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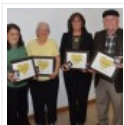
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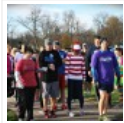
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Bright, I-74 connector discussion continues

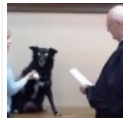
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DISTRIBUTION AREA



A proposal for a connector road linking the Bright area with Interstate 74 is progressing, as the first meeting of a 21-member community advisory board has taken place and more details emerge.

The idea has been in the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana (OKI) Regional Council of Governments' 2040 Transportation plan for nearly a decade and came to the forefront earlier this year when Dearborn County Commissioner Kevin Lynch was elected the first president of OKI from Indiana.

The advisory board consists of residents and business owners in the Bright and West Harrison area.

"There was good interaction, even though we are just starting out," Mr. Lynch said of the group's first meeting with OKI staff and consultants.

Mr. Lynch said the rationale for the potential project is that "the Bright area is being choked off because of lack of really good access."

"Connecting Bright to the interstate would facilitate more growth and more convenience for residents, business owners and commuters," he said. "As the U.S. 52 TIF (tax increment financing district) is developed, employees looking for places to live may be drawn into the Dearborn tax base."

Another important aspect is faster response time for fire and EMS and helping to strengthen local departments such as Bright and St. Leon. Mr. Lynch estimated that the usual 20-minute Bright response time to the area could be cut by about 15 minutes.

"There is no easy way to get there (Interstate 74, U.S. 52 corridor)," Mr. Lynch said, noting that Dearborn County contracts with Harrison, Ohio to help cover the area. "Harrison is a great partner. Without them we wouldn't have paramedics out there. But I would rather see that money spent to build our fire and EMS, and we could become a better partner with Harrison and repay them for their help."

Mr. Lynch noted that Harrison Fire Chief William Hursong had "great input" at the advisory board meeting regarding traffic patterns, accidents and other areas of concern.

OKI staff and consultants presented information on current roadway conditions, traffic volumes, crash data, land use, utilities, community resources and environmental resources in the Bright area at the advisory board meeting. As more information is collected, other meetings will be held, and public comment meetings will be advertised.

The next step is to "figure out the best option, or options, for the roadway," Mr. Lynch said. "Ideally it would begin somewhere around State Line and N. Dearborn Road and come out on U.S. 52 near the current interchange, but all of this is up in the air pending further analysis. It is not an easy project; a lot of different things come into it. I would not be surprised if there are several proposed designs."

He acknowledged that even if everything were to be on schedule — including the important factor of funding — it could be around six years before it the project could even begin.



“It comes down to funding and permits,” Mr. Lynch said, noting that OKI would be funding 80 percent of the approximately \$50 million project. The rest would come from Dearborn County, but Mr. Lynch said there is important support from state and federal representatives and that a collaboration is a possibility.

“They believe this is an important regional project,” Mr. Lynch said.

(Check back here for updates on this story and for public-meeting schedules. For additional details on the project, visit: <http://bright74.oki.org/>)

PREVIOUS STORY

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NEXT STORY

Canine is child advocate



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