

Project Funding Status Update Meeting
HAM-Wasson Way to Otto Armleder, PID# 113603
4/11/2025
Minutes to be forwarded to Senator Steve Wilson

Start		Stop	Total Time	
2:30 pm		3:10 pm	40 Minutes	
PERSONS ATTENDING				
	Name	Representing	Phone Number	E-Mail Address
1	Katie DeStefano	ODOT – Engineering, Project Manager	(513) 933-6583	Katherine.DeStefano@dot.ohio.gov
2	Doug Gruver	ODOT – D8DD	(513) 933-6606	doug.gruver@dot.ohio.gov
3	Scott Brown (invited)	ODOT – D8PE	(513) 933.6706	Scott.Brown@dot.ohio.gov
4	Tony Pankala (invited)	ODOT – Planning, Environmental Lead	(513) 933-6640	anthony.pankala@dot.ohio.gov
5	Steve Shadix	ODOT Design Consultant – Stantec, Project Manager	(513) 619-6470	steve.shadix@stantec.com
6	Brian Goubeaux	City of Cincinnati, Project Manager	(513) 352-5305	brian.goubeaux@cincinnati-oh.gov
7	Greg Long	City of Cincinnati, Interim Director of DOTE	(513) 352-5289	greg.long@cincinnati-oh.gov

Meeting Minutes (K. DeStefano)

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss

- (1.) both ODOT's and the City of Cincinnati's outlook on this project as it relates to potential funding resources,
- (2.) timing of resource availability for the right-of-way and construction phases of the referenced project, and
- (3.) potential barriers to meeting the project schedule and budget.

ODOT's perspective: This project is one component of the original Eastern Corridor project, of which all segments were funded through TRAC. When the Eastern Corridor project was broken up into segments, these smaller projects were handled as "local improvements". ODOT committed to funding the planning and design phases, as well as administering the construction contracts, provided the locals committed to funding the right-of-way and construction phases.

ODOT will continue to offer the use of Eastern Corridor TRAC funds for the planning and design phases. Once the Feasibility Study is approved, funds will be spent on Stage 1 plan development and any studies (i.e., structures) needed. It is important that District 8 demonstrates that our prior TRAC commitment for Eastern Corridor is continuing to be utilized. Otherwise, there is a risk of having those funds withheld.

City of Cincinnati's perspective: The City is committed to meeting the funding requirements agreed to for this project. However, the City is currently facing various challenges, on a city-wide basis, that are driving their current priorities.

There are several hurdles associated with this project that must be navigated, which are not necessarily cost driven.

- Right-of-Way (RW) associated with the abutting railroad (RR) must be acquired. This RW is owned, in part, by SORTA. It was SORTA's intent to simply donate the RR property to the City which would be a significant savings to the project and the City. However, SORTA had previously entered into a third party agreement with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), where FTA funds were given to SORTA, for public transit projects specifically associated with rail operations. Those funds were not used as agreed to with the FTA, so now the FTA wants their funds returned, which SORTA no longer has. Only when SORTA returns these FTA funds, can the RR RW be acquired for this project.

- The preferred alternative involves the construction of a roundabout located on a county road. This will require coordinative efforts with the Hamilton County Engineer's Office. There's no guarantee that the County will agree to the proposed design.
- There are **six** bridges associated with this project.
 1. The overhead trestle bridge, currently owned by the City, must be inspected and reinforced, if any structural issues surface as a part of the inspection.



2. Existing Wasson Way bridge over Columbia Parkway. Owned and inspected by City, will need modifications for the trail.



3. Existing Wasson Way rail bridge over Wooster Road. Owned and inspected by the City. Will need modification for the trail.



4. The Wooster Road mainline bridge is County Owned, and City inspected and maintained, and will require only relatively minor updates provided the County agrees to the roundabout solution at the Red Bank Road-Wooster Road intersection.



5. Location of existing deteriorated railroad structure crossing Duck Creek.



6. New structure crossing location over Duck Creek.



City staff cited that they are very limited on how much time can be dedicated to taking on additional workload at this time. Their staff are heavily involved with on-going projects, many of which are located on the west and central parts of the City. This also includes the HAM-Wasson Way Phase 7 (PID# 114602), which currently takes priority .

Even if funding were currently available to cover the RW and construction costs, the above listed hurdles will still impact the timing as to when the funds can be applied

Possible Funding Resources:

- [OKI Regional Council of Governments](#)
STBG (Surface Transportation Block Grant), Transportation Alternatives (TA), or Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) programs. OKI's solicitation for all 3 programs is currently open, with applications due at 4pm on 6/6/25. The City is well familiar with these programs, how to connect with the eligibility aspect of each program, funding caps that apply, and that a minimum 20% local match is required. OKI funds RW and Construction out of all 3 programs.
- [ODOT Pedestrian & Bicycle Special Solicitation](#)
Currently open with the application window closing 5/1/25. The "Traditional Infrastructure Project Application" would apply to this project. This program funds all phases of a project and a 20% local match would apply also. This program is targeted at projects that are of "statewide significance" so completing gaps in a regional trail system would be a good fit.
- [Federal Congressional Earmark \("Community Project Funding"\)](#)
There's no guarantee that these will continue forward, but if they do, the City of Cincinnati could submit a funding request via their US Rep. In this case it would be Representative Greg Landsman. These funds are typically eligible for all project phases and require a 20% local match.
- [ODNR grants](#)
There are also some state programs that exist, which ODOT does not oversee but are often used by locals to provide the required match to federal grants. The most applicable for this project are both the Clean Ohio Trail Fund and Recreational Trails Program.
- Private sources
The City would need to coordinate how these funds would be received, retained and then spent.
- Potential State Funded Earmark Funds

There is a risk of funding the design plans past Stage 2, without right-of-way and construction funding being secured. Based upon the input received at today's meeting, I've adjusted the schedule for a Q4 FY29 award. I've added Stage 1 and Structure Type Study milestones. See attached schedule.

 NEPA Start Date		04/19/2022		2022 (Q4)	
 Feasibility Study - Submitted		03/08/2024		2024 (Q3)	
 Feasibility Study - Approved		04/15/2025	—	2025 (Q4)	
 Structure Type Study Submitted		01/20/2026	—	2026 (Q3)	
 Structure Type Study Complete		03/20/2026	—	2026 (Q3)	
 Stage 1 Plans - Submitted		07/01/2026	—	2027 (Q1)	
 Environmental Document Approved		07/31/2026	—	2027 (Q1)	
 Stage 1 Plans - Complete		09/01/2026	—	2027 (Q1)	
 Preliminary R/W Review Submission - Submitted		09/15/2026	—	2027 (Q1)	
 Preliminary R/W Review Submission - Approved		10/30/2026	—	2027 (Q2)	
 Compliance R/W Review Submission- Submitted		01/15/2027	—	2027 (Q3)	
 Compliance R/W Review Submission - Approved		03/01/2027	—	2027 (Q3)	
 R/W Authorized		03/15/2027	—	2027 (Q3)	
 Stage 2 Plans - Submitted		04/01/2027	—	2027 (Q4)	
 Stage 2 Plans - Complete		05/10/2027	—	2027 (Q4)	
 Stage 3 Plans - Submitted		09/01/2027	—	2028 (Q1)	
 Stage 3 Plans - Complete		10/15/2027	—	2028 (Q2)	
 R/W Acquisition Complete		06/01/2028	—	2028 (Q4)	
 Final Tracings - Submitted		09/01/2028	—	2029 (Q1)	
 Final Tracings - Complete		10/10/2028	—	2029 (Q2)	
 District R/W Certification		12/01/2028	—	2029 (Q2)	
 Plan Package Received in C.O.		01/01/2029	—	2029 (Q3)	
 Sale		04/01/2029	—	2029 (Q4)	
 Award		04/01/2029	—	2029 (Q4)	Reservoir Year:
 Mismatch: Award year does not match construction contract fund event year					
 Begin Construction		06/01/2029	—	2029 (Q4)	
 End Construction		10/01/2030	—	2031 (Q2)	Estimated Duration: 487