communities to benefit from increased employment opportunities, as listed in the DEIS, several targeted measures will need to be in place. For the potential for increased local employment opportunities, consider using targeted recruitment, training residents from the surrounding communities as well as job placement goals (page 4-27). The DEIS describes possible approaches to hiring and training, but does not commit to them.

Recommendation: The FEIS should identify specific strategies through which surrounding communities will benefit from increased employment opportunities. This includes, but is not limited to targeted recruitment via local high schools and community organizations, training in the communities, and job placement goals. The FEIS and ROD should commit to specific measures with respect to hiring and training.

**Noise** The noise impacts on the surrounding communities could be considerable with the large increase in truck traffic.

Recommendation: EPA recommends all necessary noise buffers be installed to reduce noise impacts or present other options to the community that will bring similar results such as vegetated buffers or other alternative materials. If noise walls are pursued, the project team identifies how the noise walls could be designed to fit seamlessly with the existing environment consistent with CSS principles. The FEIS/ROD should commit to these proposals.

**Housing** The DEIS does not analyze housing options available to families and individuals that will be required to relocate as a result of the proposed project. The project should provide for sufficient affordable housing of acceptable quality for those that must relocate.

Recommendation: The FEIS should expand on the comparable housing options that will be available to the families that must relocate, consistent with the Federal relocation policies. The FEIS and ROD should explain how the project will provide for adequate housing for all affected households, including access to transit.
commend the proposed flexibility in citizen relocation sites in various neighborhood selections; but, Table ES-1 should reflect this relocation flexibility.

Meaningful involvement ODOT has worked with various community representatives and groups in planning and designing this corridor project. Nevertheless, the DEIS presents some very select accommodations, such as preserving and funding enhancements to the Kenneth L. Johnson Recreational Center and possible relocation of the St. Hyacinth neighborhood entrance. Other measures are presented as options that "could be done," but do not seem to have been actually discussed with the communities and agreed to.

Recommendation: We recommend ODOT seek to develop Community Benefit Agreements with each of the five neighborhood communities. These agreements and specific enhancements that are discussed in the DEIS as possibilities should be explicit commitments in the FEIS and ROD.

MITIGATION OF IMPACTS

Recommendation: EPA commends the inclusion of Table ES-1 as an Environmental Resources, Impacts and Mitigation Summary. However the DEIS describes many project plans that could mitigate impacts, but is unclear whether these elements are commitments. All mitigation measures should be explicitly committed to and summarized in the text and charts in the FEIS and ROS.

We appreciate the opportunity to participate in this project. If you have any questions or wish to discuss our comments further, please contact me or Norm West of my staff at 312-353-5692 / west.norman@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Kenneth A. Westlake
Chief, NEPA Implementation Section
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

Enclosure: EPA Summary of Rating Definitions

e-mail cc: Timothy Hill, ODOT
Larry Hoffman
SUMMARY OF EPA RATING DEFINITIONS AND FOLLOW UP ACTION

Environmental Impact of the Action

LO-Lack of Objections
The EPA review has not identified any potential environmental impacts requiring substantive changes to the proposal. The review may have disclosed opportunities for application of mitigation measures that could be accomplished with no more than minor changes to the proposal.

EC-Environmental Concerns
The EPA review has identified environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment. Corrective measures may require changes to the preferred alternative or application of mitigation measures that can reduce the environmental impacts. EPA would like to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

EO-Environmental Objections
The EPA review has identified significant environmental impacts that must be avoided in order to provide adequate protection for the environment. Corrective measures may require substantial changes to the preferred alternative or consideration of some other project alternative (including the no action alternative or a new alternative). EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

EU-Environmentally Unsatisfactory
The EPA review has identified adverse environmental impacts that are of sufficient magnitude that they are unsatisfactory from the standpoint of public health or welfare or environmental quality. EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts. If the potential unsatisfactory impacts are not corrected at the final EIS stage, this proposal will be recommended for referral to the CEQ.

Adequacy of the Impact Statement

Category 1-Adequate
The EPA believes the draft EIS adequately sets forth the environmental impact(s) of the preferred alternative and those of the alternatives reasonably available to the project or action. No further analysis or data collecting is necessary, but the reviewer may suggest the addition of clarifying language or information.

Category 2-Insufficient Information
The draft EIS does not contain sufficient information for the EPA to fully assess the environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment, or the EPA reviewer has identified new reasonably available alternatives that are within the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which could reduce the environmental impacts of the action. The identified additional information, data analyses, or discussion should be included in the final EIS.

Category 3-Inadequate
EPA does not believe that the draft EIS adequately assesses potentially significant environmental impacts of the action, or the EPA reviewer has identified new, reasonably available alternatives that are outside of the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which should be analyzed in order to reduce the potentially significant environmental impacts. EPA believes that the identified additional information, data analyses, or discussions are of such a magnitude that they should have full public review at a draft stage. EPA does not believe that the draft EIS is adequate for the purposes of the NEPA and/or Section 309 review, and thus should be formally revised and made available for public comment in a supplemental or revised draft EIS. On the basis of the potential significant impacts involved, this proposal could be a candidate for referral to the CEQ.

*From EPA Manual 1640 Policy and Procedures for the Review of the Federal Actions Impacting the Environment
From: Matt Wahl
Sent: Tuesday, November 12, 2013 12:03 PM
To: Adin McCann; Jodi Heflin; Sarah Brown; Opportunity Corridor; Ntiense Awakessien
Subject: FW: RE:Opportunity Corridor DEIS - Comments

From: naureen.dar@dot.gov [mailto:naureen.dar@dot.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, November 12, 2013 12:02 PM
To: Matt Wahl; Gary.Benesh@dot.state.oh.us; Larry.Hoffman@dot.state.oh.us
Cc: Leigh.Oesterling@dot.gov
Subject: FW: RE:Opportunity Corridor DEIS - Comments

FYI

Naureen I.Dar, P.E. - Phone: (614) 280-6846

From: Martin, Andrea (FRA)
Sent: Tuesday, November 12, 2013 9:16 AM
To: Dar, Naureen (FHWA)
Subject: RE: RE:Opportunity Corridor DEIS - Comments

The Federal Railroad Administration has no comments.

Thank you. Andrea

ANDRÉA E. MARTIN
Environmental Protection Specialist

FRA | Federal Railroad Administration
No comments were received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
October 10, 2013

Timothy M. Hill, Environmental Administrator
Office of Environmental Services
Ohio Department of Transportation
1980 West Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43223

Attn: Matt Perlik, Mike Pettegrew, Larry Hoffman

Re: 13-433; The Cleveland Opportunity Corridor Project DEIS (PID 77333)

Project: The proposed project involves building an urban boulevard with traffic lights at intersections from the I-490-East 55th Street intersection to the East 105th Street-Chester Avenue intersection.

Location: The Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project is located in the City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, Ohio.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) has completed a review of the above referenced project. These comments were generated by an inter-disciplinary review within the Department. These comments have been prepared under the authority of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.), the National Environmental Policy Act, the Coastal Zone Management Act, Ohio Revised Code and other applicable laws and regulations. These comments are also based on ODNR’s experience as the state natural resource management agency and do not supersede or replace the regulatory authority of any local, state or federal agency nor relieve the applicant of the obligation to comply with any local, state or federal laws or regulations.

Fish and Wildlife: The Division of Wildlife (DOW) has the following comments.

The project is within the range of the Indiana bat (Myotis sodalis), a state and federally endangered species. The following species of trees have relatively high value as potential Indiana bat roost trees: Shagbark hickory (Carya ovata), Shellbark hickory (Carya laciniosa), Bitternut hickory (Carya cordiformis), Black ash (Fraxinus nigra), Green ash (Fraxinus pennsylvanica), White ash (Fraxinus americana), Shingle oak (Quercus imbricaria), Northern red oak (Quercus rubra), Slippery elm (Ulmus rubra), American elm (Ulmus americana), Eastern cottonwood (Populus deltoides), Silver maple (Acer saccharinum), Sassafras (Sassafras albidum), Post oak (Quercus stellata), and White oak (Quercus alba). Indiana bat habitat consists of suitable trees that include dead and dying trees with exfoliating bark, crevices, or cavities in upland areas or riparian corridors and living trees with exfoliating bark, cavities, or hollow areas formed from broken branches or tops. If suitable trees occur within the project area, these trees should be conserved. If suitable habitat occurs on the project area and trees must be cut, cutting must
occur between October 1 and March 31. If suitable trees must be cut during the summer months, a net
survey must be conducted between June 15 and July 31, prior to cutting. Net surveys shall incorporate
either two net sites per square kilometer of project area with each net site containing a minimum of two
nets used for two consecutive nights, or one net site per kilometer of stream within the project limits with
each net site containing a minimum of two nets used for two consecutive nights. If no tree removal is
proposed, the project is not likely to impact this species.

The project is within the range of the piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*), a state and federally endangered
bird species, and the Kirtland’s warbler (*Setophaga kirtlandii*), a state and federally endangered species.
These species do not nest in the state but only utilize stopover habitat as they migrate through the region.
Therefore, the project is not likely to impact these species.

The project is within the range of the Canada damner (*Aeshna canadensis*), a state endangered dragonfly.
Due to the location and the type of habitat being affected, this project is not likely to impact this species.

The project is within the range of the black bear (*Ursus americanus*), a state endangered species. Due to
the mobility of this species, the project is not likely to impact this species.

The project is within the range of the king rail (*Rallus elegans*), a state endangered bird. A statewide
survey has not been completed for this species. Nests for this species are deep bowls constructed out of
grass and usually hidden very well in marsh vegetation. Due to the location and the type of habitat being
affected, this project is not likely to impact this species.

The ODNR Natural Heritage Database has no additional records for rare or endangered species at this
project site. We are unaware of any unique ecological sites, geologic features, animal assemblages, scenic
rivers, state wildlife areas, nature preserves, parks or forests, national wildlife refuges or other protected
natural areas within the project area. Our inventory program does not provide a complete survey of Ohio
wildlife, and relies on information supplied by many individuals and organizations. Therefore, a lack of
records for any particular area is not a statement that rare species or unique features are absent from that
area.

ODNR appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments. Please contact Brian Mitch at
(614) 265-6387 if you have questions about these comments or need additional information.

Brian Mitch
ODNR Office of Real Estate
2045 Morse Road, Building E-2
Columbus, Ohio 43229-6693
(614) 265-6387
brian.mitch@dnr.state.oh.us
APPENDIX A3:
PARTICIPATING AGENCIES
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December 9, 2013

Ginger Mullen
Chief
United States Army Corp of Engineers
502 Eight Street
Huntington, WV 25701

Re: Opportunity Corridor
Cleveland, OH

Dear Ms. Mullen,

By way of this letter, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) announces the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) intent concerning the subject project’s National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document.

FHWA will issue a single Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision document pursuant to Pub. L. 112-141, 126 Stat. 405, Section 1319(b) unless FHWA determines statutory criteria or practicability considerations preclude issuance of the combined document pursuant to Section 1319. The intent to combine the document was provided in the Coordination Plan sent in June 2013. We anticipate issuance of the combined document in February 2014.

If you have questions, please call Larry Hoffman at (614) 466-6439.

Respectfully,

Timothy M. Hill
Administrator
Office of Environmental Services

c: N. Dar, PE, FHWA – G. Benesh, PE, ODOT D-12
December 9, 2013

Willie R. Taylor, Ph.D.
Office of the Secretary
United States Department of Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20540

Re: Opportunity Corridor
   Cleveland, OH

Dear Mr. Taylor,

By way of this letter, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) announces the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) intent concerning the subject project’s National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document.

FHWA will issue a single Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision document pursuant to Pub. L. 112-141, 126 Stat. 405, Section 1319(b) unless FHWA determines statutory criteria or practicability considerations preclude issuance of the combined document pursuant to Section 1319. The intent to combine the document was provided in the Coordination Plan sent in June 2013. We anticipate issuance of the combined document in February 2014.

If you have questions, please call Larry Hoffman at (614) 466-6439.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

Timothy M. Hill
Administrator
Office of Environmental Services

c: N. Dar, PE, FHWA – G. Benesh, PE, ODOT D-12
December 9, 2013

Najah Duvall-Gabriel  
Historic Preservation Specialist  
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation  
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 803  
Washington, DC 20004

Re: Opportunity Corridor  
Cleveland, OH

Dear Ms. Duvall-Gabriel,

By way of this letter, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) announces the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) intent concerning the subject project’s National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document.

FHWA will issue a single Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision document pursuant to Pub. L. 112-141, 126 Stat. 405, Section 1319(b) unless FHWA determines statutory criteria or practicability considerations preclude issuance of the combined document pursuant to Section 1319. The intent to combine the document was provided in the Coordination Plan sent in June 2013. We anticipate issuance of the combined document in February 2014.

If you have questions, please call Larry Hoffman at (614) 466-6439.

Respectfully,

Timothy M. Hill  
Administrator  
Office of Environmental Services

c: N. Dar, PE, FHWA – G. Benesh, PE, ODOT D-12
December 9, 2013

Douglas W. Shelby  
Field Office Director  
United States Department of Housing and Urban Development  
1350 Euclid Avenue, Suite 500  
Cleveland, OH 44115

Re: Opportunity Corridor  
Cleveland, OH

Dear Mr. Shelby,

By way of this letter, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) announces the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) intent concerning the subject project’s National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document.

FHWA will issue a single Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision document pursuant to Pub. L. 112-141, 126 Stat. 405, Section 1319(b) unless FHWA determines statutory criteria or practicability considerations preclude issuance of the combined document pursuant to Section 1319. The intent to combine the document was provided in the Coordination Plan sent in June 2013. We anticipate issuance of the combined document in February 2014.

If you have questions, please call Larry Hoffman at (614) 466-6439.

Respectfully,

Timothy M. Hill  
Administrator  
Office of Environmental Services

c: N. Dar, PE, FHWA – G. Benesh, PE, ODOT D-12
December 9, 2013

Susan Hedman
Regional Administrator
United States Environmental Protection Agency
77 West Jackson Street
Chicago, IL 60604

Re: Opportunity Corridor
   Cleveland, OH

Dear Ms. Hedman,

By way of this letter, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) announces the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) intent concerning the subject project’s National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document.

FHWA will issue a single Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision document pursuant to Pub. L. 112-141, 126 Stat. 405, Section 1319(b) unless FHWA determines statutory criteria or practicability considerations preclude issuance of the combined document pursuant to Section 1319. The intent to combine the document was provided in the Coordination Plan sent in June 2013. We anticipate issuance of the combined document in February 2014.

If you have questions, please call Larry Hoffman at (614) 466-6439.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

Timothy M. Hill
Administrator
Office of Environmental Services

c: N. Dar, PE, FHWA – G. Benesh, PE, ODOT D-12
December 9, 2013

Andrea Martin  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
United States Federal Railroad Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Mail Stop 20  
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Opportunity Corridor  
Cleveland, OH

Dear Ms. Martin,

By way of this letter, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) announces the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) intent concerning the subject project’s National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document.

FHWA will issue a single Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision document pursuant to Pub. L. 112-141, 126 Stat. 405, Section 1319(b) unless FHWA determines statutory criteria or practicability considerations preclude issuance of the combined document pursuant to Section 1319. The intent to combine the document was provided in the Coordination Plan sent in June 2013. We anticipate issuance of the combined document in February 2014.

If you have questions, please call Larry Hoffman at (614) 466-6439.

Respectfully,

Timothy M. Hill  
Administrator  
Office of Environmental Services

c: N. Dar, PE, FHWA – G. Benesh, PE, ODOT D-12
February 13, 2014

Marisol R. Simon  
Regional Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration  
200 West Adam Street, Suite 320  
Chicago, IL  60606-5253  

Re: Opportunity Corridor

Dear Ms. Simon:

On behalf of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), we are sending our intended responses to your September 12, 2013 comments on the subject project’s Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Our responses to your comments are attached and will be included in the following sections of the combined Final Environmental Impact Statement/Record of Decision (FEIS/ROD), which is currently being prepared.

- Chapter 5, Public and Agency Coordination
- Appendix A1: Summary of DEIS Agency Comment and Responses
- Appendix A2: Agency DEIS Comments (Original Documents)

If you have any questions, please call Larry Hoffman, Major Project Coordinator, at (614) 466-6439.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

Timothy M. Hill  
Administrator  
Office of Environmental Services

c: N. Dar, PE, FHWA – L. Oesterling, FHWA – G. Benesh, PE, ODOT, D-12
Hello Larry,

In a letter dated February 5, 2013, FTA accepted an invitation from FHWA to be a Participating Agency in the environmental review of the Opportunity Corridor project pursuant to Section 1305 of MAP-21 (PL 112-141, 7/6/2012). In a letter dated September 12, 2014, FTA provided comments on the transit-related sections of the DEIS. FTA received responses from ODOT/FHWA and a portion of the draft Record of Decision in a correspondence dated February 13, 2014. Below is FTA’s feedback to those responses as well as feedback received from other agencies.

- **Record of Decision, Section 5.2, Page 5-3**: This page lists revised sections of the FEIS. Because FTA was provided only with portions of the Record of Decision (ROD), FTA will presume its comments were addressed in the FEIS, where applicable. Alternatively, the revised sections of the FEIS could be made available to facilitate the participating agency review process.

- This page references the table of environmental commitments (Table A); however, the table was not included in the correspondence to FTA dated February 13, 2014. FTA will presume its comments were addressed in Table A and the FEIS, where applicable. Alternatively, Table A and the FEIS could be made available to facilitate the participating agency review process.

- **Appendix A-1, Pages 2 - 6**: FTA is satisfied with the responses to its comments. The responses refer to Table A of the ROD and updates made in the FEIS; however, the table and revised section of the FEIS were not included in the February 13, 2014 correspondence.

- The ROD indicates the FEIS describes several updates to the preferred alternative (i.e., Section 5.4 of the ROD). Because the preferred alternative has changed, it may be prudent to prepare the ROD separately and allow a 30-day comment period on the updated preferred alternative in the FEIS.

- In a letter dated February 14, 2014, the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) submitted comments to ODOT regarding impacts to transit. GCRTA’s comments should be addressed in the FEIS/ROD.

- In 2009 DOT, HUD and EPA announced the **Partnership for Sustainable Communities**, an interagency partnership to improve coordination of federal transportation, environmental protection, and housing investments. In late March 2014, HUD contacted FTA to discuss the Opportunity Corridor project and their concerns regarding environmental justice. FTA and HUD also discussed the level of federal investment in the project area and commitment by the agencies, and it was noted that it is important that the affected neighborhoods would benefit equitably from the project.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (312) 353-2871.

Sincerely,

Steve

Steven S. Clark  
Environmental Specialist  
Resource Management Concepts, Inc., supporting  
Federal Transit Administration Region 5  
Phone: (312) 353-2871  
Steven.S.Clark.ctr@dot.gov
Hello Steve,

We thank you for the email response. We would like to follow up, and particularly so, to the feedback that you have provided in the bulleted items. Please see our responses below.

Please call with any questions.

Thank you,
Larry Hoffman
Major Project Coordinator
ODOT
614-466-6439

Hello Larry,

In a letter dated February 5, 2013, FTA accepted an invitation from FHWA to be a Participating Agency in the environmental review of the Opportunity Corridor project pursuant to Section 1305 of MAP-21 (PL 112-141, 7/6/2012). In a letter dated September 12, 2014, FTA provided comments on the transit-related sections of the DEIS. FTA received responses from ODOT/FHWA and a portion of the draft Record of Decision in a correspondence dated February 13, 2014. Below is FTA’s feedback to those responses as well as feedback received from other agencies.

- **Record of Decision, Section 5.2, Page 5-3:** This page lists revised sections of the FEIS. Because FTA was provided only with portions of the Record of Decision (ROD), FTA will presume its comments were addressed in the FEIS, where applicable. Alternatively, the revised sections of the FEIS could be made available to facilitate the participating agency review process.

  **Response:** You are correct, FTA’s comments are addressed in the appropriate pages in the FEIS. In addition, MAP-21 instituted streamlining measures which allows agencies to coordinate just the portion of the document that summarizes our response to the review agencies comments. We put this process in place with coordination with USEPA (where we just coordinated the portion of the document with their DEIS comments and how we intend to address them) and it worked well.

- This page references the table of environmental commitments (Table A); however, the table was not included in the correspondence to FTA dated February 13, 2014. FTA will presume its comments were addressed in Table A.
and the FEIS, where applicable. Alternatively, Table A and the FEIS could be made available to facilitate the participating agency review process.

Response: You are correct, FTA’s comments are addressed in the appropriate pages in the FEIS.

- **Appendix A-1, Pages 2 - 6:** FTA is satisfied with the responses to its comments. The responses refer to Table A of the ROD and updates made in the FEIS; however, the table and revised section of the FEIS were not included in the February 13, 2014 correspondence.

  Response: FTA’s comments are addressed in the appropriate pages in the FEIS.

- The ROD indicates the FEIS describes several updates to the preferred alternative (i.e., Section 5.4 of the ROD). Because the preferred alternative has changed, it may be prudent to prepare the ROD separately and allow a 30-day comment period on the updated preferred alternative in the FEIS.

  Response: As you know, MAP-21 established the combined FEIS/ROD format as the standard process to follow and while there were updates to the preferred alternative, the changes alone did not warrant a 30 day FEIS review period.

- In a letter dated February 14, 2014, the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) submitted comments to ODOT regarding impacts to transit. GCRTA’s comments should be addressed in the FEIS/ROD.

  Response: We have fully addressed GCRTA’s comments, including appropriate environmental mitigation to offset impacts.

- In 2009 DOT, HUD and EPA announced the **Partnership for Sustainable Communities**, an interagency partnership to improve coordination of federal transportation, environmental protection, and housing investments. In late March 2014, HUD contacted FTA to discuss the Opportunity Corridor project and their concerns regarding environmental justice. FTA and HUD also discussed the level of federal investment in the project area and commitment by the agencies, and it was noted that it is important that the affected neighborhoods would benefit equitably from the project.

  Response: We agree with FTA and HUD’s that the affected neighborhoods should benefit equitably for the project. The Opportunity Corridor project has a level of mitigation that is unparalleled by any other project in Ohio. We will be instituting multiple environmental commitments which are designed to directly benefit the affect neighborhoods. The commitments include, safer and improved bike and pedestrian access, multiuse path, benches, lighting, community enhancements, on the job training program and more. This project will invest millions of dollars back into the community and will provide the much needed and improved travel and access in the area.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (312) 353-2871.

Sincerely,

Steve

Steven S. Clark
Environmental Specialist
Resource Management Concepts, Inc., supporting
Federal Transit Administration Region 5
Phone: (312) 353-2871
Steven.S.Clark.ctr@dot.gov
February 14, 2014

Mr. Gary Benesh, P.E.
Ohio Department of Transportation - District 12
5500 Transportation Boulevard
Garfield Heights, Ohio 44125

Re: Opportunity Corridor Project
PID 77333
Transit Comments and Impacts

Dear Mr. Benesh:

On February 7, 2014 we met to review the transit related comments that ODOT has been asked to address, and also discuss the Greater Cleveland Rapid Transit Authority’s (GCRTA’s) concerns regarding the proposed Opportunity Corridor project. Areas of discussion included the proposed closure of Quincy Avenue to our buses and regular vehicular traffic between East 105th Street and Woodhill Road, the Quincy/East 105th Rapid Station, both East 79th Street Stations, proposed grade separation at East 55th Street, and Bus Station Locations. Our positions on each of these elements are discussed as follows.

Quincy Avenue Closure

Approximately five bus stops on Quincy Avenue and Woodhill Road will be affected by the proposed closure. These stops are jointly served by our #10 and #11 Bus Routes. As is our Central Bus Maintenance Facility and Woodhill Garage Facility, GCRTA has conducting pedestrian and boarding counts at existing stops in this location along the #10 and #11 routes.

GCRTA is supportive of the proposed Quincy Avenue Closure. We are aware that the #10 and #11 routes will be impacted. In accordance with our Title VI, Environmental Justice, and Service Change Policy’s GCRTA will modify one or both bus routes as need to maintain access to buses for our customers particularly the transit dependent public housing populations located east of Woodhill Road and north of Woodland Avenue. We anticipate, in accordance with our policies, that the rerouting of these routes will provide bus service to the section of Woodland between East 93rd Street and Woodhill Road, which currently has no bus service available.
Gary Benesh  
February 14, 2014  
Page 2 of 3

Quincy/East 105th Rapid Station

The Quincy/East 105th Rapid Station is one of only two Red Line stations in our system that cannot accommodate three-car trains. It has been in GCRTA’s long range plans to lengthen the platform for three car trains and add a second ADA compliant entrance on East 105th Street. The proposed Opportunity Corridor will replace the existing East 105th Street bridge over the Red Line. Due to the difficulties working within our right-of-way with active trains it would be beneficial and economical to construct the new bridge, platform extension and second entrance at the same time.

GCRTA is requesting that the Opportunity Corridor project fund 80% of the $4.0 million station and platform project to enhance the transit service in the corridor.

East 79th Street Rapid and Light Rail Stations

The proposed Opportunity Corridor alignment is halfway between our two stations on East 79th Street and far enough away from each station that we believe there is no impact to either station. GCRTA on its own will be conducting a Rail Station Transit Service Alternatives Analysis, which will study the transit utilization of both stations and the impact of a station closure to our transit system. This study will follow our Title VI, Environmental Justice and Service Change Policy’s and be conducted and concluded before the end of 2014.

East 55th Street Grade Separation

The proposed Opportunity Corridor includes a grade separated interchange with the Opportunity Corridor in a depressed section under East 55th Street with a jog handle access ramp in the south-east quadrant connecting the two. We have major facilities on two of the quadrants to the north and are familiar with the geotechnical challenges and poor soils that exist at this location. We are very concerned about the lengthy proposed closures to I-490 and East 55th required to construct the interchange.

The grade separation as shown has high social and economical impacts with numerous relocations and construction related shut-downs and traffic diversions. GCRTA is requesting that during the design phase ODOT conduct a detailed study comparing the proposed grade separation to an at-grade intersection at East 55th Street.
Bus Station Locations

GCRTA has a number of bus routes that intersect with the proposed Opportunity Corridor. These include the #2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 16 and HealthLine routes and we request that during the design phase ODOT coordinate with GCRTA in properly locating the bus stations at the intersections crossing the Opportunity Corridor including the East 105th Street section of the project. Also in the East 105th Street section we request that ODOT coordinate with GCRTA on the locations for the #10 route bus stations.

We believe that this addresses the transit related comments and concerns that have been raised during the review of the Environmental Documents. If you have any questions please contact me at 216-566-5084.

Respectfully,

Michael J. Schipper, P.E.
Deputy General Manager – Engineering & Project Management
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<td>The FEIS and ROD have been updated to reflect GCRTA’s intent to modify the 10 and 11 bus routes to maintain access for customers, particularly the transit-dependent populations located east of Woodhill Road. Based on the February 14, 2014 letter and discussions from a coordination meeting held on February 7, 2014, ODOT understands the following: • Preliminary analysis indicates that two basic options exist to maintain bus service for the neighborhoods east of Woodhill Road: 1. Pick-up the 10 and 11 bus route passengers at intersection of Woodhill Road/Woodland Avenue. This option could increase walking distances by a maximum of 1,975 feet for some residents that currently use the bus stop located at Quincy Avenue/Woodhill Road roundabout; or 2. Re-route the 10 and 11 bus routes through the neighborhood east of Woodhill Road using some combination of existing roadways such as Woodhill Road, Mt. Carmel Road, Baldwin Road, E. 110th Street and/or Woodland Avenue. • Bus Route 10 could be re-routed to E. 93rd Street, while Bus Route 11 could utilize the new Opportunity Corridor boulevard. Both of these routes currently service the E. 105th Street-Quincy Avenue train station. This service would be maintained when the new routes are identified. Furthermore, the new bus routes could potentially provide enhanced service along Woodland Road, E. 93rd Street and to the Kenneth L. Johnson Recreation Center. • The final decision on the re-routing of the 10 and 11 bus routes will be made by GCRTA once the pedestrian and boarding counts are completed, the data is analyzed and the appropriate actions are taken to comply with GCRTA’s Title VI Program, as well as its environmental justice and service changes policies. This information has also been incorporated into FEIS Section 4.6 and Table A of the ROD.</td>
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<td>As part of the Opportunity Corridor project, ODOT will fund 80-percent (up to $3.2 million) of a project to improve the existing GCRTA E. 105th Street-Quincy Avenue train station. The improvement project would extend the platform to allow three-car service, which is GCRTA’s standard. The improvement project would also construct a new entrance at E. 105th Street. The new entrance would provide both stair and elevator access to comply with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The improvements to the GCRTA E.105th Street-Quincy Avenue train station would be independently planned, designed and constructed by GCRTA. GCRTA would schedule the station improvements to coincide with the construction of the Opportunity Corridor bridge over the GCRTA Red Line to minimize impacts to transit service and maximize cost-efficiency. FEIS Section 4.6 and Table A of the ROD have been updated to reflect these considerations.</td>
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<td><strong>East 79th Street Rapid and Light Rail Stations</strong> – The proposed Opportunity Corridor alignment is halfway between our two stations on East 79th Street and far enough away from each station that we believe there is no impact to either station. GCRTA on its own will be conducting a Rail Station Transit Service Alternatives Analysis, which will study the transit utilization of both stations and the impact of a station closure to our transit system. This study will follow our Title VI, Environmental Justice and Service Change [Policies] and be conducted and concluded before the end of 2014.</td>
<td>FEIS Section 4.6 has been updated to indicate that GCRTA is currently studying the utilization and viability of the E. 79th Street Red Line stations.</td>
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### Response to February 14, 2014 Letter from GCRTA

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<td>ODOT previously considered an at-grade intersection at E. 55th Street and eliminated it from further study. The supporting analysis related to this decision is contained in the Early Analysis of West Alternates (March 2011), which is on the CD included with the DEIS and is incorporated by reference into both the DEIS and FEIS. Consequently, ODOT does not intend to reevaluate the at-grade intersection during the final design phase. FEIS Section 3.4 includes text excerpted from page 9 of the Early Analysis of West Alternates (March 2011) to help explain why the at-grade intersection was eliminated from further consideration. The excerpted text is included below for ease of reference: “The configuration of the at-grade intersection proposed with West Alternate A would not be geometrically feasible without incurring extreme costs to re-design and reconstruct the I-77/I-490 interchange. West Alternate A would also leave the existing weave section along I-490 between I-77 ramps and E. 55th Street in-place. The weave section would further compromise safety and traffic operations by requiring weaving traffic to cross at least three lanes of traffic within a relatively short distance prior to the intersection of E. 55th Street. Furthermore, the large intersection area and high traffic volumes would negatively affect pedestrian safety and mobility, including access to the GCRTA station. Residents also expressed concerns regarding the safe transit from higher speed interstate travel on I-77 and I-490 to lower speeds more suitable for the proposed urban boulevard and the residential neighborhoods in the study area. For these reasons, it is recommended that West Alternate A be eliminated from further study. West Alternate C, on the other hand, would address the inside merge condition without the need for re-design or reconstruction of the interchange. Consequently, West Alternate C is recommended for continued analysis in [PDP] Step 6.”</td>
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<td><strong>Bus Station Locations</strong> – GCRTA has a number of bus routes that intersect with the proposed Opportunity Corridor. These include the #2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 16 and HealthLine routes and we request that during the design phase ODOT coordinate with GCRTA in properly locating the bus stations at the intersections crossing the Opportunity Corridor including the East 105th Street section of the project. Also in the East 105th Street section we request that ODOT coordinate with GCRTA on the locations for the #10 route bus stations.</td>
<td>FEIS Section 4.6 and Table A of the ROD have been updated to include a commitment to further coordinate with GCRTA during final design regarding the locations of bus stations along E. 105th Street and where the boulevard would intersect existing bus routes.</td>
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