

# Meeting Notes

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Date: May 19, 2005  
Time: 7:30 a.m.  
Location: NOACA Board Room  
Attendees: CUY-Opportunity Corridor Committee  
Re: CUY-Opportunity Corridor PID 77333

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## 1) Welcome and Introductions

- Jamie Ireland and Terri Hamilton Brown opened the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves. Terri and Jamie gave a brief background of how we got to this point of the study and turned it over to ODOT Project Manager Craig Hebebrand.
- Craig Hebebrand provided an overview of the study area and the general parameters of the study and how it was developed as part of the Innerbelt Study. Craig also explained that this study has its own purpose and need and is considered an independent effort. \$5.3 million has been allocated for the initial phases.
- John Motl, from ODOT District 12 planning, discussed the history of efforts to extend I-490 east of E55th Street.
  - I-490 was supposed to continue on through Shaker Heights and Beachwood, but neighborhood antagonism killed this proposal in the 1960s.
  - In the early '70s, the so-called Bedford freeway was examined (to link I-480 and I-490). It died because there was little public support.
  - In the '80s, the WECO roadway – a new roadway from I-490 to approximately E. 79th and Kinsman was studied but nothing progressed.
  - In the '80's the SR 87A project - an extension of I-490 to Shaker Boulevard was studied and discarded.
  - The Opportunity Corridor study grew out of community interest expressed at early Innerbelt Study meetings for a convenient route to University Circle bypassing downtown.

## 2) Purpose of the OC Committee

- As the OC study gets underway, multiple meetings will be held over the next 12 to 18 months. It is recommended that the stakeholders should be divided up into two groups:
  - Working Group including members with technical interests.
  - Policy Group including members concerned with economic development and project funding.
- Terri Hamilton Brown, Executive Director of University Circle Incorporated (UCI), and James (Jamie) D. Ireland III, President of the Musical Arts Association (The Cleveland

Orchestra), are serving as co-chairs of the OC Committee. They spoke with great enthusiasm about the Opportunity Corridor. They provided background information on previous studies.

- UDA (Urban Design Associates) conducted a preliminary study in 2003 and examined the potential for new residential and commercial development that could take place in the study area if a new roadway was constructed.
- The Generation Foundation funded an early economic study that offered solid evidence to support the Corridor's need. A copy of this report was distributed during the meeting.
- University Circle is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest employment center in Cleveland. About 30,000 people travel there daily for work, and 1.4 million travel there per year for work and leisure activities. Currently, there is \$1 billion of development and new construction underway in University Circle including Severance Hall, Case Western Reserve, and the Cleveland Art Museum.
- In 2003, UCI and various other Community Development Corporations (CDCs) looked into the development potential stimulated by a connecting Corridor. They concluded such a Corridor would have a positive economic impact on the area. The Corridor would help both University Circle and the so-called Forgotten Triangle, the neglected neighborhoods southwest of the Circle that have had limited highway access and have become less and less populated over time.
- The Opportunity Corridor will service and boost economic activity in these isolated neighborhoods, and this is the reason a boulevard with intersections -- not a freeway -- has been recommended. Planned and economic development is one of the stated goals of the Opportunity Corridor study.
- In the areas that would line the proposed Opportunity Corridor, the UDA study observed that there are 869 acres of land: 581 of which are zoned residential and 288 of which are zoned industrial. There are 312 acres of developable land: 247 of which are zoned residential and 65 of which are zoned industrial.
- The CDCs will have to contribute to the decisions on how to re-zone the developable land, which for the most part is owned by the City of Cleveland, privately owned, or is abandoned/underutilized industrial property. Some of these sites include "brown fields" that need environmental cleaned-up.

### 3) Study Overview

- Craig Hebebrand stated that HNTB's work includes refining the purpose and need, developing performance measures, developing a design concept scope, identifying and evaluating alternative alignments (late 2005 or early 2006), and selection of the preferred alternatives by the end of 2006.
- The total cost for the project (preliminary estimates) is projected at \$211 million. A draft implementation schedule of the \$211 million breakdown is in the Power Point presentation available on the project website. This schedule shows completion of construction in 2012. Funding for this project, however, ends in 2006. \$205.5 million is needed to fund the remainder of the project.

- The construction phase (\$176 million) is estimated to take three years.
- Millie Caraballo, Manager of Industrial Development for the Cleveland Industrial Retention Initiative (CIRI), an ardent supporter of the Opportunity Corridor, asked if the process could be sped up. Craig Hebebrand responded that there are very specific federal and state procedures that need to be followed and perhaps it could be speed up slightly but probably not at the speed that she was implying. The Strategic Plan will further identify these possibilities, but a funding commitment needs to be in place
- Terri Hamilton Brown (UCI) explained that the study has to narrow down the conceptual alternatives and recommend the best option. Matt Wahl, project manager for Opportunity Corridor for HNTB, discussed four conceptual alternatives for the Corridor:
  - Alternative 1 for the most part follows existing local streets – E. 55<sup>th</sup> St. and Woodland Avenue until it crosses E. 93<sup>rd</sup> St. where it would create a new connection to E. 105<sup>th</sup> St. The challenge with this alignment is that there are cemeteries on both sides of Woodland and any widening of that road would impact those sites.
  - Alternative 2 crosses over the Norfolk Southern and GCRTA rail yards west of E. 55<sup>th</sup> St. and north of I-490. This alternative begins on the north side of the rail trench but crosses to the south side before E. 75<sup>th</sup> St. and stays on the south side making the same new connection to E. 105<sup>th</sup> St. as Alternative 1. This alignment minimizes potential residential takes, but there may be a constraint to providing an intersection at East 79<sup>th</sup> Street, the only continuous north/south street in the area.
  - Alternative 3 crosses over the rail yards too and stays on the north side of the tracks all the way through the study area and connects to E. 105<sup>th</sup> St. There may also be a constraint to providing an intersection at East 79<sup>th</sup> Street.
  - Alternative 4 stays on the south side of the tracks throughout the study area makes the same connection to E. 105<sup>th</sup> St. as Alternatives 1 and 2. This option has taken into consideration the site of the new GCRTA E. 55<sup>th</sup> St. station.
- Matt expressed the challenges associated with these alternatives involve elevations, structures, cemeteries, residential and commercial areas, etc.
- Matt Wahl was asked if he was implying that alternative #4 held the most opportunity for economic development. David Goldberg then proposed the idea of creating a design stemming from what would stimulate development rather than the other way around.
- Craig Hebebrand and Matt Wahl said that throughout the study they will seek to quantify the economic development potential for each of the alternatives but that Alternative 4 began as a way to improve access.

#### 4) Confirmation of Problems and Needs

- Mary Cierebiej, Deputy Project Manager for Opportunity Corridor for HNTB spoke about the Study's goals and objectives. She said that the three (3) goals are Access and Mobility and Economic and Community Development.

## 5) Goals and Objectives of the Study

- Goal 1: Access. There must be more east/west connections in the study area and they must be faster than current routes. Here are the objectives of this goal:
  - Improve access to University Circle employment, healthcare, education and cultural venues.
  - Improve access to the Interstate Highway System.
  - Improve access to the neighborhoods located along the corridor.
- Goal 2: Mobility - Improve, reduce travel time to the interstate highway system and neighborhood. There are congestion issues. Here are the objectives of this goal:
  - Improve mobility between the Interstate Highway System and University Circle.
  - Improve mobility between the neighborhoods located along the corridor and University Circle.
  - Improve mobility between the Interstate Highway System and the neighborhoods located along the corridor.
- Goal 3: Community and Economic Development – Improving University Circle's competitive advantage as well as economically helping the Corridor neighborhoods. This could be achieved by improving movement of people and goods through the Corridor. In turn, this will encourage business development, enhance property values, and attract new residents. Here are the objectives of this goal:
  - Improve the movement of people, goods and materials in and through the corridor.
  - Improve competitiveness of identified development sites.
  - Improve competitiveness of the corridor to attract residents, customers, employees and businesses.
- Craig Hebebrand said the study will quantify the number of property takes versus economic development, cost benefit analysis.
- Bob Baxter, Vice President of Administrative Management of BioEnterprise, a relatively new company headquartered in University Circle, asked if the project goals should be re-organized, putting economic development first. Mille Caraballo added that encouraging such economic development of the neighborhoods was one reason that the project name was changed from University Circle Access Boulevard to Opportunity Corridor and that improved access and mobility will allow for community and economic development.
- Craig Hebebrand explained that the goals were not listed in order of importance.
- Freddy Collier from Cleveland City Planning Commission expressed that the project goals were good and advised to keep them broad.

## 6) Strategic Plan

- Craig Hebebrand discussed the Strategic Plan, which includes:
  - Identifying specific policies, programs and projects,
  - Conducting a cost/benefit analysis,
  - Identifying available resources,

- Determining likelihood of implementation, and establishing a schedule and budget priorities.
- Encouraging CDCs to work toward decisions on whether to rezone land industrial or residential. The city owns 40% of the developable land.
- Identifying sponsors, roles, responsibilities and funds.
- Identifying legal, financial and administrative responsibilities for advancing the recommendation of the plan – it is very complete.
- Craig also expressed how the Strategic Plan includes cooperation from all agencies including public and private components. The study needs a support system implemented in the next 18 months to move the project forward.
- Terri Hamilton Brown (UCI) agreed with Craig and asked the OC Committee to gain support from the policy side and make resources available to move the project forward at the end of this phase of the study.
- Comments/Questions
  - Steps are as follows:
    - (1) Conclusion of the analysis
    - (2) Strategic Plan developed
    - (3) Move from study phase to plan phase.
  - David Goldberg with Ohio Savings Bank asked if money from the Innerbelt Plan can be re-allocated to the Opportunity Corridor since so many people think it is more important. Craig Hebebrand responded, there are no easy trade-offs, but that it can be discussed
  - Robert Jaquay from Gund Foundation asked how this study is included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Metropolitan Planning Organization plan (MPO). Ron Eckner from NOACA said that this phase of the study is in NOACA's TIP because there is funding. Robert then asked how the rest of the project would get on the TIP. Ron responded that funding, a preferred alternative, and a lead agency must be identified and in place for the rest of the project to get on the TIP.
  - Terri Hamilton Brown (UCI) asked if an alignment had to be in place before NOACA can list it. Ron Eckner replied that yes, a final alignment is needed.
  - Question from Committee Board Member: Can ODOT qualify for funding? 80/20 Federal/City? Mike Schipper, Deputy General Manager of the RTA, responded that the prescribed planning phase must be finished before Federal funding can be secured. Federal funding slows process down.
  - David Goldberg asked if no federal funds are used could the process move faster.
  - Steve Strnisha from Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP) said that we have to follow the process and do this the right way. He said it may be possible to choose a preferred alignment faster because we have already had some options shown to us, which is a great start. GCP will be behind this project and will look for funding sources. Terri said that we will need to use our resources as best we can.

- Mike Schipper (CGRTA) asked if an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be done at the end of 18 months. Craig Hebebrand (ODOT) responded that an EIS will not be complete but some of the work will be done.
- The importance of getting the public behind this plan was noted, in light of the failures of the previous plans. The key is to get the recommendation, then the funding and to get it all done as fast as possible.

## 7) Next Steps

- The next meeting will be Working Group Workshop #1 on June 16, 2005 from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Location TBD.
  - Impacts of each corridor will be discussed
- The next full Committee meeting will be held in September, 2005. We will be keeping everyone up to date via e-mail and the website.
- The Power Point presentation for this meeting and other background information will be on [www.innerbelt.org](http://www.innerbelt.org) site by next week.

## Meeting Attendees

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### CUY-Opportunity Corridor Meeting #1 – May 19, 2005

Name	Organization
Robert Jaquay	Gund Foundation
Debbie Berry	Cleveland City Planning Commission
Bob Brown	Cleveland City Planning Commission
Millie Caraballo	Cleveland Industrial Retention Initiative (CIRI)
Mary Cierebiej	HNTB Ohio, Inc.
Freddy Collier	Cleveland City Planning Commission
David Coyle	ODOT, District 12
David Goldberg	Ohio Savings Bank
Terri Hamilton-Brown	University Circle Incorporated (UCI)
James Haviland	Midtown Cleveland
Craig Hebebrand	ODOT, District 12
John Hopkins	Buckeye Area Development Corporation
Jamie Ireland	Early Stage Partners LP
Bruce Loessin	Cleveland Clinic Foundation
Augie Napoli	Cleveland Clinic Foundation
John Motl	ODOT, District 12
Bob Reeves	University Circle Incorporated (UCI)
William Riley	Mt. Sinai Baptist Church/Mt. Sinai Ministries
Mike Schipper	Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA)
Tim Tramble	Burten, Bell, Carr Development Corporation
Matt Wahl	HNTB Ohio, Inc.
Ned Whelan	Whelan Communications
Robert Baxter	BioEnterprise
Lora Hummer	ODOT, District 12
Patrick Zohn	Gateway Consultants
Steve Strnisha	Greater Cleveland Partnership
Richard McNitt	County Commissioner Jones Office
Jacek Ghosh	Fairfax Renaissance Development Corporation (FRDC)
Robert Jackimowicz	Cleveland City Council
Rich Enty	Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA)
Ben Limmer	University Circle Incorporated (UCI)
Mahmoud Al-Lozi	NOACA
Geoff Fitch	Cleveland Industrial Retention Initiative (CIRI)
Jim Benedict	UHC
Marka Fields	Cleveland City Planning Commission
Aubrey Sippola	Whelan Communications
Ron Eckner	NOACA