

MEMORANDUM

April 6, 2010

TO: Board of Mayor and Aldermen

FROM: Eric J. Gardner, P.E., Director of Engineering
Eric S. Stuckey, City Administrator
David Parker, P.E., CIP Project Executive

SUBJECT: Proposed Long Lane/Old Peytonsville Road Crossing Of I-65 Report

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to report on the progress of the Long Lane/Old Peytonsville Road Crossing of I-65 Project.

Background

The City of Franklin has contracted with Clinard Engineering Associates (CEA) to design a crossing of I-65 between Long Lane and Old Peytonsville Road. The crossing is not intended to connect to the Interstate and will be designed to accommodate the future widening of I-65. The crossing will provide an additional east-west access across I-65 that will relieve traffic at the Peytonsville Road Interchange. The project will be designed, bid, and constructed utilizing funding solely from the City. It is intended for the crossing to be constructed before the I-65 widening project begins to provide emergency vehicles and the general public an alternate route across I-65 while the Old Peytonsville Road Interchange is under construction.

Several options were studied by CEA and the City, including both an overpass and an underpass. A Public Hearing on the project was held on September 19, 2007. Based on input from the public and review of the options, the City determined that the preferred option was an underpass. On August 29, 2007 the City submitted plans, details, and other information to Paul Degges, Chief Engineer at TDOT, as application for approval to construct the underpass.

TDOT previously disapproved the City's request to construct a crossing of I-65 between Long Lane and Old Peytonsville Road utilizing an underpass. Their reasons for not allowing the underpass include maintenance, future widening of the bridge and traffic control on the I-65.

In the City's information that was submitted to TDOT, the underpass consisted of two separate bridges. One bridge would be for the two existing northbound lanes and the other would be for the two existing southbound lanes. These bridges were proposed to be constructed so that when I-65 is widened in the future, the bridges widths could be expanded to provide for the future laneage needs of I-65 (4 or 5 lanes each direction). One of TDOT's issues was that this would create additional cost to them when they constructed the widening of I-65.



As has been previously stated, this crossing is a very important part of our street network in the Goose Creek area. TDOT recognizes this along with the benefits of having this crossing. Their only disagreement at this time is that they feel that the crossing should be an overpass.

At this time, progress is being made with the widening of I-65. Design plans are well underway and TDOT expects that it would be possible to bid the construction of the widening between S.R. 96 and just north of the Goose Creek Bypass later this year.

On March 9, 2010, the City requested that TDOT would consider incorporating the bridge construction for the crossing into their I-65 widening plans. Once again, TDOT has responded that they do not feel that an underpass should be constructed, citing their reasons as it creating negative impacts on I-65.

Staff is requesting further information from TDOT to better understand their concerns of the negative impacts to I-65. Of their original concerns of maintenance, future widening of the bridge and traffic control on the I-65, only the maintenance concern appears to have any validity. If the underpass was constructed concurrently with the widening project, there wouldn't be any future widening and the construction could be phased so that the traffic control would not be significantly impacted.

Financial Impact

None.

Recommendation

Staff still feels that the underpass will create a safer street that has less of an impact on the adjacent property owners than an overpass. Staff recommends that the City work with TDOT to incorporate the underpass into the widening project. Also, since the City was previously committing to fund the crossing, staff recommends that the money the City would have spent for the crossing is contributed to TDOT to cover the additional costs to the widening project that the underpass bridge would create. The total cost estimate from 2007 to construct the underpass with a full 10-lane bridge on I-65 was \$4.2 Million. Only constructing the bridge would likely cost less than this amount and could be paid for with the money that the City has saved by converting the Goose Creek Bypass from a Single Point Urban Interchange to a Tight Urban Diamond Interchange.