CLEVELAND OPPORTUNITY CORRIDOR PROJECT
CUY - OPPORTUNITY CORRIDOR
PID 77333 City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, Ohio

RECORD OF DECISION

April 2014

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approves the decision to construct and operate the preferred alternative as identified in the attached Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project. The preferred alternative 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. The proposed boulevard will have two westbound through-lanes, but the number of eastbound through-lanes will vary. The project includes three eastbound through-lanes between I-490 and Woodland Avenue. In general, the roadway will have two through-lanes between Woodland Avenue and Chester Avenue, but the roadway between Cedar Avenue and Euclid Avenue will include a third eastbound through-lane. Left-turn lanes will also be added at many of the intersections.

The preferred alternative meets the project purpose of improving the roadway network within a historically underserved, economically depressed area within the City of Cleveland. It will also address the identified transportation need elements, including improving system linkage, improving mobility and supporting planned economic development. FHWA has also identified the preferred alternative as the environmentally preferred alternative, since it represents the best option for the Opportunity Corridor project. FHWA also finds that all practicable measures to minimize environmental harm have been incorporated into the design of the preferred alternative. Appropriate environmental commitments will be carried out to mitigate impacts.

This decision is based on an evaluation of information presented in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), the attached FEIS and all technical reports and supporting documentation incorporated by reference into the DEIS and FEIS. Additional basis for this decision is contained in the remainder of this Record of Decision.

5-1-14
Date of Approval

Laura S. Leffler, Division Administrator,
Federal Highway Administration, Ohio Division
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RECORD OF DECISION

INTRODUCTION

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), as joint lead agencies, are proposing the construction of a new arterial roadway (urban boulevard) within the City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, Ohio. The following are participating agencies in this project:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- U.S. Department of the Interior
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Federal Railroad Administration
- Federal Transit Administration

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the project describes why the transportation project is needed, the alternatives that were studied, the preferred alternative and its potential effects on the human and natural environment, the efforts to include the public and agencies in the decision-making process, as well as the outcomes of these efforts. The DEIS also identifies proposed mitigation for unavoidable impacts.

The DEIS was published in the Federal Register on Sept. 13, 2013. A formal comment period began with the publication of the DEIS and ended on Oct. 31, 2013. In accordance with the provisions contained in the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), ODOT and FHWA are issuing a single document which combines the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and the Record of Decision (ROD). The intent to combine these documents was provided in a Coordination Plan sent to the project’s participating agencies in June 2013. After a thorough review of the comments received on the DEIS, ODOT and FHWA jointly affirmed the decision to prepare a combined FEIS/ROD document and notified the participating agencies of this intent on December 9, 2013.

The preferred alternative 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. The proposed boulevard will have two westbound through-lanes, but the number of eastbound through-lanes will vary. The project includes three eastbound through-lanes between I-490 and Woodland Avenue. In general, the roadway will have two through-lanes between Woodland Avenue and Chester Avenue, but the roadway between Cedar Avenue and Euclid Avenue will include a third eastbound through-lane. Left-turn lanes will also be added at many of the intersections.

The proposed boulevard will be approximately 3.6 miles long. Approximately 2.4 miles will be built where no roads exist now. Approximately 1.2 miles – the stretch from Quincy Avenue to Chester Avenue – will be built on existing East 105th Street. The boulevard will include a low, grassy median between East 55th Street and Cedar Avenue. However, the grassy median and tree lawns will not be included on the bridges. The proposed boulevard will also include a walking/biking path on the south side of the roadway, and a sidewalk on the north side. A detailed description of the preferred alternative, including changes to the local street network and proposed bridges is included in Section 3.5 on page 3-42 of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).
PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project is to improve the roadway network within a historically underserved, economically depressed area within the City of Cleveland.

The proposed project must address the following need elements:

- Improve system linkage;
- Improve mobility; and
- Support planned economic development.

The following goals have also been identified for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project:

- Improve public transportation connections; and
- Improve facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The alternatives for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project were developed through the ODOT’s Project Development Process, which uses environmental and engineering studies to find solutions for transportation problems. As part of the alternatives development and evaluation process, the project team coordinated extensively with those who live, work, own businesses, or have other special interests in the study area. This process, which is called context sensitive solutions (CSS) design, is intended to develop a project that fits within a community. Using CSS can help to keep and improve visual, historic, community and environmental resources while still meeting all of the project requirements. The Cleveland Opportunity Corridor steering committee also provided input. This 21-member group is made up of neighborhood, business, political and transportation agency representatives, and leaders of community development corporations.

ODOT began studying the Opportunity Corridor during the Cleveland Innerbelt study, which began in 2000. During this study, alternatives were developed to address the transportation needs associated with Cleveland’s Innerbelt Bridge. The alternatives studied included rehabilitation/reconstruction of existing roadways; Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures such as improving transit and providing lanes for High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV); Transportation System Management (TSM) measures to manage traffic volumes using technology and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS); capacity enhancements; and other geometric improvements. Several of these alternatives were recommended for further study either by ODOT or others.

As part of the Innerbelt Strategic Plan (July 2004), concepts were also developed to shift some traffic from the Innerbelt Bridge to other roads. One specific concept was to provide a better transportation connection between I-490 and University Circle. Both freeway and boulevard connections were studied, but the freeway alternative was not recommended due to costs, estimated property impacts and public opposition. The results of these studies and analyses were presented to the public at multiple public meetings held between 2001 and 2003.

Based on the recommendations of the Innerbelt study and public feedback, the project team decided that an urban boulevard – a new road with a wide median and traffic lights at intersections – should be further studied as part of separate project, which came to be known as the Opportunity Corridor project. The Opportunity Corridor project was officially started in 2004. The recommendations and conclusions of the Innerbelt study were used as the starting point for the Opportunity Corridor project alternatives development and evaluation. A range of alternatives was studied, including improving existing streets – such as East 55th Street and Woodland Avenue – as well as new roadways both north and south of the Norfolk Southern (NS)/Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) rail trench.
The alternative that widened East 55th Street and Woodland Avenue was removed from further study because the transportation benefits it would provide were not enough to justify the relatively high impacts to community facilities, cemeteries and churches. Generally speaking, new roadways north of the NS/GCRTA rail trench also were not studied further because they would not support the planned economic development in the Forgotten Triangle. Alternatives south of the NS/GCRTA rail trench were found to meet the project purpose and need and were studied further. The alternatives are described in more detail in the Opportunity Corridor Draft Strategic Plan (September 2006) and the Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives Study (October 2010). Alternatives such as Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and Transportation System Management (TSM) were not studied in detail during the development of the Opportunity Corridor project, because they would not meet all elements of the project’s purpose and need.

The development of the Opportunity Corridor project was placed on hold between 2006 and 2009 due to a lack of funding. Therefore, the first public meetings for the Opportunity Corridor project were held in September 2009. These meetings were used to introduce the project, gather input about the alternatives and confirm the work completed to date and captured in published planning studies. A second series of public meetings was held in October 2010. Several neighborhood meetings were also held between 2009 and 2010. Each of these meetings was used to present the alternatives studied to the public and project stakeholders, as well as to solicit their feedback.

Based on the public input and more detailed study, several alternatives were eliminated, leaving one remaining alternative. The recommended preferred alternative was presented to the public and project stakeholders at public meetings in July 2011. Based on the comments and input received at those meetings, the project team decided to evaluate the preferred alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

The preferred alternative involves building a 4- to 5-lane urban boulevard with traffic lights at intersections from the I-490-East 55th Street intersection to the East 105th Street-Chester Avenue intersection. The boulevard will include a low, grassy median between East 55th Street and Quincy Avenue. A raised median will be included between Quincy and Cedar avenues, although medians and tree lawns will not be included on the bridges. The proposed boulevard will also include a walking/biking path on the south side of the roadway, and a sidewalk on the north side.

In addition to the build alternatives, the No-Build Alternative was also studied. It included minor, regular short-term safety and maintenance efforts. It also included other major projects that would affect transportation in the study area. The No-Build Alternative did not meet the purpose and need for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project. The No-Build Alternative would keep existing connections between I-77 and University Circle, but it would not improve these connections. The No-Build Alternative would also not improve mobility or levels of service for traffic traveling to, from and within the area between I-77 and University Circle. This alternative also would not create the transportation infrastructure needed to support revival and redevelopment in and around the study area.

The preferred alternative meets the purpose and need for the project and will:

- Improve “system linkage” – connections among the roads, neighborhoods and businesses – with an east-west arterial street between I-77 and University Circle;
- Improve mobility – the movement of people between I-77 and the University Circle; and
- Create the infrastructure to support planned revival and redevelopment in and around the “Forgotten Triangle,” which is bordered by Kinsman Road, Woodland Avenue and Woodhill Road.

The preferred alternative will also accomplish the following objectives:

- Improve connectivity among transit facilities including GCRTA stations;
- Support redevelopment plans that could increase patronage within the transit system;
• Provide multiple transportation mode options by including safe bicycle and pedestrian facilities; and
• Improve connections to existing and planned multimodal facilities in and near the study area.

MEASURES TO MINIMIZE HARM

The project team has worked to avoid, minimize and mitigate the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project. This process included extensive efforts to involve the public and stakeholders in the planning and design of the proposed project. The primary environmental impacts of the project are the proposed acquisition and demolition of 64 residential buildings, 25 commercial buildings and one church. This will require the relocation of an estimated 76 residential units and 16 commercial occupants. In accordance with ODOT’s project development process, a pre-acquisition survey will be completed during final design to determine displacements and gather information necessary to complete the relocation process. Unavoidable impacts to low-income and minority populations would also occur. Several measures will be put into place to mitigate these impacts.

Table A summarizes resources present in the project area, anticipated impacts and the steps that will be taken to reduce or mitigate the impacts of the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project.

Table A: Environmental Resources, Impacts and Mitigation Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE</th>
<th>PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE</th>
<th>ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS AND MITIGATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Streams or Surface Water Bodies</td>
<td>No impacts.</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquatic Habitat</td>
<td>No impacts.</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Quality</td>
<td>Improved water quality through:</td>
<td>• An Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit will be obtained before construction activities occur. Coordination with OEPA and the Northeast Ohio Sewer District (NEORSD) will continue during final design.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Construction of a separate storm sewer system.</td>
<td>• A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be prepared by the contractor.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Construction of a depressed grassy median to slow down runoff and naturally filter it.</td>
<td>• Best Management Practices (BMPs) from ODOT’s Construction and Material Specifications will be used during and after construction to control erosion and sediment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Construction of a detention basin in the Kingsbury Run Ravine to store stormwater and slowly release it.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wetlands</td>
<td>No impacts.</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened and Endangered Species or Habitat</td>
<td>• 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.</td>
<td>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, prior to the cutting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The project is not likely to impact these species.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floodplains</td>
<td>No impacts.</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farmland</td>
<td>No impacts.</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Use</td>
<td>Consistent with planned development and local land use plans.</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Property*               | • Approximately 46.9 acres permanent right of way.  
|                         | • Approximately 39.0 acres temporary easement.  
|                         | • Approximately 16% of the land needed is owned by the City of Cleveland Land Bank Program. | None.                                  |
| Residential Relocations*| 64 buildings/ 76 units (estimated) | None.                                  |
| Commercial Business Relocations* | 25 buildings/ 16 occupants (estimated) | None.                                  |
| Church Relocations (Buildings)* | 1 building | None.                                  |
| Bicycles and Pedestrians | Improved overall bicycle and pedestrian connections, access and safety by building features for these users. | None.                                  |
| Roadway Connections     | Several streets would be cul-de-sac’d and/or closed. | Where feasible, sidewalks will be extended to the new roadway to maintain pedestrian connections in areas where streets are closed. |
| Public Transportation   | • Bicycle and pedestrian connections to existing transit facilities will be maintained and, in some cases, improved.  
|                         | • Four bus stops on GCRTA Bus Route 11 and one bus stop on Bus Route 10 will be affected by the closure of Quincy Avenue. | • GCRTA will modify bus routes in the vicinity of Woodhill Road/Quincy Avenue as necessary to maintain access for transit dependent populations. All modifications to existing public transportation services will be made in accordance with GCRTA’s Title VI Program as well as its environmental justice and service change policies.  
|                         | | • ODOT will fund 80-percent (up to $3.2 million) of a project to extend the platform at and construct a new ADA-compliant entrance to the GCRTA E. 105th Street-Quincy Avenue train station.  
|                         | | • ODOT will 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.  
|                         | | • ODOT will coordinate street closures with GCRTA prior to and during construction to assure that no lapses in bus service occur. |

* The purchase of private property and cost of moving residents, businesses and churches to build the project would be regulated by state and federal laws, including the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act (Uniform Act). These laws provide for the fair and equal treatment of all persons affected by the project.
<table>
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<tr>
<td>Community or Public Services</td>
<td>Improved access for emergency service providers.</td>
<td>None.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traffic Noise</td>
<td>The project is predicted to have traffic noise impacts in 24 general locations.</td>
<td>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.</td>
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</table>
| Air Quality | • The project is not a project of air quality concern. Additionally, no predicted violations of National Ambient Air Quality Standards would occur as a result of the project.  
• The project is categorized as “Low potential for Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSAT) effects.” | None. |
<p>| Visual Resources | Several design features were coordinated with the community during the CSS design process to improve the look of the study area. | Public involvement will continue during final design to determine locations and details of community-focused design features. The public will be given the opportunity to have 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). |</p>
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| Environmental Justice  | Would result in disproportionately high and adverse impacts to low-income and minority populations. | The following measures are proposed to mitigate the impacts and provide added benefits to the local community:  
- ODOT will build two pedestrian/bike bridges: one at East 59th Street and one at East 89th Street. The bridges will include lighting and will be maintained by the City of Cleveland.  
- ODOT will implement a voluntary residential relocation program to allow some residents whose homes are not directly impacted by the project to be eligible for relocation assistance. Voluntary relocations will be offered assistance and benefits that match those provided to the required relocations. Federal-aid transportation funding will not be utilized for this measure.  
- For required and voluntary 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.  
- ODOT will contribute $500,000 toward the planned expansion of the Kenneth L. Johnson (Woodland) Recreational Center.  
- ODOT will help create a new entrance into the St. Hyacinth neighborhood by constructing enhancements along Maurice and Bellford avenues. This will include street trees and sidewalk and pavement repairs or improvements and will be coordinated with the project stakeholders during final design.  
- ODOT will 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.  
- ODOT will provide, at a minimum, $500,000 to be utilized for on-the-job training that will target training opportunities for individuals in the immediate vicinity of the project. Federal-aid transportation funds will not be utilized for this mitigation measure. |
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| Parks and Recreational Resources (Section 4(f) and Section 6(f)) | The Kenneth L. Johnson (Woodland) Recreation Center, located at 9206 Woodland Avenue, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Temporary easement (approximately 0.19 acres) will be needed from the planned expansion area of the rec center. The land would be needed for about six months. | During final design, ODOT will coordinate with the National Park Service (NPS) through the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) for any anticipated Section 6(f) impacts to the rec center. This coordination will occur approximately one to two years before plans are finalized. To minimize impacts to the rec center, the following items will be included in the final design plans:  
- The plans will require the contractor to protect rec center areas and users with warnings signs, gates, barricades or fences during construction;  
- Access to the rec center will be maintained at all times. The contractor will be required to closely coordinate the construction schedule with the City of Cleveland. Two weeks before the construction starts, the contractor will notify the city, in writing, of the occupation dates;  
- Any disturbed areas will be put back to a condition at least as good as or better than what was there before construction started;  
- No staging/storage of construction equipment will be on the rec center property; and  
- If unexpected work on the rec center property is needed, advance notice will be given to the City of Cleveland and ODOT to decide if additional coordination is needed. |
| Cultural Resources (Section 106 and Section 4(f))           | ![Table content](#)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | None.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
### Industrial Properties (Regulated Materials)

- 26 properties require Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) during final design.
- 16 properties currently require Phase II ESAs during final design. Additional Phase II ESAs may be required based on the results of the Phase I ESAs.

### Construction Impacts

Potential temporary construction effects could include:
- Temporary use of land to build the new boulevard and other features;
- Temporary increase in noise from construction equipment and activities;
- Temporary decrease in local air quality due to increased emissions from construction equipment and dust;
- Temporary travel delays and detours affecting roadway users, as well as community and emergency services; and
- Temporary interruption of existing utility services.

### Preferred Alternative

During final design, the project sponsor will complete the remaining Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) for the properties affected by the proposed project. Any properties recommended for further study will also be evaluated through Phase II ESAs. The results of those studies, including any requirements for material handling and disposal and worker protection, will be included in the design plans for the project.

### Environmental Commitments and Mitigation

- Temporary noise impacts from construction activities will be minimized through the use of pre-approved haul routes to bring materials to/from the project. The contractor must also comply with City of Cleveland noise ordinances and other local laws governing construction.
- State and local regulations regarding dust control will be followed to minimize air quality impacts during construction. Emissions from construction activities will be minimized through dust control measures outlined in ODOT’s Construction and Material Specifications.
- 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.
- As part of final design, a maintenance of traffic plan will be prepared to provide access to residences, businesses, public facilities, community services, and local roads during construction. The plan will include coordination with local emergency service providers, as well as news media to keep the general public informed of planned construction activities.
- Utility relocations will be coordinated to avoid and/or minimize inconvenience to customers.
Indirect and Cumulative Effects

- The project could affect the timing and location of planned economic development. However, the effects of any future land use change would also largely be determined by local plans and regulations.
- Future land use change could also impact more residents and businesses, although they would be able to choose if they want to move out of the area. If this happens, replacement housing and business sites should be available in nearby neighborhoods.
- The project could result in indirect effects to historic resources. These impacts will be avoided or minimized through existing local, state, and federal regulations and requirements.
- The project would not result in indirect or cumulative effects to natural resources.
- The project may provide increased economic activity and job opportunities.
- The project would also improve regional water quality.

None.

MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) are ultimately responsible for monitoring and enforcing mitigation measures. ODOT, as well as the contractor, are responsible for compliance assurance of all related commitments and regulatory permit conditions made or obtained for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project.

CONCLUSION

The environmental record for this decision includes the following documents:

- The Cleveland Opportunity Corridor Project Final Environmental Impact Statement FHWA-OH-EIS-13-01-F (April 2014)
- All technical reports and supporting documentation incorporated by reference into the DEIS and FEIS.

These documents, incorporated here by reference, constitute the statements required by the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) and Title 23 of the United States Code on:

- The environmental impacts of the project;
- The adverse environmental effects that cannot be avoided should the project be implemented;
- Alternatives to the proposed project; and
- Irreversible and irretrievable impacts on the environment that may be involved with the project should it be implemented.
Having carefully considered the environmental record noted above, the mitigation measures as required herein, the written and oral comments offered by other agencies and the public on this record, and the written responses to the comments, FHWA has determined that the preferred alternative is also the environmentally preferred alternative. The preferred alternative represents the best option for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project. FHWA finds that all practicable measures to minimize environmental harm have been incorporated into the design of the preferred alternative. FHWA will ensure that the commitments outlined herein will be implemented as part of final design, construction contract, and post-construction monitoring. FHWA also determines that this decision is in the best overall public interest.
CLEVELAND OPPORTUNITY CORRIDOR PROJECT
CUY – OPPORTUNITY CORRIDOR
PID 77333 City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, Ohio

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Submitted Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 4332 (2) (c) and 49 U.S.C. 303

By the

U.S. Department of Transportation – Federal Highway Administration – Ohio Division, and the Ohio Department of Transportation, as Joint Lead Agencies pursuant to 23 U.S. C. 1 39 (c)

With the participation of the

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Federal Railroad Administration
Federal Transit Administration

Date of Approval 4/25/14

Jerry Wray, Director, Ohio Department of Transportation

Date of Approval 5/1/14

Laura S. Leffler, Division Administrator, Federal Highway Administration, Ohio Division

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A Federal agency may publish a notice in the Federal Register, pursuant to 23 USC §139(l), indicating that one or more Federal agencies have taken final action on permits, licenses, or approvals for a transportation project. If such notice is published, claims seeking judicial review of those Federal agency actions will be barred unless such claims are filed within 150 days after the date of publication of the notice, or within such shorter time period as is specified in the Federal laws pursuant to which judicial review of the Federal agency action is allowed. If no notice is published, then the periods of time that otherwise are provided by the Federal laws governing such claims will apply.
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 WHAT IS THE CLEVELAND OPPORTUNITY CORRIDOR PROJECT?

The project is located in the City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, Ohio. 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. The proposed boulevard between the I-490-East 55th Street intersection and Quincy Avenue generally will be built where no roads exist today, but the stretch from Quincy Avenue to Chester Avenue will be built on existing East 105th Street.

The proposed boulevard will have two westbound through-lanes, but the number of eastbound through-lanes will vary. The project includes three eastbound through-lanes between I-490 and Woodland Avenue. In general, the roadway will have two through-lanes between Woodland Avenue and Chester Avenue, but the roadway between Cedar Avenue and Euclid Avenue will include a third eastbound through-lane. Left-turn lanes will also be added at many of the intersections.

The boulevard will include a low, grassy median between East 55th Street and Quincy Avenue. A raised median will be included between Quincy and Cedar avenues. Medians and tree lawns will not be included on the bridges. The proposed boulevard will also include a walking/biking path on the south side of the roadway and a sidewalk on the north side. Please refer to Section 3.5 on page 3-42 of this Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for a more detailed description of the preferred alternative.

1.2 WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE PROJECT?

The DEIS answers the question, “What is an Environmental Impact Statement?” on pages 1-6 through 1-8. Figure 1-1 below is an updated graphic that shows the process used to develop the Opportunity Corridor EIS and the project’s current status.

Figure 1-1: The EIS Process

A Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS was published in the Federal Register on Sept. 1, 2010. A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Cleveland Opportunity Project was published on Sept. 13, 2013 to evaluate the preferred alternative in detail. Agencies and the public were given the opportunity to review the DEIS and other project information and provide comments to ODOT by Oct. 31, 2013. A
public hearing for the DEIS was held on Oct. 1, 2013. Since then, the project team has reviewed the input received during the comment period and completed additional coordination with the project stakeholders. Based on those efforts, the project team has made minor updates to the design of the preferred alternative and further defined the mitigation measures incorporated into the project. The activities and updates that have taken place since the DEIS was published are summarized in this FEIS.

1.3 WHAT IS A FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT?
This FEIS summarizes what has changed or been updated since the DEIS was published. To avoid repeating information that has not changed, the DEIS is incorporated into the FEIS by reference. The format of the FEIS closely follows the DEIS. Each chapter of the FEIS briefly summarizes information from the DEIS which has not changed but primarily focuses on changes or updates in the project’s design, setting, technical analysis, impacts and mitigation. The FEIS also clarifies key topics that were raised during the DEIS comment period. Finally, the FEIS describes the agency and public comments received on the DEIS and provides responses to those comments.

1.4 WHAT IS A RECORD OF DECISION?
The Record of Decision (ROD) is the formal approval of the EIS and the preferred alternative, which will allow the project to move toward final design and construction. The ROD identifies the preferred alternative, explains the reasons for the project decision, summarizes the mitigation measures that will be incorporated in the project and describes how the mitigation measures will be monitored and/or enforced.

1.5 WHY ARE THE FEIS AND THE ROD COMBINED?
Historically, FEIS and ROD documents were issued as separate documents with a minimum 30-day period between the FEIS and ROD. However, that process was changed in 2012 when Congress passed the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) bill. Section 1319(b) of MAP-21, Accelerated Decisionmaking in Environmental Reviews, allows the FEIS and ROD to be combined into a single document unless:

1. The FEIS makes substantial changes to the proposed action that are relevant to environmental or safety concerns; or
2. There are significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and that bear on the proposed action or the impacts of the proposed action.

While this FEIS summarizes minor updates to the preferred alternative, none of the updates are anticipated to substantially change the proposed action or the potential impacts that are described in the DEIS. Furthermore, this FEIS does not present substantive new circumstances or information about the project or the associated environmental concerns. Therefore, the ROD for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project is included as part of the executive summary of the FEIS. ODOT notified the participating agencies for the Opportunity Corridor project of its intent to prepare a combined FEIS/ROD on Dec. 9, 2013 (see Appendix A).
2 PURPOSE AND NEED

2.1 WHAT ABOUT THE PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED HAS CHANGED SINCE THE DEIS?

The purpose and need for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project has not changed since the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was published. There were no substantive comments received on the DEIS that would affect the purpose and need. This chapter provides an overview of the project purpose and need using content from the DEIS. It is important to note that no new analysis regarding purpose and need is included in this Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). For a detailed summary of the purpose and need for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project, refer to Chapter 2 of the DEIS, which is incorporated by reference into this FEIS.

2.2 WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE CLEVELAND OPPORTUNITY CORRIDOR PROJECT?

The purpose of the project is to improve the roadway network within a historically underserved, economically depressed area in the City of Cleveland.

2.3 WHAT BASIC TRANSPORTATION NEEDS MUST THE PROJECT MEET?

The proposed project must:

1. **Improve system linkage** – The Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project must provide improved access between I-77 and University Circle.

2. **Improve mobility** – The Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project must provide improved mobility and better levels of service for traffic traveling to, from and within the area between I-77 and University Circle.

3. **Support planned economic development** – The purpose of the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project 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.

2.4 HOW DO ‘GOALS AND OBJECTIVES’ FIT INTO PURPOSE AND NEED?

Goals and objectives are not the basic transportation needs a project must meet, but they are used along with the needs to study a project. The goals and objectives were not used to choose alternatives, but they were used to guide the design. They helped to define the design features and space requirements of the build alternatives.

The goals and objectives for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project include:

1. **Improve public transportation connections** – The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) stations located along East 79th Street have the lowest ridership on the rail system due to limited activity around the sites. A goal of the project is to provide better connections to these stations. The project should also support planned economic development that will increase the number of GCRTA riders.
2. **Improve facilities for pedestrians and cyclists** – The City of Cleveland and the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) have adopted plans focused on improving bicycle facilities in the area of the project. A goal of the project is to support these efforts by providing safe bike and pedestrian facilities. This will also provide people that live in the neighborhoods with choices about how to travel. Another goal of the project is to improve connections to existing and planned pedestrian and bike paths.

2.5 **WHERE WILL THE PROJECT BEGIN AND END?**

The project will begin at I-490-East 55th Street in the west and end at Chester Avenue/East 105th Street in the east. These roads are logical endpoints for goods, employees, patients, students, residents and tourists who live or travel in the area. After reaching I-490/I-77/East 55th Street, people can drive to I-77, I-71 and I-90 and connect to western and southern suburbs, or the Cleveland Hopkins International Airport. When people reach East 105th Street/Chester Avenue, they can go on to the University Circle area or other eastern suburbs.

The beginning and end points of the project have been agreed upon by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). They provide an area that is just the right size to meet the project purpose and need. This allows for, but does not require, future projects in the study area or in the region. It also assures that other transportation improvements are not needed for the project to be useful to the public.
3 ALTERNATIVES

3.1 HAVE ANY NEW ALTERNATIVES BEEN STUDIED SINCE THE DEIS?

No new alternatives have been studied since the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was published. This chapter provides updates to the following sections of the DEIS:

- How were the alternatives developed? (DEIS pages 3-1 and 3-2)
- What is the preferred alternative? (DEIS pages 3-7 through 3-9)

In addition, the comments received on the DEIS indicated that the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) should provide more details about the alternatives that were analyzed for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project. Other comments requested further details about the preferred alternative. Therefore, this chapter also addresses the following questions:

- “What is the full range of alternatives considered and why were some eliminated from further study?”
- “What about the preferred alternative has been updated since the publication of the DEIS?”
- “How does the preferred alternative comply with other transit-related plans?”
- “How was the preferred alternative coordinated with other local plans and initiatives?”

The FEIS does not include updates to the other sections in Chapter 3 of the DEIS.

3.2 HOW WERE THE ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPED?

The alternatives for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project were developed through the Ohio Department of Transportation’s (ODOT’s) Project Development Process (PDP), which uses environmental and engineering studies to find solutions for transportation problems. The process begins with looking at transportation problems and needs and studying existing data about an area. As the process moves along, new information is gathered, and engineering designs are refined. Alternatives that don’t address the transportation needs, are too expensive or would cause too many impacts are removed from further study. The remaining alternatives are studied in greater detail until one, preferred alternative is identified.

The DEIS and this FEIS summarize the major design features of the preferred alternative and its potential impacts. The information is based on the preliminary engineering design. As the project moves toward final design and construction, the engineering design will be refined even more, including efforts to further minimize impacts. 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 natural and human environmental resources. The DEIS also considers potential indirect and cumulative effects.

Numerous alternatives were considered before the preferred alternative for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project was identified. The DEIS provides a general discussion of these alternatives and refers to several detailed documents, including:

- Cleveland Innerbelt Strategic Plan (July 2004);
- Opportunity Corridor Draft Strategic Plan (September 2006);
- Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives Study (October 2010);
- Early Analysis of West Alternates (March 2011);
3.3 WHAT IS THE FULL RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND WHY WERE SOME ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER STUDY?

Throughout the project development process, detailed evaluation matrices were prepared to compare the impacts and benefits associated with the alternatives. The information in the evaluation matrices, along with public and stakeholder input, was used to identify alternatives that should be dismissed from consideration and those that should be studied further. At each stage in ODOT’s Project Development Process (PDP), new evaluation matrices were prepared to reflect the most current data available and refinements to the alternatives. The evaluation matrices prepared for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project can be found in the following locations:

- **Opportunity Corridor Draft Strategic Plan** (September 2006) – Appendix G;
- **Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives Study** (October 2010) – Appendix B; and
- **Analysis of Central Alternates** (June 2011) – Table 1, page 3.

The reports listed above are on the CD included with the DEIS and are incorporated by reference into both the DEIS and this FEIS.

Cleveland Innerbelt Study

In 2000, ODOT began studying the Opportunity Corridor as a result of public comments received during the Cleveland Innerbelt study. During this study, alternatives were developed to address the transportation needs associated with Cleveland’s Innerbelt Bridge. The alternatives studied included rehabilitation/reconstruction of existing roadways; Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures such as improving transit and providing lanes for High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV); Transportation System Management (TSM) measures to manage traffic volumes using technology and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS); capacity enhancements; and other geometric improvements.

**Figure 3-1** on page 3-3, shows the TDM measures developed and evaluated during the Cleveland Innerbelt study. **Figure 3-2** on page 3-4 shows the TSM measures developed and evaluated during the Cleveland Innerbelt study.

Some TDM and TSM measures were eliminated from consideration. The following is excerpted from the Cleveland Innerbelt Strategic Plan:

> “Several configurations of dedicated HOV and shared use HOV facilities were considered during this phase of the study. None of the alternatives considered had a major impact on bus ridership and none had any real congestion impact in the peak hour as measured in vehicle hours of delay . . . . Thus, HOV facilities were not considered as a potential component of any of the Hybrid Alternatives.”

*Excerpted from the Cleveland Innerbelt Strategic Plan (July 2004), pages 1-94 and 1-95*
Figure 3-1
Cleveland Innerbelt Transit/HOV Concept
Source: Cleveland Innerbelt Strategic Plan, July 2004, page 1-70, Figure 1-13
Not to Scale
Figure 3-2
Cleveland Innerbelt ITS/TSM Concept

Not to Scale

Source: Cleveland Innerbelt Strategic Plan, July 2004, page 1-72, Figure 1-14

CUY-Opportunity Corridor
(PID 77333)
Cleveland, OH

NORTH
However, several TDM and TSM measures were recommended in the Cleveland Innerbelt Strategic Plan (July 2004, pages 3-7 and 3-8). These are summarized below:

- **The Cleveland Freeway Management System (FMS)** included implementing a series of Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) improvements on I-71/I-90/I-77/I-480/I-490 in the Innerbelt corridor. The FMS was subsequently completed as a separate project.

- **An Arterial Management System (AMS)** included implementing a computerized signalization system for managing flow on the Cleveland street system providing access and egress to the freeway. Implementing an AMS would be the responsibility of the City of Cleveland. To date, no funding or strategy for implementing an AMS has been identified. The City currently maintains five downtown coordinated signal systems. However, the signals are not tied into the interstates or their traffic monitoring/traveler information system.

- **A Priority Corridor System** included a series of improvements to the downtown Cleveland arterial street system to develop a hierarchical street classification system, improve traffic flow and enhance pedestrian safety/circulation. Implementing a Priority Corridor System would be the responsibility of the City of Cleveland. To date, no funding strategy for implementing this system has been identified. However, one of the priority corridors – the Shoreway – was studied as an independent corridor.

- **Transit improvements** included expansions of park-and-ride facilities, transit service and bus service. Many of the transit improvements identified in the Cleveland Innerbelt Strategic Plan were adopted by the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA). Since then, several improvements (many of which were identified in the strategic plan) have been completed, including:
  
  » Expansions to the Strongsville, North Olmsted and Westlake park-and-ride facilities;
  
  » Improvements to the Shaker Square, East 55th Street, Puritas/West 150th Street, West 117th Street/Madison Avenue and Buckeye/Woodhill rapid transit stations;
  
  » The new Stephanie Tubbs Jones Intermodal Transit Center in downtown Cleveland;
  
  » New service for the 55F Gold line along the northwest corridor, downtown trolleys and the Euclid Avenue HealthLine;
  
  » Expanded service on 31 routes and lines, including increased frequency on all rail lines; and
  
  » Planning and design for a new Red Line rapid transit station in University Circle/Little Italy and the West Shoreway bus express lanes.

The Cleveland Innerbelt study also developed concepts to shift some traffic from Cleveland’s Innerbelt Bridge to other roads. One specific concept was to provide a better transportation connection between I-490 and University Circle. ODOT studied both freeway and boulevard alternatives to make this connection. These alternatives were developed based on stakeholder and public feedback and were originally known as the University Circle Access (UCA) Freeway and the University Circle Access (UCA) Boulevard. The following is excerpted from the Cleveland Innerbelt Strategic Plan:

> “Over the course of the study, the team hosted thirteen general public meetings that went along with important project milestones. Meetings were scheduled within the Study Corridor and served to inform the public of the project status and offer the opportunity to provide comments..."
The first large, general public meeting was held January 24, 2001 at Cleveland State University. The meeting was attended by over 250 residents and members of the media. The “You Plan It” station utilized in the open house portion of the meeting was useful in soliciting public suggestions for potential improvements to the roadway network. At this station attendees were asked to draw their solutions on the study area map while working with a facilitator from the study team. The ideas for the University Circle Access Boulevard, University Circle Access Freeway, and Innerbelt Boulevard Alternative Concepts were a direct result of input garnered at this station.”

Excerpted from the Cleveland Innerbelt Strategic Plan (July 2004), pages 1-57 and 1-58

For the UCA Boulevard, two flexible alignments (shown in Figure 3-3 on page 3-8) were developed. The following is excerpted from the Cleveland Innerbelt Strategic Plan:

“One of the major concerns that was raised as part of the initial public involvement that was done as part of this study was that there is no convenient access to University Circle from I-71, I-90, or I-77. Much of the traffic coming from these three routes currently utilizes the Innerbelt to access either Carnegie or Chester to, in turn, access the University Circle area. To address this, it was suggested that a four- or six-lane boulevard extending from the end of I-490 out to the University Circle area be considered . . . . Two possible alignments for this boulevard were examined.

The first potential alignment utilizes existing railroad right-of-way. The UCA Boulevard will begin at the intersection of I-490-E 55th Street and extend east into the railroad right-of-way. To minimize neighborhood impacts, some realignment of I-490 is proposed just west of the existing I-490-E 55th Street intersection. The existing alignment of I-490 is displaced to the north to move the intersection of I-490-E 55th Street further north. This will require the relocation of an existing RTA facility, but will allow the UCA Boulevard to access the railroad right-of-way in a more direct fashion. The UCA Boulevard will then extend along this railroad right-of-way to East 105th Street near University Circle. It will then turn north and run up the East 105th Street corridor as far as Carnegie. Intersection access would be provided for all major cross-streets.

The second potential alignment begins at the existing intersection of I-490-E 55th Street. It runs up East 55th Street and connects to Woodland Avenue either through the existing intersection of East 55th Street/Woodland Avenue or via the Grand Avenue corridor. The UCA Boulevard then runs along the Woodland Avenue corridor to the railroad right-of-way. From there along the railroad right-of-way to East 105th Street where it turns north and follows the East 105th Street corridor as far as Carnegie Avenue.”

Excerpted from the Cleveland Innerbelt Strategic Plan (July 2004), pages 1-78 and 1-81

The UCA Freeway Concept (shown in Figure 3-4 on page 3-9) followed a similar alignment, but continued north to I-90. The following is excerpted from the Cleveland Innerbelt Strategic Plan:

“[The UCA Freeway] concept takes the idea of removing University Circle traffic from the Innerbelt one step further by also looking at ways to remove through interstate traffic from the Innerbelt. This would be accomplished by creating a new interstate alignment along existing railroad right-of-way to provide for an east side by-pass of Cleveland.
This concept calls for extending I-490 from East 55th Street along Norfolk and Southern, CSX, and RTA rights-of-way to I-90/East Shoreway near East 133rd Street. The freeway would have limited access, with potential interchanges near East 55th Street, Kinsman Road, Buckeye Road/Woodland Avenue, Euclid Avenue near East 118th Street, Superior Avenue, and St. Clair Avenue at Woodworth Road.”

excerpted from the Cleveland Innerbelt Strategic Plan (July 2004), page 1-81

The public was given the chance to provide input on both the UCA Boulevard and UCA Freeway concepts. Based on the public comments received, the UCA Freeway concept was removed from further consideration. The following is excerpted from the Cleveland Innerbelt Strategic Plan:

“The Alternative Concepts [which included the UCA Freeway and UCA Boulevard] were unveiled to the general public on October 11, 2001 at the Greek Orthodox Church of Annunciation in Tremont. The initial ten Alternative Concepts were communicated in both open house and town hall formats at this meeting, which was attended by over 130 people. The refined Alternative Concepts [which included the UCA Freeway and UCA Boulevard] were presented at a general public meeting on November 15, 2001 at Cleveland State University.”

Excerpted from the Cleveland Innerbelt Strategic Plan (July 2004), page 1-58

“A continuation of the freeway [UCA Freeway] was approached early in the Cleveland Innerbelt Study, but a new freeway was not well received by the public. Through public involvement, a boulevard [UCA Boulevard] beginning at the I-490 stub evolved and received public support. With the stub of I-490 available and a nearby, vertically depressed rail corridor available, to minimize property impacts, the western end and general corridor were established.”

Excerpted from the Cleveland Innerbelt Strategic Plan (July 2004), page 2-37

Eight alternatives, including the UCA Boulevard, were studied further as Conceptual Alternatives. Public input was also gathered as these alternatives were refined. The following is excerpted from the Cleveland Innerbelt Strategic Plan:

“The results of the detailed analysis of the eight Conceptual Alternatives [including UCA Boulevard] were presented to the general public in a series of three meetings set in each major region of the study area. The first meeting was held on January 21, 2003 at the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation in Tremont. The second was held on January 28, 2003 at the Cuyahoga Community College. The third was held on January 29, 2003 at the Slovenian National Home in the St. Clair-Superior neighborhood.”

Excerpted from the Cleveland Innerbelt Strategic Plan (July 2004), page 1-58
Figure 3-3
Cleveland Innerbelt University Circle Access Boulevard Concept

Source: Cleveland Innerbelt Strategic Plan, July 2004, page 2-40, Figure 2-16

CUY-Opportunity Corridor (PID 77333)
Cleveland, OH

Not to Scale
CUY-Opportunity Corridor (PID 77333)  
Cleveland, OH

Source: Cleveland Innerbelt Strategic Plan, July 2004, page 1-82, Figure 1-20

Not to Scale

Figure 3-4  
Cleveland Innerbelt University Circle Freeway Access Concept  
Page 3-9
Input from stakeholders and the public, combined with engineering analysis, caused several Conceptual Alternatives to be eliminated from consideration. The remaining alternatives, which included the UCA Boulevard, were combined into a set of four Hybrid Alternatives. The following is excerpted from the Cleveland Innerbelt Strategic Plan:

“The Hybrid Alternatives [including UCA Boulevard] were unveiled in a series of three general public meetings: October 21, 2003 at the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation in Tremont; October 2, 2003 at Quincy Place in the Fairfax-Renaissance neighborhood; and, October 29, 2003 at the Slovenian National Home in the St. Clair-Superior neighborhood.”

Excerpted from the Cleveland Innerbelt Strategic Plan (July 2004), page 1-59

Based on feedback from public meetings and more engineering analysis, the study team recommended a final plan for the Cleveland Innerbelt, which included developing the UCA Boulevard as a stand-alone project. The following is excerpted from the Cleveland Innerbelt Strategic Plan:

“The final general public meeting for the study was held on June 16, 2004 at the Visiting Nurses Association near the Central Business District (CBD). At this meeting, the Recommended Design Concept and Scope and the Strategic Plan [including a recommendation to develop the UCA Boulevard as a stand-alone project] was communicated to the public in an open house format meeting.”

Excerpted from the Cleveland Innerbelt Strategic Plan (July 2004), page 1-59

The comments and feedback received from the June 16, 2004, meeting confirmed the recommended approach to study the UCA Boulevard as a stand-alone project.

The Cleveland Opportunity Corridor Project

In late 2004, ODOT began studying the University Circle Access (UCA) Boulevard as part of separate project, which came to be known as the Opportunity Corridor project. The Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project noted that the alternatives being considered were born out of previous planning efforts for the UCA Boulevard completed as part of the Cleveland Innerbelt study.

Transportation Systems Management (TSM) alternatives were considered in the early planning of the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project. TSM alternatives would not meet all elements of the project’s purpose and need. For example, TSM alternatives would not improve system linkage by providing the missing east-west arterial street between I-77 and University Circle. TSM alternatives also would not provide the transportation infrastructure to support planned economic development in and around the Forgotten Triangle. As a result, TSM alternatives were dismissed from further evaluation and not studied in detail as part of the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project.

Within the Opportunity Corridor study area, there are several existing transit facilities, including the GCRTA Red Line, the GCRTA Blue Line, the GCRTA Green Line, four GCRTA rapid transit stations, as well as several bus routes and bus stops (see Figure 4-1 on page 4-9 and Figure 4-2 on page 4-10). As part of the Opportunity Corridor project development process, the project team worked closely with the regional transit service provider (GCRTA) and other local community organizations to confirm that transit needs were appropriately considered as part of the project. GCRTA and the Northeast Ohio Coordinating Agency (NOACA) were members of the steering committee and provided input regarding transit and other modal.

Ohio Department of Transportation

Federal Highway Administration

3-10
options throughout the project’s development in both steering committee and individual stakeholder meetings.

Because the area is already well-served by transit, GCRTA did not express a need for capital improvements to the existing transit system. Furthermore, transit improvements would not meet all elements of the project’s purpose and need. Specifically, transit improvements would not improve system linkage by providing the missing east-west arterial street between I-77 and University Circle. Transit improvements alone would not provide the necessary transportation infrastructure to support planned economic development in and around the Forgotten Triangle. As a result, transit alternatives were dismissed from further evaluation and not studied in detail as part of the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project.

However, GCRTA did note that the Kingsbury Run Valley, the trench for the GCRTA Blue/Green Line and the Norfolk Southern Railway (NS) Cleveland Main Line currently restrict pedestrian and bicycle mobility and access to public transit. GCRTA and the local community organizations also expressed an interest in maximizing currently underutilized transit infrastructure. For example, the existing Red Line train station at E. 79th Street has the lowest ridership on the entire GCRTA rail system due to limited activity around the station. As a result of this input, a stated goal of the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project is to provide better connections to existing transit stations, as well as to support planned economic development that will increase the number of GCRTA riders (see DEIS page 2-6).

To address the transit goals listed above, all of the alternatives developed for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project included new facilities for pedestrians and bicycles to increase connectivity to public transit stations and stops. Furthermore, the alternatives included bridges over the Kingsbury Run Valley, the GCRTA Blue/Green Line and the NS rail line to reduce barriers to public transit access. Finally, economic development potential and modal options were two of the criteria considered during the evaluation of alternatives.

One of the first steps in the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project was to establish a steering committee to advise the project team. The members and roles of the steering committee have changed over time. In the early planning stages, the committee was made up mostly of businesses, political and transportation agency representatives, and leaders of community development corporations. The purpose of the steering committee was to represent neighborhood and business interests in the project; encourage public input and participation; and help build support for the project. The following is excerpted from the Opportunity Corridor Draft Strategic Plan:

“During [the early planning stages] of this project, there were two (2) meetings of the full steering committee, and three (3) committee workshops. Invitations were sent to the entire committee for both types of meetings. The full committee meetings were meetings where concurrence was requested from the committee, versus the workshops that were more focused on brainstorming and evaluating the alternatives that were developed . . . . The initial meeting for this project was held on May 19, 2005 at NOACA. The first workshop for this project was held on June 16, 2005 at Quincy Place. The second workshop was held on August 18, [2005] at Quincy Place. The third workshop was held on September 22, 2005 at Quincy Place . . . .

. . . . numerous stakeholder meetings were held at the request of local stakeholders and ODOT District 12. Meetings were held with local business owners, Community Development Corporations, and local institutions . . . . The goal of these meetings was to gather input on what these stakeholders wanted to see as a result of this project, what they did not want to see, and what was included in their master plans.”

Excerpted from the Opportunity Corridor Draft Strategic Plan (September 2006), page 6
Based on the findings of the Cleveland Innerbelt study as well as stakeholder input, four preliminary alternatives were developed to make the connection between I-490 and University Circle. The following is excerpted from the Opportunity Corridor Draft Strategic Plan:

“The goal of supporting community and economic development was not identified during the Innerbelt Study. Therefore the preliminary alternatives investigated during that study were developed next to the railroads to minimize residential impacts. More investigation of these early alternatives identified substantial commercial and railroad impacts. After discussions with stakeholders, the concepts were changed to add intersections with local streets; to maximize economic development potential; to minimize disturbances to existing or planned facilities and to minimize neighborhood impacts . . . .

During discussions with project stakeholders during project initiation, four preliminary alternatives were developed [see Figure 3-5 on page 3-15] . . . . Alternative 1 was a minimal build alternative following existing E. 55th St. to existing Woodland Ave. then making a new direct connection to existing E. 105th St. Although this alternative used existing streets, the potential impacts associated with it were severe. There were a number of religious and cultural institutions impacted, and at least two cemetery impacts associated with this alternative. In terms of economic and community development, this property along this alternative was along an already developed corridor, so the potential for new development along it was considered minimal . . . .

Alternative 2 was a mix of a northern and southern alternative and an update of one of the alternatives developed during the Innerbelt Study. This alternative crossed over the railroad yard just west of E. 55th St., followed existing Grand Avenue north of the railroad tracks, then crossed back over the tracks just east of Kinsman. After crossing back south the tracks, Alternative 2 continued along the tracks until it intersected with Buckeye. Alternative 2 then used part of existing Woodland Avenue until turning north on a new path to make a direct connection to E. 105th St. It had large impacts to Orlando Baking Company’s loading dock and other facilities; it generally only created economic development potential along one side of the roadway, due to retaining walls and proximity to the railroad; proximity to the NS rail to rail grade separation did not allow for an intersection at E. 79th St.; it required a discontinuous Woodland Avenue alignment, and it was expensive to construct relative to the other alternatives . . . .

Alternative 3 was also a revision to one of the original alternatives developed during the Innerbelt Study. This alternative was an attempt to [avoid] residential impacts by paralleling the north side of the rail corridor. It crossed the rail yard west of E. 55th St. following the same alignment as Alternative 2 along existing Grand Avenue north of the tracks. Instead of crossing back over the railroad tracks, Alternative 3 stayed on the north side of the tracks for the whole length of the corridor and then followed existing E. 105th St. This alternative also had potential impacts to two cemeteries; low income multi-unit apartments as well as impacts to planned sites of development. Because of the geometry dictated by the rail lines, this alternative would require the realignment of segments of E. 89th St., E. 93rd St., Woodland, and Quincy in order to provide geometrically acceptable intersections with the new roadway. The proximity to the NS rail to rail grade separation also would make it very difficult to create an intersection at E. 79th St. It had limited opportunity for economic development because of the residential areas and already developed land north of the railroad tracks. This alternative was also the most expensive [of the] alternatives developed for the study . . . .

Alternative 4 was an alternative developed to maximize the economic and community development potential of the study area. The goal of this alternative was to avoid impacts to Orlando Baking Company, while improving access south of the railroad tracks. This alternative began at the I-490 and E. 55th St. intersection, crossed over Kingsbury Run, intersected with Kinsman, followed existing Grand Avenue south of the tracks, and intersected with E. 75th and E. 79th St. Alternative 4 continued along southern Grand Avenue and then began turning to the north to intersect with Buckeye. It continued northeast to intersect with Woodland and Quincy and north to E. 105th St. . . . .
As the preliminary alternatives were further refined during [Project Development Process (PDP)] Step 4, the intersection of E. 55th St. and I-490 became a critical location. E. 55th St. represents the first signalized intersection from I-77 and I-490. It represents the area with the highest traffic volumes in the study area. The high traffic volume results in intersection capacity issues, and operating speed and pedestrian safety concerns. Based on preliminary traffic projections supplied by NOACA, to achieve an acceptable level of service (LOS), the new facility would require three thru lanes, and dual turn lanes. In addition, E. 55th St. would require additional turn lanes. Even at this, the intersection was on the threshold of a failing LOS. Pedestrians from the St. Hyacinth neighborhood, southeast of the intersection, wishing to access GCRTA’s existing rail station west of E. 55th St. or the proposed station east of E. 55th St., would have to cross the new multilane facility. There was a concern over the safety of these pedestrians from both the neighborhood and GCRTA. The stakeholders also had concerns over the number of residential property acquisitions required in the neighborhood and therefore the ability of remaining homes to function as a livable neighborhood. Because of these concerns, four conceptual grade separation alternatives were developed.

**Conventional Diamond Interchange**

A conventional diamond type interchange was developed for the E. 55th St./boulevard intersection, see [Figure 3-6 on page 3-16]. Based on preliminary traffic data, acceptable LOS could be achieved. Due to the proximity of the I-77/I-490 ramp merges, the interchange did however require the I-77 traffic wishing to access the boulevard to exit at E. 55th St., proceed through the intersection and re-enter the boulevard. This would create challenging signing and potential confusion for travelers. The interchange also had significant impacts to both GCRTA’s existing and proposed station locations. Residential impacts in the neighborhood were in excess of the at-grade intersection and neighborhood residents were opposed to freeway type elements east of E. 55th St.

**Braided Diamond Interchange**

A braided diamond type interchange was also developed for the E. 55th St./boulevard intersection, see [Figure 3-7 on page 3-17]. This interchange braided the ramp movements between the I-490 and I-77 ramps to and from the boulevard. This interchange effectively removed all of the freeway thru traffic from the E. 55th St. intersection thereby improving pedestrian safety. While solving the I-77 ramp issue associated with the conventional diamond interchange, it did not improve impacts to the GCRTA sites nor did it address the residential property acquisition concerns, nor the freeway element concerns of the St. Hyacinth neighborhood constituents.

**Parkway Interchange**

A parkway type interchange was also developed for the E. 55th St./boulevard intersection, see [Figure 3-8 on page 3-18]. Under this configuration, traffic to and from I-77 and I-490 would be depressed under E. 55th St. to a point east of E. 55th St. where two-way access ramps would loop the traffic back to E. 55th St. To eliminate potential weave issues the access ramps were developed as add/drop lanes at the boulevard. Acceptable intersection LOS could be achieved at the E. 55th St. signals. This alternative also improved pedestrian safety by removing the thru vehicular movements from the intersection. It also allowed for access to the proposed GCRTA site via the new northern two-way access roadway. Residential impacts within the neighborhood continued to increase and freeway elements were also present east of E. 55th St. Stakeholders also expressed concern over delays and difficulty for trucks to maneuver the ramps and for the potential for vehicles to attempt to exit at a high rate of speed.
Grade Separated Interchange – South

To address the concerns [neighborhood impacts and truck mobility] a unique braided interchange was developed between I-490/I-77 and E. 55th St., see [Figure 3-9 on page 3-19]. This interchange depresses both the I-77 and I-490 ramps to the boulevard under E. 55th St. while braiding the ramp movements to E. 55th St. The single lane exit ramps achieve acceptable LOS at E. 55th St. without requiring additional lanes on E. 55th St. Pedestrian safety is enhanced by means of separating all boulevard thru movements from the intersection. Neighborhood residential impacts are reduced significantly by containing the work the north side of existing Bower and Butler Ave. All freeway elements are contained on the west side of E. 55th St. and the through movements are depressed below grade for much of the length through the St Hyacinth neighborhood. GCRTA site impacts east of E. 55th St. can be mitigated though the relocation of the new station headhouse to the south side of the trench and extending the pedestrian bridge to the tracks. Northbound to eastbound (from E. 55th St.) and westbound to northbound (from the boulevard) access is not provided in this concept. Note that these are movements that do not currently exist and were found acceptable to stakeholders thus far. These movements can easily be signed and accommodated utilizing the existing surface street network. Note that full access to and from both I-77 and I-490 is provided for in this concept . . . .

Grade Separated Interchange – North

[The project team] also investigated the potential to create a grade separated intersection for E. 55th St. north of the rail corridor . . . . Due to the presence of the rail trench, an overpass represents the only viable grade separation option . . . . The rail yard west of E. 55th St. and the weave requirements from the I-77 ramps also necessitated that all ramps from the boulevard to E. 55th St. would have to be located east of E. 55th St. Working with these constraints, [the project team] developed conceptual sketches of an overpass alternative north of the tracks, east of E. 55th St., see [Figure 3-10 on page 3-20]. This option would require bridge structures at the following locations: rail yard west of E. 55th St., E. 55th St., E. 55th St. Access Road, Kinsman and back over NS/GCTRA tracks. The alternative, if geometrically feasible, would also impact commercial, industrial, retail and residential properties . . . .

Excerpted from the Opportunity Corridor Draft Strategic Plan (September 2006), page 8-1
Figure 3-6
Opportunity Corridor
Conventional Diamond Interchange Alternative

Source: Opportunity Corridor Draft Strategic Plan, September 2006, Appendix A, Figure 10
Figure 3-7
Opportunity Corridor
Braided Diamond Interchange Alternative

Source: Opportunity Corridor Draft Strategic Plan, September 2006, Appendix A, Figure 11

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Not to Scale
Figure 3-8

Opportunity Corridor
Parkway/Interchange Alternative

Not to Scale

Source: Opportunity Corridor Draft Strategic Plan, September 2006, Appendix A, Figure 12

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NOT SCALE

Page 3-18
Figure 3-9
Opportunity Corridor
Grade Separated Interchange – South Alternative

Source: Opportunity Corridor Draft Strategic Plan, September 2006, Appendix A, Figure 13
Figure 3-10
Opportunity Corridor
Grade Separated Interchange – North Alternative

Source: Opportunity Corridor Draft Strategic Plan, September 2006, Appendix A, Figure 14.
Although no final decisions were made until after the public provided input, the rationale for the steering committee’s recommendation is detailed in the Opportunity Corridor Draft Strategic Plan and summarized below:

- **Preliminary Alternative 1:** This alternative was eliminated from further study due to high property impacts and limited economic development potential.
- **Preliminary Alternative 2:** This alternative had high impacts to Orlando Baking Company and the local street network. It also had limited economic development potential and high costs, so the full length of this alternative was not studied further. However, the portion east of Orlando Baking Company and the segment north of Woodland Avenue on East 105th Street, which is also part of Alternative 4, were recommended for further study.
- **Preliminary Alternative 3:** This alternative was eliminated from further study due to high property impacts, extensive realignments of local streets, limited economic development potential and high costs.
- **Preliminary Alternative 4:** This alternative was recommended for further study along with the western portion of Alternative 2, in an attempt to reduce the number of impacts in the St. Hyacinth neighborhood. Preliminary Alternative 4 best met the project’s purpose and need and provided an opportunity for redevelopment of the areas on the north and south sides of the roadway.
- **Conventional Diamond Alternative:** Because of the large freeway infrastructure that would be required in the neighborhood and the associated impacts, this option was removed from consideration.
- **Braided Diamond Alternative:** As with the conventional diamond, this option was not studied further because of the large freeway infrastructure and associated impacts.
- **Parkway Interchange:** Although this option provided full access to the boulevard from the St. Hyacinth Neighborhood, it was not carried further because of the severe impacts to the neighborhoods and the inability to move trucks through the intersection efficiently.
- **Grade Separated Interchange – South:** This option was studied further because it greatly reduced the number of impacts to the residential area and kept the freeway infrastructure out of the neighborhood.
- **Grade Separated Interchange – North:** This option was removed from study due to the potential impacts; the indirect access to East 55th Street for commercial vehicles, the visual presence of the overpass; the high costs for structures and the rail impacts.

The criteria used to evaluate the alternatives were developed by the project team and the steering committee. The following is excerpted from the Opportunity Corridor Draft Strategic Plan (September 2006):

...[the project team worked with] the [steering] committee members to develop evaluation criteria against which all of the alternatives could be measured objectively. There were six main categories for which the criteria were developed: Purpose and Need Issues; Environmental Resources; Utility Relocation Issues; Right-of-Way; Structures; and Planning Level Cost Estimates. The number of potential impacts to cemeteries, parks, religious institutions, commercial businesses, and residential structures was estimated for each of the alternatives and included in the matrix, as well as planning-level cost estimates. At the September 22, 2005 [steering] committee meeting, members of the committee used this matrix to make a recommendation that only Alternatives 2 (eastern portion only) and 4 [along with the Grade Separated Interchange – South Alternative] move forward for further study.”

*Excerpted from the Opportunity Corridor Draft Strategic Plan (September 2006), page 8-1*
Although the steering committee made recommendations, no final decisions were made about which alternatives would be studied further until the public provided input. The project was then placed on hold between 2006 and 2009 due to a lack of funding. When the project’s development resumed in 2009, one of the first tasks was to reconvene the steering committee, at which time residents of neighborhoods in the study area were added to the committee. Figure 5-1 on page 5-2 of the DEIS provides the most recent list of steering committee members. The following is excerpted from the Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives Study (October 2010):

“The steering committee meetings were held on September 1, 2009, March 11, 2010, and September 8, 2010. The first meeting was held at Greater Cleveland Partnership's Facility. Presentations were given by ODOT, GCP, and the City of Cleveland. This meeting provided an overview of the study process, the goals and objectives, a summary of the information gathered to date, and the preliminary alternatives. The input received during the meeting was used to refine the information presented at Public Meeting #1.”

Excerpted from the Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives Study (October 2010), page 43

The first public meetings for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project were held after the project’s development resumed in 2009. The meetings were used to introduce the project and to gather input about the four preliminary alternatives and the No-Build Alternative. Another purpose of the meetings was to confirm that the work completed to date and the corresponding recommendations described in the Opportunity Corridor Draft Strategic Plan were appropriate. The following is excerpted from the Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives Study:

“The first set of public meetings for the Opportunity Corridor Study was held on Tuesday, September 22, 2009. To increase attendance, two public meetings were held. A daytime meeting was held from 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM, and an evening meeting was held from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. The daytime meeting was held at the Cleveland Play House to capture the people who work in and around the study area. The evening meeting was held at Mt. Sinai Baptist Church for those who could not attend the daytime meeting, specifically people who live in the study area and work during the day. ODOT’s presentation focused on the Project Development Process (PDP); the project Purpose and Need, preliminary alternatives, analysis of preliminary alternatives and recommendations for alternatives to be studied next. The meeting included a formal public comment period.

. . . . In general, the public agreed with the . . . alternatives recommended for further study in Step 5 [i.e., the recommendations of the Steering Committee as contained in the Opportunity Corridor Draft Strategic Plan]. The comments suggested that the opportunity for economic development with the more southern paths (Alternatives 2 and 4) was better. This is consistent with ODOT’s screening process and agrees with the recommendation of . . . alternatives to be studied further in Step 5 of the PDP. . . . .”

Excerpted from the Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives Study (October 2010), page 43

In addition to large-scale public meetings, several neighborhood meetings were held. The following is excerpted from the Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives Study:

“Following the public meetings, neighborhood meetings were conducted in each of the neighborhoods located in the project study area (i.e., Fairfax, University Circle, Slavic Village or North Broadway, Kinsman, and Buckeye). A similar meeting format was used for each of the five meetings to share project information with residents, give them an opportunity to ask questions, and to allow the project study team to learn more about each neighborhood . . . .”
. . . . The main themes of the residents’ comments were concerns over relocation and concern about how the local neighborhoods will benefit from the project. . . . During the neighborhood meetings, a breakout session was held after the public comment period where the meeting attendees broke into small groups with members of the project team. The project team led a map exercise, a CSS [Context Sensitive Solutions design] exercise, and provided questionnaires to neighborhood residents. The CSS exercise provided information to the project team about nearby important destinations, the mode of transportation currently used to travel as well as barriers to using various modes of transportation. Questionnaires allowed participants to also comment on: travel modes, barriers to travel, what they like and dislike about their neighborhood, and what improvements they would like to see for their neighborhood.”

_Excerpted from the Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives Study (October 2010), page 44_

“. . . . During the community meetings, one of the issues for many residents was access to recreation. [In response to those comments], the proposed project will provide sidewalk and multi-purpose path along the proposed boulevard. Sidewalks will also be provided on intersecting roadways. These facilities would provide enhanced pedestrian and bicycle access and connectivity to recreational areas such as the Kenneth Johnson Recreation Center, the Kingsbury Run Connector Tow Path in the Kinsman neighborhood, and the proposed Lake to Lakes trail in University Circle.”

_Excerpted from the Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives Study (October 2010), page 29_

Additional meetings were held with businesses and other stakeholders. The following is excerpted from the _Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives Study:_

“Following the first set of public meetings, a business coordination meeting was held to present the study to the local business community. This meeting was held on Tuesday, December 8, 2009, at the Cleveland Playhouse . . . .

The comments from the business coordination meeting were transcribed and reviewed by ODOT to ensure that the business stakeholder concerns were incorporated into the conceptual alternatives development and evaluation process. The business owners’ concerns focused mainly on the relocation and construction process. The businesses that may need to be relocated wanted to be kept informed on the acquisition process as well as the timeline for determining a final alignment alternative so they can plan accordingly. Businesses within the study area that will not need to be relocated were concerned about access for their customers during construction of the Boulevard . . . . Overall, there were no comments heard that would change which alternatives were recommended for further study.

A questionnaire containing two different sets of questions was distributed. The first set of questions was developed to better understand community assets and concerns. A second series of questions asked about meeting scheduling so that the ODOT and FHWA could best align public involvement activities to meet the general needs of the businesses, their owners, and their employees. Following the meeting, handouts and questionnaires were mailed to all businesses within the study area that were not in attendance at the meeting . . . .
Meetings and interviews were conducted with business owners, employees, and patrons at over twenty locations within and immediately surrounding the study area. Additional meetings were conducted by the City of Cleveland and GCP. Interviews focused on gathering information relative to the individual or business’s function and relationship to the study area. Interviews were conducted with varied interests within the study area and included industrial manufacturers, food processing businesses, small retail and service businesses, recreation centers, community support facilities, schools and residents. These interviews also provided feedback regarding the effectiveness of public information activities to date.”

Excerpted from the Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives Study (October 2010), page 44

Once the project team gathered feedback from the steering committee, the general public, neighborhoods, businesses and other stakeholders it began to further refine the alternatives identified for further study. One example of how public input shaped the continuing alternatives development is the “quadrant roadway” at I-490 and East 55th Street. The following is excerpted from the Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives Study:

“Comments [received during the first round of public meetings] suggested both concern and support for a grade-separated intersection at E. 55th Street and I-490. The public wanted to maintain local access while still improving traffic operations. After hearing this, ODOT developed and evaluated the quadrant roadway option [see West Alternate C below].”

Excerpted from the Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives Study (October 2010), page 43

Another example of how public input shaped the project was the inclusion of aesthetic improvements in all of the alternatives. These items 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 benches, trash receptacles, and bike racks.

The project team developed twenty-seven possible options for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor during the conceptual alternatives phase. The following is excerpted from the Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives Study:

As part of the alternatives evaluation completed in [PDP] Step 5, the study area was divided into three geographic sections (West, Central, and East) [see Figure 3-11 on page 3-27]. Additional engineering alignments [conceptual alternatives] were also developed during [PDP] Step 5 to avoid and minimize impacts to the surrounding community. Using the two [preliminary] alternatives that were advanced from [PDP] Step 4 as a starting point, a total of three different alignment alternates (A/B/C) were developed and/or refined within each geographic section. The boundaries of the sections were established so that each alternate within a given section is compatible with those in the adjacent geographic sections. Therefore, any alternate from one geographic section can be combined with any alternate from the other geographic sections. This results in a total of twenty-seven possible options to create a build alternative for the Opportunity Corridor project. A brief description of the alternates within each geographic section is included below.
**West Geographic Section**

The West Section is located in the Saint Hyacinth neighborhood of Slavic Village and the Kinsman neighborhood between I-77 and E. 75th Street and includes the intersection of E. 55th Street and I-490. Modifications to the GCRTA’s E. 55th Street transit station would be required. The primary difference between the West Alternates is the proposed intersection configuration between I-490, E. 55th Street, and the proposed boulevard. The following intersection options were developed:

- Alternate A *[Figure 3-12 on page 3-28]* – Conventional four-legged, signalized intersection at I-490/E. 55th Street/ Proposed Boulevard
- Alternate B *[Figure 3-13 on page 3-29]* – Depress I-490 under E. 55th Street and braid a series of ramps west of E. 55th Street to provide access between the freeways and E. 55th Street
- Alternate C *[Figure 3-14 on page 3-30]* – Depress I-490 under E. 55th Street and construct a quadrant roadway in the vicinity of E. 59th Street to provide full access between E. 55th Street, the freeways, and the proposed boulevard.

**Central Geographic Section**

The Central Section is located in the Kinsman, Buckeye and Fairfax neighborhoods between E. 75th Street and Quincy Avenue. Each of the Central Alternates would adjoin the West Section alternates with a four-legged intersection at E. 75th Street. Each of the alternates would continue in a northeasterly direction until reaching Quincy Avenue. The centerline alignment of each Central Section Alternate varies. A brief description of the Central Section alternates is included below.

- Alternate A *[Figure 3-15 on page 3-31]* – Generally, the proposed roadway alignment is the most westerly of the three alternates and is the closest to the NS Nickelplate Line. It would create a new underpass structure to take the proposed boulevard under Norfolk Southern mainline tracks and would create a discontinuity of Woodland Avenue.

- Alternate B *[Figure 3-16 on page 3-32]* – The proposed roadway alignment is shifted slightly east from Alternate A. It would create a new underpass structure to take the proposed boulevard under Norfolk Southern railroad tracks, would maintain continuity of existing Woodland Avenue, and would generally run along to the GCRTA Red Line trench north of Woodland Avenue.

- Alternate C *[Figure 3-17 on page 3-33]* – The proposed roadway alignment is shifted further east than Alternates A and B. It would create a new underpass structure to take the boulevard under Norfolk Southern mainline tracks and would generally run parallel to the elevated CSX Railroad alignment north of Woodland Avenue.

**East Geographic Section**

The East Section is located along E. 105th Street from Quincy Avenue to Chester Avenue in the Fairfax and University Circle neighborhoods. All of the East alternates would widen E. 105th Street to a 5-lane, undivided typical section with two through lanes in each direction.

- Alternate A *[Figure 3-18 on page 3-34]* – The proposed project would widen existing E. 105th Street on its west side from Quincy Avenue to just north of Cedar Avenue. North of Cedar Avenue, the roadway widening would vary along both the east and west side of E. 105th Street through the Chester Avenue intersection. The existing E. 105th Street bridge over GCRTA and NS would be widened.
Alternate B [Figure 3-19 on page 3-35] – The proposed project would widen existing E. 105th Street symmetrically along the existing centerline from Quincy Avenue to just north of Cedar Avenue. North of Cedar Avenue, the roadway widening would vary along both the east and west side of E. 105th Street through the Chester Avenue intersection. The existing E. 105th Street bridge over GCRTA and NS would be widened.

Alternate C [Figure 3-20 on page 3-36] – The proposed project would widen existing E. 105th Street on its east side from Quincy Avenue to just north of Cedar Avenue. North of Cedar Avenue, the roadway widening would vary along both the east and west side of E. 105th Street through the Chester Avenue intersection. The existing E. 105th Street bridge over GCRTA and NS would be widened.

*Excerpted from the Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives Study (October 2010), pages ES-1 and ES-2*
Figure 3-11
Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives

Geographic Sections

Source: Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives Study, October 2010, page 9, Figure 2-4

GIS data used to create this map are from the best sources available. Use of this map should be used only for planning purposes. Aerial image is dated (circa 2005) and is shown only for illustrative purposes.
Opportunity Corridor
West Section Alternate B

Source: Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives Study, October 2010, page 9, Figure 3-4b

Legend:
- Opportunity Corridor Study Area
- Alternate B ROW
- Alternate B Centerlines
- Impacted Parcels
- Building Takes
- Commercial Buildings
- Residential Buildings
- Opportunity Corridor Study Area Parcels
- Signalized Intersection Location

Note:
GIS data used to create this map are from the best sources available. Use of this map should be used only for planning purposes. Aerial image is dated (circa 2005) and is shown only for illustrative purposes.
Figure 3-14
Opportunity Corridor
West Section Alternate C

Source: Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives Study, October 2010, Appendix A, Figure 3-4c

GIS data used to create this map are from the best sources available. Use of this map should be used only for planning purposes. Aerial image is dated (circa 2005) and is shown only for illustrative purposes.
Figure 3-16
Opportunity Corridor
Central Section Alternate B

Source: Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives Study, October 2010, Appendix A, Figure 3-4e

Legend:
- Opportunity Corridor Study Area
- Alternate B ROW
- Alternate B Centrline
- Impacted Parcels
- Building Takes
- Commercial Buildings
- Residential Building
- Opportunity Corridor Study Area Parcels
- Signaled Intersection Location

Note:
GIS data used to create this map are from the best sources available. Use of this map should be used only for planning purposes. Aerial image is dated (circa 2005) and is shown only for illustrative purposes.
Figure 3-19
Opportunity Corridor
East Section Alternate B

Source: Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives Study, October 2010, Appendix A, Figure 3-4h

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Cleveland, OH

Date: 07/19/2010
Prepared by: LLS

Note:
GIS data used to create this map are from the best sources available. Use of this map should be used only for planning purposes. Aerial image is dated (circa 2005) and is shown only for illustrative purposes.
The conceptual alternatives were presented at two steering committee meetings. The following is excerpted from the *Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives Study*:

“The second Steering Committee meeting was held at the Karamu House in Cleveland [on March 11, 2010]. Presentations were given by ODOT, GCP, and the City of Cleveland. ODOT’s presentation focused on details regarding the conceptual alternatives developed during PDP Step 5. GCP provided an overview of the comments received to date from the public involvement activities. A GCP consultant gave a presentation about two of the city’s Opportunity Corridor Development Districts.

The third committee meeting was held at the Cleveland Plain Dealer [on September 8, 2010]. Presentations were given by ODOT and the City of Cleveland. The City’s presentation provided an overview of land use changes recently adopted by the City of Cleveland. ODOT’s presentation provided an evaluation of the conceptual alternatives developed during Step 5 and the recommendation of alternatives to be further developed during Step 6.”

Excerpted from the *Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives Study (October 2010), page 43*

After the conceptual alternatives were presented to the steering committee, a second series of public meetings was held to inform the public and obtain feedback on the steering committee’s recommendations about alternatives to study further (feasible alternatives). Information about the federal-aid relocation process was included as part of the presentations for this and every other public meeting held for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project. This was designed to help address concerns related to property impacts. The following is excerpted from the *Opportunity Corridor Public Involvement Summary (January 2013)*:

“[The] second series of public meetings consisted of six separate meetings held from Tuesday, October 5, 2010 through Thursday, October 7, 2010. To increase public attendance, meetings were scheduled at four different locations in the proximity of the study area as well as at various times of the day. The same exhibits and presentations were utilized at all meetings . . . .

When selecting meeting locations, several factors were taken into account. The preference was to have the meetings in public locations which were easily identifiable and accessible to the community. Another goal was to spread the meetings throughout the study area (or within close proximity) in order to make attending the meetings convenient for as many residents and business owners as possible . . . .”

Excerpted from the *Opportunity Corridor Public Involvement Summary (January 2013), page 48*

“Meeting attendees were also encouraged to participate in a CSS exercise to get their feedback for the potential design direction of the physical elements of Opportunity Corridor. Topics and boards included feedback opportunities related to: 1) Corridor Character & Theme; 2) Roadway Elements, 3) Roadside Elements, 4) Community Elements & 5) Landform Elements . . . .

In general, the public agreed with the alternatives recommended for further study. Out of the two recommended alternates in the West section, the public showed more overall support for Alternate C – the grade separated quadrant roadway. However, concern was expressed over the residential impacts it would create. In the Central section, Alternate B was widely supported. Many residents expressed that keeping Woodland Avenue as a continuous roadway was very desirable for the surrounding neighborhoods. It was also generally agreed upon that Alternate C – eastern widening, in the East section was a favorable choice because it created the least overall impact to homes and businesses.
This [was] consistent with ODOT’s screening process and [affirmed] the recommendation of conceptual alternatives that were studied further as feasible alternatives.

Some of the comments heard in the initial public meetings were echoed again in this second series of meetings. Many comments focused on the potential for job creation as a result of this project. Residents voiced concern that those opportunities would not be made available to them. Another major concern of the public was the potential impacts to residents and businesses . . . . Other community goals voiced by the public included making the area more multi-modal and beautifying the neighborhoods.”

Excerpted from the Opportunity Corridor Public Involvement Summary (January 2013), pages 49-50

The input received from the steering committee and the public, along with engineering analysis, resulted in the elimination of several alternates, including West Alternate B, Central Alternate C, East Alternate A, and East Alternate B. The following is excerpted from the Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives Study (October 2010):

“The proposed four-legged intersection at I-490/E. 55th Street as part of West Alternate A provides more conventional access to E. 55th Street in comparison to West Alternates B and C. Because it is the lowest cost option and provides the most conventional method of access, it is recommended that West Alternate A be carried forward for further study as part of PDP Step 6. However, as part of the evaluation completed under PDP Step 5, it was determined that design year traffic operations for the at-grade intersection are projected to be sub-standard. Consequently, additional capacity analyses will be needed to determine if acceptable design year traffic operations can be attained once NOACA refines the future traffic volumes as part of PDP Step 6.

West Alternate B would depress existing I-490 under E. 55th Street just north of the existing I-490/E. 55th Street intersection with a system of braided ramps west of E. 55th Street. Although this alternate would provide improved access and mobility, access would not be provided between E. 55th Street and the boulevard. The proximity to I-77 would also require eastbound drivers to make multiple traffic decisions in a quick time frame. These items could create driver confusion for drivers looking to access E. 55th Street. Consequently, it is recommended that Alternate B be eliminated from further study due to potential driver expectancy/confusion concerns associated with the E. 55th Street access and a substantial increase in construction costs relative to the other alternates.

Although it has the highest residential impact of the three West Geographic Section alternates, West Alternate C provides the best traffic operations while providing full access to E. 55th Street. Therefore, it is recommended that Alternate C be carried for further study in PDP Step 6 and additional analysis be performed regarding the number of occupied units and the potential for finding available replacement housing within the St. Hyacinth neighborhood for those that may be impacted by this or any of the West Section alternates.

Due to the highest relative impact to Section 4(f) resources (i.e., the planned expansion of the Kenneth Johnson [Woodland] Recreation Center) as well as the great challenges with respect to accommodating the local street network and the existing rail operations, it is recommended that Central Alternate C be eliminated from further study. Alternates A and C are recommended for further study as part of PDP Step 6. As part of Step 6, additional studies should be completed to better define impacts to Section 4(f) resources (historic and recreational), as well as potential impacts to homes and businesses anticipated with Alternates A and B.
With the exception of structure impacts, all the East Section alternates have similar impacts. Based on the lower impacts to structures, it is recommended that only East Alternate C be carried for further study in PDP Step 6."

Excerpted from the Opportunity Corridor Conceptual Alternatives Study (October 2010), page ES-2

The input received from the public and project stakeholders was used along with additional engineering design to further evaluate Alternates A and C in the West Section. The following is excerpted from the Early Analysis of West Alternates (March 2011):

“... It was recommended in the CAS report and at the public meetings that West Alternates A and C be further studied during Step 6 after Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) provided updated and refined traffic projections for the project. The goal of the additional analysis was to determine if new traffic volumes would result in improved traffic operations and enhanced pedestrian safety through a smaller intersection footprint.”

Excerpted from the Early Analysis of West Alternates (March 2011), page 2

“The results of the analyses completed in the early stages of [PDP] Step 6 indicate that 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 the 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 with 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 transition 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 additional 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.”

Excerpted from the Early Analysis of West Alternates (March 2011), page 9
Input received from the public and project stakeholders was also used to further evaluate Alternates A and B in the Central Section. The following is excerpted from the *Analysis of Central Alternates* (June 2011):

“The alignments and geometrics of Central Alternates A and B were further refined and the estimated benefits and impacts were updated. A ‘windshield’ survey of the project area was also completed to determine the status of existing and demolished structures. The survey did not confirm occupancy of all residential and commercial business structures; however, several existing structures were boarded up and therefore identified as vacant. Additional coordination was also conducted with the City of Cleveland and Miceli Dairy Products to evaluate potential design modifications to Alternate B to minimize impacts to the planned expansion of the dairy. This coordination is ongoing and will continue throughout the project development process.”

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“Central Alternates A and B are both components of corridor-wide alternatives to address the identified transportation needs in the project study area. Each alternate would require some changes to the existing street network; however, only Central Alternate B would maintain the continuity of Woodland Avenue. Maintaining the continuity of Woodland Avenue is an important consideration with regard to improving system linkage and mobility in the project study area. Woodland Avenue is an east-west arterial that provides mobility and access to areas both within and adjacent to the project study area. From a broader perspective, Woodland Avenue is an important link in the transportation system which provides a direct connection between multiple neighborhoods located southeast of the Central Business District, including several immediately adjacent to University Circle. Central Alternate A would modify existing Woodland Avenue to force a series of turning movements in order to continue travel in an east-west direction. These turning movements result in a disconnection of Woodland Avenue in the project study area. This condition — referred to as the discontinuity of Woodland Avenue — would decrease mobility and reduce system linkage within the project study area. Therefore, when considered in the context of a corridor-wide alternative, Alternate B would better satisfy the purpose of and need for the project.

The estimated impacts and benefits associated with Central Alternates A and B are relatively similar. Although both would operate at acceptable levels of service, Alternate B would generally operate at improved levels. Central Alternate A, on the other hand, would result in fewer total relocations than Alternate B (16 vs. 19, respectively). Central Alternate A would also affect fewer properties identified as having the potential for hazardous materials contamination (7 vs. 12, respectively) . . . .

Based on the [Conceptual Alternatives Study] CAS data, Central Alternate B would cost approximately $10.3 million more than Central Alternate A. This cost differential amounts to approximately 5-percent of the estimated total project cost ($203.1 to $213.4 million) . . . .Due to this relatively small difference, estimated costs were not a primary factor in the selection of an alternate.

The City of Cleveland, the Buckeye Area Development Corporation, and the majority of the general public expressed a preference for maintaining the continuity of Woodland. Therefore, local stakeholders prefer Central Alternate B. Because the estimated benefits and impacts of the Central Alternates are nearly the same, the preference of the local stakeholders and relative ability to meet the purpose and need of the project are key decision-making factors. Because the local stakeholders prefer Central Alternate B and it would better satisfy the purpose and need of the project, it is recommended for further study as part of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Likewise, Central Alternate A is recommended to be eliminated from further study.”

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Excerpted from the *Analysis of Central Alternates* (June 2011), pages 2 and 4-5
After the alternates described above were eliminated, one alternate remained in each geographic section. These three alternates were combined to form a single alternative for the entire Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project, which was referred to the recommended preferred alternative. The recommended preferred alternative included:

- West Section: Alternate C
- Central Section: Alternate B
- East Section: Alternate C

A third series of public meetings for the Opportunity Corridor project was conducted to inform and solicit feedback from the public on the recommended preferred alternative. The following is excerpted from the Opportunity Corridor Public Involvement Summary (January 2013):

"[The] third series of meetings consisted of four separate meetings held from Tuesday, July 26, 2011 through Thursday, July 28, 2011. To increase public attendance, meetings were scheduled at three different locations in the proximity of the study area, as well as at various times of the day. The same exhibits and presentations were utilized at all meetings . . . ."

Excerpted from the Opportunity Corridor Public Involvement Summary (January 2013), page 76

"In general, the public agreed with the Recommended Preferred Alternative. Some of the same comments heard in the first and second series of public meetings were echoed again in this third series of meetings. Many comments focused on the potential for job creation as a result of this project; residents voiced concern that those opportunities would not be made available to them. Another concern was the potential impacts of the project to residents and businesses. Attendees asked questions about the relocation process and when it would take place. Residents and business owners wanted to be sure they will be treated fairly during the relocation process. Other community goals voiced by the public included making the area more multi-modal and beautifying the neighborhoods."

Excerpted from the Opportunity Corridor Public Involvement Summary (January 2013), page 78

Property impacts were a common concern expressed during all of the public meetings. As the preferred alternative was refined, the following measures to avoid and minimize property impacts were included:

- Retaining walls were included north and south of the boulevard and east of the quadrant roadway to minimize impacts in the St. Hyacinth neighborhood.
- The alignment of the boulevard was shifted between East 79th Street and Kinsman Road to allow for planned business expansion of Orlando Baking Company.
- The alignment of the boulevard was shifted to avoid impacts to Miceli’s Dairy.
- Lane widths on East 105th Street north of Park Lane would be narrower than Cuyahoga County design standards to match the existing lane widths. This eliminated impacts to city-owned Wade Park and minimized impacts to the Wade Park Historic District.

Several mitigation measures were also incorporated into the preferred alternative in direct response to comments received from the public and stakeholders throughout the project’s development. The final mitigation measures that will be incorporated into the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project are described in Table A of the Record of Decision (ROD).

After the publication of the DEIS, a public hearing was held for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project. Feedback about the project was also collected during a 45-day public comment period. Chapter 5 of this FEIS describes the public hearing and the comments received. The preferred alternative was further refined in response to feedback received during this time, see Section 3.4 on page 3-42.
3.4 WHAT ABOUT THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE HAS BEEN UPDATED SINCE THE PUBLICATION OF THE DEIS?

Several minor updates have been made to the design of the preferred alternative in response to the comments received after the DEIS was published. These are summarized below:

- The width of thru-lanes was reduced from 12-foot to 11-foot effective width;
- The width of turn lanes was reduced from 11-foot to 10-foot effective width;
- The third eastbound lane between Woodland Avenue and East 93rd Street and also at Cedar Avenue was eliminated;
- A curbed median was added to replace the two-way left-turn lane along East 105th Street between Quincy Avenue and Cedar Avenue; and
- Medians, where present, will be used as pedestrian refuges to the extent possible.

ODOT will maintain vehicular access to East 89th Street by resurfacing Frederick Avenue and converting East 86th Street to a two-way roadway between Frederick and Woodland avenues.

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 station platform to accommodate 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.

The potential consequences of these minor design changes are further discussed in Chapter 4 of the FEIS.

Following publication of the DEIS, the project team also coordinated with project stakeholders to review two specific elements of the preferred alternative. Although this coordination resulted in no changes to the preferred alternative, the results are summarized below:

- **Curb return radii:** Several comments received on the DEIS asked ODOT to evaluate if it would be possible to reduce curb return radii to reduce the size of the intersection areas. After further coordination with City of Cleveland and the local Community Development Corporations (CDC’s), it was decided to retain larger curb return radii. This would allow trucks and busses to safely turn corners within the roadway area rather than hopping the curbs or blocking opposing movements. It was determined that the safety benefits of this design outweighed the benefits of reduced intersection areas.

- **Bicycle facility design:** Several comments received on the DEIS asked ODOT to provide on-road bike lanes instead of a multipurpose path for bicycle traffic. This issue was discussed with the City and the local CDC’s. The multipurpose path was desired as it was perceived as a safer alternative to on-road bike lanes.

3.5 WHAT IS THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE?

The preferred alternative has not substantially changed since the publication of the DEIS. The preferred alternative 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 (Figure 3-21 on page 3-43). The proposed boulevard will have two westbound through-lanes, but the number of eastbound through-lanes will vary.

The project includes three eastbound through-lanes between I-490 and Woodland Avenue. In general, the roadway will have two through-lanes between Woodland Avenue and Chester Avenue, but the roadway between Cedar Avenue and Euclid Avenue will include a third eastbound through-lane. Left-turn lanes will also be added at many of the intersections. The proposed boulevard generally will be built where no
roads exist now except for the stretch from Quincy Avenue to Chester Avenue, which will be built on existing East 105th Street. The boulevard will include a low, grassy median between East 55th Street and Quincy Avenue. A raised median will be included between Quincy and Cedar avenues. Medians and tree lawns will not be included on the bridges. The proposed boulevard will also include a walking/biking path on the south side of the roadway and a sidewalk on the north side.

The preferred alternative will have traffic lights at Kinsman Road, East 75th Street, East 79th Street, Buckeye Road, Woodland Avenue, East 93rd Street, Quincy Avenue, Cedar Avenue, Carnegie Avenue, Euclid Avenue and Chester Avenue.

Access to East 55th Street will be provided by a quadrant roadway – a new two-way street that will be built south of the new boulevard and near East 59th Street. It will have traffic lights at both East 55th Street and the boulevard, and it will allow cars to access both roadways.

The preferred alternative also will change some local streets:

- **Francis Avenue**: closure between East 55th Street and East 57th Street;
- **Berwick Road, Colfax Road and East 73rd Street**: cul-de-sacs;
- **Rawlings Avenue**: cul-de-sac: closure between East 75th Street and East 79th Street;
- **Lisbon Road**: cul-de-sac: connection with Grand Avenue near Evarts Road;
- **Tennyson Road**: closure between Evarts and Buckeye roads;
- **East 86th Street**: conversion to a two-way roadway between Frederick and Woodland avenues;
- **East 87th Street**: closure between Buckeye Road and Woodland Avenue;
- **East 89th Street**: closure between Woodland and Frederick avenues; and
- **Quincy Avenue**: closure between East 105th Street and Woodhill Road; design will maintain access for bicycles, pedestrians and emergency services.

The preferred alternative will build these bridges:

- East 55th Street over the proposed boulevard;
- Pedestrian/bike bridge over the proposed boulevard at East 59th Street;
- Proposed boulevard over the Kingsbury Run Valley (two bridges);
- Proposed boulevard over the GCRTA Blue and Green lines (two bridges);
- Norfolk Southern Railway (NS) Cleveland Mainline over the proposed boulevard (two bridges);
- Pedestrian/bike bridge over the NS Nickel Plate/GCRTA Red Line at East 89th Street; and
- Proposed boulevard over the NS Nickel Plate/GCRTA Red Line.

### 3.6 HOW DOES THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE COMPLY WITH OTHER TRANSIT-RELATED PLANS?

The preferred alternative for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project would build new facilities for pedestrians and bicycles to improve connectivity to public transit stations and stops. These include a walking/biking path on the south side of the roadway, a sidewalk on the north side, a pedestrian/bike bridge at E. 59th Street and a pedestrian/bike bridge at E. 89th Street. Furthermore, the preferred alternative would build new bridges over the Kingsbury Run Valley, the GCRTA Blue/Green Line and the NS rail line, which would further reduce barriers to public transit access.

The alignment for the preferred alternative was strategically designed to promote future, transit-oriented development. For instance, the Opportunity Corridor would parallel the GCRTA Red Line to complement existing transit patterns in the area. Furthermore, the Opportunity Corridor alignment across E. 79th
Street was designed to evenly split the distance between the GCRTA Red Line and Blue/Green line train stations (see Figure 4-1 on page 4-9). This not only avoided impacts to these facilities but also maximized the area available for future development. This could, in turn, encourage increased ridership at these locations. 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.

Finally, in conjunction with the Opportunity Corridor project, ODOT will fund 80-percent (up to $3.2 million) of a project to extend the platform and construct a new entrance to the existing GCRTA E. 105th Street-Quincy Avenue train station. These operational and accessibility improvements are part of GCRTA’s long-term goals for this train station. While the project would be independently administered by GCRTA, 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.

By building new features for pedestrians and bicyclists and bridging barriers that currently restrict access to transit facilities, the preferred alternative would also support transit-related elements of the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) Connections + 2035 Long Range Plan, including:

- Goal #4 – Establish a more balanced transportation system which enhances modal choices by prioritizing goods movement, transit, pedestrian and bicycle travel instead of just single occupancy vehicle movement and highways.
- Goal #5 - Improve the transportation mobility of the transit-dependent and low-income individuals to jobs, housing and other trip purposes.

The full content of the Connections + 2035 Long Range Plan can be viewed on NOACA’s website at www.noaca.org.

3.7 HOW WAS THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE COORDINATED WITH OTHER LOCAL PLANS AND INITIATIVES?

As part of a separate initiative, the City of Cleveland received a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to develop a plan to assess, clean up and reuse existing brownfield sites in the study area. This grant is part of a partnership between the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), USDOT and EPA. This partnership, called the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, helps communities meet their housing, transportation and environmental goals.

The City’s plan for brownfields redevelopment was closely coordinated with the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project throughout its development. These coordination efforts included numerous meetings with staff from the City of Cleveland Planning and Economic Development departments, Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP) and the consultants developing the Brownfield Area Wide Plan. In addition, ODOT and GCP have made multiple presentations sharing information about both the Opportunity Corridor project and the Brownfield Area Wide Plan in the same venue.

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 and considered potential development options specific to the Opportunity Corridor alignment.

The planning and design of the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project was also closely coordinated with the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORSD) plans and ongoing efforts to address regional water quality issues. These coordination efforts included numerous meetings and addressed the project’s compatibility with NEORSD’s Green Infrastructure Plan, EPA’s Consent Decree for the reduction of raw sewage discharges and stormwater management. The coordination efforts focused not only on the
immediate project area but also the larger service area for NEORSD. Furthermore, the storm sewer system that would be built as part of the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project would be designed to meet ODOT water quality standards and NEORSD flow volume requirements.

ODOT will continue the coordination efforts described above 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.
4  ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND IMPACTS

4.1  HOW HAVE THE PROJECT’S BENEFITS AND IMPACTS CHANGED SINCE THE PUBLICATION OF THE DEIS?

Chapter 4 of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) describes the human and natural resources within the study area. It also discusses the potential impacts and benefits of the project on these resources, as well as ways to reduce or avoid impacts. No new alternatives have been studied since the DEIS was published. However, several minor changes have been made to the design of the preferred alternative in response to the comments received on the DEIS (see Section 3.4 on page 3-42 of this FEIS). This chapter describes updates to the project’s setting, technical analysis, impacts and mitigation that have been made since the publication of the DEIS. It is intended to expand on the following sections of the DEIS:

- How much land would be needed to build the project? (DEIS page 4-6)
- Would any homes, businesses, or churches be relocated? (DEIS pages 4-6 through 4-18)
- How would bicycles and pedestrians be affected? (DEIS pages 4-19 through 4-22)
- How would existing roads and access points be affected? (DEIS pages 4-22 and 4-23)
- How would public transportation be affected? (DEIS page 4-23)
- Would low-income and minority populations be affected? (DEIS pages 4-27 through 4-31)
- What resources are not present within the study area? (DEIS 4-35)
- How would construction activities affect the surrounding community? (DEIS pages 4-37 and 4-39)

In addition, the certified traffic plates for the project have been included in Appendix C of this FEIS. The FEIS does not include updates to the other sections in Chapter 4 of the DEIS.

4.2  HOW MUCH LAND WOULD BE NEEDED TO BUILD THE PROJECT?

The DEIS describes the amount of land needed to build the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project on page 4-6. Several minor updates were made to the design of the preferred alternative in response to the comments received on the DEIS. These include:

- The width of thru-lanes was reduced from 12-foot to 11-foot effective width;
- The width of turn lanes was reduced from 11-foot to 10-foot effective width; and
- The third eastbound lane between Woodland Avenue and East 93rd Street and also at Cedar Avenue was eliminated.

In addition, a curbed median was added to replace the two-way left turn-lane along East 105th Street between Quincy Avenue and Cedar Avenue. More land along the east side of East 105th Street may be needed to fit the new median. Building the new median is not expected to impact additional properties, but more land may be required from properties that would already be impacted by the project. No additional relocations are expected as a result of this minor design change. Finally, other issues that will be addressed during final design could slightly affect the amount of land needed to build the project. An example of this is the land needed for utilities and drainage features.

Given the above, the updates to the preferred alternative since the publication of the DEIS and further refinements during final design would be minor. Therefore, when compared to the acreages reported in the DEIS, no substantial changes in the permanent right-of-way or temporary easements required to build the project are expected. No additional property outside of the project footprint and/or the

Ohio Department of Transportation  4-1  Federal Highway Administration
4.3 WOULD ANY HOMES, BUSINESSES OR CHURCHES BE RELOCATED?

The Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project would cause homes, businesses and a church to be relocated. The DEIS includes a description of estimated relocations on pages 4-6 through 4-18. As stated previously, the minor updates to the preferred alternative since the publication of the DEIS would not require any additional relocations.

The following reports are on the CD included with the DEIS and incorporated by reference into both the DEIS and this 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 public transportation. 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.

Several comments received on the DEIS expressed concerns that relocation within existing financial means would be difficult for some residents. According to the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act (Uniform Act), in addition to receiving just compensation for any property acquired to construct the project, displaced property owners and tenants would also receive relocation assistance. There are also provisions to ensure that decent, safe and sanitary comparable replacement housing is within the financial means of the displaced person. When such housing cannot be provided using replacement housing payments within the statutory limits, the Uniform Act provides "housing of last resort" to provide agencies with the flexibility necessary to respond to difficult or unique displacement conditions. Last resort housing allows an agency to make replacement housing payments in excess of the statutory limits, if necessary, to relocate displaced persons into acceptable decent, safe and sanitary replacement dwellings.

ODOT also uses the Rental Assistance Entitlements to provide additional payments when the monthly cost of rent and utilities of the agency-selected comparable replacement dwelling exceeds the current costs at the displacement site. This program is also used to provide rental assistance payments to low-income households. Households who qualify as "low income" on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Annual Survey of Income Limits for Public Housing and Section 8 Programs will have their base-rent at the displacement site computed on 30-percent of their gross family income, if this figure is less than their actual contract rent and utilities, thereby providing an amplified rental assistance payment.

An additional benefit ODOT offers to all tenants is down payment assistance. Tenants may choose to use their entire rent supplemental payment offer amount in the purchase of a decent, safe and sanitary replacement dwelling. The funds will be applied against the purchaser's down payment and any qualifying incidental closing costs. If the displaced tenant's rental supplemental payment offer is less than $5,250, ODOT will increase their down-payment assistance offer to this amount to assist them in transitioning to home ownership.

Finally, the U.S. Department of Transportation has issued a temporary waiver to deal with situations of negative equity which exist in some localized real estate market conditions. This waiver - which expires
December 31, 2014 - was issued to minimize hardship caused when residents are forced to relocate to accommodate a public improvement project. In addition to the negative equity payment, ODOT will make increased interest payments to any residential owner-occupant who loses their existing favorable financing rate due to displacement by the project. This payment will be made to “buy-down” their replacement mortgage principal amount to an amount that would have been amortized for the same payment over the same term as the existing mortgage. The displaced person will then be able to use this amount to buy-down their replacement loan to eliminate any negative effects from a higher interest rate on the replacement mortgage. 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.

ODOT will also pay for all closing costs normally paid by the residential owner-occupant in the purchase of their replacement dwelling. This would include, as applicable, all reasonable legal fees, closing and related costs, including: notary fees; surveys; fees for preparing drawings or plats; recording fees; title search and fees for preparing conveyance instruments; lender, Federal Housing Administration (FHA) or Veteran’s Administration (VA) application and appraisal fees; professional home inspection certification of structural soundness; termite inspection; other inspections and certifications when reasonable and not paid by the seller; credit reports and Escrow agent's fees.

Finally, ODOT will pay for all moving expenses of anyone displaced by the project. This would include full costs associated with packing, unpacking, assembling, disassembling, reconnection fees for certain utilities and services, full value replacement insurance, moving up to 50 miles and some short-term storage if necessary. Displaced persons can choose to have their move completed by a contract move company or to do the work themselves and be paid directly. They may also choose to use a contract move for large, heavy items and a self-move for more delicate items via a combination move.

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 the affected owners and tenants.

For relocations, ODOT will follow the requirements of the Uniform Act as well as other standard ODOT policies and procedures. In general, the relocation process will include the following:

- ODOT will determine the fair market value of the property, which is the amount of money a property will bring if offered for sale on the open market.
- Simultaneous with appraisal preparation, ODOT will research the local housing market and find suitable decent, safe and sanitary comparable dwellings for sale (owner-occupants) and/or rent (tenants) and calculate the displaced person’s replacement housing offer.
- ODOT will present a written offer based on the fair market value.
- ODOT will make a replacement housing payment offer to all residential owner-occupants and will make a replacement housing payment offer to all residential tenant-occupants within seven days of the owner’s acquisition offer.
- The impacted party will be able to negotiate a final settlement with ODOT.
- The displaced person will be counseled by ODOT on various move and relocation options and assisted throughout the process of selecting and renting or purchasing a replacement dwelling.
- At this same time, the displaced person will be assisted as they make their decision on how to conduct and be paid for their move (contract move, self-move or combination).
- There will be a “closing” phase in which ODOT will formally buy the property and file all the paperwork.
- Simultaneous with the closing, ODOT will process the displaced person’s final replacement housing payment, applicable incidental closing cost payments, increased interest payments and moving cost payments and ensure they successfully move to their new replacement dwelling.
4.4 HOW WOULD BICYCLES AND PEDESTRIANS BE AFFECTED?

The DEIS includes a discussion of bicycle and pedestrian considerations on pages 4-19 through 4-22. The Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project would maintain and, in some cases, improve overall bicycle and pedestrian connections, access and safety by building features for these users. More specifically, the project would include a 10-foot multipurpose bicycle and pedestrian path on the south side of the roadway, and a 6-foot sidewalk on the north side of the roadway. In total, the project would add or rebuild 3.1 miles of sidewalk and add 2.9 miles of multipurpose path. The project would also build two bike/pedestrian bridges at East 59th Street and at East 89th Street. Pedestrian lighting will also be provided along the boulevard and on the bike/pedestrian bridges.

Several comments received on the DEIS asked ODOT to provide on-road bike lanes instead of a multipurpose path for bicycle traffic. This issue was discussed with the City of Cleveland and the local Community Development Corporations (CDC’s). The multipurpose path was desired as it was perceived as a safer alternative to on-road bike lanes.

Some comments received on the DEIS also expressed a desire to reduce the overall width of the Opportunity Corridor boulevard to allow pedestrians to cross the road more easily. Based on these comments, the following updates were made to the preferred alternative:

- The width of thru-lanes was reduced from 12-foot to 11-foot effective width;
- The width of turn lanes was reduced from 11-foot to 10-foot effective width;
- The third eastbound lane between Woodland Avenue and East 93rd Street and also at Cedar Avenue was eliminated;
- A curbed median was added along East 105th Street between Quincy and Cedar avenues to facilitate pedestrian crossings; and
- Medians, where present, will be used as pedestrian refuges where possible.

The updates listed above would generally reduce the width of the Opportunity Corridor boulevard and would allow pedestrians to cross shorter distances in less time. The medians, in particular, would provide pedestrians a safe place to pause while crossing traffic traveling in different directions.

Several comments received on the DEIS asked ODOT to evaluate if it would be possible to reduce curb return radii to further lessen the distance pedestrians would have to cross at intersections. After further coordination with City of Cleveland and the local CDC’s, it was decided to keep the larger curb return radii. This would allow trucks and busses to safely turn corners within the roadway area rather than hopping the curbs or blocking opposing movements. It was determined that the safety benefits of this design outweighed the benefits of reduced intersection areas.

Several comments received on the DEIS expressed concerns that long blocks and distances between traffic lights made it more difficult for pedestrians to move among and between neighborhoods. The preferred alternative will include thirteen signalized intersections spaced between 650 feet and 2,300 feet apart. Pedestrian signals and crosswalks will be provided at every traffic light. The signals will be timed so that pedestrians have enough time to cross the entire street before the opposing light turns green. In addition, each block along the Opportunity Corridor boulevard was evaluated to determine if a midblock crossing (a crosswalk located between intersections) would help pedestrians move more easily through the area. The results of these analyses are summarized below:

- **Slavic Village** – On this block, there are no destinations other than the transit station at East 55th Street. The project would maintain pedestrian access at Francis Avenue. In addition, a pedestrian bridge connecting to the Slavic Village area to the GCRTA station is included in the project. Finally, the project would connect the sidewalk from East 64th Street to the boulevard, which would improve pedestrian access across the Kingsbury Valley.
• **Kinsman Road** – The project would include sidewalk connections from Berwick Road and Colfax Road. Neither Berwick Road nor Colfax Road currently have destinations north of the boulevard other than along Kinsman Road. Therefore, the project would not directly increase inconvenience to pedestrians in this area. In addition, the project would include bridges over the Kingsbury Valley and the GCRTA Blue-Green Line that would increase pedestrian mobility and access.

• **Between the GCRTA Blue-Green Line and the NS Cleveland Line** – The Opportunity Corridor boulevard would bisect East 73rd Street. Noise barriers could be built in this area based on the desires of the residents who would be impacted (see Figure 4-13, page 4-11 of DEIS). If the noise walls are built, they would prevent sidewalks from being connected to the boulevard. If the noise walls are not built, sidewalks would be connected. If the sidewalks are connected to the boulevard, a midblock crossing is not recommended at this location because of safety concerns related to its location within the left-turn lane area to East 75th Street. The project would connect sidewalks from Rawlings Avenue to East 79th Street. There are no other locations between the Blue-Green Line and the NS line that have pedestrian access today, unless a pedestrian is walking across private property to other destinations. In addition, the bridge under the NS Cleveland Line improves pedestrian access to destinations to the east.

• **Between NS Cleveland Line and Buckeye Road** – The Opportunity Corridor boulevard would separate the neighborhoods between Evarts Road and Grand Avenue/Lisbon Road. However, midblock crossings are not recommended due to safety concerns related to the number of lanes, locations of turn lanes and the possibility of a noise barrier on the west side.

• **Between Buckeye Road and Woodland Avenue** – The project would connect the sidewalk from East 89th Street to the boulevard. The block between Buckeye Road and Woodland Avenue is relatively short (about 700 feet), and a midblock crossing is not needed.

• **Between Woodland Avenue and East 93rd Street** – The project will connect the sidewalk from the north at East 89th Street by a bridge across the NS Nickel Plate Line/GCRTA Red Line. No other crossings are present today. Also, the block between Woodland Avenue and East 93rd Street is relatively short (about 600 feet), and a midblock crossing is not needed.

• **Between East 93rd Street and Quincy Avenue** – There are presently no locations within this block to or from which pedestrians would travel. Therefore, a midblock crossing is not needed.

• **East 105th Street Corridor** – The only long block in this area is between Quincy Avenue and Cedar Avenue. The Opportunity Corridor project would add a median along this stretch of East 105th Street. Presently, there is one midblock crossing near Arthur Avenue. As part of a separate project, the New Economy Neighborhood desires to consolidate the east side streets into one intersection with a traffic light near Hudson Avenue. These measures would essentially divide this block in half and provide easier movements for pedestrians.

Several comments also expressed concern that closures on local streets, noise barriers and retaining walls would restrict pedestrian movements in the project area. In areas where streets are closed, sidewalks would be extended to the new roadway to maintain pedestrian connections. The only exception would be at East 73rd Street. As summarized above, if noise walls are built at this location, they would prevent sidewalks from being connected to the boulevard. If the noise walls are not built, sidewalks would be connected. According to ODOT’s noise policy, the decision to build the noise walls will be made by the impacted residents who would also be the primary users of the sidewalk connections. Pedestrian movements would not be restricted by any other retaining walls or noise barriers included in the project.
4.5 HOW WOULD EXISTING ROADS AND ACCESS POINTS BE CHANGED?

The DEIS describes how the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project would change existing roads and access points on page 4-22. These changes include the following closures on local streets:

- **Francis Avenue** – closure between East 55th Street and East 57th Street
- **Berwick Road, Colfax Road and East 73rd Street** – cul-de-sacs;
- **Rawlings Avenue** – cul-de-sac; closure between East 75th Street and East 79th Street;
- **Lisbon Road** – cul-de-sac; connection with Grand Avenue near Evarts Road;
- **Tennyson Road** – closure between Evarts and Buckeye roads;
- **East 87th Street** – closure between Buckeye Road and Woodland Avenue;
- **East 89th Street** – closure between Woodland and Frederick avenues; cul-de-sac north of Buckeye Road;
- **Quincy Avenue** – closure between East 105th Street and Woodhill Road; design will maintain access for bicycles, pedestrians and emergency services
- **105th Street** – The inclusion of a raised median between Quincy and Cedar avenues will limit vehicular movements from side streets and driveways to right-in-right-out access.

These closures will mainly affect vehicular traffic. For most of the areas listed above, sidewalks will be extended to the new roadway to maintain pedestrian connections. Noise walls, if built, would prevent sidewalks from being extended at East 73rd Street (see Section 4.4). 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. Exceptions to this include Francis Avenue, East 89th Street and Quincy Avenue.

Francis Avenue serves as the current entrance into the St. Hyacinth neighborhood and is located approximately 50 feet south of the proposed intersection of the quadrant roadway and East 55th Street. Allowing turning movements at both locations would introduce traffic operational and safety concerns. Therefore, Francis Avenue would be closed between East 55th Street and East 57th Street. To mitigate the impacts of the closure, ODOT will help create a new entrance to the St. Hyacinth neighborhood by constructing enhancements along Maurice and Bellford avenues. These measures would include street trees, and sidewalk and pavement repairs or improvements within the existing right-of-way and will be coordinated with the project stakeholders through the Slavic Village Community Development Corporation (CDC) during final design. The project would also build a pedestrian/bike bridge at East 59th Street to maintain access to the GCRTA transit station at East 55th Street.

The preferred alternative would build a traffic signal at Woodland Avenue. If 89th Street is extended to the Opportunity Corridor boulevard, it would create a 5-legged intersection at this location. This would introduce traffic operational and safety concerns. Therefore, East 89th Street would be closed between Woodland and Frederick avenues. To mitigate the impacts of this closure, ODOT would resurface Frederick Avenue and convert East 86th Street to a two-way roadway between Frederick and Woodland avenues. This will allow access to East 89th Street to be maintained via Woodland Avenue. In addition, the project would also build a pedestrian/bike bridge over the NS Nickel Plate/GCRTA Red Line at East 89th Street to maintain connectivity.

Quincy Avenue currently passes under the CSX railroad and forms a T-intersection with East 105th Street approximately 150 feet to the west. The Quincy Avenue profile under the CSX bridge only meets the requirements for a 15 mph design speed. About 350 feet north, Quincy Avenue-East 105th Street rises over the NS Nickel Plate/GCRTA Red Line. The East 105th Street profile over NS only meets the requirements for a 26 mph design speed. The vertical clearances for both bridges do not meet current design standards. The Opportunity Corridor boulevard, which would follow East 105th Street, would
have a 40 mph design speed and would be wider than the existing roadway. Given these constraints, it is not possible to connect Quincy Avenue south of the boulevard and meet necessary design standards without incurring excessive costs for the reconstruction of multiple roadway and railroad bridges.

Based on these constraints, Quincy Avenue would be closed between East 105th Street and Woodhill Road. As requested by the City of Cleveland, access for bicycles, pedestrians and emergency service providers would be maintained via a drive on Quincy Avenue to mitigate the impacts of the closure. With the closure, travelers who currently use Quincy Avenue to travel between East 105th Street and Woodhill Road would utilize the new boulevard, East 93rd Street and Woodland Road to make the same connections. The travel distance for the existing and new routes would be nearly equivalent.

Based on the above evaluation of the street closures and the incorporated mitigation measures, the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project is anticipated to have minor negative impacts on local connectivity and mobility. Furthermore, the improved vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian connectivity and mobility resulting from the construction of the project are expected to outweigh these minor impacts.

4.6 HOW WOULD PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION BE AFFECTED?

The DEIS includes a discussion of how the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project would affect public transportation on page 4-23. Several comments received on the DEIS expressed concern about how the closure of Quincy Avenue would impact access to public buses.

Figure 4-1 on page 4-9 and Figure 4-2 on page 4-10 show existing public transportation within the project area. 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. The programming of bus routes and stops is a dynamic process. GCRTA continually engages in service planning and routing and modifies its services on a quarterly basis. Given the time that will elapse before the Opportunity Corridor project is constructed (i.e. eight quarters or more), it is not possible for GCRTA to identify specific bus route modifications that will be implemented to address the impacts to the bus stops described above. However, all GCRTA service planning and routing is conducted in accordance with its Title VI Program, which is a civil rights document submitted to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) every three years. The Title VI Program consists of a Title VI policy statement, civil rights general requirements and transit service provider requirements such as service standards and policies. The current update was approved by the GCRTA Board in December 2014.

The GCRTA Title VI policy statement includes the following, “RTA as a recipient of federal assistance will ensure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and related statutes and regulations in all GCRTA programs and activities.” The Title VI Program requires a public participation plan for major service reductions and fare changes. The program also has requirements to evaluate major service changes to identify disparate impacts on minority populations, disproportionate burdens for low-income persons, service availability, service frequency and vehicle load. Therefore, when the Opportunity Corridor project is constructed, any modifications to the 10 and 11 bus routes would be made in full compliance with GCRTA’s Title VI Program and its policies on environmental justice and service changes.

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, preliminary analysis indicates that two options exist to maintain bus service in this area:

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 (see Figure 4-2 on page 4-10); 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 (see Figure 4-2 on page 4-10). Under this scenario, walking distances would be less for many users.

In addition to the individual stops, construction of the Opportunity Corridor would also impact the overall routing of the 10 and 11 bus routes. Based on a preliminary assessment, Bus Route 10 could be rerouted to E. 93rd Street, while Bus Route 11 could utilize the new Opportunity Corridor boulevard (see Figure 4-2 on page 4-10). 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 change policies. Prior to and during construction, ODOT will coordinate all street closures with GCRTA to assure that no lapses in bus service occur.

Other comments received on the DEIS suggested that bus service should be provided along the Opportunity Corridor boulevard. Existing transit service is currently provided parallel and adjacent to the proposed boulevard via the GCRTA Red Line and portions of the Blue-Green line. 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. 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, ODOT will help construct enhanced bus shelters in areas where the existing bus lines will cross the new boulevard. Key intersections being considered for enhanced bus shelters 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. ODOT will also work with GCRTA during final design to coordinate locations of bus stations along E. 105th Street and where the proposed boulevard would intersect existing bus routes.

Finally, 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 platform at this station is one of only two within the GCRTA system that can only service one train car. 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 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.

In a letter dated Feb. 14, 2014 (see Appendix A), GCRTA expressed their support of the closure of Quincy Avenue and the funding of the improvements to the E. 105th Street-Quincy Avenue train station. The letter also indicated that GCRTA is currently studying the utilization and viability of the E. 79th Street rapid transit stations. This study is scheduled for completion prior to the end of 2014. Finally, the GCRTA letter documented a commitment to 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 and requested further coordination on the locations of bus stations in the project area. A response to the comments contained in the Feb. 14, 2014 GCRTA letter is provided in Appendix A.
Figure 4-1
Opportunity Corridor
Transit Connectivity

Source: Opportunity Corridor Public Hearing Presentation, 10/01/2013

Not to Scale

CUY-Opportunity Corridor (PID 77333)
Cleveland, OH
4.7 WOULD LOW-INCOME AND MINORITY POPULATIONS BE AFFECTED?

The DEIS describes how the preferred alternative would impact low-income and minority populations on pages 4-27 through 4-31. The DEIS also describes several measures that will be implemented as part of the project to mitigate impacts and provide added benefits to the local community. The mitigation measures were coordinated further with the public and the project stakeholders both during and after the public comment period for the DEIS. Based on that coordination, the project will include the following:

- ODOT will build two pedestrian/bike bridges: one at East 59th Street and one at East 89th Street. The bridges will include lighting and will be maintained by the City of Cleveland.

- ODOT will implement a voluntary residential relocation assistance program (VRAP). This program will allow some residents whose homes are not directly impacted by the project to apply for assistance to relocate to another area. The eligible properties would include 15 buildings and 26 dwelling units. The properties that would be eligible for the VRAP and additional details about the program are identified in the Opportunity Corridor Environmental Justice (EJ) Mitigation Residential Voluntary Relocation Assistance Program (VRAP) Memo (July 2013), which is included in Appendix E on the included CD and incorporated by reference into this FEIS. Should baseline conditions change prior to the start of land acquisition, ODOT will reconsider the properties eligible for the VRAP.

To qualify for relocation benefits, residents must own the subject property. Tenants would qualify for relocation benefits if the property owner elects to participate in the VRAP. Additionally, at least one of the criteria detailed below must be met for each residential property:

- Proximity to the project, including:
  - Residential uses located in the intersection influence areas\(^1\) and
  - Residential uses with direct access to boulevard

- Locational compatibility: In some areas, the project would create a single remaining (isolated) residential land use on a block or in a general area. The single remaining residential land uses were determined eligible to apply for relocation benefits under the VRAP.

All voluntary residential relocations will be provided benefits matching those provided for required relocations. Federal-aid transportation funding will not be utilized for this measure.

- For required and voluntary 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.

- The Kenneth L. Johnson (Woodland) Recreational Center is an important community resource to area residents. The city currently has plans to expand the rec center, and ODOT will fund up to $500,000 of the planned expansion.

- Noise walls are recommended in three specific areas to mitigate predicted traffic noise impacts. 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

\(^1\) The intersection influence area includes the physical intersection and the approaches where driver perception, reaction, maneuvering and turn-lane storage occur.
would help decide how the walls would 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.

- The closure of Francis Avenue will affect the current entrance into the St. Hyacinth neighborhood. ODOT will help create a new entrance into the St. Hyacinth neighborhood by constructing enhancements along Maurice and Bellford avenues. These measures will include street trees, and sidewalk and pavement repairs or improvements and will be coordinated with the project stakeholders through the Slavic Village CDC during final design.

- 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.

- ODOT will provide, 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 opportunities 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.

One possible mitigation measure that was presented to the public in the DEIS and at the public hearing included providing financial aid to assist in the planning and development of sites previously identified as part of the Urban Agricultural Innovation Zone, which is located in the Kinsman neighborhood. While several individuals indicated general support for all of the mitigation measures, none of the comments expressed strong support for the urban agriculture mitigation measures. Based on the strong preference for other mitigation measure such as workforce development and job training, the project team determined that mitigation funds would be best allocated to the other measures. Therefore, financial aid within the Urban Agriculture Innovation Zone was not included as a final mitigation measure.

Another mitigation measure that was presented to the public included increasing the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) goal for the Opportunity Corridor construction contract(s). This measure received broad public support. However, ODOT will establish the DBE goal for the construction contract(s) according to its standard policy, which considers the engineer’s estimate for construction cost, scope of work items, project location and DBE contractors available to complete the work. Therefore, increasing the DBE goal to a specific target was not included as a final mitigation measure. However, ODOT will maximize the DBE goal for the construction contract(s) to the greatest extent possible.

### 4.8 WHAT RESOURCES ARE NOT PRESENT WITHIN THE STUDY AREA?

The DEIS describes resources that are not present within the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project study area on page 4-35. The DEIS further states that threatened and endangered species or habitat are not present in the study area. 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. The coordination with ODNR is included in Appendix A.
4.9 HOW WOULD CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES AFFECT THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY?

The DEIS describes how construction activities would affect the surrounding community on pages 4-37 and 4-39. One construction effect described in the DEIS includes a temporary increase in air pollution due to emissions from construction equipment and dust from construction activities. This would be minimized through dust control measures outlined in ODOT’s Construction and Materials Specifications (CMS). In addition, the contractor will be required to follow local City of Cleveland ordinances for vehicle idling and all current U.S. Environmental Protection Agency air quality regulations.

Another construction effect described in the DEIS includes a temporary increase in noise from construction equipment and activities. Some construction equipment and activities, including pile driving and soil compaction, could increase noise in the area of the project. These impacts would be minimized in these ways:

- The contractor must comply with City of Cleveland noise ordinances and other local laws governing construction; and

The increased truck traffic would use pre-approved haul routes to bring materials to and from the project area. These routes would be designed to minimize impacts to the community from increased truck noise and traffic.
5 PUBLIC AND AGENCY COORDINATION

5.1 WHAT PUBLIC AND AGENCY COORDINATION HAS TAKEN PLACE SINCE THE PUBLICATION OF THE DEIS?

Public and agency coordination conducted throughout the course of the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project is described in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on pages 5-1 through 5-10. This chapter includes a description of the public and agency coordination that occurred after the publication of the DEIS. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) does not include updates to the other sections in Chapter 5 of the DEIS.

The DEIS was published in the Federal Register on Sept. 13, 2013. A copy of the notice in the Federal Register can be found in Appendix D, which is on the CD included with this FEIS. A formal comment period began with the publication of the DEIS and ended on Oct. 31, 2013.

The DEIS and all attachments were made available at the following locations:

- The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) District 12;
- Cleveland City Hall;
- The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA);
- Cuyahoga County Department of Public Works;
- Kenneth L. Johnson Recreation Center;
- Cleveland Public Library – Main Branch;
- Cleveland Public Library – Fleet Branch;
- Cleveland Public Library – Garden Valley Branch;
- Cleveland Public Library – MLK Jr. Branch;
- Cleveland Public Library – Woodland Branch;
- Buckeye Area Development Corporation;
- Burton Bell Carr Development, Inc.;
- Fairfax Renaissance Development Corporation;
- Maingate Business;
- Slavic Village Development; and
- University Circle Inc.

The DEIS was delivered to each location with instructions for making the document available to the public. These included:

- Keeping the document at the front or main desk;
- Asking individuals to sign the document out using a provided sign-out sheet;
- Requiring the document to be viewed in the facility and returned before the individual(s) leave; and
- Allowing individuals to use a computer to view the two CDs included as an appendix.

The DEIS was also available on the project website (www.buckeyetraffic.com/opportunitycorridor). Copies of the DEIS distribution list and instructions for viewing can be found in Appendix D, which is on the CD included with this FEIS.
A public hearing for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project was held on Tuesday, Oct. 1, 2013, from 4 to 8 p.m. at Mt. Sinai Baptist Church, 7510 Woodland Ave., Cleveland, OH 44104. The hearing was advertised in several formats:

- Postcards were sent to the most current project mailing list;
- Two display-type advertisements in the Plain Dealer;
- Two advertisements in the Call and Post; and
- ODOT project website.

Community Development Corporation (CDC) and other external websites, as well as CDC newsletters and email blasts were also used to notify the public about the hearing.

Copies of advertising materials can be found in Appendix D, which is on the CD included with this FEIS.

Two-hundred-eighteen (218) people signed in at the public hearing, including 12 members of the project team. Each guest received a handout with basic information about the project and a comment sheet. The doors opened at 4 p.m., and an open-house format allowed guests to visit stations where project staff were available to answer questions. The project team gave a formal presentation at 5:30 p.m. After the presentation, any attendee could sign up to give a public verbal comment, which was limited to two minutes. Once everyone who signed up spoke, the verbal comment period was opened for others to speak as well. The presentation and public verbal comments were recorded by a court reporter. After the verbal comments, the open-house format resumed. The public was given several methods to comment on the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project. These included:

- Give a spoken comment after the presentation at the public hearing;
- Speak privately to a court reporter at the public hearing;
- Fill out a comment form and return it at the public hearing, or by email, mail or fax;
- Send comments by email, mail or fax;
- Call ODOT's Public Information Officer; or
- Fill out a comment form online (www.buckeyetraffic.com/opportunitycorridor)

Copies of the public hearing sign-in sheets, presentation, display boards, transcripts and other materials can be found in Appendix D, which is on the CD included with this FEIS.

ODOT notified the participating agencies for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project of its intent to prepare a combined FEIS/Record of Decision (ROD) on Dec. 9, 2013. Copies of this correspondence are included in Appendix A.

5.2 WHAT COMMENTS WERE MADE BY AGENCIES AND HOW DID THEY AFFECT THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE?

The DEIS was distributed to the project’s Participating Agencies:

- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE)
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- U.S. Department of Interior (DOI)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- U.S. Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Two agencies – ACOE and USFWS – did not provide comments on the DEIS. Most of the remaining agencies reviewed the document but did not have any comments. Two participating agencies – FTA and EPA – provided comments on the DEIS. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) also provided comments. Copies of the agency comments and detailed responses are included in Appendix A. A brief summary of the agency comments is provided in the following sections.

**Federal Transit Administration**

FTA’s comments were related to the alternatives development and evaluation, impacts to transit and impacts to environmental justice communities. In response to FTA’s comments, the FEIS includes enhanced discussions of the following topics:

- “What is the full range of alternatives considered and why were some eliminated from further study?” (FEIS Section 3.3 on page 3-2);
- “How would public transportation be affected?” (FEIS Section 4.6 on page 4-7); and
- “Would low-income and minority populations be affected?” (FEIS Section 4.7 on page 4-11)

Several commitments that would further address FTA’s comments were included in the FEIS. These include maintaining bus service in the vicinity of Quincy Avenue and providing enhanced bus shelters. A complete listing of the environmental commitments is included in Table A of the ROD. In addition, the preferred alternative was updated to include operational and accessibility improvements to the existing GCRTA E. 105th Street-Quincy Avenue train station (See FEIS Section 3.4 on page 3-42). Detailed responses to FTA’s comments are included in Appendix A. ODOT responded to FTA’s comments in a letter dated February 13, 2014. In an email dated April 2, 2014, FTA provided additional feedback, and ODOT responded in an email dated April 16, 2014. Copies of all correspondence with FTA are included in Appendix A.

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

EPA’s comments were related to the alternatives development and evaluation, public and stakeholder input, impacts to transit, pedestrian and bicycle mobility, stormwater management, air quality impacts during construction, street closures, mitigation for impacts to environmental justice communities (workforce development, noise barrier enhancements and relocations). In response to EPA’s comments, the FEIS includes enhanced discussions of the following topics:

- “What is the full range of alternatives considered and why were some eliminated from further study?” (FEIS Section 3.3 on page 3-2);
- “Would any homes, businesses or churches be relocated?” (FEIS Section 4.3 on page 4-2)
- “How would existing roads and access points be changed?” (FEIS Section 4.5 on page 4-6)
- “How would public transportation be affected?” (FEIS Section 4.6 on page 4-7)
- “Would low-income and minority populations be affected?” (FEIS Section 4.7 on page 4-11)
- “How would construction activities affect the surrounding community?” (FEIS Section 4.9 on page 4-13)

Updates were also made to the preferred alternative to reduce the overall width of the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor boulevard to allow pedestrians to cross the road more easily and to fund operational and accessibility improvements to the E. 105th Street-Quincy Avenue train station (see FEIS Section 3.4 on page 3-42). ODOT and FHWA held a meeting with EPA on February 11, 2014 to discuss EPA’s DEIS review comments. As a result of this meeting, it was determined that updates to the DEIS were not needed to address EPA’s comments regarding stormwater management.
Several commitments that would further address EPA’s comments were included in the FEIS. These include further extending sidewalks to maintain pedestrian connections; maintaining bus service in the vicinity of Quincy Avenue; maintaining access to/from East 89th Street via Frederick Avenue and East 86th Street; providing enhanced noise walls if desired; providing enhanced bus shelters; funding on-the-job training and following local and federal air quality requirements. A complete listing of the environmental commitments is included in Table A of the ROD. Detailed responses to EPA’s comments are included in Appendix A.

Ohio Department of Natural Resources

ODNR’s comments were related to known ranges of federally and state endangered species and measures to avoid impacts to identified species. In response to ODNR’s comments, the FEIS includes an enhanced discussion of “What resources are not present within the study area?” (FEIS Section 4.8 on page 4-12). In addition, a commitment was included in the FEIS to restrict tree cutting to avoid potential impacts to Indiana bat habitat. A complete listing of the environmental commitments is included in Table A of the ROD. Detailed responses to ODNR’s comments are included in Appendix A.

5.3 WHAT COMMENTS WERE MADE BY THE PUBLIC AND HOW DID THEY AFFECT THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE?

About 150 public comments were received during the DEIS comment period. Within the comments, individuals or groups touched on nearly 500 different points, which were grouped into several broad topics. The sections below provide a summary of these broad topics. The original comments can be found in Appendix D, which is on the CD included with this FEIS. Detailed responses to each comment are included in Appendix B. A complete listing of the environmental commitments referenced in the sections below is included in Table A of the ROD.

Opposition Comments

A number of comments received generally opposed the project for a variety of reasons. These comments generally wanted to stop the project and spend the money on other purposes including transit, fixing existing roads and neighborhood development. These comments did not result in updates to the preferred alternative.

Relocations and Environmental Justice Community Concerns

Many comments raised concerns about relocation benefits and acquisition, specifically as they relate to low property values and environmental justice community concerns. These comments are addressed by the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act (Uniform Act) provisions as well as a number of other relocation policies (see FEIS Section 4.3 on page 4-2). Comments in support of relocation were received from some impacted residents. These comments did not result in updates to the preferred alternative.

Street Closures/Cul-De-Sacs

There were two general themes to comments on street closures – impacts to mobility within the communities and concerns regarding transit routes. In response to these comments, the FEIS includes enhanced discussions of the following topics:

• “How would existing roads and access points be changed?” (FEIS Section 4.5 on page 4-6)
The FEIS also includes commitments to address these comments, including 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 bus service in the vicinity of Quincy Avenue.

**Lane Widths**

Several comments stated that 12-foot lanes promote increased speed. Due to recent criteria changes and stakeholder coordination, the lanes on the boulevard will be reduced to 11-foot effective width with 10-foot effective width turn lanes. This change is described in Section 4.4 on page 4-4 of this FEIS.

**Roadway Width**

Similar to the lane width, many comments indicated that the width of the Opportunity Corridor boulevard would be a barrier to pedestrians. This is largely due to the number of lanes, but also due to lane width and widening at intersections to give large vehicles room to turn. Due to recent coordination, minor updates were made to reduce the overall width of the roadway. A curbed median was also added along East 105th Street between Quincy and Cedar avenues to facilitate pedestrian crossings. These updates are described in Section 4.4 on page 4-4 of this FEIS.

**Pedestrian Mobility**

Several comments received expressed concerns that long blocks and distances between traffic lights made it more difficult for pedestrians to move among and between neighborhoods. Other comments expressed concern that closures on local streets, noise barriers and retaining walls would restrict pedestrian movements. In response to these comments, the FEIS includes an enhanced discussion of “How would bicycles and pedestrians be affected?” (FEIS Section 4.4 on page 4-4). The FEIS also includes a commitment to extend sidewalks to the new roadway to maintain pedestrian connections in areas where streets are closed.

**Existing Roadways**

Several comments generally opposed building the project in favor of repairing and/or upgrading existing roadways. The City of Cleveland has existing programs and projects to maintain infrastructure surrounding the project area. In addition, maintenance alone would not support the project purpose and need of improving access and mobility within the Forgotten Triangle area and supporting redevelopment. These comments did not result in updates to the preferred alternative.

**Transit**

Many comments expressed concern about impacts to transit service and access. In response to these comments, the FEIS includes an enhanced discussion of “How would public transportation be affected?” (FEIS Section 4.6 on page 4-7). Several commitments that would address these comments were also added to the FEIS. Commitments include extending sidewalks to the boulevard to maintain pedestrian connections; maintaining bus service in the vicinity of Woodhill Road/Quincy Avenue and building enhanced bus shelters. Building a new pedestrian/bike bridge to maintain access to the transit station at East 55th Street was also included in the DEIS and incorporated into this FEIS. Finally, the preferred
The preferred alternative was updated to include operational and accessibility improvements to the existing GCRTA E. 105th Street-Quincy Avenue train station.

**Environmental Justice Mitigation Measures**

The public comments indicated strong support for workforce development and job training within neighborhoods. The comments generally supported enhancements within Slavic Village and enhanced bus shelters. In regard to noise barriers, most comments were not specific to enhancements (although some expressed support), but opposed the construction of the barriers for a variety of reasons. Under state policy, noise barriers are considered when noise impacts are predicted to result from a proposed project. Noise barriers, however, will only be built if the affected residents prefer to have them. No specific comments were received regarding mitigation measures already committed to in the DEIS (Voluntary Residential Relocation Assistance Program (VRAP), pedestrian bridges and recreation center funding). Based on these comments, the FEIS includes commitments to fund workforce development through on-the-job training, improve the entrance to Slavic Village, build enhanced noise walls if desired and build enhanced bus shelters.

One mitigation measure presented to the public included providing financial aid to assist in the planning and development of sites previously identified as part of the Urban Agricultural Innovation Zone located in the Kinsman neighborhood. While several individuals indicated general support for all of the mitigation measures, none of the comments expressed strong support for the urban agriculture mitigation measures. Based on the strong preference for other mitigation measures such as workforce development, the project team determined that mitigation funds would be best allocated to the other measures. Therefore, financial aid for development of the Urban Agriculture Innovation Zone was not included as a final mitigation measure.

Another mitigation measure presented to the public included increasing the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) goal for the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor construction contract(s). This measure received broad public support. However, ODOT will establish the DBE goal for the construction contract(s) according to its standard policy, which considers the engineer’s estimate, scope of work items, project location and DBE contractors available to complete the work. Therefore, increasing the DBE goal to a specific target was not included as a final mitigation measure. However, ODOT will maximize the DBE goal for the construction contract(s) to the greatest extent possible.

### 5.4 HOW WAS MY COMMENT CONSIDERED AS PART OF THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT?

All comments received on the DEIS were considered in light of the preferred alternative presented in the DEIS and the public hearing. This FEIS describes several updates to the preferred alternative that were made in direct response to the comments received (see Section 3.4 on page 3-42). In addition, this FEIS includes enhanced discussion of several features of the preferred alternative that were of particular concern to the individuals, businesses, organizations and agencies who commented on the DEIS. Finally, several commitments included in this FEIS are in direct response to comments received (see Table A in the ROD). Copies of the agency comments on the DEIS and detailed responses are included in Appendix A. Detailed responses to the public comments received on the DEIS are included in Appendix B. The original public comments can be found in Appendix D, which is on the CD included with this FEIS.
6 ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS AND MITIGATION

6.1 WHAT WILL BE DONE TO REDUCE OR MITIGATE THE IMPACTS OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE?

Table A in the Record of Decision (ROD) describes the steps that will be taken to reduce or mitigate the impacts of the Cleveland Opportunity Corridor project. The environmental commitments and mitigation measures are incorporated by reference into this Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) will make sure that the final plan package includes the necessary engineering drawings, notes and specifications to carry out the environmental commitments outlined in this FEIS.
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