January 7, 2010

Commissioners of Ross County

2 North Paint Street

Suite H, Courthouse

Chillicothe, Ohio 45601

RE: Traffic Signal at SR 159 & Aldi’s / Tractor Supply / Tire Discounters

Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for your letter regarding the traffic signal at the above referenced intersection. We appreciate your input, involvement and commitment to provide efficient and safe transportation here in Ross County.

This traffic signal was installed by the developer and the signal warrant analysis that was used to justify the signal was performed by a consultant that was hired by the developer. This study was based on a proposed development on the East side of Bridge Street that included the Aldi’s store, a fast food restaurant and a sit down restaurant. The traffic projections used in the study were based on the ITE Trip Generation manual. Unfortunately, the restaurants were not built, and the traffic volumes being generated by the Aldi’s store are lower than projected.

*Section 4C.01 Studies and Factors for Justifying Traffic Control Signals* of The Ohio Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (OMUTCD) states the following:

*At a location that is under development or construction and where it is not possible to obtain a traffic count that would represent future traffic conditions, hourly volumes should be estimated as part of an engineering study for comparison with traffic signal warrants. Except for locations where the engineering study uses the satisfaction of Warrant 8 to justify a signal, a traffic control signal installed under projected conditions should have an engineering study done within 1 year of putting the signal into stop-and-go operation to determine if the signal is justified. If not justified, the signal should be taken out of stop-and-go operation or removed.*

A complaint was received regarding the intersection. When it was investigated, a traffic count was taken and the signal warrants were evaluated. The existing traffic volumes at the intersection are not close to meeting a signal warrant.

The OMUTCD also points out that there are pros and cons to operating a stop and go traffic signal at an intersection. Engineering judgment plays an important role in determining when a traffic signal is the best form of traffic control for an intersection. *Section 4B.03 Advantages and Disadvantages of Traffic Control Signals* of the OMUTCD states the following regarding disadvantages of traffic signals:

*Traffic control signals are often considered a panacea for all traffic problems at intersections. This belief has led to traffic control signals being installed at many locations where they are not needed, adversely affecting the safety and efficiency of vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic.*

*Traffic control signals, even when justified by traffic and roadway conditions, can be ill-designed, ineffectively placed, improperly operated, or poorly maintained. Improper or unjustified traffic control signals can result in one or more of the following disadvantages:*

*A. Excessive delay;*

*B. Excessive disobedience of the signal indications;*

*C. Increased use of less adequate routes as road users attempt to avoid the traffic control signals; and*

*D. Significant increases in the frequency of collisions (especially rear-end collisions).*

This intersection was discussed thoroughly between ODOT, the City of Chillicothe and the Ross County Planning Department. The goals of the Ross County Thoroughfare plan and the effect that this signal has on it was a large part of the discussion. We do share common goals and we support the Ross County Thoroughfare Plan. We also applaud the Access management efforts of Ross County and the City of Chillicothe. Though continuing to operate the unwarranted signal in stop and go mode may assist with property owner negotiations, it also conflicts with efficient flow of traffic on Bridge Street.

Enclosed is a copy of the ODOT signal removal process that we are following. We are currently in the stage of flashing the signal for the initial 90 days and collecting feedback. We will revisit the issue at the end of the 90 days and review all of the feedback that was received as well as the crash data. If the decision is made at that point to continue with the “removal”, the signal will remain as a flasher. The equipment will not be removed. It is our intent that the signal will revert back to stop and go operation if/when the traffic volumes are high enough to meet a signal warrant.

Please feel free to contact Patricia Wetzel at (740) 774-8983 if you have any questions or if you wish to discuss this further. Thank you again for your input.

Respectfully,

James A. Brushart

Deputy Director

Ohio Department of Transportation

District 9

Enclosure

C: T. Day D. Buskirk G. Baird R. Chaffin P. Wetzel J. Phillips