



January 26, 2022

Re: ODOT Response to Public Comments and Preferred Alternative Announcement

Dear Neighbor,

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), in partnership with the City of Chillicothe, thank you for taking your time to share your thoughts and concerns during the Bridge Street Corridor Study public involvement meeting held October 21 – November 21, 2021. ODOT has reviewed 42 public comments from this outreach. The Public Meeting Comment Summary has been posted on the project website.

ODOT has conducted a feasibility study to determine the most appropriate improvements for the corridor. This study investigated solutions along Bridge Street from the bridge over the Scioto River to Pawnee Road, including the interchange with U.S. Route 35. The study included extensive outreach with local government agencies, business owners, and the public to elicit feedback at critical times throughout the process. The table below provides ODOT's selection of the four focus area options presented during the public involvement meeting and addresses additional public comments related to the project.

***Please refer to the project website for a full summary of the proposed project and the Summary of Public Comments, at: [PublicInput.com/L1066](https://PublicInput.com/L1066)***

Topic/ Public Comment	ODOT Decision/ Response
<u>Focus Area A</u>  Bridge Street/Stewart Road/Consumer Center Drive	Option 3 was selected. It will increase the efficiency of the traffic signal by maximizing the amount of green time and greatly improve the traffic flow along Bridge Street. Improvements include:  At the Bridge/Stewart intersection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vehicles on Bridge Street will have left turn lanes onto Stewart Road.</li><li>• Vehicles on Stewart Road will not be permitted to travel straight or turn left onto Bridge Street. Instead, vehicles will use Consumer Center Drive to access either side of Bridge Street and turn right.</li></ul> At the Stewart Road/Consumer Center Drive intersection east of Bridge Street: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A single-lane roundabout will be placed. The roundabout offers more traffic capacity and increases the safety performance over a traffic signal option.</li></ul>



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<p><u>Focus Area B</u></p> <p>U.S. Route 35 Eastbound Exit Ramp</p>	<p>After additional discussions with local government stakeholders, Option 1 was selected, for it will provide a higher level of safety for drivers and pedestrians while improving traffic operations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the exit ramp by widening the outside shoulder to increase sight distance along the ramp and allow drivers to see the stopped traffic from the intersection quicker.</li> <li>• Signalize the right turn lane (eliminate the current free-flow maneuver).</li> </ul>
<p><u>Focus Area C</u></p> <p>North Plaza Boulevard and Marietta Road Intersections with Bridge Street</p>	<p>A combination of Options 1 and 2 was selected.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bridge Street between North Plaza Boulevard and Marietta Road: no changes are proposed to the lane configuration (other than the additional northbound lane).</li> <li>• Lanes on Marietta Road’s eastern approach to Bridge Street will be revised to two left turn lanes and a shared through/right turn lane. This improves the efficiency of the traffic signal and aligns the westbound through lane with the west side of the intersection.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Focus Area D</u></p> <p>Northbound Lane Termination along Bridge Street</p>	<p>Option 2 was selected, in which the additional northbound lane will be extended through the Pawnee Road intersection, then terminated as a right-turn-only lane at the first signalized intersection north of Pawnee Road. This provides better lane balance at the Bridge Street/Pawnee Road intersection and improves traffic flow at the northern termination of the project.</p>
<p><u>Public Comment</u></p> <p>Traffic Signals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate and/or update traffic signals.</li> <li>• Put timers on posts when lights are beginning to change so traffic doesn’t pull into intersection.</li> </ul>	<p>ODOT has a short-term and long-term plan to improve traffic signals and traffic flow along the Bridge Street corridor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The short-term project will improve congestion at the U.S. Route 35 eastbound exit ramp and signal coordination (using existing equipment) along Bridge Street. The short-term project is currently being installed.</li> <li>• This proposed project will incorporate the long-term plan, which will add a third northbound lane on Bridge Street and improve the traffic signals throughout the project corridor, including improving visibility of the signal heads and adding countdown timers for pedestrians. Certain safety features, such as improved pavement markings, traffic signal heads, and pedestrian crossings and curb ramps will make visibility easier for both drivers and pedestrians.</li> </ul>



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<p><u>Public Comment</u> Connected vehicle environment</p>	<p>A connected vehicle environment allows vehicles and traffic signals to “talk” to each other, with the goal of enabling traffic management to improve operations. Although ODOT has not considered this for the Bridge Street corridor, we are always evaluating future technologies that can improve safety and ease of travel on Bridge Street and other corridors throughout Ohio.</p>
<p><u>Public Comment</u> Connect US-23 to Marietta Road and Seney Road</p>	<p>The Bridge Street commercial corridor attracts high volumes of traffic due to the number of retail stores and restaurants. This project focuses on these immediate needs to improve safety and congestion along this section of Bridge Street and at the U.S. Route 35 interchange, which would still be needed even if a direct connection was made between U.S. Route 23 and Marietta Road. ODOT will continue to consider other potential improvements to traffic concerns in and around northern Chillicothe.</p>
<p><u>Public Comment</u> Requests to add service roads and/or additional access off US-35 or behind certain strip malls.</p>	<p>The addition of a northbound lane, combined with the other proposed improvements within the corridor, are expected to dramatically improve safety and reduce congestion. One new access road is being proposed on the west side of Bridge Street to connect North Plaza Boulevard with Marietta Road (behind Applebee’s and Raising Cane’s) to alleviate traffic congestion at the Bridge Street intersection with North Plaza Boulevard and the U.S. Route 35 westbound exit ramp. Traffic analysis indicates that additional changes to access will not be needed within this section of Bridge Street.</p>
<p><u>Public Comment</u> Pay attention to eye appeal.</p>	<p>Aesthetic treatments will be evaluated as part of the next phase of project development.</p>
<p><u>Public Comment</u> Would like pedestrian access to go further north than Pawnee.</p>	<p>ODOT and the City of Chillicothe support additional pedestrian facilities along Bridge Street. This project will install pedestrian facilities to the first traffic signal north of Pawnee Road. Future projects that would likely be led by the City of Chillicothe could extend sidewalks further north.</p>
<p><u>Public Comment</u> Business access and traffic concerns during construction</p>	<p>Access to businesses is expected to be maintained at all times throughout construction. ODOT will take into account business operation and peak traffic hours during construction phases. Although phasing construction will be reviewed later on in the project development process, the estimated length of construction (2 years) will be split up throughout the corridor by phases to maximize access. Additional outreach will occur as the construction phasing strategies are being developed.</p>



Topic/ Public Comment	ODOT Decision/ Response
<p><u>Public Comment</u></p> <p>Install dedicated right turn lanes at each intersection for northbound Bridge St.</p>	<p>Our traffic analysis shows that the addition of a northbound through lane will permit traffic to better distribute across all three northbound lanes. Vehicles traveling through the corridor will feel less need to use the right-hand lane. This will improve operations of the right-hand lane since it can be primarily used by vehicles wishing to turn right (either at major streets or at the business driveways along the corridor) and result in the need for fewer designated right turn lanes.</p>
<p><u>Public Comment</u></p> <p>Install additional signage on southbound Bridge Street after N. Plaza Blvd.</p>	<p>The proposed project will install signing to allow drivers to decide on the proper lane well before decisions need to be made. The proposed southbound improvements will provide two dedicated lanes through the U.S. Route 35 interchange, with a left turn lane being added south of North Plaza Boulevard to access the U.S. Route 35 eastbound ramp. Signage will be provided well in advance to indicate the proper lane the approaching drivers should be in.</p>
<p><u>Public Comment</u></p> <p>Would like protected or dedicated bike lanes on Bridge Street.</p>	<p>Pedestrian facilities in the form of sidewalks and a shared-use path are planned on both sides of Bridge Street through the project area. The project will not include a dedicated bike lane on Bridge Street, but the shared use path from Riverside Street to North Plaza Boulevard will be wide enough to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians.</p>

Next Steps: ODOT continues to work on design, securing construction funding and completing the following next steps:

- U.S. Route 35/Bridge Street Interchange Operations Study..... Early 2022
- Environmental Document..... Early 2022
- Detailed Design..... Begin in mid-2022
- Right-of-Way Acquisition ..... 2023
- Construction (Dependent on Funding).....2024-2026

ODOT greatly appreciates your involvement with this project. As the design for this project progresses, additional public outreach is expected. Should you have questions or concerns, you may email me at [Tom.Barnitz@dot.ohio.gov](mailto:Tom.Barnitz@dot.ohio.gov) or call (740) 774-8877.

Sincerely,

Tom Barnitz, P.E.

Project Manager, ODOT District 9