

OPEN HOUSE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MEETING

**Madison South Elementary School
700 S. Illinois Avenue, Mansfield, Ohio**

**Thursday, May 16, 2019
5:00 PM to 7:00 PM**

**Proposed Cook Road/Illinois Avenue & Mansfield-Lucas Road
Intersection Improvement Project**

Richland County, Ohio

ODOT Project: RIC-CR134-5.80; PID 106829

INFORMATIONAL HANDOUT



**Richland County Engineer's Office
77 N. Mulberry Street
Mansfield, OH 44902-1777
(419) 774-5591**

PURPOSE OF THIS PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MEETING

The purpose of this open house public involvement meeting is to present information and solicit public comment on the proposed Cook Road/Illinois Avenue & Mansfield-Lucas Road intersection improvement project in Madison Township, Richland County, Ohio. No formal presentation will be made. However, project representatives from the Richland County Engineer's Office (RCEO), the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), and EMH&T (project design and environmental consultant) are available to discuss the proposed project, environmental considerations, as well as address any questions or concerns you may have regarding this proposed transportation improvement project. Exhibits showing the proposed project are on display for your review.

You are invited to comment regarding the project's design and social, economic, and environmental impacts on residences, businesses and the community.

In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (codified as 36 CFR 800), ODOT also requests information regarding the presence of any known cultural resources in the vicinity of the project. Cultural resources include prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, historic bridges, historic buildings, sites, and districts.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND NEED

The existing intersection is two-way stop controlled on the Mansfield-Lucas Road approaches with dedicated left turn lanes provided on all four approaches.

A 2017 safety study done by the Richland County Regional Planning Commission (RCRPC) concluded that 15 crashes occurred at this intersection in the previous three (3) year period. At the time, the intersection was ranked #9 countywide on the 2015 RCRPC Intersection List. Since the study, 13 additional crashes have been recorded in the 2016 and 2017 calendar years. The purpose of the study is to identify and evaluate feasible alternatives that will improve safety at the intersection. The alternatives considered were a roundabout, a traffic signal, and no-build.

EMH&T has evaluated capacity for the various intersection improvement alternatives at the Cook Road/Illinois Avenue & Mansfield-Lucas Road intersection. Analyses were developed for two-way stop control (existing condition), signal control, and roundabout control for both Opening Year (2020) and Horizon Year (2040) conditions. Traffic count data as documented in a previous study titled, Abbreviated Safety Study, CR 134, SLM 5.91, Cook Road/Illinois Avenue at Mansfield-Lucas Road, published by Richland County Regional Planning, dated June 2017 was used as the foundation for the analyses.

Highway Capacity Software (HCS) was used to evaluate the operation of the intersection under stop and signalized control, and SIDRA intersection capacity software was used to evaluate the operation of the intersection under roundabout control. The HCS and SIDRA results were used to determine the level-of-service at the intersection of Cook Road/Illinois Avenue & Mansfield-Lucas Road. Levels of Service (LOS) are expressed in terms of letter grades with LOS A representing the highest quality traffic flow and minimal delay, and LOS F representing poor traffic operations, significant delay, and substantial queuing. The HCS analyses revealed that the Cook Road/Illinois Avenue & Mansfield-Lucas Road intersection is expected have individual movements with unacceptable levels of service in the horizon year 2040 if improvements are not implemented.

PROJECT SCHEDULE AND CONSTRUCTION

Right-of-way acquisition is anticipated to begin fall of 2020. The proposed project will sell in late 2021 with construction commencing in early 2022. The estimated construction cost for the project is approximately \$1,710,000 and will utilize federal and state funding.

MAINTENANCE OF TRAFFIC

Access to all directly adjacent residences, businesses, and properties will be maintained during project construction. Project construction will include complete closure of the Cook Road/Illinois Avenue & Mansfield-Lucas Road intersection, however, a priority will be made to accommodate the travelling public. Construction and possible detour information will be posted prior to the start of construction and vehicular access will be maintained to all abutting properties during project construction.

RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION

To accommodate the roadway improvements and possible utility relocations, the purchase of additional permanent right-of-way and/or construction easements and temporary right-of-way may be required. The extent of additional right-of-way takes will be determined during the detailed design phase.

ODOT operates under the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 and amendments of 1987. The main objective of this Act is to ensure that every effort is made to acquire the needed right-of-way in a fair and equitable manner. This Act provides advice and financial assistance to persons whose residence, business, farm, and/or non-profit organization may be acquired as part of the project. Operated in accordance with Chapter 163 of the Ohio Revised Code and Public Laws 91-646 and 100-17, the Relocation Assistance Program ensures fair and equitable treatment of each individual, family, business, farm and non-profit organization. Basic policies have been established in this effort by the Federal Highway Administration and ODOT:

- All property must be appraised before acquisition is started. This is done by qualified appraisers who are familiar with real estate values in the area.
- Upon determination of the fair market value, an ODOT Real Estate representative will contact the owner for an appointment. At this time, the representative will explain the project to the owner and the effect of the project on the property, and will present the offer based on the appraisal, both orally and in writing.

It is hoped that any needed right-of-way would be acquired through successful negotiations. However, if an agreement cannot be reached, property owners have recourse through the local judicial system where compensation will be determined by a jury, if necessary.

This is a basic overview of the right-of-way procedures. It is the intent of ODOT that every effort will be made to obtain a mutual agreement with the owner and to see that the owner is justly compensated for the property. This will be accomplished by consistent and fair treatment of all owners.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Various environmental studies will be conducted for the proposed project. The purpose of these studies is to identify potential environmentally sensitive resources or areas of concern that may be affected by the project. Impacts to these features must be assessed and mitigated in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and other pertinent federal, state, and local regulations. A Red Flag Summary has been conducted for the project area. The following describes the environmental compliance actions completed and those that are pending. Copies of the Red Flag Summary report is available for review at the meeting.

Cultural Resources: Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their actions on historic properties. In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (codified as 36 CFR 800), ODOT also requests information regarding the presence of any known cultural resources in the vicinity of the project. Cultural resources include prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, historic bridges, historic buildings, sites, and districts.

A preliminary Section 106 cultural resource literature review identified several structures adjacent to the project area that have been recorded in the Ohio Historic Inventory (OHI) databases. Additional evaluation of these structures will be required during the NEPA clearance phase of the project.

Ecological Resources: A Level I Ecological Survey will be conducted for the project study area to determine whether the project will potentially impact wetlands, streams, aquatic and terrestrial habitats, and/or threatened and endangered species/habitats.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) list of Federally Listed Species by Ohio Counties (January 2018) includes the following species for Richland County: Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) – Endangered; Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) – Threatened; and Eastern massasauga (*Sistrurus catenatus*) – Threatened.

No record of any unique ecological sites, geologic features, animal assemblages, scenic rivers, state wildlife areas, national wildlife refuges, or other protected natural areas were identified within a one mile radius of the project study area. All Endangered Species Act obligations will be fulfilled for the project.

Hazardous Materials/Wastes: A Regulated Materials Review (RMR) screening will be performed for the project study area to determine the presence of sites with potential hazardous material concerns. This RMR Screening includes a review of readily available historical land use information, regulatory database information, and a visual inspection to identify any properties within the project study area, or any adjacent properties, that would pose potential environmental concerns to the project.

Social and Economic/Community Impacts: The project area will be improved in a positive manner with enhanced capacity and safety features. The project will not result in impacts to human health and educational facilities, recreational facilities/activities, religious institutions, public transportation, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and/or connectivity between the neighborhoods. Coordination with police/fire/emergency medical services and other public services will continue throughout project development.

Underserved Populations: Underserved Populations are defined by ODOT as minorities, low-income, older adults, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with limited English proficiency. ODOT has developed guidance which provides information to properly identify and engage Underserved Populations as part of the environmental process with the intention to avoid, minimize or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on Underserved Populations.

The project team is working to identify and address potential impacts to Underserved Populations through public involvement outreach efforts involving local stakeholder outreach, conducting a public meeting and by addressing public comments received. You are encouraged to comment regarding the project's potential impact on minorities, low-income, older adults, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with limited English proficiency.

Traffic Noise (*analysis of traffic noise and feasibility/reasonableness of noise abatement*): The project will be evaluated to ensure compliance with NEPA, the FHWA Highway Act of 1970 and the USEPA Noise Control Act.

Air Quality: The project will be evaluated to ensure compliance with the Clean Air Act, NEPA, and state plans for meeting and maintaining national ambient air quality standards.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PROJECT INFORMATION

Your comments are an important part of the planning process for this project. Comments may be submitted in writing during the public meeting or emailed / mailed to:

E-mail to acueva@emht.com

Mail to: Abby Cueva, Senior Project Manager
EMH&T
5500 New Albany Road
Columbus, Ohio 43054

Please submit written comments by Friday, June 14, 2019.

Project information, including this meeting handout and the meeting exhibits, will be available on the RCEO's home page: www.rcengineer.com. A summary of public comments received during the public comment period and responses to comments will be prepared and will be available at Richland County Engineer's Office within 30 days after the close of the public comment period.