



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

April 6, 2009

INTRODUCTION

The City of Delaware, with the support and guidance of the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), has initiated the “Veterans Parkway” study, which is a continuation of earlier efforts known as the US 23/US 36/State Rt. 37 Connector and the Delaware Southeast Bypass.

The current roadway system allows trucks and vehicular traffic to access US 36/State Rt. 37 via William St. in the City of Delaware. This route provides an east-west connection to I-71, US 42 and US 23. William St. facilitates a high volume of trucks and vehicular traffic through a residential area, which in turn creates congestion, inefficient movement and safety concerns. Veterans Parkway was identified as a viable east-west connection in the 2001 City of Delaware Thoroughfare Plan. This connection would improve access to US 36/ State Rt. 37, US 42 and US 23.

A multi-disciplinary approach will combine technical expertise and public input to determine whether there is a need for the Veterans Parkway corridor. To this end, the City of Delaware has retained DLZ to conduct the necessary planning, environmental analyses and preliminary engineering for this study.

The Public Involvement Plan (PIP) is designed to create a developmental approach that will effectively build relationships with local business and community leaders, public officials, residents and others to solicit community input. While decision-making will be retained by the City of Delaware, ODOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), potentially affected stakeholders and the public will help shape the development of proposed conceptual solutions.

The PIP is intended to be flexible, recognizing that various stakeholders have different views, needs and visions for the Veterans Parkway Corridor. This plan addresses requirements outlined in steps 1-4 of ODOT’s 14-step Project Development Process (PDP) and incorporates national best practices in public involvement.

GOALS OF THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

- Develop a relationship with local and regional stakeholders, residents and other potentially affected stakeholders to create a clear understanding of community needs.
- Respond in an effective manner to public comments and concerns while ensuring technical and statutory requirements are met.
- Obtain informed consent on the concepts identified for further consideration.
- Provide multiple opportunities during the project development process for potentially affected stakeholders and the general public to share concerns and ideas.



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT & THE ODOT PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The first four steps of the project development process are outlined below to indicate how public involvement guidelines will be met -- and in some cases -- exceeded.

►STEP 1: Work with stakeholders to understand problems, needs and goals

The DLZ Team has the responsibility of implementing the PIP. Technical issues will be clearly communicated, trade-offs of one approach over another will be explained thoroughly and public concerns and comments will be addressed. While not every suggestion will be incorporated into the study's final outcome due to technical and environmental requirements, feedback will be encouraged and thoughtfully considered. All public involvement activities will be coordinated with the project managers for the City of Delaware and ODOT District 6.

The following tasks will be implemented throughout the course of project development:

- Develop and update the Public Involvement Plan;
- Identify and meet with the Project Steering Committee;
- Identify and meet with the Stakeholder Advisory Committee;
- Identify and develop methods to engage Environmental Justice populations;
- Prepare presentation materials;
- Develop and disseminate e-mail updates;
- Coordinate with media as necessary;
- Facilitate Web site coordination; and
- Host a public meeting/open house

DEVELOP INITIAL PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

A pro-active public involvement process is vital to the successful completion of all transportation projects. Public involvement is different than public information, in that it calls for a two-way exchange of information between the project team and the public rather than just information dissemination. This allows stakeholders and the public to better understand the technical considerations and consider potential trade-offs. This, in turn, enables the community to provide informed input to the project team. At the same time, citizens can share their community values and help identify potential issues and opportunities to the project team. This PIP will serve as a guide for project team members, stakeholders and the public by identifying when and how they will be engaged throughout the project.



VETERANS PARKWAY PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE

The Project Steering Committee consists of representatives from the City of Delaware (project sponsor), ODOT, FHWA and the DLZ Team. Committee members will meet regularly to facilitate communication among study partners and to provide technical guidance to the team as Veterans Parkway moves through the PDP.

VETERANS PARKWAY STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee consists of representatives of affected municipalities, neighborhoods, organizations and agencies that have sustained interests within the study area. At least three meetings will take place at key points during the first four steps of the PDP. At these meetings the project team will present information and seek stakeholder input and advice on various issues. Members of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee will function in multiple roles throughout the process, conferring relevant local knowledge to the project team, providing input and concurrence on project related decisions, and serving as liaisons between the project team and the public. The Veterans Parkway Study Project Stakeholder Advisory Committee will include representatives from the following interests:

- The Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC)
- CSX and Norfolk Southern Railroads
- Trucking/industrial/business
- Environmental advocacy groups
- Bicycle/pedestrian/transit interests
- Elected officials
- Planning officials
- Neighborhood groups
- School transportation departments
- Emergency management officials
- Environmental justice populations

STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #1

The first Veterans Parkway Stakeholder Advisory Committee meeting will identify stakeholder goals, study area problems and potential opportunities. The DLZ Team will publicize and facilitate the meeting, prepare handouts and draft the meeting notification and summary. Meeting materials will be posted on the City of Delaware Web site at <http://www.delawareohio.net/departments/Engineering>. The input from this meeting will be used to develop overall project goals, which will later be used to create a method for evaluating proposed conceptual planning solutions. The input will also direct data collection, provide



insight on potential development and environmental concerns and alert project team members to issues of which they might otherwise been unaware.

IDENTIFY AND ENGAGE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (EJ) COMMUNITIES

The DLZ Team will identify low income, minority, disabled and senior populations that could potentially be adversely impacted by this transportation investment and seek their active participation in the process.

PREPARE PRESENTATION MATERIALS

The DLZ Team will create a PowerPoint presentation that will offer key information on the project for use at Delaware City Council, Delaware County Commissioner meetings and interactions with other stakeholders.

E-MAIL UPDATES

The DLZ Team will draft and e-mail project updates to the Stakeholder Advisory Committee and other interested parties throughout the duration of the study.

MEDIA COORDINATION

The media is a valuable resource in disseminating information to the public. Media outlets and key contacts will be identified and included in the database for issuing news releases and other information.

The DLZ Team will coordinate with the ODOT and the City of Delaware on media responses and contacts. In addition, any news articles written about the project will be maintained in a clipping file by the study team for the final report.

WEB SITE COORDINATION

The City of Delaware has an existing Web site at <http://www.delawareohio.net>. The DLZ Team will coordinate with the City to post information related to stakeholder meetings, regular project updates and the public meeting. DLZ will provide the information that will be uploaded by the City Web administrator to insure cost effective use of this medium.



►STEP 2: Conduct Research and Technical Studies

All tasks described in STEP 1 will be continued throughout STEP 2. The DLZ Team will update this plan regularly. In addition during this step the following communication will be completed.

DEVELOP APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS

Exhibits will be prepared to communicate the results of the Red Flag Summary and to assist with drafting the Purpose and Need of the study.

►STEP 3: Identify and Evaluate Conceptual Alternative Solutions

All tasks described in STEP 1 will be continued throughout STEP 3. DLZ will update this plan regularly. In addition during this step the following communication will be completed.

DEVELOP APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS

Exhibits will be prepared to communicate the conceptual alternatives and associated costs.

STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #2

The second Veterans Parkway Stakeholder Advisory Committee meeting will review technical findings on existing and future conditions within the study area, confirm whether or not there is indeed transportation in the study area, discuss a proposed evaluation matrix based on project goals, and provide preliminary input on draft conceptual planning solutions developed by the project team. The DLZ Team will publicize and facilitate the meeting, prepare handouts and draft the meeting notification and summary. The input from this meeting will be used to further refine the evaluation matrix and the draft conceptual alternatives. The input may also direct additional data collection.

►STEP 4: Develop Final Planning Study Report

All tasks described in STEP 1 will be continued throughout STEP 4. DLZ will update this plan regularly. In addition during this step the following communication will be completed.



DEVELOP APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS

Exhibits and fact sheets will be prepared to communicate the recommended design concept and scope, funding, timetable and delivery strategy.

STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #3

The third Veterans Parkway Stakeholder Advisory Committee meeting will review refined conceptual planning solutions and a more detailed evaluation matrix that shows the strengths and weaknesses of each concept. The DLZ Team will publicize and facilitate the meeting, prepare handouts and draft the meeting notification and summary. The input from this meeting will be used to finalize the Planning Study Report and recommended steps moving forward. This meeting will be held the same day as the public meeting.

PUBLIC MEETING #1--PRESENT CONCEPTUAL SOLUTIONS TO THE PUBLIC

DLZ, in coordination with the City of Delaware and ODOT, will arrange and host the public meeting to provide study background, explain the purpose and need for the project, outline technical findings and seek feedback on proposed conceptual planning solutions. Preparation for the meeting will include: choosing a site, making media contacts to promote the meeting, notifying the Stakeholder Advisory Committee, public and interested parties of the meeting, preparing the necessary handouts, displays and other collateral material, and summarizing the meeting and related public comments.

The public meetings will be held in an open house format at a central and wheelchair-accessible location. The open house format offers one-on-on interaction and enables guests to come and go as they please. The public open house may include a formal presentation to outline specific information.