

# Memorandum

**Date:** February 21, 2025

**Subject:** South State Road and Bailey Road Corridor Studies

**Re:** Planning Commission Presentation – February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025

During the February 4<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting, the City had OHM Advisors present the proposed corridor recommendations for South State Road and Bailey Road corridors. Following the presentation, those in attendance had the opportunity to ask questions and give comments. The City and consultant team summarized the most frequently asked questions and addressed them below.

1. What is a Road Diet?
  - a. A road diet reduces the number of vehicular travel lanes or width of a road to improve safety, accessibility, and overall usability for different types of users. For this project, a road diet would convert a four-lane roadway into a three-lane roadway by reconfiguring the pavement markings. The additional paved area stripped off to vehicular traffic can be allocated for on-street parking or curbs can be moved in to provide room for additional landscaping or sidewalk widening.
2. What are the effects of lane reduction on emergency response services?
  - a. Multi-lane undivided roads can be problematic for emergency responders, as drivers may not be aware of protocols for allowing emergency vehicles to pass. Reducing the number of lanes can improve response times by allowing emergency vehicles to bypass traffic by using the center two-way left-turn lane.
3. Were bicycle infrastructure installations considered as part of the corridor study?
  - a. The consultant team and steering committee investigated options for installing bicycle infrastructure as part of the proposed recommendations. Ultimately, these options were not further explored due to right-of-way restrictions and lack of support from the engagement results.
4. Removing or reducing the number of lanes on the corridor will increase traffic congestion.
  - a. Depending on traffic volumes, reducing the number of lanes and introducing a center turn lane can improve traffic flow and not adversely affect travel times within a corridor. The current 4-lane configuration often has the outside lane blocked for left turning vehicles given the numerous access points (driveways/entrances). The dedicated turn lane removes turning traffic from the flow of traffic which often improves the overall efficiency of the corridor. Additionally, lane reconfiguration reduces the amount of weaving between lanes and creates a more predictable flow with fewer sudden stops.



5. What would the impacts be on the corridor bus routes?
  - a. During the study, there were a few options examined to further integrate the bus route into the corridor, which included a bus only lane. It was determined that further studies in coordination with Akron Metro are needed to best determine the bus route application for the corridor. In the recommended condition (3-lane roadway) bus stops would be accommodated with a bus pull-off. This allows buses to pick up and drop off transit riders without blocking traffic in the through lane.
6. What would the impacts be to business deliveries on the corridor?
  - a. The proposed recommendation (the road diet) can appropriately accommodate delivery movements and methods. Additional stakeholder and business engagement will be required to understand the locations and delivery times for the businesses along the corridor. Delivery parking areas, which could be located on an adjacent alley, side street, dedicated curb lane (or on-street parking lane) or within the center turn lane, would be designated and/or designed at necessary within the corridor to accommodate businesses.
7. A road diet may divert traffic from the area, affecting economic growth.
  - a. A road diet can drastically improve a corridor's quality of life and the area's appeal. For the majority of road diets, the average daily traffic count remains constant and improves the overall functionality of the corridor. (additional reading materials can be found here: [https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road\\_diets/guidance/info\\_guide/ch2.cfm](https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road_diets/guidance/info_guide/ch2.cfm) and <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/other/road-diets>)
8. What would the impacts be to local businesses during constriction if a corridor project proceeds?
  - a. In any type of roadway or corridor project, construction will have impacts on the local business and surrounding neighborhood. A road diet utilizes the existing pavement so construction activities are often limited to resurfacing and new pavement markings, meaning this method can be less impactful than a complete reconstruction of a roadway. The existing pavement width will likely provide adequate width to maintain traffic and access through the majority of construction. The City would work to minimize impacts to the best of their ability through a detailed maintenance of traffic plan that the contractor will be required to follow.
9. Can short-term projects move forward without a larger corridor project?
  - a. Yes. Smaller projects, which could include improving signal timing at key intersections, crosswalk enhancements, and general beautification, could still move forward without a larger lane reduction or corridor project.



10. Can there still be beautification at intersections if the configuration remains the same?

- a. Yes. At intersections where the lane configurations and movements remain the same as they are today, improvements and beautification can still be implemented. This includes, but is not limited to, improved crosswalk painting/design, longer pedestrian crossing timing, increased lighting, and landscaping. Figure 1 shows an example of an enhanced intersection as part of a larger streetscape project where improvements included landscaping, enhanced crosswalks, and signal crossing without changing the lane configuration at the intersection.



*Figure 1 - Intersection design*

11. Could a short-term, temporary project be launched?

- a. The City could conduct a “pop-up” or demonstration project to assess the impacts of fully implementing the proposed recommendation. Figure 2 shows an example of the implementation of paint and plastic delineator posts to showcase temporary roadway designs. Figure 3 shows an example from Springfield, MA, where they used construction barrels to test a proposed new configuration.



*Figure 2 - Paint and plastic delineator posts*



*Figure 3 - Example from Springfield, MA*