

City officials talk future Sunbury Parkway

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A potential west industrial park connection to the proposed Sunbury Parkway may be at Kintner Parkway next to where Newman Roofing is currently being built.

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The next steps for the future Sunbury Parkway were discussed during a recent City of Sunbury Services Committee meeting.

Engineer Bob Kuederle gave an update on Sunbury Parkway, with an emphasis on the new high school. Traffic for the proposed parkway would dump into Cherry Street and Miller Drive, he said. Kuederle described Cherry Street as the major west gateway into the city.

A traffic impact study estimated that it took about \$4 million in construction costs to do all the road improvements around the school campuses to meet the needs of the new high school, primarily at Miller Drive and Cherry Street. Kuederle said the initial planning was important to avoid building a traffic signal only to have to add another one later.

Also examined was the land annexed for the parkway in the west, which was approved by the then-village in 2016. As the map was shown at the meeting, Mayor Joe St. John said the future land use plan had the foresight to accommodate the new high school, even though it wasn't said to be in the works at that time.

"If this thoroughfare plan builds itself out a little more, we've also got a west connection into the industrial park (on Kintner) that somehow gets to 36/37," Kuederle said. "We've also got to punch through to (route) 61 to the east. Bringing the other two connections online may reduce the craziness at Miller, which would be a good thing."

A map of routes 3 and 36/37 was looked at, with seven possible points of interest in terms of possible connections. "I totally agree with the scope of what we're looking at," St. John said, noting that something needs to be done with Cheshire Road. "We need to keep the traffic flowing, and the traffic is not going away."

Concluding, Kuederle said an updated picture of future traffic based on all influences needs to be taken into account.

"We know what the traffic is from the school. Other development and growth, which is one thing one of the fastest-growing communities isn't going to want to neglect," Kuederle said. "If we could see the whole picture, we could favorably position this for outside funding."

He said those communities that "have their ducks in a row" are more likely to get funding.

St. John said the approach would then be to get infrastructure in place first, so the city gets the development it wants to go in along the parkway and recouping the costs on the back end. He pointed to Dublin and New Albany as examples of cities getting what they asked for.

According to the Ohio Department of Transportation's major new construction list, the Sunbury Parkway project is considered to be Tier 1, with \$10 million committed for right-of-way acquisition in 2024, and \$21.9 million in local funding through tax-increment financing.

According to a "Competitive Advantage Projects" sheet, the Sunbury Parkway and interchange would cost a total of \$165 million and is considered to be shovel ready. The phasing plan, issued by ODOT, estimates completion in six phases in 2035.

It was said during the meeting that a consultant is currently working on the design for Phase 1, which is the new bridge and set of ramps for the interchange. Another consultant is studying environment impacts, a thorough nine-month process. These should be ready by the end of the year or early next year. Construction could start by 2024, it was said.