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The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) is cooperating with the local communities' desire to provide for an aesthetically pleasing I-75 corridor through Hamilton County, Ohio. This includes the *I-75 Thru the Valley* and *I-75 Mill Creek Expressway* projects. Because ODOT believes that transportation projects can be attractive as well as safe and efficient, ODOT has utilized the Implementation Committees from the *I-75 Thru the Valley* and *I-75 Mill Creek Expressway* projects to assist in the aesthetic vision for the corridor. The State requires a solution that involves a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach in which citizens and agencies are part of the planning and design team.



AESTHETICS COMMITTEE

The *Aesthetics Committee* participants were made up of representatives from various community groups and organizations represented on the *I-75 Thru the Valley* and *I-75 Mill Creek Expressway* Implementation Committees. In addition, the Transportation agencies and the project consultant teams were also represented. *Aesthetics Committee* members are listed in the table to the right.

Aesthetics Committee members were charged with:

- Aiding in the development of the vision for the project
- Providing recommendations to the project team on aesthetic treatments
- Communicating decisions back to their respective agencies/constituents
- Identifying project issues and community values

To guide the committee members in accomplishing these duties, a presentation was

Table 1: *Aesthetics Committee* Members

Committee Members	Representing
Joe Gorman	Camp Washington
Michael Moore	City of Cincinnati Architect
David Gamstetter	City of Cincinnati Parks
Mayor Bo Bemmes	City of Reading
Tom Losekamp	City of Sharonville
Peggy Brickweg	City of St. Bernard
Bob Harrison	City of Wyoming
Tim Gilday, P.E., P.S.	Hamilton County Engineer's Office
Dawn Longworth	Hartwell Community Council
Donna Hubbard	Lockland School District
Dr. Tara Maddock	Mill Creek Watershed Council
Stephanie Sunderland	Northside Community
John Heilman	OKI Regional Council of Governments
Roger Davis	South Cumminsville Community
Greg Vehr	University of Cincinnati
Chief Robert Lawson	Village of Arlington Heights
Mayor Richard Ellison	Village of Elmwood Place
Jack Cameron	Village of Evendale
Walter Cordes	Village of Glendale
Susan Upton-Farley	Village of Lincoln Heights
David Krings	Village of Lockland
Mark von der Embse	Federal Highway Administration
Jay Hamilton, P.E.	ODOT, District 8
Stefan Spinosa, P.E.	ODOT, District 8
Julie Walcoff	ODOT, Central Office
Erin Peterson, P.E., AICP	M•E Companies, Inc.
Mike Ciotola, P.E.	M•E Companies, Inc.
Nick Hoffman, AICP	M•E Companies, Inc.
David Shipps, AICP	TranSystems Corp.
Susan Swartz, P.E., AICP	TranSystems Corp.

given to both I-75 Implementation Committees, introducing the design aesthetics; and an *Aesthetics Charter* was distributed, listing the guidelines and requirements. The *Aesthetics Charter* is located in the Appendix.

DESIGN AESTHETICS GOAL

The goal was to create a uniform approach to design aesthetics along the I-75 corridor. This was carried out by the *I-75 Aesthetics Committee* through discussion and consensus.



AESTHETICS COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Two *Aesthetics Committee* meetings were held to discuss the aesthetics options. The first meeting occurred on Monday, August 13, 2007, while the second meeting took place on Tuesday, October 2, 2007. Both meetings were held at the City of St. Bernard Municipal Building from 10:00 a.m. to Noon.

August 13, 2007 Meeting

The purpose of the first meeting was to introduce the aesthetic options available to the communities along I-75 in the *Mill Creek Expressway* and *Thru the Valley* project areas; as well as provide a forum for discussion.

October 2, 2007 Meeting

The purpose of the second meeting was to review the aesthetic options along I-75 for the *Mill Creek Expressway* and *Thru the Valley* project areas; provide a forum for discussion; and come to a consensus on aesthetic options for the corridor.

Full *Aesthetics Committee* meeting summaries and handouts are located in the Appendix.

AESTHETICS COMMITTEE PROCESS

From the beginning, the *Aesthetics Committee* was asked to seek consensus on all decisions, with consensus not necessarily meaning agreement or active support by each member. During the first meeting, committee members were shown examples of all the aesthetic options available. These included:

- Bridge Color, Texture, Design, Design Elements and Fencing
- Community Identification
- Noise Wall Type, Color and Landscaping
- Lighting Type and Decorative Lighting on Bridges
- Landscaping and Planting of Trees
- Retaining Walls

Each of the aesthetics options were reviewed and all of the discussion and questions at the meeting were inserted into the meeting summary handout and distributed to the committee. Prior to the second *Aesthetics Committee* meeting committee members were asked to:

- Review all aesthetics options materials
- Report what they learned back to their community/organization and distribute copies of the *Aesthetics Options Handout*. A copy can be viewed in the Appendix.
- Provide comments and questions to the Project Team regarding the aesthetic options
- Discuss their thoughts and opinions with other *Aesthetic Committee* members
- Review and visit aesthetic locations listed on the *Aesthetics Committee Tour Handout*. A copy can be viewed in the Appendix.
- Contact the Project Team if their community was interested in funding more expensive options
- Identify potential landscaping location(s) on I-75 interchanges if their

community was interested in providing/ funding landscaping

- Be prepared to be flexible when choosing aesthetics options

Before the second meeting, an *Aesthetics Preference Survey* was distributed to *Aesthetics Committee* members and they were asked to send in their community or organizations' preference for aesthetic options. Those results were incorporated into the aesthetic options discussion at the meeting.

The *Aesthetics Preference Survey* and summary are located in the Appendix. During the second meeting, each of the aesthetic options were discussed in detail and the *Aesthetics Committee* members came to a consensus in choosing the preferred design aesthetics for the I-75 corridor.



AESTHETICS COMMITTEE DECISIONS

The following design aesthetics were agreed upon, by the *Aesthetics Committee*, during the second meeting. An *Aesthetics Options Decisions Brochure*, made available to the public, can be viewed in the Appendix.

Bridges

Bridge Color.

Consensus: To be determined

Once the bridge type (steel or concrete) is determined, a bridge color can be chosen. As bridge designs are completed, ODOT will work with communities in choosing colors for their communities. Sharp contrasts in color will be avoided, while a smooth transition in color along the corridor will be the ultimate goal.

Bridge Texture.

Consensus: Rustic Ashlar



Rustic Ashlar will be used as the bridge texture throughout the corridor and in those areas of the City of Cincinnati which Rustic Ashlar fits into the design of their interstate master plan.

Bridge Design.

Consensus: Geometric



Bridge Elements.

Consensus: Texas Rail



Bridge Fencing.

Consensus: Straight Fencing



Community Identification

Community Identification.

Consensus: Community Names



Consensus: Community Seals



Since Texas Rail was chosen, ODOT will work to place community names where possible (i.e. bridge abutments), though some bridges may not be able to host a community name. One community seal will be chosen for each community and spaced appropriately along available surfaces (i.e. noise walls, appropriate sized retaining walls, etc.).

Noise Walls

Decisions made by the *Aesthetics Committee* regarding noise walls, includes only the “appearance” of the interstate side of the noise walls. It should be noted that final noise wall locations will be determined at a later date. Separate meetings will be held with affected stakeholders regarding noise walls in their communities.

Noise Wall Type.

Consensus: Rustic Ashlar



Noise Wall Color.

Consensus: To be determined

Once the bridge type (steel or concrete) and bridge color are determined, a noise wall color can be chosen. ODOT will

work with communities in choosing a smooth-transition of noise wall color, along the corridor, in order to avoid sharp contrasts.

Landscaping along Noise Walls.

Consensus: Yes



Landscaping along noise walls can be planted and maintained by local entities if an agreement is made with ODOT.

Lighting

Lighting Type (At Systems Interchanges, i.e. I-74, Norwood Lateral and SR 126).

Consensus: **High Mast Lighting**



Lighting Type (In-between Interchanges and at non-systems interchanges).

Consensus:
South of I-74/
I-75: **Cobra Lighting**



North of I-74/
I-75: **Low Mast Lighting**



Decorative Lighting on Bridges.

Consensus: Yes



Decorative lighting on bridges can be purchased and maintained by local entities if an agreement is made with ODOT.

Landscaping

Landscaping near Interchanges.

Consensus: Yes

Landscaping of interchanges can be purchased and maintained by local entities if an agreement is made with ODOT. ODOT will work with communities to provide grading and areas for landscaping.

Planting trees near the Interstate.

Consensus: Yes



Trees near the interstate can be planted and maintained by local entities if an agreement is made with ODOT and all safety requirements are met.

Retaining Walls

Retaining Walls.

Consensus:

Lockland Split Retaining Walls:
Canal Scene



Other Retaining Walls: Rustic Ashlar with community seals



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SUMMARY

ODOT's goal of creating a uniform approach to design aesthetics along the I-75 corridor has been accomplished through uniting the communities and organizations along the I-75 corridor through discussion and consensus. An aesthetics committee was formed to assist the transportation agencies and the project consultant team in implementing guidelines for the design aesthetics along I-75. The aesthetics options chosen satisfy the State's vision of a safe, efficient and attractive vision for the corridor, through a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach.