



Improved Interchange at I-71 and US 36/SR 37 and Proposed Sunbury Parkway

DEL-71-7.91

PID 90200

April 28, 2016

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)



ODOT project website:

<http://www.dot.state.oh.us/districts/D06/projects/71/Pages/default.aspx>

1. What is the purpose of this Public Meeting?

The purpose of this meeting is to provide the public the opportunity to review alternatives to improve safety and reduce congestion at the I-71/US 36 SR 37 interchange and provide improved east-west connectivity in the region. In August 2012, ODOT completed a feasibility study that determined that an interchange to the south of the existing interchange at I-71/US 36/SR 37 would be the best option to reduce congestion in the area than one to the north. Further study of possible interchange improvements was completed in December 2014. ODOT determined from the results of this study that an improvement which combined the existing interchange with additional ramps to the south would be the best option for a regional solution.

2. Why is this project needed?

Delaware County has been the fastest growing county in Ohio for over a decade, and according to the US Census Bureau, its population grew another two percent between 2013 and 2014. In addition to its growth in population, Delaware County is also facing an increase in freight traffic. When combined, this increase in traffic will stress all of the major routes in Delaware County, but particularly the already congested and regionally important I-71 and US 36/SR 37 interchange.

3. Why not just improve the existing interchange?

To improve the existing interchange to handle the future expected high traffic volumes would require a much larger interchange. The interchange would be similar to an I-71 and I-270 type of interchange with flyover ramps and additional lanes on US 36/SR 37. This type of fix would require substantial amounts of property from the existing businesses along US 36/SR 37. The results of the 2014 feasibility study determined that a combined interchange would provide improved traffic operations and have less overall impacts than upgrading the existing interchange location. According to traffic projections, traffic will be diverted by the proposed project such that the existing interchange and US 36/SR 37 will operate at acceptable levels of service.

4. Won't the existing businesses along US 36/SR 37 in the vicinity of I-71 be impacted?

The upgrade necessary at the existing interchange to address the projected level of traffic would eliminate many, if not all, of the surrounding businesses along US 36/SR 37. By adding new ramps to the south of the existing interchange, businesses along US 36/SR 37 can continue to operate as they currently do. In the I-71 southbound direction, the exit to US 36/SR 37 will be the only exiting location in this combined interchange layout. There will be no exiting ramps to the proposed interchange in the southbound direction. I-71 northbound direction will look similar to Polaris/Gemini with a barrier separated ramps to access both the proposed location as well as the existing interchange.

5. I keep hearing about \$16.5 million dollars for the current interchange. What does this mean?

The Simon-Tanger traffic study, identified both opening year and future year improvements that were necessary to accommodate the additional traffic brought to the area due to the opening of the mall. The opening year improvements have been constructed. The future year improvements were valued at \$16.5M. The need for future improvements are beyond what is triggered by just the Outlet Mall. ODOT has determined the southern interchange will not only solve the traffic issues at the current interchange, but address the regional concerns as well. Pursuant to the feasibility study, ODOT has determined that additional interchange ramps to the south of the current I-71/US 36/SR 37 coupled with an east-west roadway will be the best option to improve safety and reduce congestion. The distribution of traffic with a combined interchange will be about 60/40, meaning only 40% of the traffic would use the existing interchange and therefore building the design year improvements would be under-utilized. It is ODOT's intent to apply that \$16.5 million dollars to the construction of the additional southern interchange ramps.

6. We heard that the improvements underway at this time are supposed to make the existing interchange operate better in future years. Why do we need the additional ramps to the south if the existing interchange is being improved?

The improvements identified in the Simon-Tanger traffic study do not account for any additional development beyond the outlet mall, an auto mall and some retail stores and will not accommodate future area growth and development as per local land use plans. ODOT would like to point out that the development of this area could not have been possible without the contribution of private developers in the area. Simon-Tanger is funding current improvements at the existing I-71/US 36/SR 37 interchange.

7. Is there an option to put interchange ramps north of US 36/SR 37?

A northern interchange was reviewed as part of the August 2012 ODOT Feasibility Study and was not recommended. The largest problem with a northern interchange was the insufficient reduction in congestion at the existing interchange and it did not adequately address the east-west connectivity needs for the region.

8. Could parts of all three alternatives be used to make one proposed roadway?

Yes. Based on comments from the public, there could be adjustments to the alternatives.

9. How many lanes will the proposed Sunbury Parkway have?

The proposed Sunbury Parkway will be six lanes between Africa Road and I-71 and five lanes from I-71 east to US 36/SR 37 when all phases are complete. There will be additional turn lanes at intersections.

10. What will be the speed limit on the proposed Sunbury Parkway?

The speed limit on the proposed Sunbury Parkway will be 50 mph per Ohio Revised Code requirements.

11. Where will traffic signals be located on the proposed Sunbury Parkway?

Future traffic signals are expected at the following intersections with Sunbury Parkway:

Africa Road/US 36/SR 37

Fourwinds Drive and S. 3 B's & K realignment

I-71 northbound Ramp

Wilson Road

Galena Road

Domigan Road

Sunbury Pkwy and US 36/SR 37 on the far east side of the project

12. What will the proposed Sunbury Parkway look like?

Initially, Sunbury Parkway will be a two lane roadway. Sunbury Parkway will ultimately be expanded to two lanes in each direction, curb and gutter, with a grass median. The facility will also include a sidewalk on one side and a shared use path on the other side. A shared use path is physically separated from the roadway and can accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.

13. What will the connector roads from 3B's & K to Sunbury Parkway look like?

Fourwinds Drive is planned to be built by others as a two lane roadway north of the 3Bs & K Road realignment and will be widened to provide turn lanes at the proposed Sunbury Parkway.

14. What will happen to 3B's and K once the new connector road at Fourwinds Drive is built? How will residents who live on 3B's and K south of Sherman get to their homes?

Residents living on South 3B's and K south of Sherman Road will be able to use either Africa Road to Sherman Road to access their homes or use the new Fourwinds Drive connection when built by others from the proposed Sunbury Parkway to South 3B's and K to access their homes.

15. What will the connection at Africa Road look like?

Africa Road will be widened from two lanes to four lanes south of the proposed Sunbury Parkway. There will be additional left and right turn lanes at the intersection.

16. When will the preferred alternative/route be selected? And how will we be informed?

The preferred alternative will be selected after a review of comments received from tonight's meeting and during the comment period. Comments will be taken into consideration in the selection of the preferred alternative. The preferred alternative for the added southern interchange and Sunbury Parkway will be chosen after that time. The notification along with a response to all comments we have received about the project will be posted on the ODOT website and sent to those who have provided their contact information.

17. When will these proposed improvements be built?

The additional southern interchange ramps and the Sunbury Parkway connection to Wilson Road will be ready for construction in 2018 pending funding availability. The extension of Sunbury Parkway west to Africa Road will be phased for later years. To aid their plans for development in the area, a private development group will begin constructing two lanes of Sunbury Parkway from Wilson Road east to existing US 36/SR 37 beginning in 2019. Future phases of the interchange project include a tie-in west to existing US36/SR 37 and the upgrade of Sunbury Parkway from two lanes to four lanes. These improvements are planned for future years as traffic and development in the area warrants. Because of the collaboration between public and private entities, an effective solution can be delivered sooner to the area than if we tried to do this by ourselves.

18. I have heard that there is other development that will be happening in the region. What are the plans?

Development is already beginning in the area with the Simon-Tanger Outlet mall opening in June 2016. Other retail, residential and recreational facilities are planned in the area as identified on local land use plans.

19. How much do the improvements cost and who will pay for them?

The planning level cost estimate for construction of all the improvements including the interchange, ramps, connection to the west to Africa Road and the widening of Sunbury Parkway east of Wilson road is \$125 Million. This estimate does not include right of way or the cost to build the initial two lanes of Sunbury Parkway from Wilson Road east to US 36/SR 37. Funding will likely come from multiple sources including ODOT. Funding, including those from private sources, must be available in advance of construction per federal requirements.

20. I heard there is a Big Walnut Interchange project – what is it?

The Delaware County Engineer's Office is studying the feasibility of a new interchange on I-71 at Big Walnut Road, located approximately midway between the US 36/SR 37 interchange and the Polaris/Gemini Parkway interchange. The study of improvements for the I-71 and US 36/SR 37 interchange considered traffic both with and without the possible I-71 and Big Walnut interchange.

21. What is an AER?

An AER is an Alternative Evaluation Report which documents the process and the decisions made in the selection of a preferred alternative to solve the purpose and need of a project.

22. What is TRAC?

TRAC is the Transportation Review Advisory Council. Established by Ohio Revised Code in 1997, the nine-member Transportation Review Advisory Council assists in developing a project selection process for ODOT's largest investments. The TRAC, chaired by ODOT's Director, also approves Major New projects for funding.

23. What are the next steps for the I-71 and US 36/SR 37 Interchange Improvements?

- Public Meeting Comment Period End Date – May 13, 2016
- Preferred Alternative Determination – Summer 2016
- Transportation Review and Advisory Council (TRAC) Funding Application – 2016
- Alternatives Evaluation Report (AER) Complete/Approved – Summer 2016
- Second Public Meeting – Fall 2016
- Environmental Document Approved – Winter 2016
- Interchange Designed – December 2016 to early 2018
- Begin Property Purchase – Summer 2017
- Interchange Ready for Construction, Pending Funding Availability – 2018