



Public Meeting

August 19, 2004

Project Information

Project Description

The Portsmouth Bypass, (State Route 823) will be a four-lane, divided, limited-access freeway from Wheelersburg to Lucasville with access provided by interchanges at US 52, at Shumway Hollow near the Airport on SR 335, at Lucasville-Minford Road, and at US 23.

Purpose of the Meeting

The purpose of this meeting is to present the recommended Preferred Alternative and continue to receive feedback from the public on how to improve upon the Preferred Alternative.

Background

The Portsmouth Bypass was first identified as part of the Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS) in 1964, under the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). The purpose of the ARC's programs is to reduce poverty in the Appalachian region. The highway program seeks to end the isolation of these areas and provide the roadway connections needed to attract economic development and jobs. Funding limitations have stalled the project several times in decades past. In 1998 ODOT signed the Southeast Ohio Highway Compact, which allocated money across several projects, including \$55 million toward this project if it was found to be a feasible idea.

In 1999 ODOT began a planning study for the project. A thorough traffic survey was conducted and several alternatives were considered to meet regional transportation and economic development needs, including upgrading the existing routes and several bypass concepts. Based upon the findings of the study, ODOT determined that a bypass in the area of the county airport would provide good transportation benefits and the best chance for economic development – it would provide roadway access to flat, developable property that already possessed an airport, rail line and close proximity to ports along the Ohio River. In 2001 ODOT approved access to the funding to continue with development of the project.

In August 2001 ODOT began the current study to determine the best location for the new roadway. At the start of the study, the project team met with representatives from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and numerous local officials. Field studies have been conducted to determine the locations of critical resources like schools and community buildings, neighborhoods, farm support services, wetlands, and historic bridges and buildings. Mapping was created to show the topography and the locations of homes and businesses. Geotechnical borings were conducted to provide information on the soil conditions so the planners could better estimate construction costs and how steep the slopes can be cut. This information is the foundation upon which the roadway planning was conducted.

In November of 2002, several alternatives were shown to the public for comment. Based upon public concerns, ODOT agreed to revisit the alternatives analysis to consider additional options. In November of 2003, the refined Feasible Alternatives were shown at a public meeting and comments were compiled. Based upon the social, economic, and environmental impacts of these options, along with the public comments received, ODOT has recommended the Preferred Alternative that is on display at today's meeting.

Next Steps

With the Proposed Preferred Alternative decided, the design and location of the roadway shown may not be identical to the final roadway design. The design team will now begin to develop roadway plans and will concentrate on trying to improve upon the preferred option by addressing concerns and suggestions of property owners.

During previous public meetings, the Project Team received several suggestions for improvements to the alternatives. The team has investigated these ideas and some of them have resulted in changes to the Preferred Alternative from the "Hill" alignment previously shown. One such improvement was the decision to add an interchange at Lucasville-Minford Road. Other suggestions resulted in minor shifts of the roadway to reduce property impacts.

Similarly, other suggestions may be received from citizens that would improve the project and reduce impacts to people and property. In other words, please make specific comments so that ODOT will have the benefit of your knowledge to make the project better for everyone concerned. Feel free to use the comment forms provided or additional sheets.

Funding & Schedule

The Portsmouth Bypass is estimated to cost approximately \$240 million for construction and right-of-way. ODOT has currently pledged \$55 million toward the project. The remaining funds to complete the project have not yet been committed. Funding for the project will depend upon many factors, such as the fate of the Appalachian Development Highway System program and the size of the Federal Transportation Bill that is currently under development.

A plan for funding the entire project, or for constructing a portion with the currently pledged funds, will be developed over the next several months. It is possible that ODOT may design the roadway and purchase the right-of-way with those available funds in order to preserve the corridor while construction funding is sought. It is also possible that ODOT may choose to construct a portion of the roadway while seeking funds for the remaining portions. Please provide your input on this issue, if you have an opinion on how the project should be implemented.

Comments will be accepted at the meeting, by mail, fax, or e-mail until September 3, 2004:

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823 Portsmouth Bypass

An Appalachian Development Highway

ISSUE/CONCERN		Preferred Alternative
DESIGN ISSUES	Length (miles)	16.2
	Probable Cost (millions)	\$240
	Earthwork (incl. mitigation)	\$103
	Structures (incl. bridges, ret walls & culverts)	\$59
	Remaining Construction Costs	\$62
	Utility Relocations	\$8
	Right-of-Way/Relocations	\$7
PROPERTY IMPACTS		
	Relocations	Total
	Single-Family Residences	30
	Apartments (1 building)	16
	Other Residences	8
	Mobile Homes	10
	Other Relocations	barns & farm buildings
		14
	Property Impacts by Alternative	Right of Way Required
	Active Agricultural	(acres) 55
	Passive Agricultural	(acres) 118
	Scrub/Logged	(acres) 150
	Urban/Developed	(acres) 125
	Woodland	(acres) 493
	Potential Landlocked Properties*	
	Number of Parcels	(number) 45
	Acreage	Landlocked Acreage 435
*These properties may be landlocked, as no access was apparent and no service road appeared feasible. Access strategies will be pursued with property owners prior to making a final determination.		
ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES	Stream Culverted/Relocated (feet)*	20,881
	Perennial	(linear feet) 2,853
		(number) 6
	Intermittent	(linear feet) 14,495
		(number) 26
	Ephemeral	(linear feet) 3,533
		(number) 5
	Stream - Bridged	(linear feet) 1,047
	Total Wetlands Impacted	(acres) 1.27
	Category I	0.23
Category II	1.04	
Ponds	(acres) 2.93	
*Exact impacts to be determined when decisions on bridge vs. culvert have been finalized.		
SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES	Residences Close to Roadway	Within 400' of R/W 305
	Cemetaries	Adjacent to Alignment (not impacted) 5
	Churches	Adjacent to Alignment (not impacted) 4

All impact calculations are preliminary based upon limited design information. Final impacts will be determined once design is complete and ultimately may be more or less than the impacts predicted above.



**Portsmouth Bypass
Frequently Asked Questions
August 19, 2004**

What is the purpose of this Public Meeting?

The purpose of this meeting is to present the Preferred Alternative that was chosen based upon environmental impacts, agency comments, and public input. The goal is to obtain additional public comments that will help us further improve the Preferred Alternative.

Is this "Hill Alignment" shown today the final decision on the location?

The location is never truly final until the property is purchased and the highway is constructed. There are issues that can arise during environmental reviews, public comments, and property purchase that may result in minor changes to the location to reduce impacts or costs. However, ODOT does not expect there to be any large changes that would move the alignment to a different location.

When will construction begin on the Portsmouth Bypass?

The Portsmouth Bypass, with a right-of-way and construction cost of about \$240 million in current dollars, will need to be funded and built in three or four phases. ODOT is in the process of deciding how to implement the project. Depending on the strategy the first construction section could go out for bid no earlier than 2008, as the environmental approvals, preparation of construction plans, and property purchases would need to be completed first.

My property is impacted by the Preferred Alternative. When will ODOT buy my property?

The timing will depend on which section is planned for construction first and when funds will be available for property purchases. The earliest purchases are expected to be the properties that are completely impacted ("total takes"), which may begin as early as summer of 2005. Properties that are not occupied and/or that have only small impacts may be purchased later in the process.

How will I be compensated if my property is needed for the project?

In the event that your property is required for the project, you will be compensated based on Fair Market Value at the time of appraisal. In addition, ODOT offers a Relocation Assistance Program which is available to owners, renters and businesses. For more information regarding property purchases, please speak with an ODOT Real Estate representative at tonight's meeting or contact Tom Corbin at the ODOT District 9 Office, at (740) 773-2691, extension 216.

Where will the interchanges be located?

Traffic can enter the Bypass in four locations: US 23 just north of Lucasville, Lucasville-Minford Road just west of Minford, Shumway Hollow near the county airport, and US 52. The interchange at US 52 is a "split interchange", which means that traffic coming to and from US 52 towards Portsmouth would use SR 140 to get to the ramps. Traffic coming to and from US 52 towards Wheelersburg would have ramps directly on US 52.

Why was the Hill Alignment chosen as the Preferred Alternative?

In most sections of the project, there were two alternatives – one alignment that generally passed through the hills and one that generally passed through the valleys. The Hill Alignment alternative was chosen as the Preferred Alternative in each section. Although it is more expensive than the Valley Alignment, the Hill Alignment was preferred by the community, based upon public comments and opinions of local officials. The Hill Alignment also had slightly lower environmental impacts in nearly every category, including the number of homes affected, the number of homes adjacent to the roadway, the impacts to perennial streams, and the effects on farmland. Comments from the environmental review agencies were not inconsistent with this decision.

What are the impacts of the Preferred Alternative?

The most notable impacts will be the required property purchases totaling nearly 1,000 acres, including the purchase of approximately 38 single-family homes, one apartment building, and ten mobile homes. Farmland impacts of the Preferred Alternative are minimal. There are no impacts expected to historic or archaeological properties, public building, cemeteries, or parklands. While much of the area has been logged or damaged by last year's ice storms, there are still many acres of woodland that will be cleared by the project. The primary environmental impacts will result from the clearing of these woodlands and the need to cross numerous streams and tributaries. ODOT will work with the environmental agencies to develop culvert and stream channel designs that are appropriate for the area, including stormwater controls where needed. In addition, ODOT employs erosion and sedimentation control practices during construction that should help to reduce the short-term impacts on streams.

What about noise from the roadway? Will there be noise walls?

Based on the preliminary analyses, it appears that noise walls may be proposed in a couple of locations, most likely next to Highland Bend and near the southern end where the Bypass joins US 52. *This is not yet decided.* These studies will be updated as more design information is available. If noise walls are eventually proposed for those areas, public meetings will be held with the adjacent neighborhoods to determine whether or not they want the noise walls and to get input on the appearance.

Will the project be funded through completion?

Based on current information, it is foreseen that once construction begins, it should be finished. There are no guarantees, but ODOT has been doing a better job of planning out the program for multiple years to see that once a project is begun that future phases can be implemented. ODOT District 9 intends to continue to seek funding to see it through completion.