



**RED BANK CORRIDOR PROJECT
COMMUNITY PARTNERS COMMITTEE**

Madisonville Recreation Center · December 7, 2011

Prepared by:

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MEETING ATTENDEES

Eastern Corridor Implementation Partners

- Ted Hubbard, Hamilton County Transportation Improvement District
- Michael Moore, City of Cincinnati
- Martha Kelly, City of Cincinnati
- Steve Mary, Ohio Department of Transportation
- Joe Vogel, Ohio Department of Transportation
- Andy Fluegemann, Ohio Department of Transportation
- Keith Smith, Ohio Department of Transportation
- Jay Hamilton, Ohio Department of Transportation

Project Team Consultants

- David Wormald, URS Corporation (Red Bank Corridor Project)
- Stephen Curless, URS Corporation
- Scott Buchanan, URS Corporation

Participants

- Alyssa Konermann
- Amy Westheimer
- Andrew Allwein
- Ashley Patrick
- Ben Frech
- Bill Collins
- Bill Fischer
- Bob Igoe
- Caroline Duffy
- Craig Rozen
- Deb Osborne
- Eric Ragland
- Ernie Barbeay
- Frank Henson
- Gregory Goloborodko
- Jennifer O'Donnell
- Jenny Kaminer
- Jon Harmon
- Laura Whitman
- Marilyn Wall
- Michael Burson
- Mike Fremont
- Mike Judy
- Paul Slone
- Rob Pasquinnucci
- Sharon Lally
- Shelley Deiters
- Tim Daugherty
- Todd Wales
- Vivian Llambi

MEETING MINUTES

Introductions

ODOT District 8 Deputy Director Steve Mary welcomed participants. All participants introduced themselves and where appropriate, provided their affiliation.

History and Purpose of the Eastern Corridor Program

Hamilton County Chief Deputy Engineer Ted Hubbard provided a brief overview of the Eastern Corridor Program. He explained that the program was developed to address existing and anticipated transportation challenges within the Eastern Corridor including:

- Few direct routes connecting Eastern Corridor communities; people are using I-471, I-275 and circuitous routes along crowded surface streets
- Growing congestion on roadways within and around the Eastern Corridor
- Low Level of Service (LOS) ratings on key Eastern Corridor roadways
- Higher than average accident rates
- Limited transportation options (mostly limited to vehicles only)

Mr. Hubbard said that the Eastern Corridor's transportation challenges and needs were originally outlined in the Major Investment Study (MIS) conducted by the Ohio-Kentucky-Council Regional Council of Governments in 2000. Seventeen individual jurisdictions within the Eastern Corridor participated in the study. The MIS established four goals that have guided the development of a recommended Eastern Corridor plan and will guide its implementation:

- Identify an effective, comprehensive transportation solution
- Provide support and sustenance to the regional economy
- Implement transportation improvements that are consistent with larger, regional environmental goals
- Consider existing and future land uses when structuring the transportation solution

Mr. Hubbard also provided an overview of the other plans and studies that have been completed and have shaped the current Eastern Corridor program. These include:

- 2002 Eastern Corridor Land Use Vision Plan
- 2004 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)
- 2005 Green Infrastructure Concept Master Plan
- 2005 Tier 1 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)

- 2006 Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)'s Tier 1 Record of Decision (ROD)¹
- 2009 Eastern Corridor Land Use Vision Plan, Green Infrastructure Plan & Jurisdictional Updates²

[Post meeting note: copies of these plans and studies are available on the Eastern Corridor website, www.EasternCorridor.org, under the Tier 1 Archives, Milestone Documents section.]

Mr. Hubbard also mentioned that a series of geomorphological studies were conducted in 2010 that looked at the meandering character of the Little Miami River to make sure any Eastern Corridor plans developed would be compatible with the shifting nature of the river channel.

Mr. Hubbard concluded his discussion with an emphasis on public involvement—public involvement has been and will continue to be a very important part of the Program development process. One consistent information resource is the Program website at www.EasternCorridor.org. He also conveyed that Todd Portune, Hamilton County Commissioner and Chair of the Hamilton County Transportation Improvement District (HCTID), was not able to attend tonight's meeting due to a schedule conflict and sent his regrets to the participants.

Stated Purpose of Red Bank Corridor

[per the 2005 Tier 1 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and 2006 Tier 1 Record of Decision (ROD)]

ODOT's Red Bank Corridor Project Manager Keith Smith discussed the purpose of the project and the roles and responsibilities of the Red Bank CPC members.

Project Purpose

Mr. Smith reviewed the purpose of the Red Bank Corridor project, quoting some relevant highlights from Chapter 4 of the 2005 Tier 1 Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS):

Utility and Significance: Proposed improvements on Red Bank Road from I-71 to US-50, independent of other corridor investments, will provide increased capacity, improved access management, and improved safety on Red Bank Road within this portion of the Eastern Corridor consistent with regional and state transportation plans, transportation need, and project funding and construction considerations.

Description of the Improvement: Consolidate and manage access points along existing Red Bank Road and Red Bank Expressway to establish a controlled access arterial roadway from existing I-71/Red Bank interchange to US-50; total length is about 2.5 miles.

¹ In June 2006, the FHWA issued a Record of Decision (ROD) that supported the recommendations made in the Tier 1 FEIS study and advanced them for further evaluation to be performed under the current Tier 2 study process.

² In 2009, the Eastern Corridor Land Use Vision Plan and **Green Infrastructure Concept Master Plan were updated and new information was presented in the Eastern Corridor Land Use Vision Plan, Green Infrastructure Plan & Jurisdictional Updates report.**

Roles and Responsibility of Red Bank Community Partners Committee (CPC)

Mr. Smith and Mr. Mary explained that the CPC members' primary responsibilities are to represent their community/organization and interests at CPC meetings and to share/exchange information from CPC meetings with their respective communities and organizations. Mr. Mary emphasized that the project team wants to hear from and exchange information with the community on this project. He said that while the project team may not always have the answers (depending on where we are in the project development process), they do want to have the discussions.

Mr. Mary explained that ODOT's role is to review the plans developed by their Red Bank Corridor project team, lead by URS Corporation, and share/exchange information with stakeholders and communities. ODOT will also serve as the project's construction manager once the project advances to that stage. Mr. Mary also identified the other project Implementation Partners: the Hamilton County Transportation Improvement District, the City of Cincinnati, the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) and SORTA.

Work Completed to Date

Red Flag Summary

Dave Wormald of URS Corporation explained that the existing conditions of the Red Bank Corridor are summarized in a report called the Red Flag Summary. The project team recently completed this report and it should be posted on the Eastern Corridor website by Friday, Dec. 9.

[Post meeting note: This report is now available on the website, www.EasternCorridor.org, under Current Studies, Red Bank Corridor, Study Documents].

Mr. Wormald explained that a Red Flag Summary is a standard document prepared during the planning and development process for a project. The document is an assessment of the existing environmental resources – both natural and man-made – within the project corridor. The report also looks at design issues, geotechnical and geological information (including soil type), locations of utilities, identifies locations of any potential hazardous materials (such as gas stations, underground storage tanks—both in use and abandoned), etc.

Highlights from the Red Bank Corridor Red Flag Summary include:

- Design Criteria – generally, the existing road meets design criteria established for existing traffic volumes; some lane widths are a little smaller than needed but not enough for major concern
- Utilities - a substantial amount of utilities exist along the corridor which is no surprise for this urban area
- Evaluation of accident records – in general, there are not a lot of traffic accidents along the corridor although accident rates are slightly higher than the city's average. However, this is not necessarily out of the ordinary considering the heavy use of the corridor
- Geotechnical – There are several slopes along the corridor that may affect the design of feasible alternatives and must be taken into consideration when developing alternatives
- Historic districts – there are a few historic landmarks in the vicinity of the project corridor, but most are outside of study area
- Floodplain – the corridor lies outside of the FEMA floodplain

Traffic Modeling Status

Jay Hamilton, ODOT District 8 Traffic Planning Engineer, provided an update on traffic status and modeling efforts. He explained that the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) manages the regional traffic model and the project team has been working with OKI to update the model for the Red Bank Corridor project. So far, the team is looking at projected traffic volumes numbers both with the proposed new SR-32 link and without the link.

- Without the link, it's expected there will be more traffic, but not by much
- With the new link, traffic levels will increase
- The project team expects to run several iterations of model
- Modeling efforts are scheduled to be completed by mid to late January
- Results will be shared with the Eastern Corridor Implementation Partners in February at which point the team will consider whether or not the projections are logical

Current City Projects

Michael Moore, Director of Transportation and Engineering for the City of Cincinnati, provided updates on several nearby projects:

- Madison Road Rehab – funding has been received for this project and work is scheduled to start in July
- The Kennedy Connector – Project should help relieve traffic problems around in the Ridge to I-71 vicinity. Work is expected to begin in September or October 2012 and construction is expected to take two years to complete.

Current County Projects

Mr. Hubbard provided an update on planned Hamilton County projects:

- The new intersection in Columbia Township at Ridge and Highland is working better now and, together with the Kennedy Connector project, traffic should improve in the Ridge, Kennedy and Highland vicinity

Current Development Projects

The following information was shared about other local efforts:

- The City has been investing in the Red Bank Junction
- Infrastructure in the Drive-In area has been completed; there are eight acres to be developed
- MedPace is working on its new building. Access to this business needs to be maintained.

Madisonville Community Council President Bob Igoe discussed the Madison Square project being planned at the intersection of Madison and Whetzel and stated that the project is in line with the City's Growth and Opportunities Study report (GO Cincinnati).

Representing the Community Action Committee (CAC), Bill Collins shared the following:

- Earlier this year, Madisonville representatives spoke with other nearby communities and key landowners about the proposed Red Bank Corridor project. Together, they formed a Red Bank Corridor project task force.
- In October, the HCTID recognized the CAC as an entity representing the interests of multiple communities, major landowners and businesses within the Red Bank project corridor. The HCTID understands that the CAC is ready and prepared to get involved in detailed design discussions with project planners.
- The CAC would like to start daytime planning meetings, beginning the 3rd week in January.
 - The group wants to reach an agreement on design specifications sooner than later

- The CAC suggested they will pull together the group to be included in the meetings
- The CAC said they will be sure to include City and Fairfax representatives in the group

Fairfax Administrator Jenny Kaminer stated that Tim Fiorini also wanted to do the same thing and that he's been named as spokesman for businesses along the corridor, including the Virginia Avenue businesses.

CAC Member and Oakley Community Council representative Craig Rozen emphasized that CAC members want to be liaisons between this group and the community. He said the CAC has been meeting weekly and is putting together a White Paper outlining the kind of road, sidewalk and bikeway improvements they would like to see incorporated into the Red Bank Corridor plan. It will also outline bikeway and sidewalk connections they would like to see throughout the area. They hope to present the White Paper at the next CPC meeting in January.

- It was suggested that the January meeting be on Tuesday, Jan. 24 or Wednesday, Jan. 25
 - CAC will coordinate meeting space
 - Meeting would be small—approximately 7-9 people would be there to represent the CAC

Mr. Moore asked if there is anything more that the City and Project Team can provide the CAC before the January meeting. Responses received from CAC representatives included:

- We want to move as quickly as possible
- It's [the CAC's] understanding that there hasn't been an "econometric" a study done assessing what's in corridor now and how elements will be affected by upcoming development. We need to get that snapshot established to define a realistic context for planning for the future. Can money be put toward funding something like that? (ODOT confirmed that a study of this sort is not in the current Red Bank Corridor contract)
 - Mr. Collins and Mr. Rozen mentioned that there is a 20-year old document that was very successful but now out of date. Another document was prepared 10 years ago. But it's not adequate for today.
 - Mr. Collins said the CAC would also like something to help identify the best use of properties and to identify under used properties. Without that information blended with Red Bank plan, they are worried about damaging future growth and development opportunities.
 - City representatives expressed that they are certain there was baseline work completed as part of the Go Cincinnati plan. That plan is available on the City's website, www.cincinnati-oh.gov (search on Go Cincinnati).
- Mr. Rozen requested more up to date maps. ODOT said they are welcome to have any/all of the maps shared at the meeting.

Context Sensitive Designs and Complete Streets

Keith Smith discussed the Context Sensitive Design and Complete Streets concepts and shared specific definitions for each (provided below). His conclusion was that both concepts are very similar and, for the most part, can be used interchangeably. The main thing to consider in developing this project is, when complete, will the community be glad that the project was done?

Complete Streets

Complete Streets is the planning, scoping, design, implementation, operation, and maintenance of roads in order to reasonably address the safety and accessibility needs of users of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets considers the needs of motorists, pedestrians, transit users and vehicles, bicyclists, and commercial and emergency vehicles moving along and across roads, intersections, and crossings in a manner that is sensitive to the local context and recognizes that the needs vary in urban, suburban, and rural settings.

The **National Complete Streets Coalition**, a pro-complete streets advocacy group in the United States, defines complete streets as those that are designed and operated to allow all users, not only drivers, to use them safely. The specific design elements of a complete street vary from place to place, but they may include:

- **Pedestrian infrastructure** such as sidewalks; crosswalks, including median-crossing islands and raised crosswalks; accessible pedestrian signals, including audible cues for people with low vision and pushbuttons reachable by wheelchair users; and sidewalk bump-outs
- **Traffic calming measures** to lower driving speeds and define the edges of car travelways, including road diets, center medians, shorter curb corner radii, elimination of free-flow right-turn lanes, staggered parking, street trees, planter strips and ground cover
- **Bicycle accommodations**, such as dedicated bicycle lanes or wide shoulders
- **Mass transit accommodations**, such as bus pullouts or special bus lanes

[Context Sensitive Solutions \(Design\) - from the Federal Highway Administration's website](#)

Context Sensitive Solutions utilize design excellence. [They] simultaneously advance the objectives of safety, mobility, enhancement of the natural environment, and preservation of community values. Guiding principles include:

- Address the transportation need
- Be an asset to the community
- Be compatible with the natural and built environments

A brief discussion followed regarding the incorporation of complete streets/context sensitive design into planning documents. ODOT representatives stated that including context sensitive design in the preliminary project development process began coming into practice in the late 1990's, early 2000's. Now, the Federal Highway Administration requires that all projects incorporate context sensitive design. All ODOT projects, including the Red Bank Corridor project, must adhere to that regulation.

Existing Conditions

ODOT representatives explained that the maps all participants received at tonight's meeting were aerial photos of the EXISTING Red Bank study corridor. The black and white dotted lines identify the study boundaries; the yellow lines identify the public right-of-way boundaries. The orange lines on the maps note the locations of the cross-section graphics also distributed at the meeting. The letters next to the orange lines correspond with a cross-section view of the roadway in the packet of graphics. The group

then reviewed each of the cross-sections, noting the changing character of Red Bank Expressway (width of road corridor, number of lanes, type of medians, width of public right-of-ways and sidewalks, etc.).

After reviewing the maps and cross-sections, discussion was held regarding the preferred widths of sidewalks and bikeways, whether or not bikeways should be located in the road or on side paths, ideal widths for bike paths and road lanes, etc. Also, the discussion expanded beyond the Red Bank Corridor study area and included work being planned along Madison Road. Comments/discussion included:

Bike Path Discussion

Community representatives asked if there is opportunity to adjust the width of the planned bike paths along Madison Road – we see a four-foot-wide walkway as a hindrance rather than benefit because it can get congested with both walkers and bikes.

- This is what we're here to discuss
 - If a four-foot width is not good, how can that be affected/changed?
 - This is more of a City issue that pertains to the Madison Road plans; the City will look at the issue
 - Group representatives suggested combined walk/bike paths would have to be minimum of 10 feet maybe even 12-14
- Oakley/Madisonville has a goal to establish a bike path that would allow riders to travel between Oakley and Madisonville. The community wants to push that accessibility.
- A real hindrance to bike paths is the speed and width of Red Bank Expressway
- If bikes are accommodated in plans, it should be seamless
- The City has constructed a variety of walk/bike path options that have been designed based on projected need. The City has also done side paths for both bikes & pedestrians.
- In the City, people over 15 years old should not be riding bikes on sidewalks. But some areas can be designated as "shared" paths, in which case bikes would be allowed.
- Mr. Rozen said they are excited about the Kennedy Connector and other development planned for Oakley Station. He doesn't think there is an option other than providing a side path for bikes though. He said we may have to get creative on how we do it, but we want to push inclusion of side paths in project. City representatives mentioned that it has been their intention for past 10 years to connect the areas with bike facilities
- The CAC has ideas on how side paths can be accommodated in other ways and will talk about them at the January meeting
- Mr. Hubbard shared that in his experience, some bikers prefer wider curb lanes rather than bike paths because they felt more secure. What do the bikers at this meeting think about that?
 - This is an issue Queen City Bikers debates all the time.
 - For cyclists just starting, riding in a road lane deters them and they don't start riding – 60% -70% of people wouldn't do it. Side paths encourage more people to participate.
 - Side paths may help discourage urban flight because it improves quality of neighborhood and quality of life
- There are plans to extend bike paths from Fairfax through Mariemont to the Little Miami River trail. This would be a huge benefit, particularly if bike paths are added through Red Bank. We need to get in on this now and not miss the opportunity.
- ODOT and the City said that anyone who's been involved in this project can tell you that biking connectivity is part of our goal – we want the same things
- Project team representatives noted that the maps shared at this meeting show what is EXISTING. They do not yet address what can be done.

Roadway Lane Width and Speed Limit Discussion

- What is ideal lane width for cars moving at 35 mph?
 - Preferred width is a 12 foot lane; the standard lane widths for urban areas is 11 feet.
- The narrower the road lanes, the more accidents you have. If lanes get too wide, then you start getting two cars per lane (side by side)
- Please keep in mind that Red Bank needs to accommodate a lot of commercial traffic and trucks, not just cars. Lanes and other geometric features need to be designed to safely accommodate these vehicles.
- The City typically designs to 11 feet for 35 mph to accommodate trucks (45 mph means wider lanes). But you have to consider things off road that affect sight lines– guard rails, bushes, curbs, etc. Inclusion of these features can encourage/discourage speeds
- Overall design scheme helps determine speed

Misc. Comments

- One resident has noticed a lot of motorized scooters for the elderly in Madisonville in the last year – this could be a new trend? Should be accommodated in plans.
- Please consider that there are three senior centers and multiple schools in the project study area – all need to be considered and accommodated in project plans.
- Are you planning a “charrette,” where people can mark on maps, participate in an intense working session?
 - ODOT mentioned that some of that work is to take place at this meeting
 - CAC representatives said they’ve done a lot of work on weekly basis regarding this issue and would like more specific time dedicated to this issue rather than it be a small part of a larger meeting. They think it would be better for them to present a more comprehensive approach. ODOT said they look forward to hearing that information at the January meeting
 - CAC representatives said they will get into a lot of detail at that meeting. They are concerned about past decisions that have cut Madisonville off from other communities and want to use this as an opportunity to rectify this.
 - CAC representatives said the January meeting would be with a smaller group, possibly just 7 or 8 of their team. ODOT expressed that they understand the desire to meet with the smaller group, but they need to make sure that community-based meetings held about the project are inclusive of others as well
- We would like to create a Gateway into the City of Cincinnati as part of this project

Financing

Joe Vogel, ODOT District 8 Planning and Engineering Administrator, shared information about funding for the Red Bank Corridor project. He said that funding has been obtained for the current Tier 2 study, which includes preliminary engineering and environmental analysis. The estimated cost of the current study is \$3.5 million.

- The Red Bank Corridor project’s funding source is an HCTID earmark –80% of which is provided through federal funding (\$2,840,000) and 20% (\$710,000) through local funding from the HCTID.

CAC representatives acknowledged that some of the work they’d like to see completed within the Red Bank corridor may not fit into ODOT’s project scope. However, they don’t know what the limits are or

where to go to pursue funding for any work outside the scope. ODOT said they would work with the local stakeholders to identify potential funding resources for efforts that fall outside the current project scope. Many of the available funding sources have competitive application processes and specific deadlines. Possible funding sources may include:

- Federal Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds via OKI
- Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) funds
- State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) loans
- Ohio General Capital Program (this has been used but is hard to get)
- Municipal Road Fund (MRF)
- City Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Mr. Vogel further explained that funding has not yet been obtained for detailed design and construction, and it looks like it's going to be difficult to get funding over the next couple of years.

- A funding request for the Eastern Corridor Program is included as part of the federal transportation bill currently under consideration/negotiation in Washington. However, movement on that bill has been very slow and there is a lot of competition for a limited amount of funds.
- ODOT's Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) recently went through a regional process to prioritize projects that need funding and the Eastern Corridor Program received strong consideration. However, funding levels are drastically lower now than in the past. A lot of good projects need money but funds are limited.
- A possible option to help advance projects to construction will be to break them down into phases and fund construction in parts.

A participant asked City representatives if they would ever make a decision that the Red Bank Corridor project can't wait and work must be done. City representatives reiterated the importance of the project to both the local and regional community and said the project will likely always be on the City's list of projects to be completed.

Mr. Vogel explained that it is rare to have construction funding in place at this stage of a project's development and it is standard practice for large transportation and infrastructure projects to proceed with preliminary design before construction funding is identified/obtained. Mr. Vogel also explained that the Implementation Partners are moving forward with the project development process to ensure that the project will be ready to go (shovel-ready) as soon as funding becomes available. Although no guarantee, having a project that is ready to be funded for construction will help move the project to the top of the funding list.

Red Bank Corridor Schedule

Scott Buchanan, URS Corporation discussed work to be completed during the upcoming months:

- The project team will be working to identify traffic volumes and run the models. This will help better determine issues that need to be addressed through project design. More information will be available in January at which point we can start developing alternatives.
- Mr. Rozen asked if traffic modeling on this project takes into account other changes being planned in the area, like the Kennedy Connector project. There is a concern that these projects together will create cut-through problems in residential areas of Oakley and Madisonville. ODOT said they are working to identify all known projects and include them in the modeling process.

The model should show how traffic patterns will likely shift depending on the changes put in place. Part of this process is to make sure that we don't create a problem somewhere else by fixing problems here.

- Another participant said that the region needs to implement other transit options to help alleviate these kind of traffic issues. ODOT responded that providing a rail transit option is part of the Eastern Corridor Program's effort to reduce traffic and congestion. One of the key purposes of this Program is to get people to their jobs and other destinations more efficiently (and not use residential roads). It's an opportunity to spread out the traffic by providing more choices, not less.

Next Steps

ODOT stressed that they and the other Eastern Corridor Implementation Partners want to hear from local communities and stakeholders on the Red Bank Corridor project and to work with them in developing a project that meets both regional and local needs.

This Red Bank Corridor Community Partner Committee meeting is just the first of many to come. The date and time of the next group meeting will be confirmed and communicated to participants.

Information about the Eastern Corridor Program and its projects, including the Red Bank Corridor project, is posted on the Eastern Corridor website, www.EasternCorridor.org. Comments, questions and ideas can also be submitted on that site by clicking on Submit Feedback. Information is also being shared through Facebook (www.facebook.com/easterncorridor) and Twitter. Another option is to sign up to receive information and updates through email. Further, questions can be directed to any of the project representatives in attendance tonight.

As the meeting concluded, participants reviewed aerial plots of the project area that were hung up on the meeting room walls and discussed the project with representatives and other participants.