

Little progress in bypass project

It's slow going for officials seeking to split costs for widening section of Ohio 4.

By Chris Dumond
Staff Writer

HAMILTON — The process of getting Fairfield, Hamilton and Fairfield Township officials together to agree on how to split up the cost of the Bypass Ohio 4 widening design work is moving about as fast as rush-hour traffic.

'We need to quit dragging our feet.'

Don Hassler
Vice chairman,
Butler County
Transportation
Improvement
District

After the state tentatively agreed to pay half the \$2.4 million cost in January, Butler County Transportation Improvement District officials spoke urgently about the need to hash out an agreement. At Monday morning's monthly meeting of the TID, though, Director John Fonner said communication between the three has been unfortunately quiet four months later.

"What I'm hearing from each of the three partners separately is, 'We're OK, where is everyone else?'" Fonner said. "The hold up, as I understand it, is that the three parties have not met to talk."

The TID Board of Trustees voted Monday to spend \$2.4 million on the design work pending the three governments reaching a formal agreement on how to split costs. TID Chairman Jim Blount said trustees were pushing the two cities and the township to meet next Monday to wrap up the process.

"We need to quit dragging our feet," Vice Chairman Don Hassler

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Bypass

Cost of widening to six lanes \$32 million

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said. "We'll keep dragging and dragging and there won't be anything left."

Local transportation officials have been pressing for the project since the late 1990s. In 1999, one official estimated that the project could take seven to 10 years. The talk at the TID in the spring of 2002 wasn't much different from Monday, either, except the bill was then estimated between \$12 million and \$14 million.

Today the cost to widen the bypass from two to six lanes between Symmes and Tylersville roads and to four lanes for the remainder is estimated at more than \$32 million. The roadway averages about 20,000

Other TID project updates:

Liberty Interchange: Liberty Township is still working to finalize a special income tax district to help fund the project. The design of the Cox Road extension north may be completed this summer. Interchange ramp improvements are expected to be bundled with state's Cincinnati-Dayton Road widening project to be bid next year.

Ohio 747 widening, Tylersville to Ohio 129: A May 21 deadline was issued for five remaining property owners the TID has been unable to negotiate with for right of way purchases. After the deadline, the TID will file in court to take the land through eminent domain.

Ohio 63 extension: The TID is in talks with Trenton to help pay interest for three years on property the city recently purchased for right of way. The city has also asked the TID to weigh in against a request to the county's board of zoning appeals for a landowner to build a house in Madison Township near the future Ohio 63 corridor.

Source: Butler County

drivers per day, with between three and eight times the average number of wrecks as comparable roadways in the state,

according to engineering consultant M-E Companies.

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