



Welcome

This is the fourth quarterly FY 2022 newsletter published by the Lima Allen County Regional Planning Commission. It is intended to provide timely updates on local transportation projects, area (re) development initiatives, as well as transit and paratransit related news, highway safety, and other activities undertaken by the Planning Commission and our partners. The newsletter is supported in part with funds from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), and the Planning Commission member political subdivisions.

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Bike Rodeo to be Held

Young local cyclists will learn to have a safer biking experience on Saturday, September 18, 2021, 11:00 - 1:00 p.m. at the Block Party at Mercy Health. The party and rodeo will be held at the Graduate Medical Education (GME) building parking lot. Youngsters, ages 6 to 12 years old, will ride their bicycles through a series of skill tests, learn how to balance at a slow speed, ride in a circle slowly, maneuver through an obstacle course, or stop and signal at an intersection. In addition, Crankers Cycling will be on hand to conduct bike safety checks, and participants will receive a free bike helmet (while supplies last). The Block Party is a free, family-friendly event. Stop out to enjoy the music, food trucks, bounce house, vendors, and first responder appreciation.



Thayer & Thirty

Thayer Road started to garner attention just a few years ago when nearby residents and local officials became concerned with safety issues caused by travel patterns that abruptly shifted for the worse. Since 2010, the segments of interest have hosted increases in traffic flow by over 300%. The crash history mirrors a similar pattern. In 2010, there were less than 20 crashes, and 2017 saw a peak of nearly 50 crashes from SR117 to US30. Around 2018, Regional Planning began having conversations with local stakeholders from pertinent townships, Allen County Engineer's Office, and ODOT District One to determine potential remediation.

Mott & MacDonald, an engineering firm hired for the Thayer Road study, confirmed the bypass theory nominated by locals. Thayer is acting as a bypass for regional travelers circumnavigating the City of Lima. The corridor had long been used for this purpose by locals, but the advent of Global Positioning System applications and the popularity of smartphones have made nearly every traveler privy to local knowledge. StreetlightData identified over two-thirds of the traffic is originating over 30 miles away.

As of August 2021, the construction of those countermeasures has broken ground. Thayer is

currently closed at US30 to implement a Restricted Crossing U-Turn (RCUT), the first of its kind in Allen County. The device restricts the movement of vehicles which eliminates conflict points by closing the median to pass-through traffic. RCUTs have been shown to reduce crashes by 40% and fatal crashes by 70%. Unfortunately, the intersection was home to three fatalities and 17 high-speed crashes from 2016 through 2020.

In conjunction with the RCUT at Thayer, construction on US30 has also begun at Mayberry and Cool Roads. Cool Road will lose all access to US30, while Mayberry Road will still support access to US30 from the north. These projects are part of a larger plan to convert US30 to a controlled-access highway through Allen and Hardin counties. Eliminating at-grade intersections will result in a safer highway for all users.

While Thayer Road seemingly transformed overnight, potential improvements will be evaluated over several years. In addition, the corridor will be eligible for federal monies as the entire corridor is now on the federal functional class. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) administers the functional classification system, a division of the United States Department of Transportation. The system identifies three main categorizations

for roadways: arterials, collectors, and local roads. Local roads are not a member of the functional class as their purpose is primarily to provide access to property. Arterials and collectors serve to increase mobility for travelers.

LACRPC, with the support of the Allen County Engineer's Office, coordinated with ODOT District One to apply for Major Collector status on Thayer from SR81 to US30. The application arrived at FHWA via ODOT Central Office in late July and was subsequently approved in August. The update to the functional class aligns the entire bypass corridor with a consistent classification as a Major Collector. Before the classification revision, portions of the bypass corridor were classified as local.

Not only is the corridor of interest now correctly classified according to its use, but it is also now eligible for MPO funding. Although ODOT Safety funding can be utilized on any road, other funding streams have more rigid stipulations for dissemination. This could be an important distinction as the landscape of US30 evolves, and Thayer is one of the few roads with access. As a result, traffic counts are likely to continue to increase and may exceed the capacity of its narrow lanes.

Bike & Pedestrian Counts

Everyone Counts!

The Allen County Bike and Pedestrian Task Force needs your help! Bike and pedestrian counts are conducted twice a year at 40 locations across Allen County. Volunteers are always needed to help with these counts. You may be asking, why is my help needed, and why is it important? Accurate and consistent counts provide data to measure the usage and benefits of these travel modes as compared to other modes. It is also extremely helpful as we plan for future bike and pedestrian facilities. The National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project developed a model for counting, reporting, and analyzing bicycle and pedestrian use and demand data during two count periods each year. The basic assumptions

of the methodology are that, in order to estimate existing and future bicycle and pedestrian demand and activity, agencies nationwide need to conduct counts and surveys in a consistent manner similar to those being used by other groups for motor vehicle data collection. Conducting counts twice a year helps analyze trends over time and understand how many people are walking and biking in Allen County. Bike and pedestrian data will also help prioritize funding for future projects and may also provide data for grant applications. The 2021 count periods are May 16-22 and September 13-18. How can you help? You can help by adopting a count location or two. By adopting a location, you, your friends, co-workers, or community group would be in charge of

filling each of the time periods required to complete the count for that location. You can also volunteer to fill a shift or two if it is not possible to adopt an entire location. Locations are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, or to adopt a location, follow the link! <https://www.signupgenius.com/tabs/23677df05afcbec42-fall-bike1> You can also help to spread the word by asking others to join the effort.





Township Funding Opportunity

The Ohio Department of Transportation recently announced the Township Stimulus Program, a one-time program providing Federal funds to townships for sidewalk, roadway, and culvert (less than 10 feet in span) projects within township limits. ODOT's Division of Planning, Office of Local Programs, will administer the allocation for this program. The total funding available for the program is \$8 million, with a funding limit of \$250,000 per project. 100% of eligible costs for all phases of the project, up to the specified project funding limit, will be provided by ODOT. The project funds will be pre-paid to the township and must be spent by December 31, 2024.

There are currently 1,308 townships in the State of Ohio. To be eligible for the Township Stimulus Program, the project must:

1. be within township limits;
2. be the maintenance responsibility of the township;
3. require no or minimal environmental or right-of-way work; and
4. be a culvert (less than 10 feet in span), sidewalk, or roadway (including pavement marking and guardrail) project.

LACRPC and the Allen County Engineer's Office are working with all of our township partners to develop applications and estimates before the November 19 deadline.

District 16 Natural Resource Assistance Council (NRAC)

NRAC Funding Available

announces the application period is now open for Round 16 of Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Funding. Approximately \$2,563,935 is available to local communities and non-profit organizations to preserve natural areas, protect streams, and create outdoor recreational opportunities. Applications for Green Space improvements under the Clean Ohio Round 16 program will be accepted from July 22, 2021, through January 22, 2022. District 13 comprises Allen, Auglaize, Hancock, Logan, Mercer, Putnam, Shelby, and Van Wert counties. For further information, contact Shane Coleman at 419-228-1836 or scoleman@lacrpc.com.

Safe System Program Underway

The Ohio Department of Transportation is making major changes to its Highway Safety Improvement Program to focus limited funding on fatal and serious injury crashes. ODOT is also creating a new program to encourage systemic or proactive safety investments to prevent specific high-severity crash types. ODOT is making these changes because traffic deaths in Ohio have risen six of the past seven years. Focusing on severity and specific

crash types and safety improvements will help better target these crashes and align our investments with federal safety requirements focused on reducing fatalities and serious injuries. These changes are also part of a national movement to adopt a Safe System approach. Safe System is a paradigm shift from eliminating crashes to eliminating fatal and serious injuries. It acknowledges that people make mistakes and engineers have a re-

sponsibility to reduce crash severity by being more aggressive in using roadway design and operational changes instead of relying on drivers to change their behavior. Safe System also strives for a greater transportation balance that serves the needs of all road users, not just motorists.

For more information on Safe System: https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/zerodeaths/zero_deaths_vision.cfm

2021 Annual Meeting

The LACRPC held its Annual Meeting on April 22 virtually this past year. Steve Ewing, Auglaize Township Trustee, was installed as President of the Board of Directors. FY 2021 committee chairpersons include Transportation Coordinating Committee – Howard Elstro, City of Lima; Developmental Controls Committee – Chuck Schierloh, City of Lima; Administrative Affairs Committee - Thomas Tebben, City of Lima; and Community Development Committee (CDC) – Mitch Kingsley- Village of Bluffton. The remaining members of the Executive Committee include Robert Sielschott (Bath Township), Dave Belton (Shawnee Township), Brion Rhodes (Allen County), Kevin Cox (Perry Township), Beth Seibert (Allen County), Jerry Gilden (Marion Township), and Larry Vandemark (American Township).



Comprehensive Economic Development Update

The 2021 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) was prepared by the Lima Allen County Regional Planning Commission (LACRPC) on behalf of member political subdivisions and interested stakeholders. The 2021 CEDS works to update similar plans developed in 2005, 2010, and 2015 and relies heavily upon the work on the previous documents. In addition, Allen Economic Development Group's (AEDG) Strategic Plan was incorporated to reflect the current state of economic development in Allen County. Thus, the 2021 CEDS results from a continuing participatory economic development planning effort that participants represent the community's diverse interests. The CEDS development process included several steps including obtaining community input and consensus from a large cross-section of stakeholders. Various issues of community concern were identified, such as workforce readiness, innovation, economic resilience, and broadening of the economic base. These areas of concern were used to develop goals, objectives, and performance measures which were ultimately used to create an action plan. This plan will enable

the community to reach the stated purposes and economic development projects identified and prioritized. The Allen County CEDS articulated a shared vision that benefits the community in its entirety. The vision statement recognizes both the community's strengths and weaknesses while affirming a shared ambition. "Allen County is a community that supports the aspirations of its residents by providing an environment where a high quality of life is supported by locally-based and globally-competitive businesses that offer ever-increasing job opportunities and growing personal incomes for area residents." The CEDS provides a summary background of economic conditions in the region and completes an in-depth analysis of the area's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The data facilitated a strategic direction and action plan along with performance measures to evaluate implementation. The CEDS was circulated to local stakeholders involved in developing the community's economic development strategy and formally adopted by the LACRPC at its August 2021 meeting.

Upcoming Meetings

The following table outlines upcoming meeting dates and times for the various standing committees serving the Planning Commission and the local community. Meetings are held at the specified times in the Conference Room of the Planning Commission located at 130 W. North Street, Lima Ohio 45801. Meetings are open and the public is invited to attend.

COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE											
21-Sep				21-Oct				21-Nov			
Committee	Day	Date	Time	Day	Date	Time	Day	Date	Time		
CAAC	Thursday	9/9/2021	3:00PM	Thursday	10/14/2021	3:00PM	Thursday	11/4/2021	3:00PM		
DCC	Tuesday	9/14/2021	3:00PM	Tuesday	10/12/2021	3:00PM	Tuesday	11/9/2021	3:00PM		
DCC	Tuesday	9/28/2021	3:00PM	Tuesday	10/26/2021	3:00PM	Tuesday	11/23/2021	3:00PM		
CDC	Thursday	9/16/2021	3:30PM	Thursday	10/21/2021	3:30PM	Wednesday	11/10/2021	3:30PM		
CAC	Tuesday	9/21/2021	10:00AM	Tuesday	10/26/2021	10:00AM	Tuesday	11/16/2021	10:00AM		
TAC	Tuesday	9/21/2021	1:30PM	Tuesday	10/26/2021	1:30PM	Tuesday	11/16/2021	1:30PM		
TCC	Thursday	9/23/2021	3:00PM	Thursday	10/28/2021	3:00PM	Thursday	11/18/2021	3:00PM		
EC	Thursday	9/23/2021	4:00PM	Thursday	10/28/2021	4:00PM	Thursday	11/18/2021	4:00PM		
ACC	Wednesday	9/22/2021	4:00PM	Wednesday	10/27/2021	4:00PM	Wednesday	11/17/2021	4:00PM		

*Lima Allen County
Regional Planning Commission
130 W. North Street
Lima OH 45801*