

STA-30-18.35, PID 20344
**FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
STATEMENT REEVALUATION**

June 2007

Purpose and Need for Action

1975 FEIS – The 1975 FEIS included the following need statement:

"Since the early 1950's approximately twenty-three years ago, the need for the relocation of US 30 on new alignment has been studied and requested. Studies have been done by local, regional, and state-wide planning groups to select alignments that would best serve the needs for the movement of people and goods. Several origin and destination traffic studies were made that illustrated the need for better traffic facilities to serve east-west traffic in the greater Canton area.

Traffic projections for the estimated time of completion amount to 49,000 vehicles daily for the segment between Whipple Avenue S.W. and Harrison Avenue S.W. In 1995 the traffic volumes are estimated to total 75,000 vehicles per day in the same highway section. The traffic volumes forecasted for the new highway are too high for efficient and safe utilization of the existing circuitous and congested traffic network.

US 30 is designed to provide a major east-west traffic route for central Stark County that will serve the vehicular transportation needs of residential, industrial, and business in the greater Canton area. US 30 is also an essential part of an intermediate belt system which will allow motorists to utilize access in all directions to move in, around and through the greater Canton community."

Project History - The proposed project is the relocation of US 30 in Stark County from the existing Trump Avenue (CH 170) partial interchange to a new interchange to be built at SR 44 east of East Canton. The improvement of US 30 in this area has been under consideration for many years. Previous actions taken include:

- ◆ In 1956-57, the Ohio Department of Highways, now the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), commissioned a consultant to determine an alignment to relocate US 30 between Canton and East Liverpool. ODOT later determined that the 1957 alignment was not feasible due to unacceptable ecological and cultural resource conflicts.
- ◆ In the early 1970's, an effort was made to restudy the relocation corridor and develop a new alignment. However, financial constraints suspended the project before an alignment was selected.
- ◆ In 1990, ODOT prepared the *US 30 Implementation Study*. This document identified the tasks associated with the development process and estimated the cost for planning, design, and construction to improve US 30 across the State of Ohio. The primary objective for US 30 in Ohio was to improve it to a four-lane, divided, limited access facility to improve mobility throughout the corridor. To meet this objective, US 30 was divided into 14 segments across the state. Seven of these segments required extensive construction to become four-lane

limited access highways. The subject project (Trump Avenue to SR 44) was identified as being part of Segment XIII (Trump Avenue to SR 11).

- ◆ ODOT initiated the study of Segment XIII in December 1991. The project study area was selected to enable the proposed facility to serve the communities currently served by existing US 30. The new limited access facility would avoid developed and environmentally sensitive areas to the maximum extent possible. The west project terminus was the US 30 interchange at Trump Avenue, which was to be constructed as part of the STA 30-29.696 relocation project. The east terminus was SR 11, a limited access 4-lane divided freeway that combines with US 30 to complete the highway route to the eastern edge of the State of Ohio. Since both of these termini are four-lane, limited access transportation facilities, this segment was identified as a gap closure project to make all of the segments coincide as similar continuous facilities.

Studies continued on this section through 2004. In 2004, the Ohio Department of Transportation decided to undertake implementation of the first construction segment of Segment XIII (Trump Avenue to SR 44). This segment was originally included in the Final Environmental Impact Statement approved by FHWA in 1975 for US 30 from Canton to East Canton.

2006 Purpose and Need – The following Purpose and Need Statement has been developed for the STA-30-18.35 project (Trump Avenue to SR 44).

Existing Facility - US 30 extends 242 miles across Ohio from Indiana to West Virginia. After the anticipated 2007 completion of a major 26-mile long project in Hancock and Wyandot Counties, almost the entire length of US 30 from the Indiana line to the Trump Avenue interchange will be either four-lane divided highway or four-lane limited-access highway. US 30 from Trump Avenue to the SR 11 interchange east of Lisbon will be the only remaining segment that is primarily two-lane roadway.

The current project area includes the portion of US 30 that traverses through portions of Canton and Osnaburg Townships and the Village of East Canton in Stark County. The existing US 30 roadway between Trump Avenue and SR 44 varies from a five-lane to a two-lane roadway. Key problems that are present with the existing facility include:

- The existing alignment is typified by substandard vertical and horizontal geometry, with several vertical curve deficiencies within the study area. As a result, there are insufficient sight distances for frontage access points.
- The route through East Canton involves several traffic signals. Two turn movements are required in the Village of East Canton. Large trucks have difficulty negotiating these turns due to the horizontal and vertical curve deficiencies.

For the reasons noted above, the existing US 30 facility does not serve as an efficient means of transportation for through traffic and freight transport.

Access Ohio – In 2004, the Ohio Department of Transportation prepared *Access Ohio 2004-2030*. Access Ohio identified five key statewide transportation goals:

1. Transportation Safety – ODOT will continually reduce the number and severity of crashes.
2. Economic Development and the Quality of Life – ODOT will support transportation improvement projects which promote Ohio's economy, foster economic development, and enhance the quality of life.

3. Efficient, Reliable Transportation Flow – ODOT will reduce traffic congestion and improve travel reliability.
4. System Preservation – ODOT will plan and sustain a manageable and predictable schedule of existing transportation system maintenance within an \$825 million annual system preservation budget.
5. Resource Management – ODOT will efficiently manage resources to execute core business functions while maintaining the highest-possible levels of quality and productivity.

Access Ohio identified a number of key “macro corridors” in the state, including “Corridor 12” (US 30/62/SR 14–Mansfield to Pennsylvania). Within Corridor 12, US 30 is considered as a cross-state route, while US 62/SR 14 primarily serves intra-regional travelers commuting within Stark, Columbiana and Mahoning Counties.

Access Ohio identified the following objectives for Corridor 12:

1. *Provide improved intermodal connections to rural areas.*
2. *Continue converting US 30 from Mansfield to SR 9, east of Canton, and portions of US 62 to a four lane limited access facility.*
3. *Improve safety, congestion, and access management control along the corridor.*
4. *Support the preservation and enhancement initiatives along the Ohio and Erie corridor.*
5. *Protect the natural and built environment from impacts resulting from transportation facilities and services that enhance the livability and sustainability within the region.*

The *Access Ohio* list of 2004 to 2030 Recommended Major Improvements (Corridor 12) included improving US 30 to be a four-lane limited access highway from Trump Avenue to SR 44.

Regional System Linkage - US 30 serves as a major east/west connector between Ohio cities and villages, including Van Wert, Lima, Upper Sandusky, Bucyrus, Mansfield, Wooster, Massillon, Canton, Minerva, Lisbon and East Liverpool. US 30 also serves as an interstate connector, linking Ohio with Fort Wayne, Indiana, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. With interchanges at I-75, I-71 and I-77 in Ohio, US 30 is a major link in the north-central Ohio highway network carrying volumes ranging from approximately 4,500 vehicles per day in Allen County to up to 40,000 vehicles per day near Canton. The nearest east/west limited access facilities beyond the project area are I-76 and I-80, 25 and 35 miles to the north respectively, and I-70, 45 miles to the south.

On the regional level, US 30 is important as a connector from I-77 to SR 11. SR 11 is a divided freeway that combines with US 30 to complete the highway route to the eastern edge of the State of Ohio. In Ohio, I-77 is a north-south highway connecting Cleveland and Marietta, passing through Akron, Canton, New Philadelphia, and Cambridge. Of particular importance to the project area is the connection to the City of Canton, the largest city with the highest traffic volume along US 30 through Ohio. The City of Canton serves the project area as an employment, shopping and service center.

Several groups of transportation users are projected to benefit from an improved US 30 facility in the project corridor. A few of the primary beneficiaries are:

- Commuters from the project area traveling to employment centers in Canton and other communities;
- Industrial and manufacturing businesses in the project vicinity;

- Residents of the Village of East Canton;
- Residents of rural areas in Stark County (Osnaburg Township);
- East/west travelers crossing Ohio between paralleling I-76 and I-80 to the north and I-70 to the south;
- Transporters of agricultural products from the region; and
- Through truck freight transporters between Canton, Pittsburgh, I-77, I-71, and SR 11.

Traffic Volume - The Ohio Department of Transportation Office of Technical Services and the Stark County Areawide Transportation Study (SCATS) provided existing (2005) and design year (2030) average daily traffic (ADT) volumes along existing US 30 in the project corridor (see Appendix 8). These future traffic volumes are based on the assumption that there would be no major improvements that would affect the traffic-carrying capacity of the highway.

The existing traffic along US 30 through East Canton is about 9,000 vehicles per day (2005), with about 7% truck traffic. If no major improvements are provided, traffic will increase to about 11,300 vehicles per day by the design year 2030. However, if US 30 is relocated around East Canton, traffic on the existing highway through East Canton will be 4,000-4,050 vehicles per day in 2030. If traffic is diverted to a new limited-access facility, traffic volumes on the existing US 30 facility will be substantially reduced, serving East Canton in a more efficient and safe manner.

Comment:

Level of Service - Level of Service (LOS) is a qualitative measure of traffic operations and conditions taking into account (directly or indirectly) the effect of several factors, including speed (design and actual), travel time, traffic interruptions, freedom to maneuver, safety, driving comfort, convenience and operating costs. Level of Service is rated from A to F, with A being the highest level. For rural highways, level of service criteria are defined in terms of density of traffic, as follows:

- Level A represents complete free flow condition, where the operation of vehicles is unaffected by the presence of other vehicles and only constrained by geometric features of the facility and driver preferences.
- Level B is also indicative of free flow, although the presence of other vehicles begins to be noticeable.
- Level C represents a range in which the influence of traffic density on operations becomes marked. The ability to maneuver within the traffic stream and to select an operating speed is clearly affected by the presence of other vehicles. Average travel speeds are reduced to about 50 mph on 70-mph design sections and minor disruptions may be expected to cause serious local deterioration in service.
- Level D represents an unstable condition for traffic flow. Speeds and maneuverability are severely restricted.
- Level E represents operations at or near capacity and is quite unstable. Minor disruptions result in queues and lead to Level F, which is forced or breakdown flow, with complete traffic stoppages.

Level of Service in the project corridor by section was recorded in 2000. The LOS from Trump Avenue to SR 44 is currently at LOS C. If US 30 is not relocated, the LOS will deteriorate to D by the Design Year. If US 30 is relocated, the LOS on the existing roadway will improve to LOS B. The existing and projected traffic volumes vary through the project

area, and such differences affect the LOS. Generally, the higher the traffic volume, the lower the LOS for an individual section along the two-lane highway.

The proposed project would provide through travelers and local travelers with a highway facility that would operate at a desirable level of service through the year 2030 and beyond. The level of service (LOS) of the new facility is anticipated to be C for the entire project area through the year 2030.

Safety - The Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS) Traffic Crash Records Section provided traffic accident data for crashes occurring on US 30 in the project study area. Crashes that occurred from January 1, 1996 to December 31, 1997 were tabulated with specific information regarding the location, type of crashes, types of vehicles, speeds, conditions, and various other factors. The 1996-1997 crash rate for US 30 in the study area was 3.58 crashes per million vehicle miles. For comparison purposes, the 2001-2003 statewide accident rate for two-lane rural highways was 1.64 accidents per million vehicle miles traveled. Clearly, the accident rate of the existing facility is above the statewide rate for similar highways. The statewide rate for four-lane, rural, divided highways (such as the proposed facility) is 1.12 accidents per million vehicle miles. It is anticipated that the proposed facility would have a considerably lower crash rate than the existing facility.

The signalized intersection of Trump Avenue at existing US 30 was identified as a "high crash" location in the *Accident Analysis, STA/COL-30-18.35/0.00* (ms consultants, 2001). In particular, a high rate of "angle-type" accidents was noted. Countermeasures were implemented in 2001 to correct possible deficiencies and improve intersection operation.

The separation of through traffic from local trips, including school busses, mail delivery and garbage trucks, will reduce the frequency of crashes along the existing US 30 facility. The reduction in the number of crashes will result in fewer fatalities and injuries and reduced property damage.

Efficiency and Travel Time - The existing conditions on US 30 do not allow a uniform flow of traffic, resulting in time delays and an increased consumption of fuel. Currently, travel from the Trump Avenue interchange to SR 44 south requires about 6.59 minutes, with about 56 seconds of stop time at the existing intersections. Relocating US 30 would reduce this travel time by about 3 minutes.

Police, fire, and emergency medical service response times would also be improved, as response times to emergency situations will be reduced. As there are no hospitals in the corridor area, improvements to response and travel times of local emergency services to transport people to hospitals in Canton would be a benefit to the service area of US 30.

Truck Traffic - Problems associated with truck traffic are among the most persistent complaints of those traveling or residing along US 30 in East Canton. The elimination of through truck traffic along existing US 30 would improve traffic flow and reduce traffic noise, leaving only local truck traffic. This would improve living conditions in residential neighborhoods. Also, through trucks traveling on the proposed facility would be able to transport goods through the project area in less time and at less cost.

Economic Development - *ACCESS OHIO*, the Ohio Department of Transportation's Long-Range Transportation Plan, conducted an in-depth study of the relationship between

2.87

13 700 APP

105

2007-2008

transportation system investments and economic development. Based on this analysis, the entire US 30 corridor in Ohio was identified as one of the most critical statewide corridors, and was programmed for major improvements. The economic development potential for an area is dependent on the accessibility to an efficient highway system for businesses receiving supplies and shipping goods, for employees traveling to work centers, and for consumers traveling to shopping and service facilities.

Local officials generally have expressed the need for an improved highway facility to support and generate economic development within the project area. The current lack of a limited access facility hinders the expansion of existing companies within the area, and the selection of sites within the project area for new businesses.

Improved highway access would make eastern Stark County more attractive to businesses that require access to efficient transportation systems. The potential economic benefits of highway improvements would include increased opportunities for employment and an increased tax base to support public schools, safety services and infrastructure. Existing major employers in and near East Canton include Nexpak, DLH Industries, Koch-Glitsch LP/Koch Knight LLC, and Resco Industries.

Officials and local businesses in the project area are generally supportive of improved transportation facilities. Many local officials attribute the overall lack of recent economic development in part to the fact that the area is not served by a continuous four-lane divided highway.

Organizations and agencies that have expressed their full support for the upgrading and expansion of US 30 as a necessary element of future regional economic development include the US 30 Highway Committee, the Stark County Area Transportation Study (SCATS), and the Ohio Department of Development, District 11.

Summary - The following needs have been identified in the STA-30-18.35 project area:

- Provide an efficient east/west route to link the eastern portion of Stark County to the region;
- Improve the level of service for through and local traffic;
- Improve safety for through and local travelers on US 30, a facility which currently experiences crash rates considerably higher than statewide averages;
- Improve safety by removing through traffic and the majority of truck traffic from local streets in East Canton;
- Improve safety and efficiency by removing conflicts between vehicle types;
- Foster desired economic development within an area not currently served by an efficient east/west highway; and
- Support existing industry and future development through improved access to the region.