



# I-75 Mill Creek Expressway Newsletter

April 2005 • Issue 1

## WELCOME!

The purpose of this newsletter is to update you on the progress of work on the I-75 corridor between the Western Hills Viaduct and the Paddock Road interchange. This newsletter will be sent periodically, and will provide you with information on the activities you might expect over the next few months. In addition, it will include information on the environmental and planning studies currently underway. As the project progresses, this newsletter will eventually give you an idea of what I-75 will look like. Your ideas are greatly appreciated at any time, and will help determine the course of this 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 transportation plan named 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. Several projects emerged from the NSTI as priorities. Based on analysis of existing and future travel corridors and public and stakeholder input, this section of I-75 ranked high in terms of importance. The *I-75 Mill Creek Expressway* study is intended to build upon this major investment study and refine the recommendations within this portion of the I-75 corridor.

## STUDY AREA

The *I-75 Mill Creek Expressway* study area includes the interchanges with Hopple Street, I-74, Mitchell Avenue, Norwood Lateral (SR 562), and Towne Street. In order to properly evaluate options at I-74/I-75, the study will also include the adjacent Colerain interchange on I-74. When improvements to an interchange are being considered, studies are required to evaluate how the proposed work will affect the next adjacent interchange. Therefore, traffic data will be collected and evaluated on I-75 from the Western Hills Viaduct to Paddock Road, on I-74 from the Montana Avenue interchange to I-75, and on the Norwood Lateral from I-75 to the Paddock Road interchange ([See Figure 1: Study Area Map on Page 2](#)). The study area includes portions of the City of Cincinnati, City of St. Bernard, and the Village of Elmwood Place.

## PROJECT PURPOSE AND GOALS

ODOT initiated the *I-75 Mill Creek Expressway* study to evaluate alternatives that will improve traffic flow and enhance safety. With your help, the *I-75 Mill Creek Expressway* will:

- Reduce the frequency and severity of collisions within the Study Area
- Reduce congestion on I-75 to an acceptable level while limiting community impacts
- Minimize design deficiencies
- Improve the safety and efficiency of local access
- Coordinate with local plans regarding rail, light rail, bus transit, environmental restoration, and community development

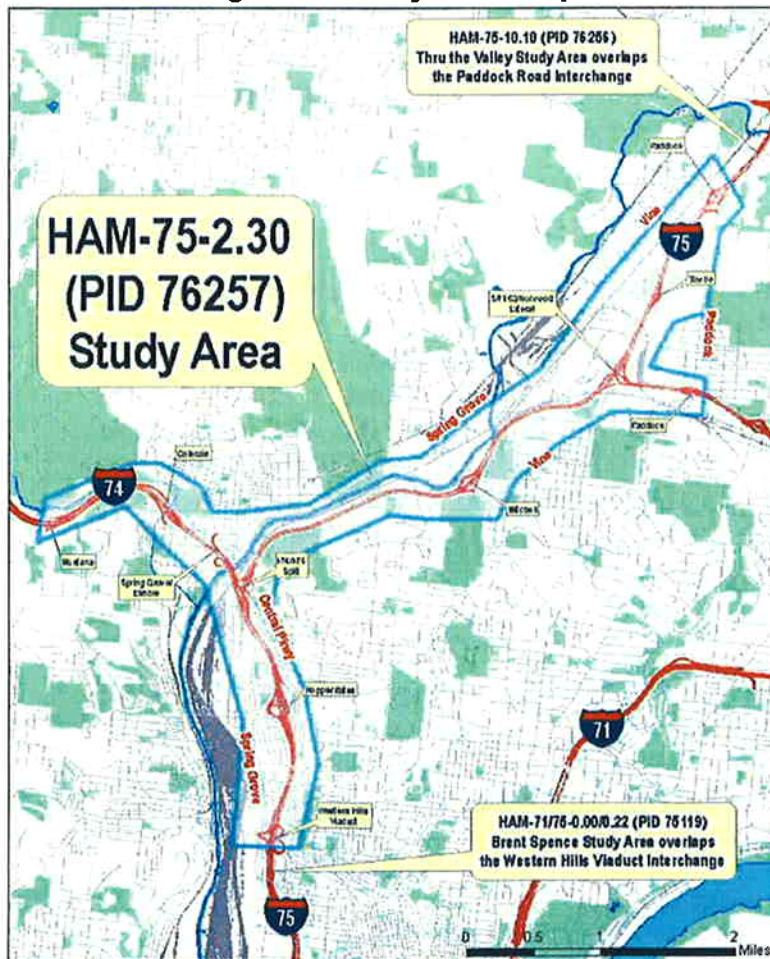
## IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

The *I-75 Mill Creek Expressway* Implementation Committee was established by ODOT in November of 2004 and is composed of representatives from Hamilton County, City of Cincinnati, City of St. Bernard, Village of Elmwood Place, OKI, FHWA and other participants. It is responsible for implementing the policy decisions and technical studies of the *I-75 Mill Creek Expressway* study team and to ensure that the interests of each community or organization within the study area are represented. This committee plays a vital role in collecting public input and keeping the public informed throughout the length of the project.

## FUTURE CHALLENGES

In future steps of the Project Development Process, the Project Team and Implementation Committee will be developing alternatives to address the identified needs. In addition to tight physical constraints, such as the existing railroad facilities and the channelized Mill Creek, the *I-75 Mill Creek Expressway* study area includes numerous community issues. The area contains several community parks and recreational facilities, state parks, churches, schools and several noteworthy cemeteries. Currently, thirteen of the fifteen census tracts within the study area have a higher unemployment rate than the Cincinnati Metropolitan Area (Cincinnati/Hamilton CMSA). The needs of the community and the potential impacts to important social, economic and environmental resources will be considered in evaluation of alternatives to address the transportation needs.

Figure 1: Study Area Map



## PROJECT SCHEDULE

### Fall/Winter 2003

Project Ranked High from NSTI

### Spring 2004

Funding Identified and Programmed thru TRAC

### Fall 2004

ODOT Assembles Consultant Team and Implementation Committee

### Fall/Winter 2004/2005

Technical Studies Conducted

### Spring 2005 – Fall 2007

Identify Various Alternatives

### Fall 2007 – Spring 2010

Detailed Final Design

### Fall 2008 – Spring 2010

Right-of-Way Acquisition Process

### Fall 2010 – Fall 2013

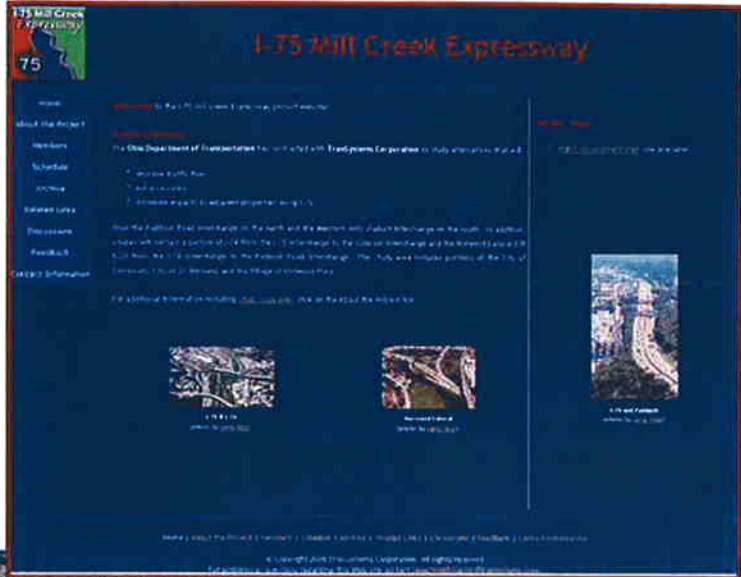
Construction Phase



## WEBSITE

The I-75 Mill Creek Expressway Project Website ([www.i75millcreekexpressway.com](http://www.i75millcreekexpressway.com)) provides all project related public information to the widest distribution of interested parties around the clock. Users will find an array of information including the following key project highlights:

- 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



## QUESTIONS?

As always, your comments and input on the I-75 Mill Creek Expressway Project are encouraged. TranSystems and/or the Ohio Department of Transportation will do our best to respond to and address any comments or concerns received. Please feel free to contact the study team.

I-75 Mill Creek Expressway Study Team  
5747 Perimeter Drive, Suite 240  
Dublin, OH 43017

Ph: (614) 336-8480 or (866) 315-0052  
Fax: (614) 336-8540

E-mail: [I75MCEStudyTeam@transystems.com](mailto:I75MCEStudyTeam@transystems.com)  
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# I-75 Mill Creek Expressway Newsletter

May 2005 • Issue 2

## **WELCOME!**

The purpose of this newsletter is to update you on the progress of work on the I-75 corridor between the Western Hills Viaduct and the Paddock Road interchange. This newsletter will be sent periodically and will provide you with information on the activities to expect over the next few months. In addition, it will include information on the environmental and planning studies currently underway. As the project progresses, this newsletter will attempt to help you visualize the future I-75 Mill Creek Expressway. The next newsletter issue will discuss concepts that are being considered to address the identified needs. Your ideas and input is greatly appreciated at any time, and will help determine the course of this project.

## **PURPOSE AND NEED**

The Purpose and Need report, done in conjunction with ODOT District 8 and ODOT's Office of Urban and Corridor Planning, addresses the existing and future conditions of the I-75 corridor as it relates to safety, current design, and existing and future traffic volumes. The next three sections, Efficiently Serve Existing and Future Traffic Conditions, Reduce the Number and Severity of Collisions and Correct Substandard Physical Conditions, will summarize the findings of the Purpose and Need report. The complete Purpose and Need report is available on the Project Website at ([www.i75millcreekexpressway.com](http://www.i75millcreekexpressway.com)).

## ***EFFICIENTLY SERVE EXISTING AND FUTURE TRAFFIC CONDITIONS***

Currently, traffic volumes are quickly approaching the limit of freeway capacity throughout the entire study area. Southbound I-75, eastbound I-74, and eastbound SR 562 accommodate the highest volumes of traffic during the morning rush hour from 7:30-8:30 A.M. While no sections of the freeway reach failing levels, two sections (I-75 between Paddock and SR 562 and I-74 between the Colerain Interchange and I-75) have nearly reached their capacities during the morning rush hour. Even though current freeway capacities are reaching their limits, traffic volumes alone do not determine congestion. In addition, traffic accidents (or collisions) play a major role in the effects of congestion on motorists.



Through the use of regional travel demand modeling done by the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Planning Commission (OKI), traffic volumes in the study area in the year 2030 are expected to far exceed the freeway capacity of nearly all sections for both the A.M. and P.M. peak travel periods. All of I-75 southbound, as well as most of I-75 northbound, will operate at unacceptable levels of service. In addition, I-74 eastbound between I-75 and Colerain Interchange will have reached its capacity during the A.M. rush hour and I-74 westbound will have nearly reached its design capacity in the P.M. peak period. For a complete listing of the existing and future traffic volumes in the study area, please refer to the Existing and Future Conditions report on the project website at ([www.i75millcreekexpressway.com](http://www.i75millcreekexpressway.com)).

### REDUCE THE NUMBER AND SEVERITY OF COLLISIONS

The portion of I-75 corridor under study has been documented as a congested freeway with a history of high accident frequency. Traffic crash information for the study area was obtained from both ODOT's Office of Roadway Safety and Mobility and from the Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS). The accidents were mapped by year (2001-2003) utilizing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to determine crash rates throughout the study area.

Within the I-75 corridor study area, 2,830 accidents were logged in 2001 through 2003. On I-74, within the study area, 611 accidents were recorded, while 345 accidents occurred on SR 562 during the same time period. Sections of I-74, I-75, and SR 562 appear on the ODOT's list of Safety Hot Spots, which identifies segments of roads of which 200 or more accidents occur annually. Furthermore, a section of I-74 and a section of SR 562 rank one and two respectively on the High Crash Location Identification System (HCLIS) list. The corridor has an overall crash rate two and a half times higher than the statewide average.

When traffic accidents occur, traffic has to slow-down and/or stop to allow the wreckage to be cleaned from the road. As a result, motorists are delayed from traveling to their destination. The high frequency of traffic accidents coupled with high traffic volumes further intensifies the problem of congestion. More safety and crash data statistics can be viewed in the Existing and Future Conditions report on the Project website at ([www.i75millcreekexpressway.com](http://www.i75millcreekexpressway.com)).



Towne Street Interchange (photo by Larry Stulz)

### PROJECT SCHEDULE

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Right-of-Way Acquisition Process

#### Fall 2010 – Fall 2013

Construction Phase

### CORRECT SUBSTANDARD PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

The I-75 Mill Creek Expressway is typical of urban highway design and construction dating from 1950's and 1960's. Lower speed curves, left-hand exit ramps, poor lane continuity, and undesirable service ramp locations are some of the problematic features within the corridor. These substandard physical conditions are a major factor contributing to accidents and congestion problems. A complete detailed description of the Interstate freeway segments, along with the major access points, and known deficiencies are summarized in the Purpose and Need report at ([www.i75millcreekexpressway.com](http://www.i75millcreekexpressway.com)).



## STUDY AREA

In addition to tight physical constraints, such as existing railroad facilities and the channelized Mill Creek, the I-75 Mill Creek Expressway study area includes numerous community issues. The area contains several community parks and recreational facilities, state parks, churches, schools, and several noteworthy cemeteries. In addition, several emergency service locations are sited within the study area. Currently, 13 of the 15 census tracts within the study area have a higher unemployment rate than the Cincinnati region as a whole. The needs of the community and the potential impacts to important social, economic and environmental resources will be considered in evaluation of alternatives to address the transportation needs.



Norwood Lateral (photo by Larry Stulz)

Figure 1: Community Map



## QUESTIONS?

As always, your comments and input on the I-75 Mill Creek Expressway Project are encouraged. TranSystems and/or the Ohio Department of Transportation will try to respond to and address any comments or concerns received. Please feel free to contact the study team at:

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## I-75 Mill Creek Expressway Newsletter

July 2005 Issue 3

### **WELCOME!**

The purpose of this newsletter is to update you on the progress of the I-75 Mill Creek Expressway Study, which covers the I-75 corridor from Western Hills Viaduct to Paddock Road and the portion of I-74 from Colerain/Beekman to the interchange with I-75.

Since the last newsletter, several conceptual alternatives have been developed to address the safety and congestion problems within the study area. These concepts were developed with input from the Implementation Committee and the Ohio Department of Transportation. More information on the study process and participants may be found on the project website.

Each option that was recommended for further study is included in this issue and is posted on the project website. Comments received from the public will be taken into consideration as the options are developed in more detail.

Some ideas were eliminated due to unusually high community and environmental impacts or costs. Those ideas that were considered and dismissed may be found in the Planning Study Report on the project website.

**It is important to remember that these concepts represent "ideas" to be considered further. Each concept will be developed in more detail and be made available for public review in the coming months.**

### **Questions?**

As always, your comments and input on the I-75 Mill Creek Expressway Project are encouraged. TranSystems and/or the Ohio Department of Transportation will try to respond to and address any comments or concerns received. Please feel free to contact the study team at:

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# HAM-75-2.30 Conceptual Alternatives

## I-75 Mainline Alternatives





### Recommended for Further Work

-  New ramp
-  Arterial improvement
-  Ramp closed
-  Freeway improvement

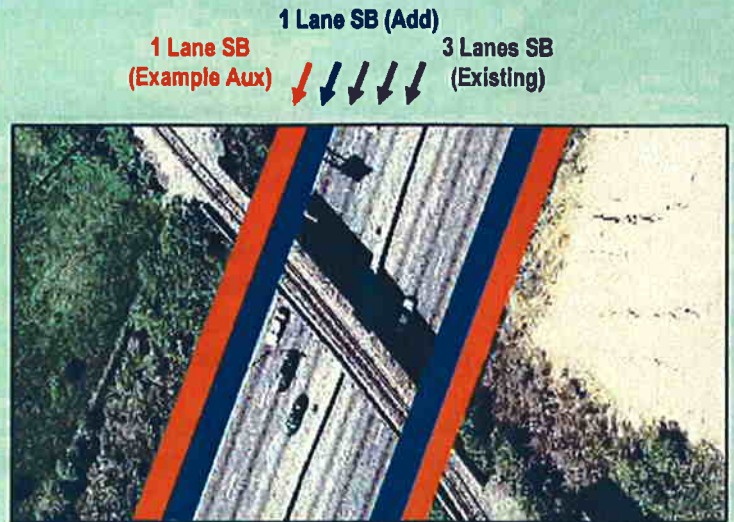


**I-75-NB – No Build:** This concept would involve no improvements other than routine maintenance. No capacity improvements would be made. This option would fail to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, but will be carried forward for comparison in future steps.



-  2 Lanes SB (Add)
-  3 Lanes SB (Existing)
-  3 Lanes NB (Existing)
-  2 Lanes NB (Add)

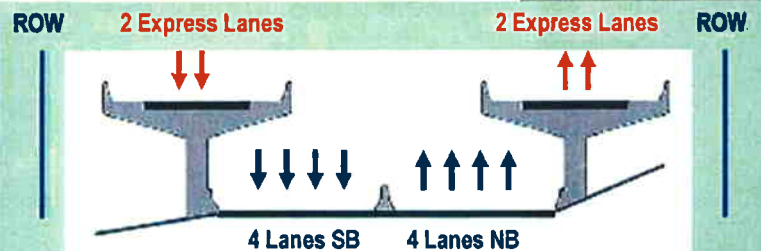
**I-75-B – Five Lane Continuity:** This concept would involve providing five continuous freeway lanes through the study area, adding one lane in each direction south of I-74 and two lanes in each direction north of I-74. This option would provide additional capacity improvement, but at a higher cost and impacts.



- 1 Lane SB (Add)
- 1 Lane SB (Example Aux)
- 3 Lanes SB (Existing)

- 3 Lanes NB (Existing)
- 1 Lane SB (Example Aux)

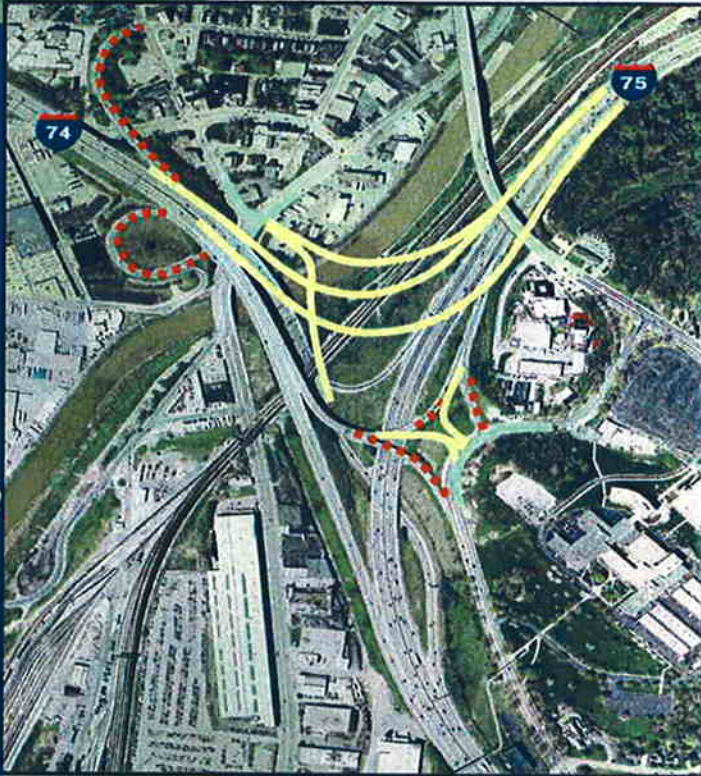
**I-75-A – Four Lane Continuity with Auxiliary Lanes:** This concept would involve adding a fourth lane on the outside in each direction north of I-74. Four lanes currently exist south of I-74. An Auxiliary lane (Aux) provides additional lane capacity for merging and acceleration/deceleration between adjacent lanes. The project team is still evaluating locations where auxiliary lanes could be feasible. This alternative was recommended by the NSTI for further consideration. This option provides the opportunity to improve safety and congestion to a limited degree while minimizing property impacts and costs.



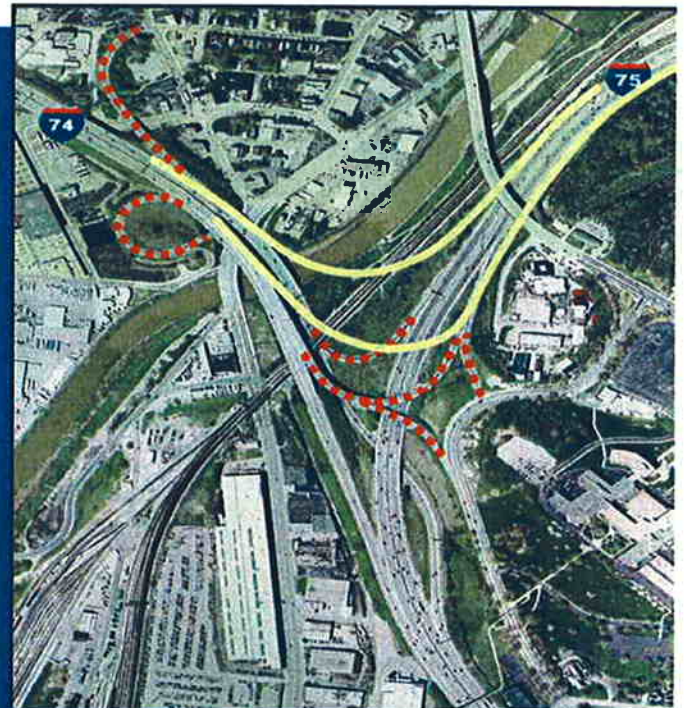
**I-75-C – Four Lane Continuity with Elevated Express Lanes:** This concept would involve providing four lanes at-grade through the study area, adding one through lane in each direction north of I-74, plus the construction of elevated express lanes. This option has the potential to provide superior improved capacity and safety benefits; however, it would be expected to be extremely expensive and intrusive to the surrounding communities. This option may be less problematic if implemented for only a portion of the study area and will be carried forward for further evaluation.

## HAM-75-2.30 Conceptual Alternatives I-74/I-75 Alternatives Recommended for Further Work

I-74-NB – No Build: This concept would involve no improvements other than routine maintenance. No capacity improvements would be made. This option would fail to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, but will be carried forward for comparison in future steps.



I-74-A – Fully Directional Interchange with Local Access: This concept would reconstruct the I-74/I-75 interchange to provide higher speed directional ramps to and from I-75 north, closing the existing ramps at Dreman and Colerain Avenues, and improving access to Colerain Avenue and Central Parkway. This option would provide only moderate safety improvements with moderate operational improvements, but would improve local access. This option has the potential to be costly.







I-74-B – Fully Directional Interchange with No Local Access: This option would reconstruct the I-74/I-75 interchange to bring this system-to-system interchange up to current standards. All service ramps would be closed, with new higher speed ramps to serve I-75 north. This concept would have superior operational performance and improve safety, but with impacts to local access.

# HAM-75-2.30 Conceptual Alternatives

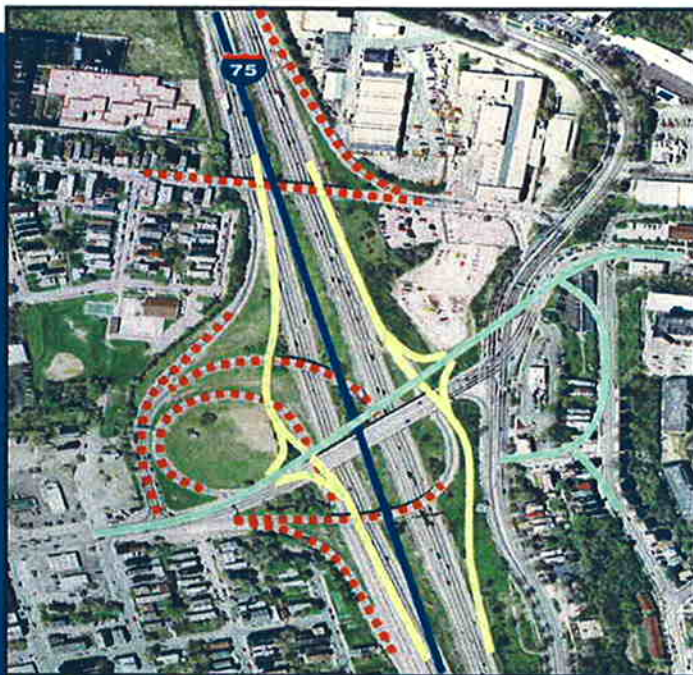
## Hopple Street Alternatives

### Recommended for Further Work

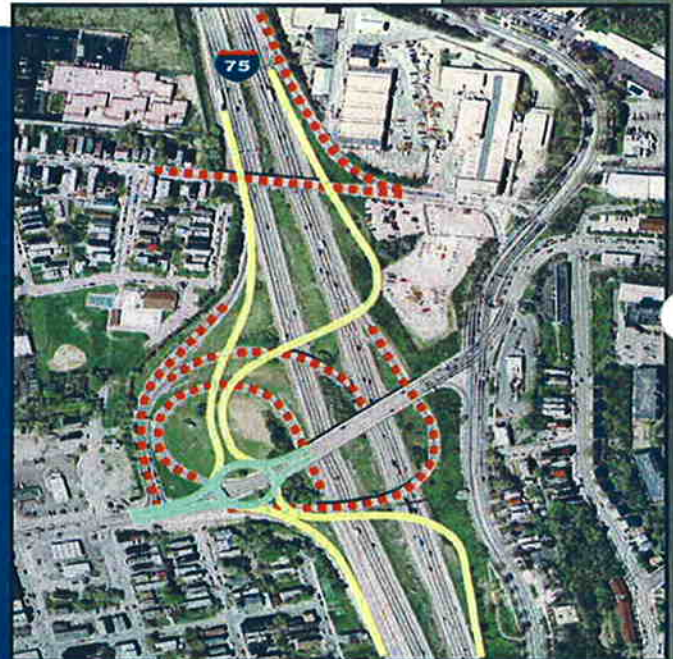
-  New ramp
-  Arterial improvement
-  Ramp closed
-  Freeway improvement



**HOP-NB – No Build:** This concept would involve no improvements other than routine maintenance. No capacity improvements would be made. This option would fail to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, but will be carried forward for comparison in future steps.



**HOP-A – Tight Urban Diamond Interchange (TUDI):** This concept would involve reconstructing the existing interchange as a tight diamond, narrowing the median of I-75, relocating Hopple Street to grade-separate the Central Parkway intersection, and constructing a connector road from Central Parkway to MLK Drive. The Bates Avenue bridge and ramp would be closed. This option would be expected to reduce congestion on the freeway and improve operation on the arterial with moderate property impacts and cost. Some existing right-of-way could be reclaimed.



**HOP-B – Offset Roundabout Diamond Interchange:** This concept would involve reconstructing the Hopple Street interchange as an offset roundabout diamond. A modern roundabout intersection would be constructed on the west side of I-75, which would accommodate all ramps. The I-75 northbound ramps would be constructed as flyovers over I-75. The Bates Avenue bridge and entrance ramp would be closed. This option would provide improved operational and safety performance at a moderate cost with low property impacts.

## HAM-75-2.30 Conceptual Alternatives Norwood & Mitchell Avenue Alternatives Recommended for Further Work



**NOR-A – Modified Interchange with Additional Ramp Lanes:** This concept would involve construction of an additional ramp lane to and from the north on I-75. This would improve operational performance and increase safety at a moderate cost and minimal property impacts, particularly in conjunction with TOW-A.

**NOR-NB – No Build:** This concept would involve no improvements other than routine maintenance. No capacity improvements would be made. This option would fail to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, but will be carried forward for comparison in future steps.



**MIT-A – Tight Urban Diamond Interchange (TUDI):** This option would involve reconstruction of the current intersection as a tight diamond. If traffic volumes do not exceed the limits of this design, the tight urban diamond concept would provide improved operational and safety performance with little or no property impacts and at a moderate cost.

**MIT-NB – No Build:** This concept would involve no improvements other than routine maintenance. No capacity improvements would be made. This option would fail to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, but will be carried forward for comparison in future steps.



## HAM-75-2.30 Conceptual Alternatives Colerain & Towne Street Alternatives Recommended for Further Work



**COL-A – Low Impact Improvement/Full Movement Interchange:** This option would involve minor changes to the existing interchange to provide for full movements to I-74. This option would provide moderate operational improvements with low impacts and costs.

**COL-NB – No Build:** This concept would involve no improvements other than routine maintenance. No capacity improvements would be made. This option would fail to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, but will be carried forward for comparison in future steps.



**COL-B – Double Roundabout Diamond Interchange (DRDI):** This concept would involve reconstruction of the existing system interchange as a double roundabout diamond. This option would include providing full movements to I-74. This concept would have very good operational and safety performance and the potential for positive community impacts at a relatively low cost.



**TOW-A – Interchange Closed:** This concept would involve closing the Towne interchange and removal of the ramps. The existing partial interchange serves a low traffic volume and interferes with the effective, safe operation of the Norwood Lateral interchange. The closure of Towne will be necessary under any improvement scenario for Norwood Lateral. This safety improvement also was recommended by the NSTI study.

**TOW-NB – No Build:** This concept would involve no improvements other than routine maintenance. The interchange would remain open. This option would fail to meet the Purpose and Need of the project, as it would allow the continued operational and safety problems with the adjacent Norwood Lateral interchange. However, this option will be carried forward for comparison in future steps.