

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS RECEIVED

from the

OPEN HOUSE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MEETING

at

**Fairlawn City Hall Council Chambers
3487 S Smith Rd, Fairlawn, Ohio 44333
Tuesday, February 13, 2018
and from the comment period that followed**

for the

**Cleveland Massillon Road
Improvement Project**

SUM-Cleveland Massillon Rd PID 103293

**City of Fairlawn and Copley Township,
Summit County, Ohio**

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried-out by ODOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 11, 2015, and executed by FHWA and ODOT.

Response to 2018 Public Comments

The following commenters (**Commenters #10, 14, 15, 24, 25 and 32**) provided detailed comments, while the following commenters (**Commenters #26, 27 and 31**) provided single-issue comments, not brought up in other comments. Both of these types of comments are addressed individually below:

The following are the responses to comments submitted by **Copley Township (Commenter #10)**:

In response to comments made by Copley Township (on its website and in a resolution) opposing the roundabout proposed for Cleveland Massillon Road, the City of Fairlawn provides the following information.

The City of Fairlawn is following the expert recommendations of the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS), and the engineering firm AECOM for the design of the improvements. The construction of a roundabout was recommended in order to improve traffic safety, reduce travel congestion and delay, and reduce the pollution caused by idling cars. The City has been informed that the roundabout would actually reduce average travel time both North and South bound on Cleveland Massillon Road in this area.

Indeed, because the proposed roundabout will reduce traffic congestion and air pollution, the construction of the roundabout is eligible for CMAQ funding. The Summit County Engineer voted for the funding for this project at the January AMATS meeting.

1. EAST AND WEST TRAFFIC

Copley Township's statements that "traffic traveling east and west at this intersection is limited to the weekend traffic from the churches and the traffic flowing from the now closed Rothrock Rd" and that the roundabout "would only serve the church and accounting firm that have driveways on Rothrock," are factually flawed.

In addition to the Crosspoint church and the accounting firm on the West side of the intersection, there are three properties on Rothrock Spur in Copley Township whose only access point Cleveland Massillon Road would be from the West leg of the roundabout. Also, Sawgrass Drive opens onto Rothrock Road as well, and numerous Fairlawn residents in that neighborhood of 160 homes will use the roundabout to access Cleveland Massillon Road.

On the East side, the Arbors of Fairlawn is a 24/7 nursing facility whose patients, visitors, and staff use this intersection daily. Moreover, all three church properties have weekday programs and events, not just services on Sundays.

2. ESTIMATED COST OF THE ROUNDABOUT

Copley's suggestion that the cost for a roundabout is unreasonably more than a traffic signal is misleading. Copley suggests that a roundabout will cost approximately \$1.2 million and the cost for a traffic signal at this intersection is approximately \$110,000. These numbers are not accurate.

The estimate for improvements that include a traffic signal (instead of a roundabout) are much higher than \$110,000 because the improvements would need to include replacement of the pavement through the intersection, whereas the pavement costs are included in the roundabout costs. And a traffic signal with full automation and preemption for emergency vehicles would likely cost closer to \$300,000 and require future servicing and upkeep.

However, it is true that the upfront costs of a roundabout are much more than the roundabout option. But other factors must be considered. Based on statistical crash modeling, the roundabout option will result in significantly fewer and less severe accidents in the project area. This will result in saving lives and significant savings in medical and auto repair bills. Thus, there is a much higher benefit/cost ratio than traditional improvements. This option also results in less overall delay for traffic traversing the project area. When evaluating alternatives, upfront cost is only one factor.

3. NORTHBOUND TRAFFIC EXITING ROUTE 77 MUST GO SOUTH

In the project as proposed, motorists exiting I-77 North at Cleveland Massillon Road must travel north; left turns will be prohibited. If the intent is to go south to Copley, the motorist will need to go north briefly and through the roundabout to travel south.

This traffic pattern was necessitated by the closely spaced intersections at the site. The traffic analysis shows that although southbound traffic will have to travel farther, the overall time to make the trip through the roundabout is comparable to, or less than, the time that would be spent waiting to turn left at a signal. Furthermore, the remaining traffic in the area will have significantly less delays.

Other options were considered. A traffic study was performed to evaluate a variety of options for improvements to Cleveland Massillon Road from I-77 to Rothrock Road. Those options included:

- a. Roundabouts at both the I-77 exit Ramp and Rothrock Road;
- b. A roundabout at the I-77 exit Ramp and stop controlled intersection at Rothrock Road;
- c. Traditional improvements (turn lanes and traffic signals) at both intersections; and
- d. Right turn Only at I-77 and a Roundabout at Rothrock Road.

The last alternative was preferred because it results in the lowest overall delay for all traffic using the project area. And this alternative has a significantly lower predicted crash frequency than the traditional improvements.

Accordingly, ODOT was willing to support the approval of several million dollars in funding for the project if it contained a roundabout.

4. IMPROVEMENTS END AT THE I-77 INTERSECTION

The original plan called for the improvements to extend to Ridge Park Drive in Copley and to align the intersection at Kumho Drive and Ridge Park Drive. The current plan has the improvements ending at the I-77 intersection. The project was truncated as a result of comments by the Summit County Engineer's Office (Copley's Traffic Engineer). A separate project will be pursued in the future to address the area between I-77 and Ridge Park Drive.

CONCLUSION

Plans for widening and improving Cleveland Massillon Road in this area have been discussed for decades. Traffic congestion in this part of the road has been a problem long before Rothrock Road was closed. It has taken many years of work with the various agencies involved to plan and put together funding for this project. The roundabout is an important part of the project and the funding of the project. The roundabout will be safer, better for the environment, and improve traffic flow in this area. Once completed we believe the improved roadway will serve the local residents and businesses very well for many years to come.

The following are the responses to comments submitted by Our Lady of the Cedars Church (Commenter #14):

1. The Loss of the Traffic Interrupt created by the removal of the traffic light at Rothrock Road will make it difficult if not impossible for my parishioners to exit the property and turn left (South bound on Cleveland-Massillon Rd.)
 - To complete the left turn a driver would need to cross three lanes of traffic. Two north bound and one south bound lane would have to be open before a turn could be completed.
 - The existing traffic light at Rothrock provides the needed interrupt to halt the North bound traffic that allows for the completion of the left turn.
 - A left turn from the Church is currently difficult with only one south bound lane. With the two proposed SB lanes and no traffic interrupt the left turn will be impossible.
 - This option will force Parishioners to turn right NB on Cleve-Mass to Elgin, Stop at the light, turn right or left on Elgin, make a u-turn on Elgin return to the light and wait again for a light change so they can proceed south on Cleveland-Massillon. This results in an extended amount of idle time waiting for the traffic lights to change thus defeating the benefit of the proposed roundabout.

Response: It is acknowledged that under the current condition, the two lane road of Cleveland Massillon and a traffic signal at Rothrock Road, the traffic signal aids Parishioners by stopping traffic on Cleveland Massillon and allowing opportunities for them to turn left out of the driveway. It is also acknowledged that it is currently difficult for Parishioners to turn left given the congestion of Cleveland Massillon Road. Fortunately, the proposed improvements will significantly reduce congestion along the corridor providing ample opportunities for Parishioners to turn left.

It should be noted that for all of the alternative solutions investigated, the traffic signal at Rothrock Road would be removed and replaced with an unsignalized intersection. Therefore this concern is not unique to the roundabout. Nevertheless, parishioners should not have difficulty finding gaps in traffic given the additional capacity of the four-lane road and the reduction of congestion due to the recommended improvements. Additionally, heavy church traffic generally does not coincide with weekday peak traffic hours therefore access out of Our Lady of the Cedars Church should not be an issue.

2. Relocate the Traffic Light from Rothrock Rd to the church exit drive and install the light as a demand light. This alternative will eliminate the left turn difficulty.

Response: A traffic signal cannot be constructed because the volume of church traffic does not satisfy the requirements for warranting a traffic signal at the church exit.

3. Provide a Center Turn Lane from Elgin to South of the Church. This could be accomplished with either one or two N & S bound lanes. This option would provide an idle lane that will enable a driver to cross the NB lane/s and utilize the turn lane as a safe haven until there is a NB opening in the traffic.

Response: Traffic analyses concluded that this section of Cleveland Massillon Road did not meet the requirements to warrant a center turn lane. An additional lane through this section would also have a greater impact on the church and require the acquisition of additional right of way.

4. Do Not Create a Roundabout utilize better timing and coordinated signalization between the traffic lights and the 77 ramp, Rothrock Road, and Elgin Rd.

Response: As mentioned above, any improvement would result in the removal of the traffic signal at Rothrock Road. In addition, this corridor has been of great concern to the City of Fairlawn for many years. There have been numerous attempts within the last couple decades to develop a **fundable** solution to the congestion and safety issues along the corridor. Through the completed alternatives analysis it was determined that the proposed improvement, with a roundabout at Rothrock Road, would not only result in the highest safety benefit and highest overall improvement in operations, but best qualifies for funding. Therefore this solution benefits the entire corridor as a whole.

5. Correct Drainage Issues on Cleveland Massillon Rd. that currently allows the West side of Cleveland-Massillon Rd. to drain into and cause flooding of the retention basin on the Church property.

Response: The proposed improvement includes an upgraded closed drainage system, therefore drainage from Cleveland Massillon Road will not enter the retention area on the property. The drainage area which utilizes the retention area during rain events is primarily from the more than 20 acres of property on the east side of Cleveland Massillon Road, including the Our Lady of the Cedars Church property.

6. Provide Needed Curb Cuts at least two, to the Church property located north of the retention basin.

Response: Curb cuts are provided for existing driveways only, but the City is willing to meet with you to determine the location for one additional curb cut north of the retention basin.

7. Provide a serviceable access to Hallandale from the Church property.

Response: This is outside the scope of the project.

8. Extend the project to include the 77 SB entrance, and the Kumho and Ridge Park Dr. Intersection with the installation of appropriate traffic signalization.

Response: The project was truncated as a result of comments made by the Summit County Engineer's Office. A separate project will be pursued in the future to address Cleveland Massillon Road between I-77 and the intersection of Ridge Park Drive and Kumho Drive. In addition, the traffic studies have indicated that a traffic signal will need to be installed at the I-77 southbound entrance ramp in the near future to efficiently process the traffic.

9. Do Not Begin Construction prior to the second week of August. Both Copley Township and Our Lady of the Cedars Church have their annual festivals the first full week in August.

Response: Access along Cleveland Massillon Road and to local establishments will be maintained throughout construction. The City of Fairlawn and ODOT will coordinate construction activities with local festivals to minimize disruptions.

At the February 13 presentation the audience was told, several times, that the SB Cleveland Massillon traffic would proceed unimpeded through the roundabout. Unfortunately this is the approach most drivers will take as they travel SB @ 35 mph and will not yield to the traffic with the legal right of way utilizing the roundabout to go North on Cleve-Mass Rd. (77 to NB Cleve-Mass Rd.) Will this cause an increase in traffic accidents?

Response: The geometry of the roundabout is designed so that traffic entering the roundabout must slow down and yield to traffic within the roundabout. As such, the circulating and entering and exiting speeds will be much slower than 35 mph and will allow ample time for drivers to look left for traffic circulating the roundabout and yield to them. It is anticipated that the overall safety of the intersection will improve as a result of the roundabout.

The following are the responses to comments submitted by St. Thomas Eastern Orthodox Church (Commenter #15):

1. We support comment 3 of Our Lady of the Cedars of Mount Lebanon Church (hereinafter “the Cedars”) which suggests providing a Center Turn Lane from Elgin Road to South of the Cedars;
Response: Traffic analyses concluded that this section of Cleveland Massillon Road did not meet the requirements to warrant a center turn lane.

2. We support comment 8 of the Cedars which proposed to extend the project to include the 77 Southbound entrance, and the Kumho and Ridge Park Drive Intersection;
Response: The project was truncated as a result of comments made by the Summit County Engineer's Office. A separate project will be pursued in the future to address Cleveland Massillon Road between I-77 and the intersection of Ridge Park Drive and Kumho Drive. In addition, the traffic studies have indicated that a traffic signal will need to be installed at the I-77 southbound entrance ramp in the near future to efficiently process the traffic.

3. The City of Fairlawn should consider all comments made by the property owners affected by this project.
Response: The City of Fairlawn will give due consideration to all comments made by the property owners affected by this project, as well as all comments received.

The following are the responses to comments submitted by CrossPoint Alliance Church (Commenter #25):

In reviewing the proposed drawings of the roundabout at the intersection of Rothrock and South Cleveland-Massillon Roads we offer the following concerns and suggestions for your and the engineer's continuing study and development. These issues pertain primarily to the CrossPoint Alliance Church property, at 855 Rothrock Road on the North West corner of the roundabout project. It is our understanding that all items listed below will be at the expense of the project and not to CrossPoint.

1. The Water Meter Vault will need to be relocated. From previous conversations with you, we understand that Akron Water prefers an indoor meter rather than the vault.

Response: This is correct. The water meter vault will need to be removed and the water meter (and associated equipment) relocated to inside the building at the expense of the project. The City of Fairlawn and consulting engineer will coordinate this relocation with CrossPoint as the plans progress.

2. The Siamese Hydrant also appears to be in the way of the repositioning of Rothrock Road. We would appreciate it if the relocated hydrant be at the proper height from the ground so that we avoid the "mounding" situation that is currently needed.

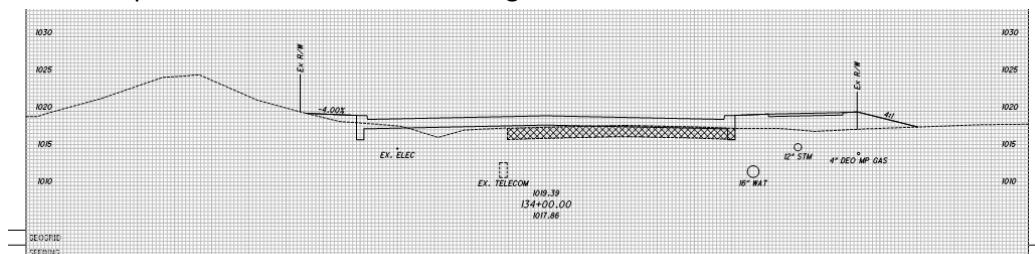
Response: The Siamese Hydrant will be relocated and the contractor will be responsible for installing it at the proper height. The current mounding situation should be eliminated.

3. We are concerned about the elevation of the roundabout in relationship to our property, especially as it related to our current signage. We don't want the church hidden behind a "mound" because of an elevation that is below the current property elevation. We're also concerned about it being so high that our sign is below the roundabout elevation.

Response: On this corner of the CrossPoint property, the roundabout is slightly higher than the existing ground. The grading behind the walk will extend to the base of the existing sign and should not adversely affect the ability to see the sign from the roundabout.

4. We are assuming that the widening of C/M Road to the north of the roundabout will result in the taking of the trees and mounding along our eastern border. We understand that replacing this would be at the expense of the project. We would like to be involved in the design and layout of any improvements.

Response: The widening of Cleveland Massillon Road along the eastern border with CrossPoint will not impact the mound and the existing trees will remain. See cross section below.



5. We also wonder how such improvements might impact the retention pond at the properties most north east corner and the outlet to the storm drain.

Response: The improvement will not impact the retention pond. The outlet pipe will be connected to the upgraded storm sewer system via a manhole at the base of the mound.

6. In selling portions of our property to this project we will be losing a portion of the property that has been a part of our calculated green space. Future building and parking lot additions have counted on that green space for approval by the Planning Commission. Setbacks will also be affected by the roundabout improvements and Rothrock Road relocation. It is our understanding that to be enforceable, any promised accommodation for future variances pertaining to green space or building setbacks, must be part of enacted legislation by the City Council.

Response: The City of Fairlawn will coordinate with CrossPoint for any variances.

7. We would appreciate a detailed plan of how the city will provide access to our property during construction.

Response: Access to all properties will be maintained during construction. Any impacts to your drive aprons will be coordinated between the contractor and church officials.

8. We would offer a suggestion for the design of the entrance to the roundabout from Rothrock Road. Presently there is a right turning lane onto C/M Road going south. In times of heavy traffic, it would seem to be a challenge to get from Rothrock Road to the roundabout to go north. However, traffic wanting to turn right from Rothrock to C/M might still be able to merge onto the right lane if there were a right turn only lane on Rothrock.

Response: Traffic analysis of the roundabout indicates that a single lane approach to the roundabout can process traffic with little delay.

The following are the responses to comments submitted by James M. Schulte (Schulte & Company, CPA) (Commenter #32):

1. Extension of Water and Sewer - While the majority of the parcels impacted by this planned construction have been developed, there are roughly 10 acres of un-developed property to the northwest of the intersection of I-77 and S. Cleveland-Massillon road. This acreage is directly in the epicenter of the planned construction, is zoned for commercial use and located within the Joint Economic Develop District (JEDD). Yet none of this acreage is currently serviced by sewer. City water was extended to one parcel; and I paid for that personally.

Common sense dictates that water and sewer utilities should be extended as part of this project. Doing it as part of this project will facilitate the timely development of these parcels without future disruptions and construction to roadways.

Response: The extension of water and sewer to this property is not within the scope of the project.

2. Landscaping and Clean-up of Hillside Frontage that Faces I-77 exit ramp - The hillside that fronts the I-77 exit ramp at 600 thru 640 S. Cleveland-Massillon Road needs cleaned-up and landscaped. Since I-77 was constructed in 1970, this hillside has been an eye sore for anyone visiting our community. Through the course of this improvement, this front door to our community needs to be cleaned up and landscaped in a manner that results in a mostly maintenance free and yet attractive entry to our community.

Response: Landscaping of the slope between Cleveland Massillon and Rothrock Spur, and located within Copley Township, are being evaluated as part of the final design.

3. Relocation of Rothrock Road to the North to Accommodate Roundabout – Similar to comment #2 above, as part of the I-77 construction in 1970, Rothrock Road was re-routed through several properties to link back to Cleveland-Massillon. In the process, ODOT cut into hillsides ignoring the long-term issues associated with maintaining a very steep hillside and deep road-side ditch. After looking like hell for nearly 50 years, the current plan calls for Rothrock to be relocated to the north; meaning the hillsides that were cut into back in 1970 now need replaced and properly landscaped. Specifically;

- The roadside drainage ditches need to be relocated to remain immediately adjacent to the relocated road.

Response: A single roadside ditch will be relocated adjacent to the relocated road and the slope will be graded accordingly.

- The hillside that was cut into in 1970, now needs to be graded to result in a gentle sloping, easier to maintain frontage.

Response: Where feasible and within the limits of the project, the slope will be graded to result in a gentler slope.

- Downspouts and other drains that had been properly extended to the existing roadside ditches, need to be extended to the location of the new roadside ditches.

Response: All existing drain pipe outlets will be maintained or accommodated for in the final design.

- Existing monument style signs need to be moved to properly align with the location of the new roundabout.

Response: Signs directly impacted by the project will be addressed in right of way negotiations.

- The existing stone retention wall in front of 600 S. Cleve-Mass should be re-installed next to the re-located access road that leads to 612 through 640 S. Cleve-Mass.

Response: The retention wall and corresponding signage will be negotiated during right of way acquisition.

- Spruce or similar non-deciduous trees should be planted along the relocated Rothrock road to afford screening for parking lots and residents.

Response: See response to comment #2 above.

- The relocation of Rothrock road will result in a strip of land several times the width of the current un-maintained hillside. Given the 50-year history of the government failing to properly maintain the existing smaller hillside, there needs to be a plan for the maintenance of this larger strip of land. That plan should be to give the land to the adjacent property owners; effectively shifting the maintenance to private landowners.

Response: The land between this property and the relocated Rothrock Road will be negotiated with the City of Fairlawn as part of the right of way acquisition process.

4. Extension of Shared Use Path - The shared-use path shown on the west side of Cleve-Mass on the proposed plan should be extended beyond the I-77 interchange. This section of Cleveland-Massillon has regular and recurring pedestrian traffic; typically coming to or from Copley High School. The shared use path needs to extend to Ridgewood; truly connecting the community of Fairlawn to its high school. Moreover, while there was some chatter about placing this path on the eastside of Cleve-Mass and then connecting to Brunsdorff, the path is properly placed on the west side of Cleve-Mass to avoid the on-off ramps to I-77 while enabling connection to the high school

Response: The shared-use path currently extends throughout the length of the project. A separate project will be pursued in the future to address Cleveland Massillon Road between I-77 and the intersection of Ridge Park Drive and Kumho Drive. At that time, the shared-use path will be extended beyond the I-77 interchange.

5. Center Turn Lane at Our Lady of the Cedars - The turn lane on the south side of the Elgin intersection should be extended to the entry for Our Lady of the Cedars; enabling easier in/out to that facility.

Response: Traffic analyses concluded that this section of Cleveland Massillon Road did not meet the requirements to warrant a center turn lane.

6. Traffic light at I-77 Entrance Ramp - This project should include a traffic light at the I-77 southbound entry. This light would never stop either southbound lanes on Cleve-Mass but, for the southbound lane that turns onto I-77, it would switch between an arrow (when northbound lanes would have a red light) and a green light (when northbound lanes also have a green light).

Response: A separate project will be pursued in the future to address Cleveland Massillon Road between I-77 and the intersection of Ridge Park Drive and Kumho Drive. In addition, the traffic studies have indicated that a traffic signal will need to be installed at the I-77 southbound entrance ramp in the near future to efficiently process the traffic.

7. Alignment of Kumho and Ridge Park Drive - This project should also include aligning the intersection at Cleve-Mass and Kumho drive with Ridge Park Drive. As of this writing, there is more traffic in and out of Ridge Park than Kumho. Yet, there is a traffic light to accommodate the Kumho Drive traffic while the busier Ridge Park visitors go without. Aligning these roads as part of this construction process helps enable traffic to move freely from the more congested and accident-prone intersection of I-77 and portions to the north. Failing to address this issue now is literally “kicking the can down the road”.

Response: The project was truncated as a result of comments made by the Summit County Engineer's Office. A separate project will be pursued in the future to address Cleveland Massillon Road between I-77 and the intersection of Ridge Park Drive and Kumho Drive.

8. Rothrock Road – The Obvious Construction Detour - During construction, Rothrock should be re-opened and used a detour. Without getting into the justification for opening or closing the road permanently, opening Rothrock during the construction period will help reduce congestion and hopefully enable the construction time-frame to be reduced. I'd hate to be the mayor that had a fully-improved road available to temporarily alleviate construction headaches and decided to keep it closed at the peril of his constituents.

Response: Opening Rothrock Road is not an option, access to Rothrock Road and adjacent properties will be maintained during construction at all times.

The following are the responses to comments submitted by the Summit County Engineer's Office (Commenter #24):

1. The Summit County Engineer's Office supports the widening of Cleveland Massillon Road to a four-lane facility with left turn lanes added at signalized intersections. Summit County has an agreement with the City of Fairlawn to pay 20% of the local share of the project which was described as a widening of Cleveland Massillon Road from south of Ridge Park Drive to SR 18 including realigning the Kumho Drive and Ridge Park Drive intersection into a single, signalized intersection, providing traffic signals at warranted intersections. The County is opposed to the elimination of the intersection re-alignment at Kumho/Ridge Park and is opposed to the construction of the roundabout at Rothrock Road.

Response: The project was truncated as a result of discussions with Joe Paradise of the Summit County Engineer's Office at the DSRT meeting held on March 10, 2016. During that meeting there were extensive conversations about potential project limits and related HSP and STP funding scenarios. It was proposed by Mr. Paradise that the area south of the freeway could be pursued separately. It was agreed that this strategy could maximize the project's safety scores. As a result of the conversation at this meeting, the project was truncated. A separate project will be pursued in the future to address Cleveland Massillon Road between I-77 and the intersection of Ridge Park Drive and Kumho Drive. The City of Fairlawn is willing to discuss these additional improvements and the associated cost sharing.

2. The Summit County Engineer's office is opposed to the roundabout at Rothrock Road for the following reasons:

- a. Pedestrians - The City desires a multi-use trail along the corridor. At the roundabout pedestrians are forced to cross from the side of the road to the median to the far side of the road without the assistance and safety that a pedestrian controlled push button and pedestrian signal head provides.

Response: It is a common misconception that roundabouts are less safe than traditional intersections for pedestrians. Statistics show that roundabouts are safer for pedestrians. There are many features of a roundabout that make them safer than traditional intersections:

- Roundabouts have fewer conflict points than traditional intersections thereby reducing conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles or bicycles and vehicles.
- Pedestrian crossings are shorter than traditional intersections and pedestrians are only required to cross one direction of traffic at a time.
- Pedestrian refuge areas in the splitter islands provide a protected area for pedestrians to wait for a gap in unidirectional traffic.
- Roundabouts operate at lower speeds than traditional intersections. Lower speeds improve yielding, reduce vehicle stopping distances, and lower the risk of injury or fatality for collisions with pedestrians.

The roundabout will not hinder the establishment of a multi-use trail along the corridor.

- b. Costs – The cost of constructing the roundabout will be approximately \$1.3 million dollars while the cost of a fully actuated traffic signal installation would be approximately \$120,000. **Response:** The City of Fairlawn, in association with AMATS and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) conducted an alternatives analysis that investigated four alternatives with the goal of addressing the congestion and safety issues as well as providing an avenue for funding the project:

Alternative 1 – Roundabouts at I-77 exit and Rothrock Road

Alternative 2 – Roundabout at I-77 exit and unsignalized intersection (stop sign) at Rothrock Road

Alternative 3 – Signal at I-77 exit and unsignalized intersection (stop sign) at Rothrock Road

Alternative 4 – Unsignalized intersection (Right-Turn Only) at I-77 exit and roundabout at Rothrock Road

This alternatives analysis found Alternative 4 (with a roundabout at Rothrock Road) to best meet the project purpose as well as to attract funding.

Concerning congestion, Alternative 4:

- Results in highest overall improvement in operations
- Has the shortest overall travel times/delays
- Is best able to handle changes in future traffic volumes
- Eliminates queues impacting adjacent intersections

Concerning safety, Alternative 4:

- Has the lowest future crash probability
- Results in the fewest conflict points between vehicles
- Has the highest Benefit-Cost Ratio for funding

Concerning costs, the proposed estimate for improvements that include a traffic signal are much higher than \$110,000 because the improvements would include replacement of the pavement at the intersection as well. In addition, the cost of fully automated signals and preemption for emergency vehicles is significantly higher. Traditional intersections also incur the costs of future service and upkeep. It is true that the upfront costs of a roundabout are more expensive than a traditional intersection; however, based on statistical crash modeling, the roundabout option will result in significantly fewer and less severe accidents in the project area. This will result in significant savings in medical and auto repair bills and in a much higher Benefit-Cost ratio than a traditional improvement. Alternative 4 also results in less overall delay for traffic traversing the project area and will best serve the entire region. When evaluating alternatives cost is only one factor.

- c. Over design – In urban areas for the past 40 year, it has been ODOT’s policy to design for a Level of Service of D, 20 years into the future. The low-cost traffic signal installation will

provide such a level of service and save the state a million dollars that can be used on other high crash locations. If ODOT is waiving this limit constraint, can we expect similar consideration on other public works projects where the LPA desires an added turn lane at traffic signals but ODOT requires documentation justifying the need based on Level of Service.

Response: Intersection improvement projects are approved on a case by case basis.

- d. Dual rights from I-77 off ramp – The proposed design provides for dual right turn lanes from the I-77 northbound off ramp, one lane passing on either side of an island at Cleveland Massillon Road. The left lane at the intersection presents an opportunity for a driver to purposely avoid the roundabout and make a left turn and proceed south bound in the northbound lane approximately two car lengths then cross over the hatched median to continue south. This is a dangerous condition that should be revised by eliminating the second lane onto Cleveland Massillon Road.

Response: The proposed left lane of the I-77 northbound off ramp will be striped and signed to make it clear that left turns are not allowed at this intersection. In addition, the curvature of the left side curb line indicates to drivers that left turns are not permitted. The left lane of off ramp will assist in directing southbound traffic into the correct lane of the roundabout to reduce merging between the off ramp and the roundabout.

- e. Maintenance – Maintenance, whether snow & ice removal, pothole patching, striping or clearing a traffic accident at a roundabout is a significant problem. Traffic will back in all four directions around the loop and there is no simple mechanism for relieving the congestions. Where will maintenance vehicles park during routine maintenance of the circle? How will mowers access the grassed area?

Response: A three-leg roundabout occurs on the City of Fairlawn/Copley Township border, at the intersection of Ridgewood Road and Jacoby Road, about 1.25 mile from the proposed new roundabout. Maintenance crews have not had any issues with this roundabout and should have no trouble adapting to the new roundabout. In addition, the central island is being designed to minimize regular maintenance.

3. The Summit County Engineer’s office is opposed to the southern terminus of the project. As part of a partnering agreement with the City of Fairlawn, we agreed to realign the two public roadways each serving a significant population of current employees and each capable of adding additional commercial office space. With the proposed disruption to the traffic along Cleveland Massillon Road, there is no reason not to realign the public streets as previously agreed.

Response: See response to comment #1 above.

4. The Summit County Engineer’s office is opposed to the lack of opportunity for the public to comment on the major decisions during the various plan preparations phases of the project. Several major decisions were made during the development of this plan and the feasible

alternatives that were developed and discarded were never presented to the public for an opportunity to comment. Among the decisions that were not presented to the public include:

- The previously described shortening of the project's southern end;
- The consideration of the traffic signal at the off ramp without a roundabout;
- A consideration of whether a single roundabout at the ramp terminal was preferred;
- A consideration of whether a double roundabout should be installed to eliminate the need for southbound vehicles to drive north a tenth of a mile to head south;
- The decision that Rothrock Road will remain closed during construction when the barricade could easily be removed to ease the detour around the city for both northbound and southbound vehicles headed to Montrose while the Cleveland Massillon Road is closed for bridge construction.
- The decision to not install a traffic signal at the Commercial Drive intersection.
- The decision not to provide left turn lanes or not to provide a two way left turn lane in the area adjacent to Our Lady of the Cedars while the rest of the project has 5 lanes minimum.

Response: The public involvement process followed by the City of Fairlawn for this project is typical for a project of this size. The format, handouts, and request for comment process were approved in advance by ODOT District 4.

There was a previous public meeting held on October 22, 2015 for Phase 1 of the project, from just north of Rothrock Road to Brookwall Drive. Of the commenters' concerns, the following project decisions were presented to the public and no comments were received:

- The decision to shorten the project's southern end.
- The decision not to install a traffic signal at the Commercial Drive intersection.
- The decision not to provide a center left turn lane adjacent to Our Lady of the Cedars church.

The remaining decisions regarding Phase 2 of the project, from I-77 to Rothrock Road, were presented at the public meeting held on February 13, 2018. All the alternates, as discussed herein, were presented to the public and the reasons for the recommended alternative discussed above.

5. The Summit County Engineer's office is opposed to the continued economic and environmental injustice that this project perpetuates on the residents of Copley Township. Rothrock Road was improved and widened in the 1990's using State of Ohio Department of Development funds to provide improved access to the commercial properties adjacent to I-77 and located in Copley Township. Against the wishes of both Copley Township and the County Engineer's office, the City barricaded the street (at that time a County Highway) at the corporate line. This action, perpetuated by this current project, creates a hardship on any developer seeking improved access to the portion of Montrose located in Copley township along Rothrock Road. Viewed in terms of environmental justice, this project permits the existence of a road closure that leads to vacant commercial property that could and should be seen as a negative impact on the low-

income and minority populations that generally seek employment in these areas. This project misses a strategic opportunity for advancing Environmental Justice to improve access to employment opportunities within this corridor. This opportunity should be considered an integral part of the Agency's mission is to focus attention on the environmental and public health challenges that face the regions minority and low-income population.

Response: Concerning Environmental Justice (now referred to as Underserved Populations by ODOT), Census mapping of the project area was checked and an Underserved Populations Form was prepared for the project. Census mapping revealed that Underserved Populations (minority, low income, linguistically isolated and over age 64) were all well under 50 percent in the two Census block groups that comprise the project area. In addition, the project does not include any residential or business relocations and results in no changes to access. Based on this, the City of Fairlawn concluded that no disproportionately high or adverse effects will occur to any Underserved Populations because of the implementation of the project. The closing/potential re-opening of Rothrock Road was not part of this project and thus the Environmental Justice/Underserved Populations implications of such a move were not analyzed.

6. It is the recommendation of the Summit County Engineer's office that:

a. The southern terminus of the project be extended to include the realignment of the offset intersection of Kumho Drive and Ridge Park Drive.

Response: See response to comment #1 above.

b. The intersection of the I-77 northbound off ramp and Cleveland Massillon Road retain a traditional traffic signal installation;

Response: This option was analyzed as Alternate 3 as described above in response to comment #2b. Alternate 4 was the recommended solution for the reasons outlined above.

c. The proposed roundabout at Rothrock Road be eliminated and replaced with a standard intersection;

Response: See response to comment #6b.

d. The existing non-warranted traffic signal at the intersection of Rothrock Road and Cleveland Massillon Road be eliminated until such time that Rothrock Road is re-established as a through street without barricades at the corporate boundary;

Response: See response to comment #6b.

e. A fifth lane be provided in the area between Rothrock Road and Elgin Road be provided for turning vehicles into the property owned by Our Lady of the Cedars Catholic Church.

Response: Through and turning traffic volumes between Rothrock Road and Elgin Road do not warrant a center turn lane in accordance with ODOT guidelines.

f. A traffic signal warrant analysis of the intersection at Commercial Drive should be prepared to determine if a traffic signal at this location is warranted.

Response: A traffic signal warrant analysis for the intersection at Commercial Drive was completed as part of the 2015 Cleveland Massillon Road Traffic Study. The intersection did not meet any signal warrants under current traffic conditions and there is not expected to be a significant increase in side-street volumes in the future.

- g. A proper public meeting be held with testimony from all affected residents, with a full and complete presentation of the feasible alternatives prior to making the final decisions on the project. An open house meeting format is designed to discourage comments from the general population by not giving the aggrieved parties the opportunity to have an audience to their comments. This office was approached by nearly a dozen interested parties that did not feel that they were presented sufficient information to make a proper decision and some voiced concerns that their opinions were trivialized and their comments ignored. An example of this attitude is evident in the written response from the City to the Administrator of Copley Township.

Response: See response to comment #4.

One commenter (**Commenter #26**) pointed out that the Montrose Cemetery is located on the west side of Cleveland Massillon Road near the north terminus of the project. Commenter hoped that construction would not disturb the cemetery.

Response: Construction at the north end of the project, in the vicinity of the Montrose Cemetery, consists only of resurfacing. The Montrose Cemetery will not be impacted by the project.

One commenter (**Commenter #27**) stated that drainage from a Rosemont Country Club fairway causes flooding of his parking lot three to four times a year and asked how the project will correct this.

Response: The drainage from the golf course at this location will be collected by the proposed storm sewer system and will no longer enter this property.

One commenter (**Commenter #31**) commented on the planned tree barrier along the golf course and suggested that because of the number of golf balls his property receives that a net type barrier be considered to supplement this.

Response: A net type barrier is not being considered at this time.

Comments from the following commenters (**Commenters #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, and 31**) were aggregated for response purposes and their comments are addressed below:

Several commenters (**#6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 28**) expressed their concern that Rothrock Road does not warrant a roundabout and would be a waste of money and/or expressed a desire for Rothrock Road to be re-opened. One of these commenters pointed out that the estimated cost for a roundabout is approximately \$1.2 million, while the cost for a traffic signal at the Cleveland Massillon Road/Rothrock Road intersection is approximately \$110,000.

Response: Concerning costs and the waste of money, please see the response to **Commenter #24** on page 14, above. Concerning the re-opening of Rothrock Road, please see the response to **Commenter #24** on page 17, above.

Several commenters (**#6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17**) were opposed to the need to travel briefly north to the roundabout in order to travel south on Cleveland Massillon Road.

Response: A traffic study was performed to evaluate the four alternatives, discussed in the response above, for improvements to Cleveland Massillon Road from I-77 to Rothrock Road. The alternatives were evaluated based on Cost (Benefit-Cost), Traffic Operations (current condition and with Rothrock Road opened), Future Safety, and Environmental Impacts.

Some pertinent points of the study include the following:

- A traffic signal will need to be installed at the I-77 southbound entrance ramp in the near future to efficiently process the traffic.
- A traditional improvement scenario (signal and turn lanes), would result in four signalized intersections within 1,400 feet spaced approximately 450 feet apart. The model shows that queues will back up into adjacent intersections resulting in poor operations and continued congestion into the future. This problem is already being realized between the newer signal at the I-77 northbound Exit Ramp and the signal at Rothrock Road.
- Alternative 4 (recommended) results in the best future operation for both the current traffic patterns and any future traffic from Rothrock Road .
- Alternative 4 (recommended) results in the lowest overall delay for all traffic using the project area.
- Alternative 4 (recommended) has a significantly lower predicted crash frequency than Alternative 3.

The traffic pattern alluded to in the comments was necessitated by the closely spaced intersections in the vicinity of I-77. The traffic analyses show that although southbound traffic will have to travel farther, the overall time spent to make the trip through the roundabout is comparable to the time that would be spent waiting to turn left at a signal. Furthermore, the remaining traffic in the area will have significantly less delays.

Several commenters (**#6, 13, 16, 17 and 19**) agreed with the proposed widening, but had other concerns.

Response: Comments acknowledged.

Several commenters (**#1, 2, 4, 5, 29 and 30**) were complimentary of the project and expressed that they looked forward to it being built.

Response: Comments acknowledged.

ONE commenter (**#13**) called for the improvements to extend to Ridge Park Drive in Copley and to align the intersection of Kumho Drive and Ridge Park Drive.

Response: Please see responses concerning this comment to **Commenters #14** on page 5, **#15** on page 7, **#32** on page 12 and **#24** on page 13, above.

One commenter (**#3**) requested that project construction not start until after the first full weekend of August, which is the weekend for the Lebanese Festival at Our Lady of the Cedars Church as well as Copley's Heritage Days.

Response: Please see responses concerning this comment to **Commenter #14** on page 6, above.

One commenter (**Commenter #16**) stated that roundabouts are less safe for pedestrians than traditional intersections and expressed concern for the safety of pedestrians, especially schoolchildren and residents of the nearby nursing home, at the roundabout.

Response: It is a common misconception that roundabouts are less safe than traditional intersections for pedestrians. In reality, there are many features of a roundabout that make them safer than traditional intersections, including fewer conflict points, shorter crossings, pedestrian refuge areas, and lower speeds:

- Roundabouts have fewer conflict points than traditional intersections thereby reducing conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles or bicycles and vehicles.
- Pedestrian crossings are shorter than traditional intersections and pedestrians are only required to cross one direction of traffic at a time.
- Pedestrian refuge areas in the splitter islands provide a protected area for pedestrians to wait for a gap in unidirectional traffic.
- Roundabouts operate at lower speeds than traditional intersections. Lower speeds improve yielding, reduce vehicle stopping distances, and lower the risk of injury or fatality for collisions with pedestrians.