



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

From the June 29, 2005 Public Meeting for the Thru the Valley Project

1. When will the project begin?

The project is slated to begin construction in 2010.

2. When will the project end?

Construction on the project is scheduled to be completed by 2013.

3. Is any consideration being given to building a regional bypass?

The Thru the Valley project is advanced from the previous North South Transportation Initiative (NSTI) and a new bypass is not within the study area or scope of this project.

4. Why is light rail or other means of mass transit not incorporated into this project?

The funding for this project was specifically identified for highway projects, and therefore must be used for this purpose. Any transit-oriented project, including light rail, would be a separate project. All of the conceptual alternatives being considered for the Thru the Valley Project preserve the existing transit corridor so that future transit options remain viable possibilities.

5. Why aren't semi-trucks required to use I-275 instead of I-75?

The interstate highways are federally owned highways and federal law does not permit banning trucks except in extenuating circumstances. Banning trucks would involve the enactment of legislation by both Kentucky and Ohio.

Aside from the legal issues mentioned above, there are more practical reasons. Trucks that have a destination within the outerbelt of I-275 cannot be required to use I-275, since that would take them away from their possible destination. Studies indicate that there is an average of 20,000 trucks per day using I-75 in Hamilton County, most have destinations somewhere between the river and I-275. In order to enforce the restriction, state lines would have to be crossed to make sure the truck did not have a stop within the outerbelt of I-275. In addition to being a problem from an enforcement standpoint and the multiple jurisdictions involved, banning trucks from I-75 would not have a substantial impact on the traffic congestion in this corridor. There would not be a large benefit to eliminate through trucks since the overall amount would be rather small.

6. Which and how many properties will you take?

We are now in the process of analyzing multiple conceptual alternatives. Each alternative has been evaluated and an estimate of properties affected has been tabulated, which enables the public and project team to compare each alternative. These conceptual alternatives will be narrowed down to three or four feasible alternatives from which a preferred alternative will be selected. Once the preferred alternative has been selected (spring 2006), a precise estimate of how much right-of-way (*or how many properties*) will be required.

7. When will property owners be contacted if their property is needed for this project?

First you will receive an introductory letter from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). After a title report and appraisal is completed, a staff realty specialist or contracted representative of ODOT will contact you to set up an appointment. During the appointment this person will review the project and provide copies of the project plans, the appraisal, and ODOT's offer for your property. The right-of-way acquisition process for the Thru the Valley Project is scheduled to begin in the winter of 2008.

8. How is fair market value for residential property determined?

Full fair market value is the amount a willing buyer would pay a willing seller for the property on the open market, with neither the buyer nor the seller acting under duress. What this means is ODOT will pay you the value you would expect to receive if you were to put your property up for sale on the open market. In most instances the value is computed by determining what similar properties in your neighborhood have recently been selling for.

9. If ODOT buys my home, how much will they pay toward relocation and moving expenses?

Relocation benefits are available to assist in your moving or relocating to another property. They can apply to home, farm, or business acquisitions. The amount is calculated based on a number of factors. A staff realty specialist or contracted representative of ODOT will give you a detailed explanation of all of your eligible relocation benefits.

10. Is emergency response time from various departments factored into the design?

If emergency response times will be affected by a proposed alternative, the project team will consider these impacts along with the various other factors used to determine the preferred alternative. We welcome any information that a jurisdiction would like to provide in this regard.

11. What level of Environmental Document will be processed for this project?

It is expected that the Thru the Valley Project will be processed as a Level 4 Categorical Exclusion (CE4). Most likely an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will not be required because the alternative stays within the existing I-75 alignment and there are no significant changes to access planned. Also, the impacts are not of the magnitude that would make the project follow an Environmental Assessment (EA) or EIS. A CE4 does not mean a reduction in the studies or alternatives considered; the level of effort is basically the same as an EA. The CE process is the result of a Programmatic Agreement between the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and ODOT for projects that do not have significant impacts to the human and natural environment, and therefore, the amount of environmental documentation required by the FHWA can be reduced from that required in an EA or EIS.

12. What noise reduction measures will be used and how are they determined?

Given the limited amount of available right-of-way in the project area, noise abatement, where warranted, will best be achieved through the use of noise walls. These walls are generally constructed of concrete and textured and colored with patterns and stains approved by the majority of benefited property owners. Walls are an average of 10 to 16 feet high with a maximum of 20 feet and will usually yield a 5 to 10 decibel decrease in sound.

The current ODOT policy along with some additional noise related information is available at: <http://www.dot.state.oh.us/oes/noise.htm>

13. What will be done to improve the air quality for those living in between the split?

Measures have been taken to ensure that federal funding and approval are given to those transportation activities and projects that are consistent with air quality goals of the region. The estimated emissions from projects in the corridor have been evaluated to ensure that the transportation improvements will not adversely impact local air quality.

This project will likely not "improve" air quality in itself, but reduced congestion generally reduces spot emissions. The project will be modeled in the OKI's* air quality model to assure there is no net detriment to regional air quality.

14. Why not eliminate the Lockland split entirely, and move all lanes to the west side?

Several alternatives for the section of interstate through Lockland are being considered including combining the northbound and southbound lanes on one side or the other. The number and severity of impacts must be carefully considered for each alternative in order to provide the best transportation solution, while minimizing these impacts.

15. Why tie up both the north and south bound lanes with construction at the same time?

During the construction phase of this project, every effort will be made to minimize the inconvenience to the traveling public. While a final construction phasing plan has not yet been determined, it is ODOT's intent to balance the overall duration of the construction project with the inevitable lane restrictions that will be required. We anticipate that there will be no reduction in the number of lanes during the peak hours.

16. Is this project being coordinated with other major projects (e.g.-Eastern Corridor, Mill Creek Watershed, 275 Upgrades, 275/Indiana Bridge Upgrades)?

Yes. Representatives from several different agencies, including OKI,* regularly attend Implementation Committee meetings to ensure coordination of Thru the Valley with other projects in the area. Other planned projects for the area can be found on OKI's Web site at <http://www.oki.org/transportation/tip.html>.

17. How will Gondola Street be affected (regarding option #4)?

Based on the information the project team has developed to date, there appears to be enough existing right-of-way available to accommodate the Four-Lane Continuity alternative without affecting Gondola Street.

18. What is the benefit of closing the Galbraith Road exit?

The exit to Galbraith from northbound I-75 is currently on the left side of the interstate. According to Federal Highway Standards, left entrances and exits are not permitted due to safety concerns and the fact they violate driver expectancy.

19. What is being planned to relieve the daily morning backup that occurs on southbound I-75 at I-275?

Backups in general will be reduced by widening I-75. A separate project is planned for the widening of I-275 which will also help reduce traffic backups.

20. What will be done to relieve the crossover problems that exist in the bridge over I-75 between the eastbound I-275 to northbound I-75 ramp and the southbound I-75 to eastbound I-275 ramps?

A separate project is planned for improvements to I-275 including the ramps to and from I-75. However, while there is funding for the engineering portion of this project, funding has not been secured for construction.

21. Will local contractors do the work?

The project will follow the standard procedures for contractor selection.

***OKI (the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments)** is a council of local governments, business organizations and community groups committed to developing collaborative strategies, plans and programs which will improve the quality of life and the economic development potential of the Tri-state. OKI sponsored the North South Transportation Initiative (NSTI) from which the Thru the Valley project was created.

Questions or Comments?

For more information about this project please visit www.thruthevalley.com or contact one of the following project managers.

Mike Ciotola
M•E Companies, Inc.
635 Brooksedge Boulevard
Westerville, OH 43081
800-229-1774 ext. 357
e-mail: mciotola@mecompanies.com

Jay Hamilton
ODOT, District 8
505 S. State Rt. 741
Lebanon, OH 45036
800-831-2141 ext. 9336584
e-mail: Jay.Hamilton@dot.state.oh.us