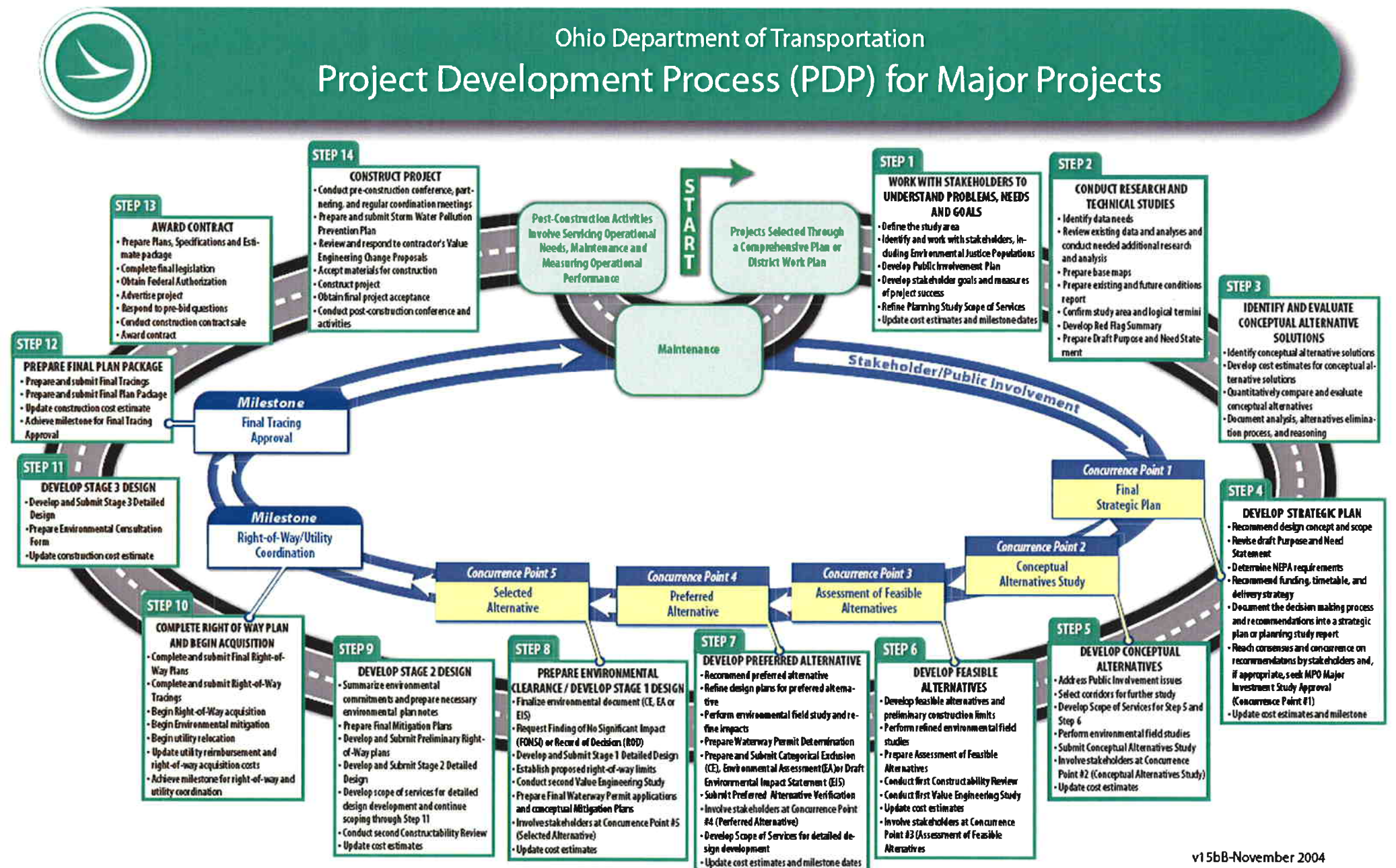


1.0 Introduction

The I-75 Mill Creek Expressway project is currently in Step 6 of ODOT's Project Development Process for Major Projects (See Figure 1-1). The Assessment of Feasible Alternatives (AFA) is a combined design and environmental document produced at the end of Step 6, based upon the information provided in the *Planning Study Report* (Step 4), *Conceptual Alternatives Study* (Step 5), and environmental studies and engineering information developed throughout Step 6. The ultimate purpose of the AFA is to provide the basis for recommending a preferred alternative that is presented to the stakeholders, agencies, and the public in Step 7.

At this point in the Project Development Process, the design of feasible alternatives is based upon the guidelines in ODOT's Location and Design Manual, Volume 3, Section 1400. Evaluation of potential impacts is based upon studies identified in ODOT's PDP manual and technical guidance documents. For this project, these studies included: Phase I and II History/Architecture Investigations, Ecological Survey, Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report, social and economic information, preliminary noise analysis, along with the stakeholder and public comments from public involvement meetings held throughout the process.

Figure 1-1: Project Development Process Road Map



1.1 Purpose and Need

A Purpose and Need Document was prepared for the project and approved April 22, 2005. The findings of the Purpose and Need are summarized below to provide the reader with the context within which the alternatives were developed.

1.1.1 Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the project is to improve traffic flow and enhance safety while minimizing impacts to adjacent properties along I-75 from the Western Hills Viaduct interchange on the south to the Paddock Road interchange on the north.

1.1.2 Project Background

In 2000, the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) and the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (MVRPC) cooperated on a regional multi-modal transportation plan, the North South Transportation Initiative (NSTI). The primary focus of the NSTI was to determine how to improve the safety, efficiency and reliability of transportation networks within Southwest Ohio, Northern Kentucky and Southeast Indiana. Analysis of the existing and future travel corridors was combined with input from stakeholders and the public. As a result, several projects were established to address the original focus of the NSTI. One of the most important corridors established by the public and stakeholders was Interstate 75. The I-75 Mill Creek Expressway study builds upon this major investment study and refines the recommendations within this portion of the I-75 corridor.

1.1.3 Regional Setting/Study Area

The proposed project is located in Hamilton County, Ohio, within the Cincinnati metro area. Hamilton County is in the southwest corner of Ohio. The Ohio River and the State of Kentucky border the county to the south and the State of Indiana to the west. The City of Cincinnati and a large majority of its metro-area are within Hamilton County. The land cover is predominantly the Mill Creek Valley with hills bordering on either side entirely within an urban setting. The I-75 corridor passes north-south through Hamilton County and the City of Cincinnati, providing a connection between the states of Kentucky and Ohio.

The project area spans from the Western Hills Viaduct interchange on the south to the Paddock Road interchange on the north. This area includes the Hopple Street, I-74, Mitchell Avenue, Norwood Lateral (SR 562), Towne Street,

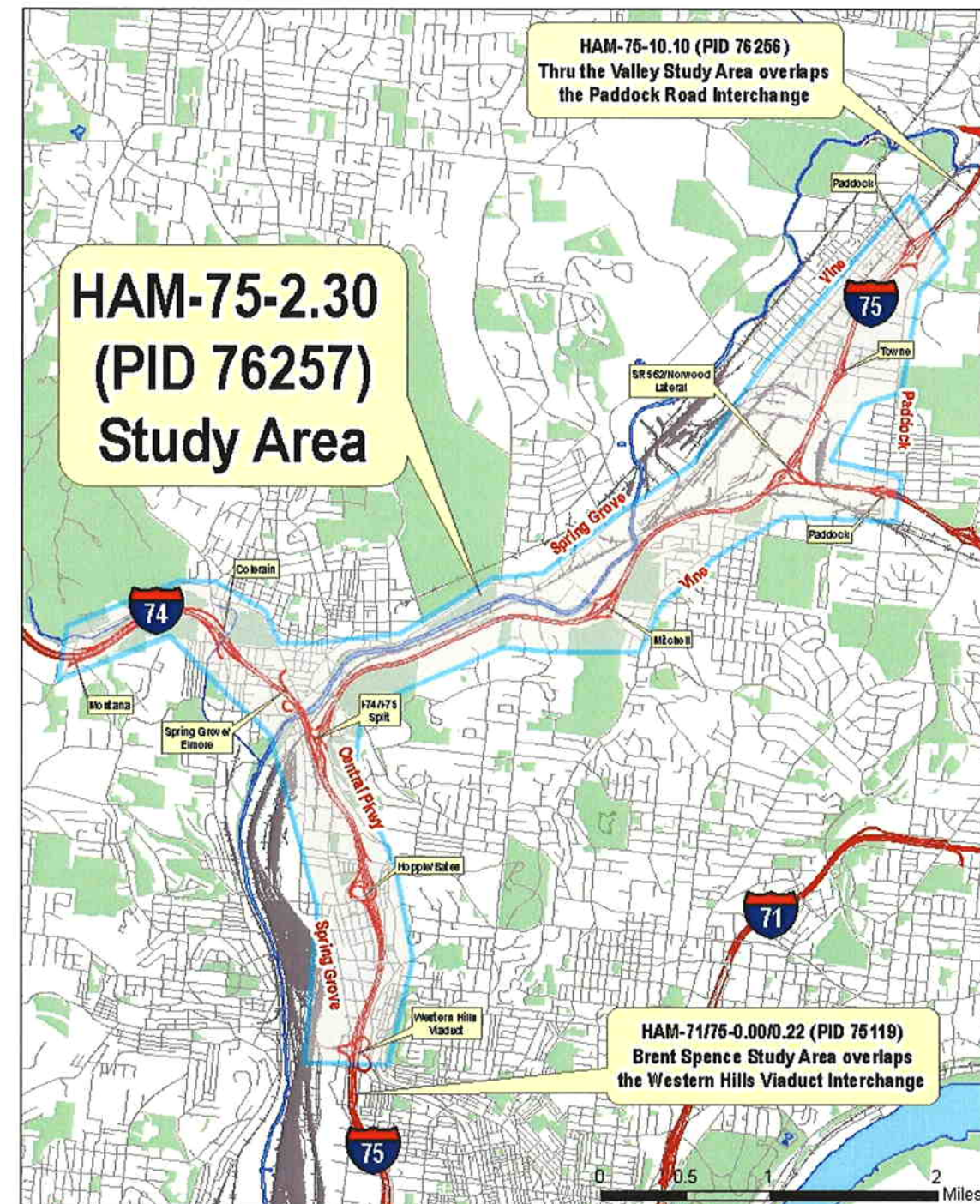


Figure 1-2: I-75 Mill Creek Expressway Project Study Area