

I-75 Mill Creek *Expressway*



*Public
Involvement Plan*

April 2005

HAM-75-2.30 (PID 76257)

Introduction

The Ohio Department of Transportation District 8 office has recently contracted with TranSystems Corporation to study alternatives that will improve traffic flow, enhance safety and minimize impacts to adjacent properties along I-75 from the Paddock Road interchange on the north and the Western Hills Viaduct interchange on the south. In addition, studies will contain a portion of I-74 from the I-75 interchange to the Colerain interchange and the Norwood Lateral (SR 562) from the I-75 interchange to the Paddock Road interchange. The study area includes portions of the City of Cincinnati, City of St. Bernard, and the City of Elmwood Place.

Sections of the I-75 corridor proposed for study have been identified by ODOT's Office of Roadway Safety and Mobility as high crash locations, safety hotspots and congested areas.

The purpose of this study is to reconstruct a portion of the I-75 corridor to add capacity to effectively handle the high traffic volumes and high percentage of commercial traffic using this section of highway. In addition to capacity additions, improvements to the transportation system to provide a reduction in traffic accidents will also be required. The process of this study must involve various project stakeholders, the affected residents, business owners and community leaders, as well as the political entities and funding agencies, which must ultimately implement the proposed improvements. Therefore, the Public Involvement Program, detailed in this Public Involvement Plan, is a critical component to the success of this project.

Purpose

The goal of the HAM-75-2.30 Public Involvement Plan (PIP) is to maintain the positive local success of the North South Transportation Initiative (NSTI) with active participation from stakeholders and the general public. Public involvement during a transportation planning study serves two basic purposes; it is necessary to disseminate information and to solicit input. It is important that the components of the Public Involvement Plan address both objectives. The Public Involvement Plan for the HAM-75-2.30 Study will:

- Solicit public input to identify problems and establish project objectives

- Provide the public with information on the progress of the study
- Provide information on the potential impacts and benefits of each alternative under consideration
- Solicit input for a preferred alternative

In order to achieve these goals, the Project Team proposes to use several methods described in detail below.

Methods

Implementation Committee – The Implementation Committee meetings will be held approximately every six (6) weeks (beginning in November, 2004) in conjunction with “milestone events” such as decisions and phase transitions. The purpose of these meetings will be to utilize a technical and policy group of individuals who will represent the public and interested local agencies in the dissemination and collection of meaningful information, perspectives, alternatives, and general public issues.

The Implementation Committee has already been identified and includes personnel from ODOT Central Office, ODOT District 8, FHWA, Hamilton County Engineer’s Office, City of Cincinnati, City of St. Bernard, City of Elmwood Place, SORTA, OKI, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati State Technical College, Mill Creek Conservancy District, and Uptown Consortium. Other interested parties may be added to the committee, if necessary, to ensure that all viewpoints have been represented. ODOT and TranSystems will collaborate on the agenda for each meeting, notifying committee members of meeting dates and preparing meeting materials and exhibits.

Public Meeting(s) – A public meeting will be held near the end of November, 2005, to present the Conceptual Alternatives. This meeting will be conducted in an open-house format at a location to be determined by availability and expected volume of attendees. The Project Team may determine that a series of meetings at several locations throughout the project area may be more appropriate. The Implementation Committee will assist the project team in making this determination.

Following the public meeting, there will be a two (2) week period for the public to submit comments on provided sheets or through the project website. TranSystems will make location arrangements, prepare a press release for

ODOT's use in announcing each meeting, prepare and mail invitations to persons on the mailing list, prepare exhibits, handouts, and comment sheets. TranSystems will collect and summarize the comments received, including the responses given. The finding will be included in the technical file and summarized in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

ACTIVITY	DATE/ DEADLINE	RESPONSIBILITY
Set up Implementation Committee	November 15, 2004	TranSystems
Implementation Committee Meeting #1: Project Introduction	November 29, 2004	TranSystems
Develop Draft PI Plan	December 13, 2004	TranSystems
Develop Mailing List	January, 2005	TranSystems
Implementation Committee Meeting #2: Purpose and Need Discussion	January 24, 2005	TranSystems
Implementation Committee Meeting #3: Conceptual Alternatives Discussion	March 14, 2005	TranSystems
Implementation Committee Meeting #4: Planning Study Report Discussion	April/May, 2005	TranSystems
Implementation Committee Meeting #5: Present Final Strategic Plan to Stakeholders	June, 2005	TranSystems
Implementation Committee Meeting #6: Conceptual Alternatives (in progress) Discussion	July, 2005	TranSystems
Implementation Committee Meeting #7: Discussion of Comparison Results	September, 2005	TranSystems
Hold Public Meetings (Several Locations)	November, 2005	TranSystems
Summarize PI meeting activities for ODOT	1 week after PI Meeting	TranSystems
Compile and summarize PI Meeting comments, produce response letters to comments for ODOT review	1 week after close of comment period	TranSystems

Mailing List and Notifications – TranSystems has developed a public contact list that will serve as the basis for notifications and mailings. The list will be updated throughout the process with the names and contact information from meeting attendance sheets and submitted comment forms. Included in this database is information such as name and mailing address. This mailing list will be delivered to ODOT in both hard copy and electronic format for review and approval.

TranSystems will issue mailings to property owners 48 hours prior to conducting field reviews that involve entering private property within the project area. This notice covers a period of no more than 60 days.

Website – At the onset of the process a project website will be created. This website will provide all project related public information to the widest distribution of interested parties around the clock. Users will find an array of information on the project including the following key exploratives:

- Project Purpose and Background
- Schedule and Timeline
- Progress/Status Section
- Maps and Renderings
- Frequently Asked Questions
- News Releases/Updates
- Community Outreach
- Implementation Committee Information
- Feedback and E-mail Contact

TranSystems will be responsible for the development, hosting, and maintenance of the project website including updating site content on an as needed basis and responding to feedback and emails daily. By April 1, 2005 the website address will have been secured and will be referenced on all materials and by word of mouth.

Project Logo – TranSystems, with the input and cooperation of the Implementation Committee, will develop a logo to be used throughout the duration of the study. With numerous other ODOT projects along I-75 within Hamilton County and Southwest Ohio, the project logo will not only add an aesthetic impact to all documents, but it will create a unique identity for this project.

Project Newsletters, Fact Sheets and Reports – TranSystems will create project newsletters and fact sheets that will update the stakeholders and general public of meetings, respond to their questions, and provide a schedule for the near future. All public reports will be available, upon approval by ODOT, on the project website as Adobe Acrobat files. Those reports will include the Public Involvement Plan, Purpose and Need, Existing and Future Conditions Report and Planning Study Report.

Mobile, Informational Study Display – A display that illustrates the overall study area and proposed improvements will be placed at various public locations throughout the study area.

Modifications to the Plan

A Public Involvement Plan is never final until the project is complete. The approaches being used for this project will be examined during the progress of the work and adjusted as necessary. For instance, if TranSystems is not receiving appropriate representation from certain neighborhoods or communities, particularly in light of Environmental Justice populations in this area, additional methods will be employed.