OPEN HOUSE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MEETING
WITH OPEN MICROPHONE PUBLIC COMMENT SESSION

Celebration Church
688 Dan Street, Akron, Ohio

Tuesday, May 10, 2016
5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

State Route 8 Bridge Replacement Project

Existing Bridge

Future Bridges: Steel I-Girder Bridge Type

INFORMATIONAL HANDOUT

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DISTRICT 4
2088 SOUTH ARLINGTON ROAD
AKRON, OHIO 44306-4243
330-786-3100
WWW.ODOTDISTRICT4.ORG

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by ODOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 11, 2015, and executed by FHWA and ODOT.
State Route 8 Bridge Replacement Project

MEETING FORMAT

The meeting format includes a brief project overview presentation at 5:45 pm. Following the presentation, interested individuals will have the opportunity to speak during an open microphone public comment session. Throughout the open house, personnel from ODOT District 4 and Gannett Fleming (project consultant) will be available to address questions.

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

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

The proposed project will replace the 1,500-ft long bridge, known as the North Expressway Viaduct, carrying State Route 8 (SR-8) over various railroads, E. North Street and the Little Cuyahoga River Valley in the City of Akron.

Two bridges will replace the one existing bridge. To the right is the preliminary plan for construction phases:

1. A new bridge (#1) will be built next to the existing bridge.
2. SR-8 traffic will be shifted to new bridge #1.
3. The existing bridge will be removed and new bridge #2 will be built.
4. When new bridge #2 is finished, SR-8 northbound traffic will travel on new bridge #2, while SR-8 southbound traffic will travel on new bridge #1.

Auxiliary Lanes. The existing bridge has three lanes in each direction. The new bridges will have four lanes in each direction to improve traffic flow. The additional lanes are known as auxiliary lanes. For SR-8 north, the northbound entrance ramp from Perkins Street will essentially be extended across the bridge to become the exit ramp for the Glenwood Avenue interchange. For SR-8 south, the southbound entrance ramp from Glenwood Avenue will extend across the bridge to the exit ramp for the Perkins Street interchange.

PROJECT CONSTRUCTION

At this time, the project is in the study phase. Public input is needed to proceed with more detailed project design. ODOT is committed to replacing the bridge as soon as possible. The bridge replacement is expected to begin around 2021 at a cost exceeding $120 million.

HOW WILL THIS PROJECT AFFECT RESIDENTS?

- The project will provide modern bridges for current and future traffic.
- Traffic will be allowed along SR-8 during construction, however temporary lane and ramp closures may occur.
- Some houses and buildings will be removed. Individuals affected by the project will be contacted by ODOT.

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND NEED

The bridge was constructed in 1953 to provide a grade separation for the Akron Expressway (now SR-8) as it crossed over the Little Cuyahoga River, five railroad corridors, the Pennsylvania and Ohio Canal, and E. North Street. To extend the life of the bridge, numerous maintenance activities have been performed. While the bridge is safe for travel and routinely inspected, it continues to deteriorate, is over 60 years old and needs to be replaced. Maintenance activities will be performed as needed until the bridge is replaced. SR-8 at the bridge is a six-lane urban freeway that carries over 115,000 vehicles per day. It is a vital component of the transportation infrastructure in Northeast Ohio and provides a critical link for commuters and commerce to the government, medical, university and other commercial facilities in downtown Akron and beyond.
ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

A variety of environmental studies have been completed for the proposed bridge replacement project. The purpose of these studies is to identify potential sensitive resources or areas of concern which may be affected. 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. Below is a summary of resources and issues identified in the preliminary environmental studies.

The land use within the project study area consists primarily of the existing SR-8 expressway and adjacent developed urban areas, but also includes shrub/scrub, grassland and forested area. The following ecological resources were noted in the project study area (also see Ecological Resources Map on Page 9):

**ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

**Waterways** - The waterway resources located within the SR-8 bridge replacement project study area include the Little Cuyahoga River, three small un-named streams (Steam 2, 3, and 4), one wetland (Wetland A), and a ditch (Ditch 1). The locations of these resources are noted on the Ecological Resources Map on Page 9. Based on the currently available project plans, one of the streams (Stream 2) will be temporarily impacted by construction. This impact is estimated to be two temporary construction crossings at 25 linear feet each (50 feet of total linear impact). There are no anticipated impacts to the Little Cuyahoga River, the other un-named streams, the wetland, or the ditch identified within the project study area.

**Pennsylvania and Ohio Canal** - The P&O Canal was a shipping canal which operated from 1840 until 1877. Overall, the canal was approximately 82 miles in length and ran from New Castle, Pennsylvania to Akron, Ohio. Within the project study area, the P&O Canal flows underneath the existing SR-8 bridge structure and drains into a concrete box culvert structure. Within the box culvert, the water enters a concrete pipe and is conveyed (subsurface) to the Little Cuyahoga River. Within the study area, the canal consisted of an approximately 10 foot wide channel with an average water depth of 4 to 6 inches. Water flow within the study area was primarily stagnant and the channel substrate consisted of silt and muck. The majority of the embankments were moderately vegetated within the project area. No impact to the P&O Canal is anticipated for the project.

**Threatened & Endangered Species** - There are three federally listed species with known ranges within Summit County, including the Indiana Bat (Myotis sodalis), Northern Long-eared Bat (Myotis septentrionalis), and Northern Monkshood (Aconitum noveboracense). The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) was contacted for records of any rare species or significant natural features within proximity to the project area through a search of the Natural Heritage Database. The ODNR reported that there are no records of rare or endangered species within a one mile radius of the project area. The ODNR is unaware of any unique ecological sites, geologic features, animal assemblages, scenic rivers, state wildlife areas, nature preserves, parks or forests, national wildlife refuges, parks or forests, or other protected natural areas within a one miles radius of the project site. No federally listed species were encountered during the site investigation, however, based on the USFWS definition for roosting habitat, seven trees within the estimated impact area have potential to provide suitable bat habitat. There is a potential that one or more of these trees may be impacted during construction of the project. Based on the Level 1 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) coordination, the proposed bridge replacement project may effect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the Indiana Bat and Northern Long Eared Bat.

**FLOODPLAINS**

The project crosses the Special Floodplain Hazard Area (Zone AE) for the Little Cuyahoga River. Minor permanent and temporary impacts to the floodway may result from project construction and contractor access. The project design team will minimize floodplain impacts and conduct the appropriate coordination with floodplain regulators.

**PARKS**

**Lookout Park (City of Akron)** - Lookout Park is located at the corner of Lookout Avenue and Parkview Avenue (see Parks Map on Page 10). The City of Akron Parks Maintenance Division maintains Lookout Park. The 2.55-acre park property consists of approximately 0.35 acre of mown grass and open space, while the remainder of the property is forested with rolling terrain and steep slopes. The park provides passive recreation opportunities. Grading of the SR 8 expressway foreslope in the State Route 8 Bridge Replacement Project will require the acquisition of approximately 0.16 acre of
Lookout Park along SR-8 at the east park boundary. In an effort to minimize harm to users of Lookout Park, the following commitments will be incorporated into the environmental document:

- Access to the Lookout Park will be maintained at all times throughout project construction;
- A noise wall has been recommended along SR-8 to reduce traffic noise levels for nearby residents and the users of Lookout Park. Residents and property owners that would benefit from the noise wall will be provided an opportunity to vote in favor or against construction of the noise wall as well as the texture/material and color of the residential side of the noise wall;
- The duration of the minor temporary construction impacts will be less than the duration of project construction; and,
- The remaining park property beyond the permanent right-of-way take and the temporary construction limits will not be used for staging and/or storage of construction equipment and/or materials.

It is anticipated, given the above measures to minimize harm, that the impacts to Lookout Park will be classified as “de minimis”. A “de minimis” impact is one that will not adversely affect the activities, features or attributes of the property.

**Freedom Trail (Summit Metro Parks)** - Freedom Trail is a combined use hike/bike path that travels 6.2 miles between the Middlebury Lot and Eastwood Avenue in Akron. This completed 6.2 mile trail constitutes Phase I and Phase II of a planned 3 phase project. The proposed Phase III portion would extend the trail 1.8 miles and end near the University of Akron. Once Phase III is complete, the Freedom Trail would be 8 miles long. The Freedom Trail Phase III extension would utilize an unused former METRO Regional Transit Authority (RTA) rail line that runs through the southern end of the proposed bridge replacement project. The portion of the proposed Freedom Trail Phase III extension that runs through the project area is noted on the Parks Map on Page 10.

The current schedule for the proposed extension has the trail project being completed prior to the anticipated start of construction for the proposed bridge replacement project. Freedom Trail is a publicly owned recreational resource that is open to the public. Since the proposed Freedom Trail extension is planned to be constructed before the anticipated start of construction for the proposed bridge replacement project, it must be taken into account and treated as if it is already in place.

Summit Metro Parks provided Gannett Fleming with a set of plans for the Freedom Trail Phase III project. Using these plans, Gannett Fleming was able to design the proposed bridge replacement project to avoid any permanent impacts to the proposed Freedom Trail Phase III extension. While there will be no anticipated permanent impacts to the proposed Freedom Trail Phase III extension, there would be temporary closures during construction of the proposed bridge replacement project. They are necessary to allow the contractor to move equipment and material to various points at the southern end of the project and the closures would also be necessary whenever an overhead hazard is present that could potentially injure someone using the Freedom Trail. The number of potential closures, along with the potential duration of each closure, is not known at this time. The closure time would be less than the total construction time for the proposed bridge replacement project.

The proposed mitigation for the temporary closure(s) of Freedom Trail is a detour route. While no official detour has been developed at this time, one conceptual option for the detour is shown on the Parks Map on Page 10. The conceptual detour would begin at the Adam’s Park exit on the Freedom Trail (located on N. Adams Street, east of the proposed bridge replacement project area), then it would go south/southeast along N. Adams Street to Perkins Street, then west along Perkins Street (over SR-8) to N. Union Street, then north on N. Union Street until it intersects with Arch Street and the western portion of N. Adams Street, then the detour would travel through the entrance/parking lot of a business located at 190 N. Union Street to rejoin the Freedom Trail (west of the proposed bridge replacement project area). A new trail entry/exit point may need to be constructed at 190 N. Union Street as, according to the Freedom Trail plan sheets provide by Summit Metro Parks, it does not appear that a trail entry/exit point has been planned at this location. This conceptual detour is approximately 0.75 mile in length, 0.45 mile longer than the section of the Freedom Trail that would be closed. The detour would utilize existing sidewalks, crosswalks, and traffic signals to maintain a safe route of travel for bicycles and pedestrians. Appropriate signage would need to be installed along the detour route.

It is anticipated that the temporary impacts to the Freedom Trail will be classified as “Temporary No Use”.

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State Route 8 Bridge Replacement Project

Page 3 of 10
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Environmental Justice (EJ) is defined as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, sex, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. There are three fundamental environmental justice principles:

- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.
- To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

The USEPA provides a tool called EJScreen that graphically identifies minority and low income populations by block groups. Block groups are statistical divisions of census tracts that are generally defined to contain between 600 and 3,000 people and are used to present data. There are portions of three different block groups in the project study area.

High percentages of both minority and low income populations are located in the block groups that the project study area crosses. However, the proposed project doesn’t change any access points or routes, doesn’t alter access to public transportation, doesn’t involve any disproportionately high and adverse effect to any minority or low income populations, will not negatively impact pedestrian, bicyclist, and/or motorist safety, and no EJ issues have been raised as a result of public involvement activities conducted to date.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

To date, two stakeholder meetings and one public open house meeting were conducted for the proposed bridge replacement project. The first stakeholder meeting was held on September 27, 2012 and the second stakeholder meeting was held on April 9, 2014. At both of these meetings a PowerPoint presentation was given that provided an overview of the progress of the project, along with specifics on various alternatives. The public open house meeting was held on July 15, 2015. The primary purpose of this meeting was to inform the public on the progress of the project and solicit input in regards to the recommended alternative alignment and bridge types. A variety of displays were made available for the public to view. Approximately 80 people attended the July 2015 public open house meeting and a total of 15 comments were received. Of the comments received, noise and noise walls were the two most common topics.

AIR QUALITY

Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSATs) - In accordance with the ODOT Technical Guidance for Analysis of Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSAT), the proposed bridge replacement project falls under the category of projects having low potential MSAT effects that are not expected to be associated with meaningful differences in emissions for project alternatives. Widening associated with the project is an example of a “Minor Widening Project”. Minor Widening Projects are classified as projects that improve operations of highways without adding substantial new capacity and for which the ultimate traffic level is predicted to be less than 140,000-150,000 ADT. The opening day (2020) ADT is 121,740. The design year (2040) ADT for the project is 132,880.

Fine Particulates (PM2.5) - Summit County is a designated nonattainment area for PM 2.5 per the 2006 criteria. Projects in nonattainment areas require coordination with EPA to identify projects of air quality concern. On June 5, 2014, the Ohio EPA provided concurrence that the proposed bridge replacement project is not a project of air quality concern and that a PM2.5 hotspot analysis is not required. The USEPA concurred with this determination on June 6, 2015 and FHWA approval was received on February 2, 2016. No additional action is necessary.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) - The state of Ohio is in attainment for carbon monoxide (CO) at this time and no coordination or analysis is required for the project.

Ozone - Summit County is in an Eight-hour ozone nonattainment area, which requires consideration of the regional effects on ozone from federally funded projects or projects of regional significance. Such projects are considered in regional conformity determinations and listed in the Statewide Transportation Implementation Plan (STIP). The proposed bridge replacement project appears in the 2016-2019 conforming STIP and the project description in the STIP matches the proposed activities. Therefore, ozone is addressed for this project.
NOISE & NOISE WALL ANALYSIS

Noise abatement has been evaluated for the noise sensitive areas which meet ODOT and FHWA criteria for Type I. For analysis purposes, the project study area was divided into four Noise Study Areas (NSAs 1, 2, 3 and 4). Noise measurements and concurrent traffic counts were conducted in all NSAs. Based on the evaluation of existing and future noise levels, noise impacts were determined to exist in NSAs 1, 2, 3, and 4. Noise mitigation features were determined to be feasible and reasonable within NSAs 1, 2, 3 and 4. Various noise barrier options were considered and evaluated in terms of mitigation feature lengths, heights, costs and locations. This process resulted in the development of the following feasible and reasonable noise barriers along the SR 8:

- **NSA 1 Barrier** – A 16.7 feet average high noise barrier along the west side of SR-8 southbound with a length of approximately 1,868 feet and an estimated cost of $780,675.
- **NSA 2 Barrier** – A 12.0 feet high noise barrier along the east side of SR-8 northbound with a length of approximately 1,170 feet and an estimated cost of $351,125.
- **NSA 3 Barrier** – A 9.9 feet average high noise barrier along the west side of SR-8 southbound with a length of 848 feet and an estimated cost of $209,425.
- **NSA 4 Barrier** – A 12.0 feet high noise barrier along the east side of SR-8 northbound with a length of approximately 950 feet and an estimated cost of $284,625.

The location of the recommended noise walls is included on the Project Map on Page 7.

Normal traffic growth results in changes to noise levels within the project area with predicted decreases in the design year when compared to existing noise levels in some locations and design year increases over existing noise levels in other locations. Such increases relate to perceptions of noise increase ranging from not discernable to barely discernable. With the implementation of the feasible and reasonable noise abatement measures identified in this report, the project-related noise levels are predicted to range from approximately 51 to 62 decibels (dBA) at analyzed sites within NSA 1, 47 to 65 dBA at analyzed sites within NSA 2, 56 dBA to 65 dBA at analyzed sites within NSA 3, and 53 dBA to 65 dBA at analyzed sites within NSA 4.

ODOT is committed to construction of the feasible and reasonable noise abatement measures contingent upon the following conditions:

- Community input regarding desires and aesthetic considerations;
- A noise reanalysis will need to be conducted if major design changes occur during the final design phase of the project

RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION

To accommodate construction of the new bridges and associated roadway improvements, the purchase of additional permanent right-of-way, construction easements and/or temporary right of way will be required. The extent of additional right of way takes will be determined during the future detailed design phase of plan development.

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.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Comments may be submitted in the following four ways:

1. Spoken or submitted in person during the open house public involvement meeting
2. By phone to Robert Lang, ODOT District 4 Environmental Specialist, at 330-786-4975
3. By email to Robert.Lang@dot.ohio.gov
4. By mail to:
   
   Edward W. Deley, Jr., Environmental Coordinator
   Ohio Department of Transportation - District 4
   2088 S. Arlington Road
   Akron, OH 44306-4243

**THE FINAL DATE TO SUBMIT COMMENTS IS FRIDAY, MAY 27, 2016.**

If you are unable to attend the public involvement meeting, the meeting materials will be available for review at ODOT District 4, 2088 South Arlington Road, Akron.

Additional project information, including the public involvement meeting handout and displays, will be available on the ODOT District 4 website: www.dot.state.oh.us/districts/d04 by selecting the “Public Meetings/Public Involvement” heading on the left side menu. Project information can also be found on the ODOT District 4 Facebook page (facebook.com/ODOTD4) and the ODOT District 4 Twitter feed (@ODOT_Akron)

A summary of public comments received during the public comment period and responses to those comments will be available by request and posted on the ODOT District 4 website by June 27, 2016.

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried-out by ODOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 11, 2015, and executed by FHWA and ODOT. 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.
Bridge Type - Steel I-Girder
STATE ROUTE 8 BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT  
City of Akron, Summit County, Ohio

PUBLIC MEETING  
May 10, 2016,  
5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

COMMENT SHEET  
- Please Print -

Name/Business:  

Mailing Address:  

E-mail Address:  

Phone Number:  

Please write comments in the space provided below

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