



I-75 Mill Creek Expressway Newsletter

May 2005 • Issue 2

WELCOME!

The purpose of this newsletter is to update you on the progress of work on the I-75 corridor between the Western Hills Viaduct and the Paddock Road interchange. This newsletter will be sent periodically and will provide you with information on the activities to expect over the next few months. In addition, it will include information on the environmental and planning studies currently underway. As the project progresses, this newsletter will attempt to help you visualize the future I-75 Mill Creek Expressway. The next newsletter issue will discuss concepts that are being considered to address the identified needs. Your ideas and input is greatly appreciated at any time, and will help determine the course of this project.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The Purpose and Need report, done in conjunction with ODOT District 8 and ODOT's Office of Urban and Corridor Planning, addresses the existing and future conditions of the I-75 corridor as it relates to safety, current design, and existing and future traffic volumes. The next three sections, Efficiently Serve Existing and Future Traffic Conditions, Reduce the Number and Severity of Collisions and Correct Substandard Physical Conditions, will summarize the findings of the Purpose and Need report. The complete Purpose and Need report is available on the Project Website at (www.i75millcreekexpressway.com).

EFFICIENTLY SERVE EXISTING AND FUTURE TRAFFIC CONDITIONS

Currently, traffic volumes are quickly approaching the limit of freeway capacity throughout the entire study area. Southbound I-75, eastbound I-74, and eastbound SR 562 accommodate the highest volumes of traffic during the morning rush hour from 7:30-8:30 A.M. While no sections of the freeway reach failing levels, two sections (I-75 between Paddock and SR 562 and I-74 between the Colerain Interchange and I-75) have nearly reached their capacities during the morning rush hour. Even though current freeway capacities are reaching their limits, traffic volumes alone do not determine congestion. In addition, traffic accidents (or collisions) play a major role in the effects of congestion on motorists.



Through the use of regional travel demand modeling done by the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Planning Commission (OKI), traffic volumes in the study area in the year 2030 are expected to far exceed the freeway capacity of nearly all sections for both the A.M. and P.M. peak travel periods. All of I-75 southbound, as well as most of I-75 northbound, will operate at unacceptable levels of service. In addition, I-74 eastbound between I-75 and Colerain Interchange will have reached its capacity during the A.M. rush hour and I-74 westbound will have nearly reached its design capacity in the P.M. peak period. For a complete listing of the existing and future traffic volumes in the study area, please refer to the Existing and Future Conditions report on the project website at (www.i75millcreekexpressway.com).

REDUCE THE NUMBER AND SEVERITY OF COLLISIONS

The portion of I-75 corridor under study has been documented as a congested freeway with a history of high accident frequency. Traffic crash information for the study area was obtained from both ODOT's Office of Roadway Safety and Mobility and from the Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS). The accidents were mapped by year (2001-2003) utilizing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to determine crash rates throughout the study area.

Within the I-75 corridor study area, 2,830 accidents were logged in 2001 through 2003. On I-74, within the study area, 611 accidents were recorded, while 345 accidents occurred on SR 562 during the same time period. Sections of I-74, I-75, and SR 562 appear on the ODOT's list of Safety Hot Spots, which identifies segments of roads of which 200 or more accidents occur annually. Furthermore, a section of I-74 and a section of SR 562 rank one and two respectively on the High Crash Location Identification System (HCLIS) list. The corridor has an overall crash rate two and a half times higher than the statewide average.

When traffic accidents occur, traffic has to slow-down and/or stop to allow the wreckage to be cleaned from the road. As a result, motorists are delayed from traveling to their destination. The high frequency of traffic accidents coupled with high traffic volumes further intensifies the problem of congestion. More safety and crash data statistics can be viewed in the Existing and Future Conditions report on the Project website at (www.i75millcreekexpressway.com).



Towne Street Interchange (photo by Larry Stulz)

PROJECT SCHEDULE

Fall/Winter 2003

Project Ranked High from NSTI

Spring 2004

Funding Identified and Programmed thru TRAC

Fall 2004

ODOT Assembles Consultant Team and Implementation Committee

Fall/Winter 2004/2005

Technical Studies Conducted

Spring 2005 – Fall 2007

Identify Various Alternatives

Fall 2007 – Spring 2010

Detailed Final Design

Fall 2008 – Spring 2010

Right-of-Way Acquisition Process

Fall 2010 – Fall 2013

Construction Phase

CORRECT SUBSTANDARD PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

The I-75 Mill Creek Expressway is typical of urban highway design and construction dating from 1950's and 1960's. Lower speed curves, left-hand exit ramps, poor lane continuity, and undesirable service ramp locations are some of the problematic features within the corridor. These substandard physical conditions are a major factor contributing to accidents and congestion problems. A complete detailed description of the Interstate freeway segments, along with the major access points, and known deficiencies are summarized in the Purpose and Need report at (www.i75millcreekexpressway.com).



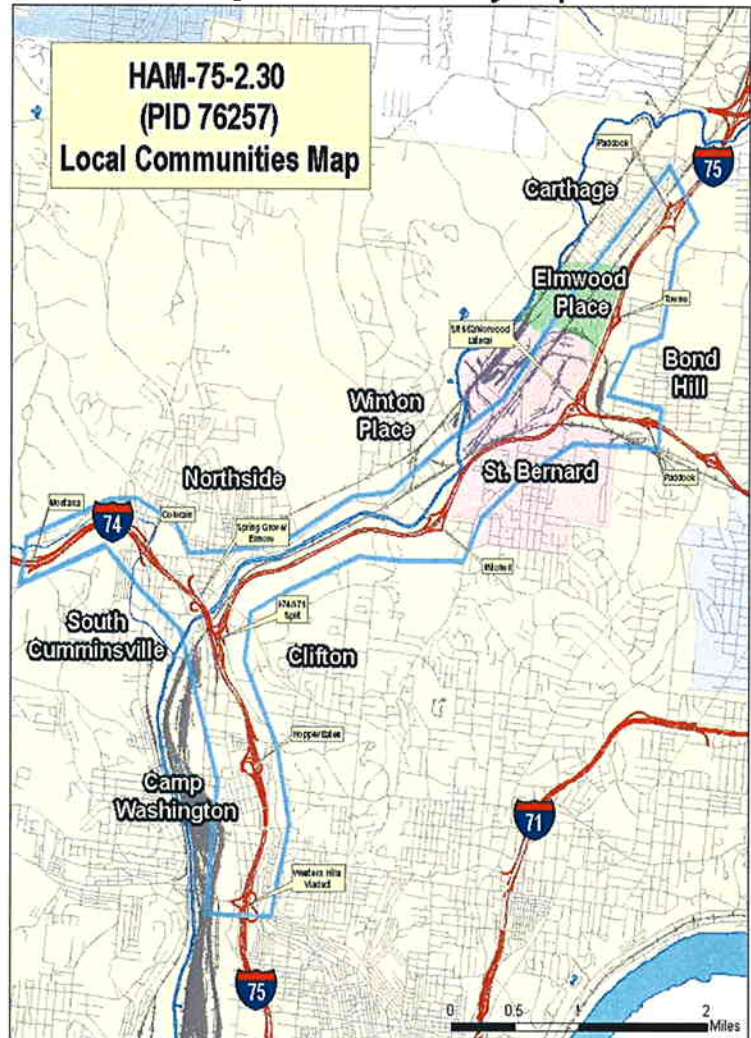
STUDY AREA

In addition to tight physical constraints, such as existing railroad facilities and the channelized Mill Creek, the I-75 Mill Creek Expressway study area includes numerous community issues. The area contains several community parks and recreational facilities, state parks, churches, schools, and several noteworthy cemeteries. In addition, several emergency service locations are sited within the study area. Currently, 13 of the 15 census tracts within the study area have a higher unemployment rate than the Cincinnati region as a whole. The needs of the community and the potential impacts to important social, economic and environmental resources will be considered in evaluation of alternatives to address the transportation needs.



Norwood Lateral (photo by Larry Stulz)

Figure 1: Community Map



QUESTIONS?

As always, your comments and input on the I-75 Mill Creek Expressway Project are encouraged. TranSystems and/or the Ohio Department of Transportation will try to respond to and address any comments or concerns received. Please feel free to contact the study team at:

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