

Local road projects may get funds

By Gary Budzak - February 6, 2024



The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) announced that the Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) has approved a draft list of 18 projects to receive new funding commitments, including a few impacting central Ohio.

Most notable to Gazette readers is \$5 million requested in additional funding for construction of the I-71 at Sunbury Parkway project in Delaware County. The 2025 project is described by ODOT as a "new service interchange south of U.S. 36/S.R. 37."

Nearby in Franklin and Licking counties, \$5 million in preliminary engineering has also been requested this year for state Route 161. This project would "widen the highway from four to six lanes between U.S. 62 and S.R. 37."

This would be between New Albany, Johnstown and Alexandria.

The costliest request, at \$22.5 million, is for construction at the north outer belt in 2025. This would be for ramp widening from I-270 east to I-71 north in Franklin County.

In all, the grand total of the draft list projects is \$127,300,000. A total of 28 projects were submitted.

"The public can comment on the draft list by emailing trac@dot.ohio.gov until February 23, 2024," ODOT said this week. "TRAC will vote on the final list at their February 28 meeting."

If approved by TRAC, this would be the latest round of infrastructure investments for Intel.

"Ohio Governor Mike DeWine and ODOT announced \$90 million for transportation investments in the area surrounding Intel's future campus, known as the Silicon Heartland," the governor's office announced last July. "This is the latest in a long list of funding commitments and investments in this region."

"The bulk of the investment, \$66 million, will fund projects on local roadways in Delaware, Franklin, and Licking counties," the news release continued. "This investment includes reconstructing roadways, improving the safety and efficiency of intersections, and making sure the local roadway network has the capacity to address the demands of this rapidly growing area of Ohio. ... The remaining \$24 million will be used by ODOT to advance projects that create safer intersections and expand key corridors..."

ODOT said the latest roadway improvements in the Silicon Heartland is the closure of Jug Street at the beginning of February for three days to reconstruct a culvert.

"Two-way traffic on Mink Street will be maintained," ODOT said on Jan. 26. "Two-way traffic will also be maintained on Jug Street, but there will be no access from Jug Street to Mink Street. Residents living within this corridor will have access maintained to their properties at all times from the east (no Mink Street access)."