

REGIONAL REVIEW

Volume 13, Issue 3

Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson
Metropolitan Planning Commission

Summer 2012

FHWA, ODOT AND WVDOT TO HOLD INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOPS FOR PROPOSED NEW OHIO RIVER BRIDGE CROSSING



Informational Public Workshop Meetings

And Availability of the Approved Environmental Assessment
And Draft Section 4(f) De Minimis Analysis

Proposed Ohio River Bridge Crossing Bridge
Brooke County, WV
Jefferson County, OH

Date: Monday, August 27, 2012

Time: 5:00-8:00pm (no formal presentation)

Where: North Elementary School Auditorium,
1004 3rd Street, Brilliant, OH

and

Date: Tuesday, August 28, 2012

Time: 5:00-8:00pm (no formal presentation)

Where: Wellsburg Middle School Gymnasium,
1447 Main Street, Wellsburg, WV

Project Background

The idea of an additional Ohio River Crossing, south of Wellsburg, emerged when two major studies were completed by the BHJ-MPO to evaluate the transportation system in the Upper Ohio Valley Region. These reports identified the long-term bridge planning needs for the region and included a priority to construct a new Ohio River Bridge, south of Wellsburg. As a result of public comments and agency comments, four alternatives remain: Build Alternatives 2, 2B, 8 and 8B. This meeting is to discuss these alternatives and their environmental impacts, with Build Alternative 8B being considered the Preferred Alternative.

Those wishing to file written comments may send them to Gregory Bailey, P.E., Director, Engineering Division, West Virginia Division of Highways, Capitol Complex Building 5, Room A-317, 1900 Kanawha Boulevard East, Charleston, West Virginia 25305-0430 on or before Friday, September 28, 2012. Visit the WVDOH Website at <http://go.wv.gov/dotcomment> for project information and the opportunity to comment electronically.

The Federal Highway Administration, Ohio Department of Transportation and the West Virginia Division of Highways are jointly holding two Informational Workshops to introduce the Environmental Assessment and Draft Section 4(f) De Minimis Analysis document for a proposed Ohio River Bridge between Brooke County, WV and Jefferson County, OH. A preferred bridge corridor will be revisited. The meeting dates and locations are Monday August 27th at the North Elementary School Auditorium, 1004 3rd Street Brilliant, OH and Wellsburg Middle Gymnasium, 1447 Main Street Wellsburg, WV. The scheduled times for both workshops are from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. There will be no formal presentation. Participants attending the workshops will have an opportunity to ask questions and state their views and opinions on the Preferred Alternative #8B as well as view the approved Environmental Assessment on the project.

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To view the Environmental Assessment documentation prior to the meeting go to the BHJ Bridge Study page at:

<http://www.bhjmpc.org/Newsite2/Projects/bridgestudy.html>

Or visit the WVDOH Website at:

<http://www.transportation.wv.gov/comments>

And select:

**Comment on
Engineering Projects**

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This edition of the *BHJ Regional Review* clearly illustrates a changing regional economy and investments adapting to these changes.

On page one, a new round of public information meetings for a new Ohio River Bridge is summarized. It's been three years since our last round of meetings. Over these three years, an extensive environmental assessment and evaluation of potential intrusions has been considered. This round offers the public an opportunity to comment upon the recommended bridge touchdown points

and its regional impact. If publicly approved, the proposed new Ohio River Bridge, as our #1 regional transportation priority, will move toward a crucial and essential point called a FONSI. While a transportation insider's acronym for "Finding of No Significance", the FONSI will allow the Federal Highway Administration and the state DOT's to move toward a final design and right-of-way acquisition.

On page four and five, West Virginia's most highly touted brownfield project (Taylor, Smith and Taylor Pottery site at Chester, WV) is overviewed. With a diversity of financial participation from the US Environmental Protection Agency to the Hancock County Commission to West Virginia's Northern Brownfield Assistance Center, this long-standing community and environmental challenge has gathered over \$1.2 million in demolition and redevelopment funds. It's a true community success story.

On page six, the BHJ Transportation Study Director, articulates the federal push to sustain our highway and bridge infrastructure. Highways and bridges move our economy. They sustain jobs. To this point, Congress passed MAP 21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century). MAP 21 is the first long-term highway authorization since 2005.

Finally, on page 7, the silent new infrastructure called "broadband" is introduced. If you haven't been paying close attention, you may have missed the recent fiber investment in our region and statewide programs like Connect *Ohio* to move us into an enhanced digital age.



John C. Brown

Executive Director
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ATTENDS EDA CONFERENCE



On July 10th, BHJ Executive Director John Brown attended the regional conference for the US Economic Development Administration in Philadelphia. Pictured from l to r are Pat Ford, Executive Director of the /Business Development Corporation of the Northern Panhandle; Willie Taylor, Director for US EDA Region 3; Ann Cavalier, US EDA State Rep for West Virginia; and John Brown. With an audience of over 600 and inclusive of six states, the conference provided updates on creative funding opportunities, preparing for a changing economy and a plenary message from US EDA Secretary Matt Erskine.

BHJ OFFICE IS DESIGNATED OUTPOST FOR ACCESS 2040

COLUMBUS (Monday, August 13, 2012) – The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), as part of updating its long-range transportation plan, is seeking public comment on the future of Ohio’s transportation system.

Access Ohio 2040, the newest version of ODOT’s long-range transportation plan, is currently being updated and expected to be finalized summer of 2013. The plan will help set the stage for ODOT transportation policies and investment strategies for the coming years. Access Ohio 2040 is an update to the previous plan, Access Ohio 2030, which was released in 2004. The new plan will include the latest data to forecast trends and analyze issues affecting transportation throughout the state.

The public will be given multiple opportunities over the next year to provide input into the development of Access Ohio 2040. A survey on customer preferences for the future of transportation in Ohio is currently available on the Access Ohio website, <http://access.ohio.gov>. The documents may be reviewed at the BHJ office, 124 North Fourth Street from 8:00-a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

BDC RECEIVES \$200,000 BROWNFIELD CLEANUP GRANT

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on July 11 gave a \$200,000 brownfields cleanup grant to the Business Development Corp. of the Northern Panhandle that will be used to help clean up hazardous substances.

The funding is supporting cleanup of the former Taylor, Smith and Taylor (TS&T) Pottery site at 8th and Plutus Streets near downtown Chester, which has been vacant for more than 20 years. The site is being demolished and developed so the property can be used for future business activities.

The site was used as a ceramic pottery manufacturing facility from 1900 until operations ceased in 1982. The facility is contaminated with metals and inorganic contaminants. Grant funds also will be used for reuse planning and community outreach activities.

"This funding will help the Business Development Corporation of the Northern Panhandle spearhead cleanup activities at an abandoned industrial site that has been vacant and underutilized in the Chester community for more than 20 years," EPA mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator Shawn M. Garvin said in a news release. "Our brownfields resources target communities where environmental cleanups and new jobs are most needed and where our investments will have the greatest effect on the health and economy of the area."

It was once a major employer in Hancock County where workers produced pottery that was shipped all over the United States. Since it closed in 1982, the TS&T Pottery facility sat silent, empty and in decay until it was demolished earlier this summer. Hopefully, the property will be given new life and be developed for a new thriving business.



laurelholltopark.net



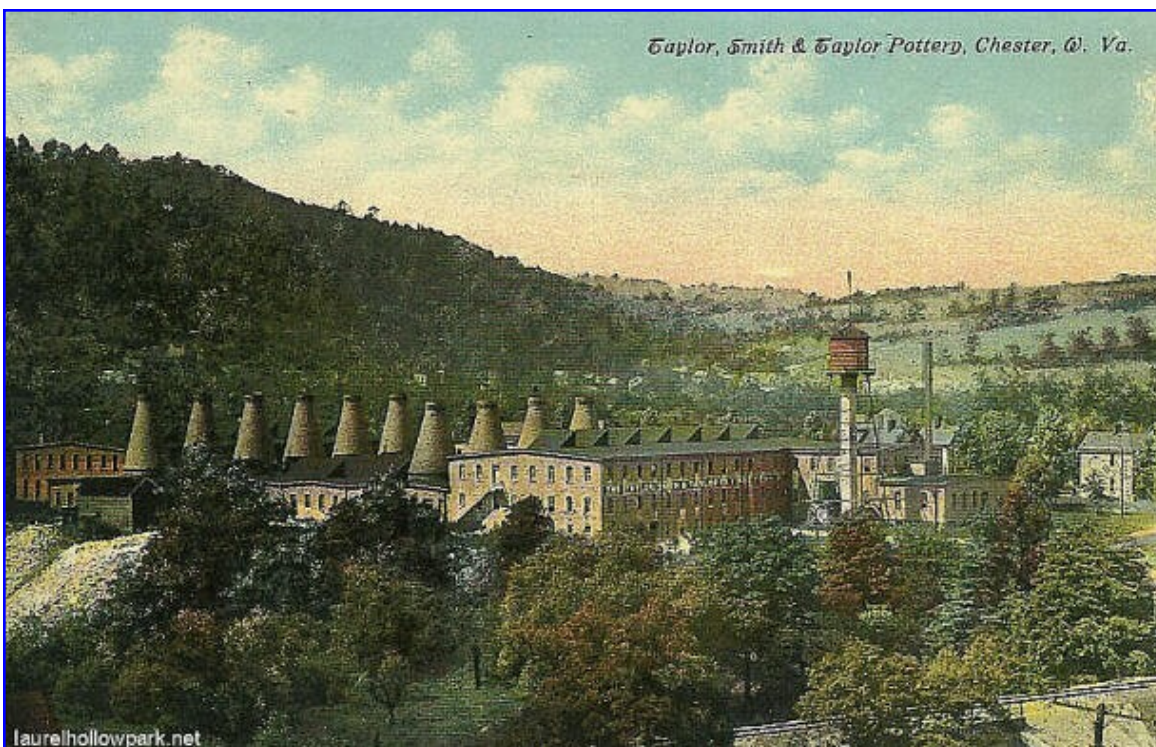
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THE STORY BEHIND TS&T POTTERY

All photos and history are from the Laurel Hollow Park website (<http://www.laurelhollowpark.net>) and used with their permission. From that website, some information is taken directly from an article written by Lucille T. Cox in 1938 that appeared in several trade publications.

In 1895 the town of Chester was laid out and work was started on the suspension bridge to be built across the Ohio River. The bridge was opened to the public in January 1897 and immediately industrial enterprises became interested in obtaining sites in the new town. A rolling mill was built and followed by the Edwin M. Knowles China Company. The Smith brothers, William and Charles, believed there was room for another pottery and were able to convince several influential men from East Liverpool in the proposition. On October 26, 1899, *The Tribune*, the local newspaper of East Liverpool, reported the articles of incorporation has been filed with the Secretary of State in Columbus. The original owners were Col. John Taylor, C.A. Smith, Joseph G. Lee, Albert G. Mason and William Smith. The firm would be known as the Taylor, Lee & Smith Company.

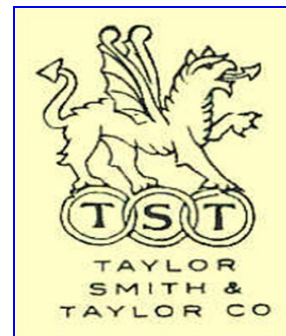
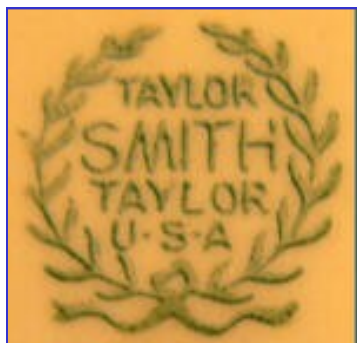
It was many months before the pottery company was ready to begin operations. The contract for the building was given in December of 1899 and on the 25th of January, 1900, work was begun on the new pottery. On June 21 the eight kilns of Taylor, Lee & Smith were completed and July 5 the artesian well had been bored and piped. On the 13th of September the slip house started operation and the first clay was made. During the fall, the warehouses were stocked but nothing was shipped until January 1901.



The pottery made dinnerware, hotel ware, toilet sets and specialty pieces. In the late 1920's, the toilet wares and specialty items (spittoons, plaques, cracker jars, etc) were phased out. From then until closing, mainly dinnerware sold in department stores, five and dimes, hardware stores and through catalogs were produced.

In 1901, the name of the pottery was changed when Joseph Lee withdrew from the firm. A resolution was passed renaming it Taylor, Smith & Taylor Company, Potters. In 1971, Anchor Hocking purchased the plant as a tax write-off and eventually closed it in 1981.

Collectors of TS&T Pottery will find one of the two logos on the bottom of the of their pieces.





MOVING AHEAD FOR PROGRESS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

By: Michael Paprocki, BHJ Transportation Study Director

On July 6, 2012, President Obama signed into law MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act) authorizing \$105 billion in funding for surface transportation programs for Federal Fiscal Years 2013-2014. MAP-21 is the first long-term highway authorization since 2005 and breaks from traditional legislation authorizing federal transportation programs for six-year periods.

BHJ is pleased that MAP-21 supports population thresholds that maintain the designations of Metropolitan Planning Organizations at 50,000 or greater. This provision ensures that small MPO planning areas such as BHJ continue to support the local decision process of selecting and developing surface transportation projects through collective and collaborative process. This provision continues the requirements for a metropolitan long-range plan and a short-term transportation improvement program or TIP. Continuation of the MPO planning process in areas such as BHJ ensures that elected officials, administrators and interested citizens at the local level continue to participate in the public involvement process for the selection of transportation projects and programs that support the needs of small urban areas.

On the other hand, for the first time in recent memory, MAP-21 contains no congressional earmarks by federal representatives in the House or Senate. In other words, there is no specific funding in the new bill set aside for regionally significant projects such as a New Ohio River Bridge, access improvement to the Veterans Memorial Bridge or reconstruction of the Collier Way Bridge over US-22 in Weirton, WV,

Further, MAP-21 does not increase the federal gasoline tax that has remained constant at 19.5 cents per gallon since 1995. Therefore, the bill encourages States and local governments to raise transportation improvement funds through other sources such as public/private partnerships and tolling. With no increase in revenues to the Highway Trust Fund account, state and local highway agencies will focus on maintaining existing infrastructure and seek low-cost and innovative ways to improve or expand their respective transportation networks.

MAP-21 redefines three surface transportation programs: Federal Highway's Transportation Enhancement Activities and two Federal Transit programs—Job Access and Reverse Commute and New Freedom.

MAP-21 redefines the Transportation Enhancement Activity program as Transportation Alternatives. MAP-21 eliminates four previously eligible activities: pedestrian and bicycle safety and educational programs; acquisition of scenic or historic easements and sites; scenic or historic highway programs including tourist and welcome centers and the establishment of transportation museums.

MAP-21 repeals two Federal Transit programs: Job Access and Reverse Commute and New Freedom. The legislation redefines JARC projects and eligible under the Urban Area Formula program locally administered by two designated recipients: the Steel Valley Regional Transit Authority and the City of Weirton, WV. MAP-21 merges the New Freedom Program and redefines FTS's 5310 Program now called Formula Grants for the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities.

MAP-21 restructures many of the core surface transportation programs carried out by the Federal Highway and Transit. Over the next 12 to 18 months, each agency will create new guidance and redefine the future of transportation planning.

THE PUSH IS ON: BROADBAND EXPANSION ABOUNDS

While roads and bridges are commonly characterized as infrastructure, broadband, an exploding wireless opportunity for residents and business has increasingly taken root in the BHJ region. In the fall, at the request of the West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey, the Brooke-Hancock Regional Planning Council will hire a consultant to coordinate a broadband need study. On both sides of the Ohio River, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration has leveraged stimulus dollars to expand physical fiber.

The Weirton Area Port Authority is under consideration by the Federal Communication Commission to become a facilities-based international communications carrier. In early August, the Mary Weir Library, an anchor institution with key fiber access, applied for a West Virginia Technical Assistance Broadband Grant to promote their extensive resources through an online collaborative.

According to Connect Ohio, Jefferson County has 46 percent of its residents using broadband access at home, but there also is a 32 percent slice of the county population that says it does not use the internet at all. While 68 percent of Jefferson County residents own a computer and access the Internet, the statewide averages are 80 percent ownership and 82 percent accessing the Internet.

WHAT IS BROADBAND? The term broadband commonly refers to high-speed Internet access that is always on and faster than the traditional dial-up access. Broadband provides access to the highest quality Internet services—streaming media, VoIP (Internet phone), gaming, and interactive services. Many of these current and newly-developing services require the transfer of large amounts of data that may not be technically feasible with dial-up service. Therefore, broadband service may be increasingly necessary to access the full range of services and opportunities that the Internet can offer.



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Planning Commission

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SUMMER/FALL CALENDAR

September 3	Labor Day—BHJ Office Closed	
September 10	Executive Committee	Noon
September 26	Technical Advisory Committee Full Commission	10:30 Noon
October 1	Executive Committee	Noon
October 10	ANNUAL DINNER	6:30
November 5	Executive Committee	Noon
November 28	Technical Advisory Committee Full Commission	10:30 Noon

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the image below.



Appalachian Regional Commission
www.arc.gov

Brooke County Economic Development Authority
www.brookewv.org

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.cityofsteubenville.us

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.ohio.gov

State of West Virginia Government Info.
www.wv.gov

Top of WV Convention and Visitors Bureau
www.topofwv.com

U.S. Census Bureau
www.census.gov

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

U.S. Economic Development Administration
www.commerce.gov

Village of Wintersville
www.wintersville.net

Weirton Area Port Authority
www.wapainc.org

Weirton Chamber of Commerce
www.weirtonchamber.com

West Virginia Department of Transportation
www.transportation.wv.gov

West Virginia Development Office
www.wvdo.org

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