

TID gets 'moving' on Ohio 4 Plans

Board to act on proposed widening projects - Hamilton Journal 4/9/02

Plans to widen the Ohio 4 bypass will move forward, the Butler County Transportation Improvement District board decided Monday. Proposed plans call for the addition of two lanes, intersection improvements and an update of traffic controls from the Dixie Highway in Fairfield to Bypass 4's intersection with Hamilton Middletown Road in Fairfield Township.

"This is something really need to get moving on," said Ed Shelton TID board member and city of hamilton councilman. Shelton is pushing for the northern portion of Bypass 4 to be widen first to fit with plans to ease access to the Butler County Regional Airport

The airport has the potential to become the centerpiece of future economic development in its area, Shelton said. "There's a large quantity of land around there, and that means quite a bit of money to the City of Hamilton to help offset some of the losses of business we have had so far," he said.

Project funding may come in a variety of ways, said Mike Samoviski, TID executive director, who estimates its costs at about \$12 million to \$14 million. Though the project is eligible for federal and state funding and grants, the Ohio Department of Transportation in December halted funding for all 2006 construction projects, thus forcing the need for other money sources.

One option the board plans to examine is funding through a tax increment financing district. "There's limited access to the highway, and a direct benefit is hard to establish for a TIF," Samoviski said. "It's something we'll look at, but ... it's going to take a variety of sources."

Much of the funding will need to come from communities affected by the widening, he said, which would include the cities of Hamilton and Fairfield, Fairfield Township, and the Butler County offices of the commissioners, engineer and TID.

The TID is expected to service as project coordinating agent. "We'll approach the local agencies to secure money to do the engineering work," Samoviski said. But before anything can happen, the project must advance from the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Government's 30-year transportation plan to the state's active projects list.

Members of the transportation district said they plan to meet with the Department of Transportation about moving the project onto the active list. Once that's done, TID officials said it then will request proposals for engineering services.