September 4, 2018

Re: Intersection of Mad River Road and Alex Bell Road
    Results of Public Meeting and Comment Period

Dear Property Owner or Interested Party;

First, I want to thank everyone who took the time to attend the public meeting on June 20, or to provide us with comments after the meeting. We wanted to know and understand any concerns and questions that you had about this intersection, and you certainly provided that.

As many of you who came to the meeting, or viewed our website, may know, this Office presented three possible alternatives to remedy the traffic congestion and high crash rate regularly experienced at this intersection: 1) a traffic signal with left turn lanes; 2) a modern roundabout (referred to as Alternate 2A); and 3) another modern roundabout (referred to as alternate 2B). Another option, of course, was to leave the intersection as is. This Office’s preferred alternative, based on our collective engineering experience, knowledge of the County’s roadway system, preliminary engineering, traffic studies, and estimated costs, was the modern roundabout 2A.

We received written comments from about one hundred people, and several other persons provided input at the meeting. Although there were some persons who preferred that the intersection remain a four-way stop, a strong majority of responders expressed their belief that something should be done to improve the flow of traffic at this intersection. Of those, the comments were essentially split between the roundabout and a traffic signal. Those living in the neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the intersection heavily favored a roundabout over a traffic signal, while those living further away from the intersection preferred a traffic signal.

Given this input, this Office still believes that the modern roundabout is the best choice, in that it is suitable for the traffic volume in the area and would perform better in reducing crashes and relieving congestion than a traffic signal.
The most commonly heard objection to a roundabout was the opinion that no one would be able to drive in them, especially since there are no roundabouts in Montgomery County and some drivers are unfamiliar with them. Several people complained that roundabouts are too confusing and that elderly drivers won’t be able to handle them. Roundabouts, however, are being regularly built all over the United States, and in many areas in Ohio, including neighboring Warren and Butler Counties. For example, the Butler County Engineer has built 14 roundabouts to date, and found that the rate of crashes dropped by 60 percent, with injury crashes being reduced by 80%. In fact, large reductions in crashes and injuries have been documented all across the nation. I’m confident that the drivers in Montgomery County are as good as anywhere in Ohio, or for that matter, anywhere in the country, and that we will see the same excellent results being obtained elsewhere.

With a modern one-lane roundabout (Alternative 2A) as the preferred alternative, we will now apply for federal funding to design, acquire rights of way, and construct the project. If the federal grant is approved, the project will go through a detailed design process—the presentations made to date have been conceptual only. At the same time, there will be an in-depth environmental review of the impacts of the project to any historic sites, wetlands, protected species, water quality, air quality, and other environmental concerns. The roundabout option must prove to be feasible to construct, and pass the environmental reviews, before proceeding to construction. The earliest construction is likely to occur is 2024.

Please see the updated responses to frequently raised questions and concerns.

If you have any questions you may contact our project manager Rex Dickey at (937) 496-7737 or dickeyr@mcohio.org.

Thanks again for participating with us.

Respectfully,

Paul W. Gruner, P.E., P.S.
Montgomery County Engineer

Enclosures