



REGIONAL REVIEW

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Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson
Metropolitan Planning Commission

Fall 2006

WV DOT MOVES FORWARD IN PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW OHIO RIVER BRIDGE CROSSING

On October 25th, the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) secured the approval of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to proceed with the advertising and hiring of a consultant for further mandatory planning work to construct a new Ohio River Bridge crossing near Wellsburg, WV and Brilliant, Ohio. For the past ten year, this bridge project has been the Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Commission's (BHJ), #1 regional transportation priority.

Due to the pending passage of a new federal highway bill and the administrative reorganization of WVDOT, FHWA approval had been withheld for an extended two year period. According to Jim Sothen, Deputy State Highway Engineer for Development, the selection process should be completed within sixty days.

John Brown, BHJ Executive Director stated "This formal notice moves the bridge crossing project over a significant hurdle. The competition for high ticket priced projects is intense and requires a cooperative and consensus building effort throughout the region. The WVDOT announcement illustrates a commitment to resolve a regional transportation crisis. Backed by a previous \$18 million congressional appropriation by Senators Byrd and Rockefeller, project momentum continues."

The transportation crisis centers upon the proposed demolition of the Ft. Steuben Bridge in Fiscal Year 09, the 100+ year age of the Market Street Bridge and the

limited, below grade access and egress to the Veterans Bridge. Since January 2005, on a bi-monthly basis, BHJ staff, Ohio and West Virginia transportation department staff, private businesses from Half-Moon Industrial Park and local elected officials have met to suggest, fund and construct access improvements in this bridge crisis corridor. For more information, please refer to the BHJ web site www.bhjmpc.org and the category "Bridge Study."

The project construction cost of a new Ohio River bridge crossing is estimated at \$100 million. The proposed mandatory planning study would finalize environmental and location issues. Previous bridge study work has prioritized a need for better access at the Veterans Bridge and the construction of a new Ohio River Bridge crossing near Wellsburg. These priorities were reviewed and approved by a 36 member advisory committee over a 16 public meeting period. The study was led by a nationally recognized transportation firm, Edwards and Kelcey. Key bridge site selection guidelines were mobility, environmental impact, safety, cost effectiveness and regional growth.

In June 2006, load limits on the Ft. Steuben Bridge were reduced to a ten ton maximum. This change effectively closed the bridge to all truck traffic. According to Becky McCarty, Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) Public Information Officer (District 11 Office), "these reductions were necessitated by the continuously deteriorating condition of the bridge and the continual noncompliance

to the posted limits. Unfortunately, since the current load limits have been in effect, violations have continued. Trucks continue to cross the Ft. Steuben Bridge with complete disregard to the posted limits. ODOT is making every effort to keep the bridge open to car traffic until its removal in 09, but if the current violation trend is not reversed, ODOT may find it necessary to close the bridge to all traffic at an earlier date."



The Ft. Steuben Bridge, constructed in 1928, is proposed for demolition in 2009. Matched with the 100+ year age of the Market Street Bridge and access issues at the Veterans Bridge, WVDOT's announcement to progress the construction of a new Ohio River Bridge crossing is welcomed regional news.

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**BHJ METROPOLITAN
PLANNING COMMISSION
OFFICERS—2006**

Gary R. Folden, Chairman
Norma Tarr, Vice Chairman
Ruby Greathouse, Treasurer
Art Miser, Secretary

STAFF

John C. Brown, PhD., AICP
Executive Director
Email: jbrown@bhjmpc.org

Joan E. Cresap, Finance Manager
Email: jcresap@bhjmpc.org

Mary Moore, Receptionist
Email: mmoore@bhjmpc.org

Michael J. Paprocki
Transportation Study Director
Email: mikepap@bhjmpc.org

Shawn Price
Senior Engineering Technician
Email: sprice@bhjmpc.org

David T. Snelting
Transportation Engineer
Email: dsnelting@bhjmpc.org

Linda Taylor
Office Manager/Rideshare
Email: ltaylor@bhjmpc.org

Barb Zimnox
Community Development Specialist
Email: bzimnox@bhjmpc.org

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BHJ Regional Review
124 North 4th Street Second Floor
Steubenville OH 43952-2796
Ohio: (740) 282-3685
WV: (304) 797-9666
Fax: (740) 282-1821
Email: bhjmpc@bhjmpc.org
Website: www.bhjmpc.org

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Through the newspaper, television, on-line news, fax, and a sundry of targeted hard mail information sheets, we're inundated with a variety of opinions and perspectives. Mix this communication barrage with a daily dose of meetings and business obligations, it is challenging but necessary for BHJ to separate the wheat from the chaff and recognize reasonable long-term priorities for our region.

For example, in late August, representatives from Brooke and Hancock counties met to list and set priorities for regional investments. Twenty-seven agencies provided 99 project requests. These projects totaled \$402 million. The top five investment projects were as follows.

- New Ohio River Bridge Crossing. \$100,000,000.
- Route 8 Sewer Project. Hancock County. \$14,400,000.
- Mahan's Lane, Eldersville Rd. & Bruin Drive Sewer Project. Brooke County. \$19,000,000.
- Entrepreneurial (New Business Start-Up) Program. \$70,000.
Redevelopment of Brownfield Sites to Create Jobs. \$3,500,000.

The above priority setting is a prerequisite for federal funding through the U.S. Economic Development Administration and the Appalachian Regional Commission. We complete similar reviews for the U.S. Federal Highway Administration. The competition for dollars to fund these priorities is intense. With unexpected federal obligations to the Iraq War and the massive rebuilding of the Gulf/Katrina region, even previously committed federal appropriations have been reduced or rescinded.

At BHJ, on a daily basis, we are working cooperatively on these and other projects to retain jobs and build our infrastructure. We continue to appreciate our many partners that recognize joint priorities and actively participate in the achievement of these goals.

John Brown, AICP
jbrown@bhjmpc.org

THE CHAIRMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

GARY FOLDEN

On behalf of the entire membership, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. James Sother, West Virginia Department of Transportation, for taking time from his busy schedule to attend our September Full Commission meeting. His comments were extremely informative for the officials in Brooke and Hancock Counties. It was certainly a little depressing for us not to have any of the top ranked projects in our areas. One of the most important issues derived from his presentation is the fact that the West Virginia officials and BHJ representatives must continue to make their voices heard in Charleston. Remember the old saying "the squeaky wheel gets the grease". We need to continually let our representatives know what we need. An orchestrated letter-writing and office visiting campaign should be one of the top priorities of all local officials.



Another item that needs refreshed in

the minds of the membership is the service of grant writing and management provided by the BHJ executive director and staff. The excellent staff and their ability to write, obtain, and manage grants is one of the agency's strongest points. Each member agency should turn to BHJ for assistance in these areas. Why not make use of this valuable asset and make your membership work for you.

Attendance at the monthly Executive

Committee meetings has been somewhat lax over the last several months, so I want to encourage the Executive Committee members to fulfill their obligations to the agency and make a concerted effort to attend the meetings. You are the operational committee that runs the business of the organization and your input is extremely vital to the organization. I look forward to a renewed interest in assisting the agency reach its goals and directives.

Once again, fall is upon us and the leaves begin to show those beautiful reds and yellows. Of course along with the beauty comes the raking and bagging of leaves, but it is well worth it to see such splendor. And the holidays are just around the corner. I don't know about you, but they seem to come faster each year. However, my point is, have a wonderful fall and joyous holiday season.

A GLIMPSE OF OUR TRANSPORTATION FUTURE

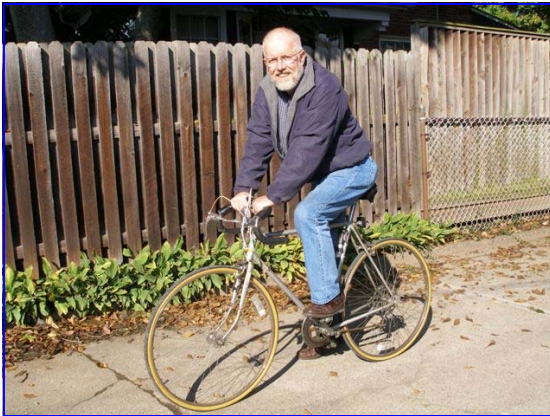
Fred Abouselmann from the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) on August 23rd at the Ohio Transportation Planning Conference provided a picture of our transportation future. Key points included the following statements.

- * Spending tied to hurricane Katrina has hit as much as \$2 billion per day. The pace will slow, but the recovery effort could easily cost the federal government \$150 billion.
- * The fiscal 2006 budget deficit could shoot from \$314 billion to \$400 or more.
- * Chinese freight capabilities will grow by 35% over the next 10 years while the U.S. freight capability will increase 7% over the same time.
- * In 1970, trade was 12.4% of the U.S. gross domestic product (GDP). Today, it is over 25%.
- * Shipment of containerized cargo in and out of the U.S. will increase by more than 350% by 2020.

THE FINDLAY CONNECTOR:

A PERSPECTIVE FROM AN OPENING DAY BICYCLIST

For the BHJ region, the Findlay Connector reduces travel time to the Pittsburgh International Airport and creates further job opportunities. While it's a six-mile \$225 million state-of-the-art superhighway, for one day prior to its official opening, on October 11th, it was opened as a bikeway. Dave Snelting, BHJ's Transportation Planner, participated in this one-day bike challenge and provides his unique perspective.



Question: Why did you want to ride a bike for 12 miles on the Findlay Connector?

Answer: I have been anxiously awaiting the opening of the Findlay Connector. My wife and I travel to the Robinson Township area at least once a month and I have followed the construction progress along US22 from my windshield. I enjoy bike riding although I don't get out often enough. When I read about the "Community Day on the Findlay Connector" to be held on Saturday, October 7th in the Herald Star, I knew I would like to take advantage of the opportunity to see the Findlay Connector before opening day. The bike ride provided me the ability to see the connector up close and at a slow pace.

Question: As an engineer and transportation planner, what was your overall impression of the Findlay Connector?

Answer: The Findlay Connector is built to the latest geometric design standards for interstate highways. The highway was constructed by the PA Turnpike Commission and will be paid for over time through tolls collected by users of the highway. The PA Turnpike Commission is promoting its EZ-PASS system for paying these tolls which eliminates having to come to a complete stop at the toll both. Those not using EZ-PASS can pay by cash (coins or bills) at the toll both. For the trip to the airport, a toll both is located on the ramp just before entering the

connector from US 22. On the return trip the toll both is located on the exit ramp to US22. Observation of the work completed at the US22 interchange reveals provisions for the future extension of the Findlay Connector to Interstate 79 and the Mon-Fayette Expressway. Both of these sections are currently in the Environmental Study phase. These sections will open up access to the area southwest of Pittsburgh and provide access to Interstate 68 in West Virginia as well as Interstate 76 (PA Turnpike) east of Pittsburgh.

Question: How do you see the Findlay Connector benefiting the BHJ Region?

Answer: The Findlay Connector makes the Pittsburgh International Airport very accessible to the Steubenville-Weirton area. People who have driven the Findlay Connector after opening day indicate a round trip from Steubenville to the airport can be made in one hour. Those taking either business or pleasure airline trips can now access the airport without delay or stopping from the Steubenville-Weirton region. The Steubenville-Weirton



area enjoys being in a location where many large city amenities such as the airport and downtown Pittsburgh are within one hour drive of the area. These large city assets can be taken advantage of when desired, while still living in a small community without major traffic congestion issues.

ODOT & WVDOT BUSY WITH ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

State Route 43 On October 18, ODOT District 11 announced the traffic pattern on State Route 43 in Wintersville would be changed as part of the widening and intersection improvement work on State Route 43, Two Ridge Road and State Route 646. Both lanes have width restrictions of ten feet, and Woody Acre residents will now access State Route 43 from a new service road.

This is the next step in the plan to widen SR 43 to five lanes, realign the intersection of that road with Two Ridge Road and SR 646 as well as install new traffic signals.

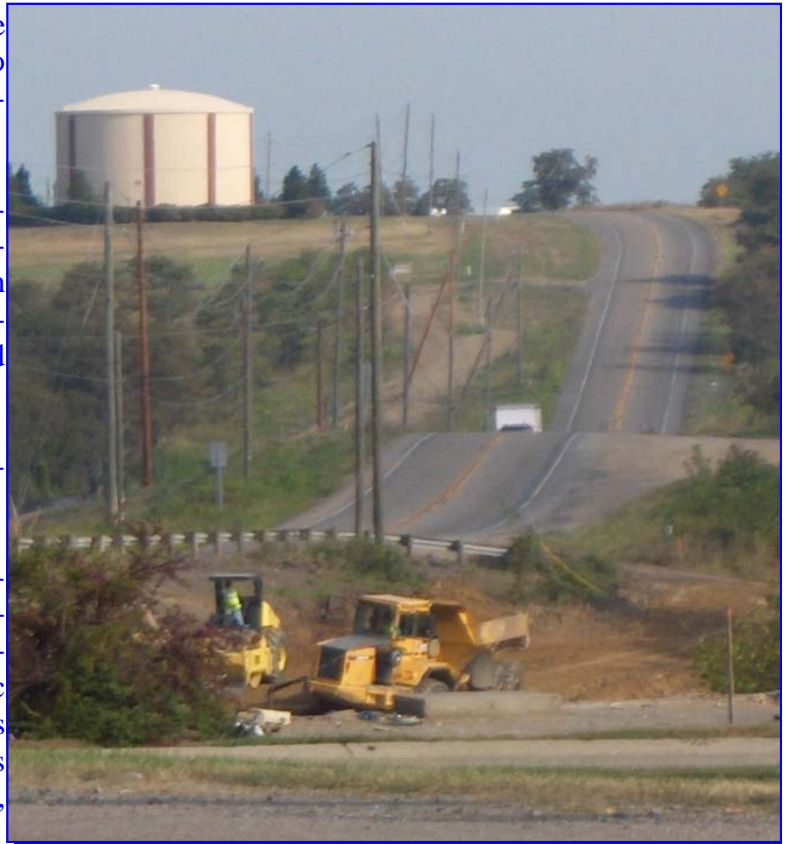
ODOT's contractor, Shelly & Sands, Inc., from Zanesville, Ohio, expects the \$5.2 million project to be complete by September 30, 2007. Until then, motorists can expect many changes, but once completed they will experience a more efficient traffic flow, less congestion and improved safety.

On the other side of the river, the WVDOT is busy making improvements as well.

Freedom Way Intersection- Located in the City of Weirton at the intersection of Freedom Way and West Virginia Route 2, the project will widen the existing intersection and improve traffic signals. WVDOT expects traffic to be maintained with little delays. The contractor, James White Construction of Weirton, West Virginia, expects this \$380,281.11 project to be completed by mid-May, 2007.

Three Springs Drive Bridge The existing bridge over US 22 at Three Springs Drive (County Route 13) in Weirton,

West Virginia will be widened and re-decked. Additional work will consist of grading, drainage, paving, signing, pavement markings, lighting and traffic signals. Motorists can expect detours and delays during construction. This \$3,448,078.55 project was awarded to Ohio-West Virginia of Powhatan Point, Ohio and is expected to be complete in late October, 2007.



Ohio SR 43 near WalMart Distribution Center

FALL 2006 CALENDAR

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE ON ELECTION DAY—TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH!!!!

November 8	BHJ Executive Committee Meeting	Noon
November 10	Veteran's Day Observed—BHJ Office Closed	
November 15	TAC Full Commission	10:30 Noon
November 23 –24	Thanksgiving Holiday—BHJ Office Closed	
December 5	BHJ Executive Committee	Noon
December 25	Christmas—BHJ Office Closed	

COMMUTE INFO HAS TRANSPORTATION ANSWERS

CommuteInfo is a program of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, operated in partnership with transportation management associations, transportation providers, businesses and non-profit service organizations throughout Southwestern PA. CommuteInfo is dedicated to increasing the number of commuters in [Southwestern PA](#) sharing a ride to work. The goal is for commuters living, working or attending school within the [10-county SPC region](#) to choose ridesharing at least twice a week by providing them with viable options, incentives and encouragement.

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission has been promoting commuting alternatives since the early 1970s. Through the efforts of many partners, we estimate that we have helped thousands of people find alternatives to getting to work or school since that time. According to the 2000 Census, there are 5,045 people who travel from Brooke, Hancock and Jefferson counties into Southwestern PA for work. That is a lot of people and a lot of cars on the road (and does not include the people traveling to work in the reverse direction from SW PA into those counties).

The CommuteInfo program is designed to help all commuters who have one part of their work or school com-



Lisa Kay Schweyer, CommuteInfo Program Developer

mute ending within the region. Our partnership with BHI has allowed us to help reach commuters from the Steubenville-Weirton area making these kinds of commutes. We currently have 6 vanpools traveling from Steubenville-Weirton into downtown Pittsburgh and/or Oakland every day. As part of the CommuteInfo program, the vanpool participants are also eligible for the regional Emergency Ride Home service.

If anyone is interested in learning more about the commuting alternatives available to them or their company, please give us a call. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you.

USEDA ADMINISTRATOR TALKS REGIONALISM



Clockwise (from left) Bill Phipps, Bel-O-Mar Regional Council; John Brown, BHI; U.S. Assistant Secretary Sandy Baruah; Jim Hall, WV Region VI; and Stephanie Powers, Southern Alleghenies Planning Council

On September 5th, at the invitation of Sandy K. Baruah, U.S. Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development, a consortium of Pennsylvania-Virginia-West Virginia regional directors met to discuss first-hand issues. Mr. Baruah's prepared comments included the following statement:

“Through collaboration – regional collaboration. We must acknowledge what we all learned on the elementary school playground, that we are stronger when we stand together than when we stand alone. We need to look beyond traditional political jurisdictions – the city boundary, the county line, even the division between States – and work together.”

COMMUNITY PROFILE: RICHMOND, OHIO

The Village of Richmond, Ohio population (441 as of the 2000 US Census) hasn't changed much from the 1800s. When Joseph Talbott bought the land in 1799, he paid \$2.50 an acre and settled there in 1800. However, it wasn't until 1815 the he had the area laid out as a town with sixty-foot wide streets and lots of 60 x 106 feet. Once the work was completed, the town was named "Richmond."

The first building was a log house built by B. Hartman and located on the corner of Sugar and Main Streets. By 1817, there were five families living in the little town.

When Richmond was incorporated in 1835, there was a population of about 200. It was a local center with industries such as pottery, pork packing and wool dealing—and it had an established college. By 1850, the population had risen to 514.

Around 1830, the Rev. John C. Tidball determined Richmond would be a desirable location for his small academy. The basement of the old M.E. Church was leased for two years. In 1845, a committee was appointed to purchase a building site. Two lots located on the east side of Sugar Street (owned by Joseph Talbott) were purchased

for \$60.00, and a half-acre plot was donated by Thomas Hammond. A brick building was finished in June of that year.

The property was conveyed to Mr. L.W. Ong in 1872 with the understanding it would be used solely for educational purposes. Mr. Ong then donated an acre tract of his land and an additional eleven acres adjoining the property was purchased for a new school. A two-story brick college building and three-story frame boarding hall (large enough for 50 students) was erected on a knoll making it visible to those approaching from the east. The Sugar Street property was sold to the school district for public school purposes and used for approximately ten years before it was torn down.

The Village history is kept alive today by the Richmond Historical Society at the Crew House Museum located on Main Street (740-765-4834). There you can learn about the Quaker Days or Chief Logan and how an incident involving his family help spur Lord Dunmore's War in 1774.

Nearby is Jefferson State Lake with 18miles of trails—and where Chief Logan and the Mingo Indians once lived.

SCENES FROM THE PAST



COLLEGE, RICHMOND



LOG CABIN NEAR RICHMOND
(Residence of James Gray)



POST OFFICE, RICHMOND



MAIN STREET, RICHMOND



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Editor: Linda Taylor
Regional Review
BHJ Metropolitan Planning Commission
124 North Fourth Street Second Floor
Steubenville, OH 43952
740-282-3685
www.bhjmpe.org

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Related Web Sites

Appalachian Regional Commission
www.arc.gov

Brooke Pioneer Trail Assoc. Inc
www.brookepioneertrail.org

**Business Development Corporation of the
Northern Panhandle**
www.bhbdc.org

CHANGE, Inc.
www.changeinc.org

City of Steubenville
www.ci.steubenville.oh.us

Hancock County Convention and Visitors Bureau
www.hancockcvb.com

Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce
www.jeffersoncountychamber.com

Ohio Department of Transportation
www.dot.state.oh.us

Progress Alliance
www.progressalliance.com

State of Ohio Government Information
www.state.oh.us

State of West Virginia Government Info.
www.state.wv.us

State Route 2 & Interstate 68 Authority
www.route2andi68.com

U.S. Census Bureau
www.census.gov

U.S. Department of Transportation
www.dot.gov

Village of Wintersville
www.wintersville.net

Weirton Chamber of Commerce
www.weirtonchamber.com

West Virginia Department of Transportation
www.wvdot.com

West Virginia Development Office
www.wvdo.org