



## Cleveland Avenue and Schrock Road Intersection Improvements

### PROJECT BACKGROUND

The City of Westerville (Westerville) and the City of Columbus (Columbus), in coordination with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), are proposing improvements to the Cleveland Avenue/Schrock Road Intersection in Blendon and Sharon Townships, Franklin County, Ohio. The current intersection and surrounding roadways have numerous safety and functional deficiencies, as identified in a 2012 Safety Study, conducted by Evans, Mechwart, Hamilton & Tilton (EMH&T).



On January 30, 2014, Westerville, Columbus, and ODOT hosted a public involvement open house to present the Preliminary Engineering Design for the project, including impacts to Sharon Woods Metro Park and results of the Noise Analysis. The purpose of the open house was to provide an opportunity for the public to view the Preliminary Design and request public input. The meeting was held at Mount Carmel St. Ann's Hospital, 500 South Cleveland Ave, Westerville, Ohio. The open house was attended by 44 individuals, including 30 interested parties and 14 individuals representing the Project Management Team. This team is comprised of Westerville, Columbus, ODOT, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) and EMH&T (the engineering consultant for the project).

On March 10, 2014, Westerville and EMH&T met with a representative of Barrington Square Apartments. The purpose of the meeting was to solicit input from the property owner regarding the structural noise abatement measures (i.e. noise wall) recommended by the Noise Analysis. In addition, noise comment forms were hand delivered to each of the 22 affected residential units at the southern end of the Barrington Square Apartments. Residents were given two weeks to respond. Results indicated a 55% approval rating for construction of a noise wall. As such, a noise barrier is proposed to be constructed as part of this project. The wall will be located immediately adjacent to the southern property boundary of the Barrington Square Apartments, between the Apartments and the southbound Cleveland Avenue-to-westbound I-270 entrance ramp.

### PROJECT UPDATE

Since the January 30, 2014 open house, there has been extensive coordination between members of the Project Management Team regarding the Preliminary Engineering Design and proposed property impacts. Based on these discussions and more in-depth engineering design efforts, some revisions have been made to the preliminary project design. These changes include the following:

- The on-street bicycle facilities have been removed from Cleveland Avenue to lessen the property impacts along Cleveland Avenue.
- There will be a minimum 10' wide multi-use path constructed on the east side of Cleveland Avenue. This path will tie into the ODOT-sponsored bridge project on the south end of the project corridor and an existing 5' wide sidewalk on the north end of the project corridor, near the JP Morgan Chase drive.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS AND RESPONSES**

The public open house was publicized via a Press Release (issued 1/16/14) and a Public Notice (issued 1/16/14 and 1/23/14). In addition, individual invitation letters were mailed to property owners and interested parties two weeks prior to the public open house. Five (5) written comments (via comment forms and email) were received as a result of the open house. Below is a summary of all comments received in relation to this project with responses from the Project Management Team.

### **Bike Lanes and Sidewalks**

**Comment: Planned bicycle/pedestrian path width across the highway interchange and through the Cleveland/Schrock intersection is inadequate (should be 10').**

*Response: There are two projects in different stages of development along Cleveland Avenue at I-270 and Schrock Rd. The City of Westerville is responsible for the improvements being made to the intersection of Cleveland Avenue and Schrock Road. There is also an ODOT-sponsored project to replace the deck of the Cleveland Avenue bridge over I-270. As part of the ODOT project, ramps will be reconfigured to reduce pedestrian conflicts through the interchange and a multi-use path will be provided along the east side of Cleveland Avenue through the interchange that will match up with facilities being constructed as part of the Westerville project. At the point where the two projects intersect, the path will be approximately 11' in width.*

**Comment: No bus shelters, benches, or other obstructions should be within the 10' bike lane.**

*Response: There are no bus shelters or benches proposed to be placed within the multi-use path. Some minor obstructions such as traffic control signage may be necessary; however, an accessible route will be maintained in all areas. Signs erected within this area will be at a height consistent with the Ohio Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (OMUTCD) and local standards.*

**Comment: Extend Cleveland Ave bike lanes and side path to Chase Bank's [JP Morgan Chase's] driveway at the existing traffic signal.**



*Response: There will be a 10'-11' wide multi-use path constructed on the east side of Cleveland Avenue that will tie into an existing 5' wide sidewalk on the north end of the project corridor near the JP Morgan Chase drive.*

**Comment: Extend sidewalk along north side of Schrock Road further west to I-270 along entire southern side of Sharon Woods Metro Park periphery.**

*Response: This request is outside the limits of this project. The project area only extends to the Barrington Square Apartments on Schrock Road and does not encompass the entire southern periphery of the Sharon Woods Metro Park. There is currently an existing sidewalk on the southern side of Schrock Road.*

**Comment:** *Wayfaring signs are needed to indicate bike/pedestrian crossing.*

*Response:* All legal crosswalks will be indicated with signs and pavement markings consistent with the Ohio Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (OMUTCD) and local standards.

**Several comments were received regarding a general appreciation for the additional sidewalks, the buffer allowed for bike lanes, and for not considering concrete curb and gutter as bike lane space.**

*Response:* Both the City of Westerville and the City of Columbus have made concerted efforts to promote biking and pedestrian transportation options and appreciate public input provided throughout this project regarding these facilities. Bike lane design will be consistent with AASHTO standards.

### **Roadway Design**

**Comment:** *The project should include a dedicated right turn lane from westbound Schrock Road to northbound Cleveland Avenue.*

*Response:* The addition of a dedicated right turn lane was not identified in the Safety Study (2012) as being necessary or feasible to address the transportation issues in the project area. A copy of the Safety Study is on file at the City of Westerville.

### **Property Impacts**

**Comment:** *Vehicles turning in and out of the [property at 6861 Cleveland Avenue] create traffic problems at the intersection.*

*Response:* In order to address the traffic and safety problems in the area, it may be necessary to remove the access points for this property.

**Comment:** *Wendy's is concerned about the effect of the temporary construction easement on the turning radius for customers exiting the drive thru lane on the north side of the building.*

*Response:* The construction limits proposed in the Preliminary Engineering Design have been revised to maintain a greater width through the drive aisle. The limits have been minimized to the extent possible.

**Comment:** *Regarding installation of the noise wall, save as many trees as possible or replant afterward.*

*Response:* The construction of the noise barrier will require the removal of vegetation in order to access the location and build the structure. The wall will be located near the existing right-of-way fence directly south of the Barrington Square Apartments. Removal of existing vegetation will be minimized to the greatest extent possible.





### **NEXT STEPS**

- ⇒ Detailed engineering design plans are currently being finalized. These plans must be approved by the City of Westerville, City of Columbus, and the Ohio Department of Transportation.
- ⇒ Right-of-way acquisition is expected to begin in January 2015, subject to funding approval.
- ⇒ The anticipated start of construction is June 2016, subject to funding approval. The duration of construction is expected to be approximately 18 months.

### **THANK YOU**

The Project Management Team appreciates the participation in the planning effort for the Cleveland Avenue and Schrock Road intersection improvements project. We thank all those who have provided input regarding this project. The feedback received will assist the City of Westerville, the City of Columbus, and ODOT in defining ways to resolve the identified transportation issues in the study area.

All comments received to date have been fully documented and have been taken into consideration as the project has developed. All comments received at the public open house are considered public comments and are subject to disclosure in accordance with the Ohio Public Records Act (Section 149.43 of the Ohio Revised Code).

For more information regarding this project or for a full copy of all comments received at the public meeting, please contact Jeff Kessler, Project Manager for the City of Westerville, at 614-901-6669, or email [jeff.kessler@westerville.org](mailto:jeff.kessler@westerville.org).