



GPD GROUP[®]
Glaus, Pyle, Schomer, Burns & DeHaven, Inc.

Columbus Office

1801 Watermark Drive
Suite 150
Columbus, OH 43215

tel 614.210.0751
fax 614.210.0752
www.gpdgroup.com

June 11, 2014

2013195.01

RE: JEF-Lovers Lane/Ft. Steuben Drive Intersection Improvement

A public meeting was recently held on April 24, 2014 regarding proposed improvements to the intersection of Lovers Lane and Ft. Steuben Drive in Steubenville, Ohio. As part of that meeting, the City of Steubenville received public input comments over the period of April 24th to May 27th, 2014. Through the public involvement process, you have been identified as an abutting property owner, public meeting attendee, or interested party who submitted comments. As such, we are hereby providing you with a list of all comments received, along with responses to those comments.

On behalf of the City of Steubenville, we thank you for your interest in this project.

Sincerely,
GPD Group

Kevin J. Grathwol, P.E.
Senior Project Manager

**JEF-Lovers Lane / Ft. Steuben Drive
Intersection Improvement (PID 90234)
Public Open House Meeting, April 24, 2014**

Public Comments and Responses

Comment 1

I'm concerned about the roundabout proposal, mainly. With the average demographic in this area, I'm afraid of the added confusion of the traffic pattern – flows/pause/caution. Giving people the right away seems to be a lost art anymore.

Response: The proposed roundabout alternative consists of a simple single-lane roundabout, which will limit any confusion drivers may experience. Although the concept is new to the area, drivers will quickly grasp the proper means of navigating the roundabout in a safe manner.

I'm concerned with the fact that the main focus seems to be only until "Mall Drive" intersection. The worse part of the road is down by the Country Club.

Response: This project is just the first of several phases to reconstruct and widen Lovers Lane.

I'm for a "signalized intersection" with widening option which would help people who walk on Lovers Lane, too.

Response: Both options will accommodate pedestrians.

Comment 2

Traffic congestions at the intersection of Mall Drive and Lovers Lane is predicated on the signal on Sunset and Lovers Lane. A roundabout will not alleviate congestion. Leaving the mall and going towards Country Club with traffic coming from Sunset will be held up more than a signal. Four lane intersection will allow turns and straight through travel. The only advantage a roundabout has is slowing traffic. Accidents will not be prevented – severity will. If the majority of traffic would go straight through the roundabout makes sense, but most turn into the mall or out of Mall Drive.

Response: Roundabouts are a proven intersection alternative to reduce congestion and improve safety. With all approaching vehicles required to yield to any vehicles within the circulating roadway, all approaches and movements are effectively given the same priority. This results in reduced delay for lesser utilized movements, such as a westbound left turn from Ft. Steuben Drive to Lovers Lane, but generally keeps all vehicles moving slowly.

Comment 3

Ingress and egress should never have been put there. That should be totally closed. That would cut traffic more than help. Make traffic use John Scott Hwy where the true in and out can accommodate the traffic.

Response: The City does not intend on closing Ft. Steuben Drive. The City made a conscious decision many years ago to approve Ft. Steuben Drive access from Lovers Lane, and this now serves as a vital secondary ingress/egress to the mall and surrounding businesses. In addition to the negative economic effect that closure of Ft. Steuben Drive would potentially have on these businesses, closure of the roadway would result in increased congestion on Sunset Blvd. and John Scott Highway, such that mall traffic would migrate to the path of least resistance, that being Sinclair Avenue via Lovers Lane. Instead of southbound traffic turning left at Ft. Steuben Drive, it would travel further south along Lovers Lane to Sinclair Avenue, necessitating the need for improvement of the Sinclair Avenue intersection. In short, traffic volumes on Lovers Lane are not anticipated to decrease by closing Ft. Steuben Drive.

**JEF-Lovers Lane / Ft. Steuben Drive
Intersection Improvement (PID 90234)
Public Open House Meeting, April 24, 2014**

Public Comments and Responses

Lovers Lane is just that! A LANE. The existing right of ways will take more of the front yards of all those houses and further depreciate their value.

Response: Neither alternative is anticipated to require additional permanent right-of-way from the properties along the west side of Lovers Lane.

Comment 4

What about the confusion of the turnabout for aging population? Do we have enough traffic for this?

Response: The proposed roundabout alternative consists of a simple single-lane roundabout, which will limit any confusion drivers may experience. Although the concept is new to the area, drivers will quickly grasp the proper means of navigating the roundabout in a safe manner. Regarding traffic, roundabouts can handle a wide range of traffic volumes, while providing the added benefit of traffic calming.

*Road rules are important

Response: Agree. With roundabouts, all approaching vehicles are required to yield to any vehicles within the circulating roadway.

*How much of the property will be lost for each person's line?

Response: Neither alternative is anticipated to require additional permanent right-of-way from the properties along the west side of Lovers Lane.

*What about the rest of Lovers Lane

Response: This project is just the first of several phases to reconstruct and widen Lovers Lane.

I'm all for the traditional signalized intersection with sidewalks.

Response: Thank you for your input.

Comment 5

Only need to widen Lovers Lane. Turnabout will cause a lot of accidents.

Response: Each alternative will widen the roadway to meet current standards. Roundabouts are a proven intersection alternative to reduce congestion and improve safety.

Comment 6

I believe that you will never get a good consensus about the choices. The city council needs to vote for one as soon as possible in order to begin the project as soon as possible.

Response: Thank you for your input.

**JEF-Lovers Lane / Ft. Steuben Drive
Intersection Improvement (PID 90234)
Public Open House Meeting, April 24, 2014**

Public Comments and Responses

Comment 7

- Put a street repair issue on ballot for specific period of time for specific purpose (3 years)
 - The entire city would benefit from an improved Lovers Lane
 - Give city residents this option; only way to generate revenue for these repairs/improvements

Response: Thank you for your response. We will be discussing this with City Council and the Administration for the future phases of the roadway improvement.

- I am concerned that there is no effort or concern to deal with areas beyond (south) Mall Drive ... this is important to many residents.

Response: This project is just the first of several phases to reconstruct and widen Lovers Lane.

- Safety is a critical concern; road too narrow... teaching kids to drive on this road has been frightening.

Response: This project, as well as subsequent phases, will reconstruct and widen Lovers Lane to meet current standards.

- Feel free to contact me for any efforts/initiatives regarding Lovers Lane!!

Response: Thank you for your input and offer of support.

Comment 8

The roundabout designed has been used in many cities throughout Ohio. I lived in Columbus and have driven thru many. This should be no question to the roundabout design. Especially if it is 100% funded. Tax payers should be ashamed if they would let this opportunity go because they just don't understand how a roundabout works. Roundabout supporter!

Response: Thank you for your input and support.

Comment 9

Having experience with roundabouts, which keeps traffic moving at a slowed down speed, I'm supportive of the effort for a roundabout.

Response: Thank you for your input and support.

Comment 10

More property should be taken from the mall side of Lovers Lane.

Response: Neither alternative is anticipated to require additional permanent right-of-way from the properties along the west side of Lovers Lane. Additional permanent right-of-way is anticipated to be limited to the east side (mall side) of Lovers Lane.

Elderly and timid drivers will be hesitant to pull into roundabout – causing backups.

Response: The proposed roundabout alternative consists of a simple single-lane roundabout, which will limit any confusion drivers may experience. Although the concept is new to the area, drivers will quickly grasp the proper means of navigating the roundabout in a safe manner.

**JEF-Lovers Lane / Ft. Steuben Drive
Intersection Improvement (PID 90234)
Public Open House Meeting, April 24, 2014**

Public Comments and Responses

Dangerous switching lanes in roundabout to get from inside lane to outside lane to exit roundabout.

Response: The proposed roundabout alternative consists of a simple single-lane roundabout. Thus, there will be no switching of lanes.

Far more traffic is on Lovers Lane than in the simulation.

Response: The roundabout "video" that played during the open house meeting was for the purpose of explaining roundabouts and how they operate, and showed a number of examples. As part of our engineering traffic analysis, we performed true simulations of each alternative based on average weekday peak hour traffic over the course of a year, excluding weekend or seasonal/holiday peaks. Each alternative provides exceptional traffic operation.

Roundabout needs increased lighting so as to be less confusing for drivers.

Response: Appropriate street lighting is a critical component to roundabout design and operation.

Comment 11

I would prefer the roundabout because they would have to take more property with the other option. The roundabout could only have the straight ahead option – or turning toward the mall – easier than the roundabouts I've seen in other cities.

Response: The proposed roundabout alternative consists of a simple single-lane roundabout, coupled with a tee intersection, which will limit any confusion drivers may experience.

Comment 12

I think this would help our community FOR SURE! Thank you for all your efforts.

Response: Thank you for your input and support.

Comment 13

I would love any improvement in the traffic at the mall entrance. I can't turn left without endangering myself and others. Thank you.

Response: Thank you for your input and support.

Comment 14

As a 35 year resident of Lovers Lane, the Mall Drive intersection has never been an issue to me. When evaluating the numerous issues associated with living on Lovers Lane, it certainly isn't a high priority item. If your determination is that the Mall Drive intersection is a problem, despite feedback from myself and other Lovers Lane residents, my personnel recommendation would be to close it. Everyone agrees that Lovers Lane is a narrow, two lane residential roadway which was never designed to handle the high volume of traffic currently using the road. I believe that any monies spent on the intersection improvement project would be misspent funds in light of other higher priority issues which I've listed below.

**JEF-Lovers Lane / Ft. Steuben Drive
Intersection Improvement (PID 90234)
Public Open House Meeting, April 24, 2014**

Public Comments and Responses

- 1) Road Condition - The road is obviously in deplorable condition. This includes the surface, sub-surface, curbing, drainage and lack of sidewalks.
Response: This project, as well as subsequent phases, will reconstruct and widen Lovers Lane to meet current standards, and also provide sidewalks.

- 2) Road Width - I don't think there needs to be a significant increase in the width just a small increase where it could be attained with minimal cost.
Response: Through this project and subsequent phases, Lovers Lane will be widened to provide a minimum curbed pavement width of 24', excluding any turn lanes, as compared to the existing pavement width of 19'. The primary cost of these improvements will be for the roadway reconstruction, not for the additional 5' of pavement.

- 3) Traffic Volume - There has been a significant increase in traffic over the past few years and this includes a recent increase in the number of tractor trailer trucks using the road.
Response: Duly noted.

- 4) Speed - The speed limit is not obeyed and in many cases cars and trucks travel at excessive speed.
Response: Duly noted.

In conclusion, I ask that you reconsider modifications to the Mall Drive intersection in favor of addressing the more serious issues outlined above. I believe attention to those issues would create the most beneficial improvements for everyone who utilizes Lovers Lane, especially residents. However, if the intersection project goes forward in spite of other obvious problems, my wife and I both believe the traffic circle is the best option of the proposed alternatives.

Response: Thank you for your input.

Comment 15

I am the General Manager of Fort Steuben Mall, the main branch of commerce that will be affected by proposed construction on Lovers Lane/Ft. Steuben Drive. I'd like it on record that Ft. Steuben Mall is adamantly opposed to the closure of Ft. Steuben Drive off of Lovers Lane. The economic impact of such a move has the potential to cause measurable stress and lost income to our tenants, not to mention the other businesses located on Mall Drive.

Our Lovers Lane entrance sees significant traffic coming into the Mall, our most recent numbers being 6,000 per day. Cutting off the accessibility to the Mall to those on Lovers Lane, or more frequently, Wintersville residents, not only inconveniences our customers, it also makes it more likely that they will not shop here as frequently. This could be a major inconvenience to those elderly shoppers who depend on easy access to our tenant Walmart for everyday items.

We are incredibly concerned that our tenants may suffer catastrophic losses that could cause them to close. As it is, Fort Steuben Mall sometimes struggles to keep our traffic up and the poor Jefferson

**JEF-Lovers Lane / Ft. Steuben Drive
Intersection Improvement (PID 90234)
Public Open House Meeting, April 24, 2014**

Public Comments and Responses

County economy has hit us very hard. Should Ft. Steuben Drive close, it would be detrimental to our continued efforts to serve our customers. Should additional stores close due to this road being shut off, the city and county will also be affected by decreased tax revenue coming from our tenants.

Fort Steuben Mall emphatically supports the improvement of Lovers Lane without question, and ultimately we would be supportive of any addition that makes access to Fort Steuben Mall from Lovers Lane most convenient for our customers.

Response: The City does not intend on closing Ft. Steuben Drive. The City made a conscious decision years ago to approve Ft. Steuben Drive access from Lovers Lane, and understands that this roadway serves as a vital secondary ingress/egress to the mall and surrounding businesses. Thank you for your input, concern and support.

Comment 16

Concerning the signalized option: Drawing shows a 5' wide sidewalk on west side of Lovers Lane. This will cut down each lot by this amount (with driveway modifications). If a sidewalk is required, why could it not be constructed on the east side? What about utility poles? Cost to relocate? Actually, this proposed sidewalk from Teresa Drive to Preston Road is a sidewalk to nowhere.

Response: With either option, sidewalk will be provided on the west side of Lovers Lane where the residents/users are located. Placing the sidewalk on the east side of the road invites "jaywalking" by pedestrians who will cross the roadway at random locations, which is unsafe and undesirable. Utility poles are currently located within existing right-of-way and are therefore anticipated to be relocated at utility owner expense, in a location approved by the City. Consideration will be given to relocating utility poles to the east side of Lovers Lane, if feasible. Regarding the "sidewalk to nowhere", understand that this project is just the first of several phases to reconstruct and widen Lovers Lane, with each phase including sidewalk that connects to the previous phase(s), ultimately providing sidewalk connectivity from Sunset Blvd. to the Ft. Steuben Mall.

On the roundabout option: Property acquisition is minimal, but the construction site could be moved east a few feet to minimize disturbing property along Lovers Lane.

Response: If the roundabout alternative is selected, it will be designed in a manner to minimize impacts to abutting properties, while providing suitable geometry for the entries and exits.

I feel the roundabout option is the best option – no signals to install and maintain, and traffic should proceed smoothly toward the mall and southbound toward Coal Hill Rd.

Response: Thank you for your input.

Comment 17

I believe the roundabout would better serve the area and is a safer alternative.

Response: Thank you for your input.

**JEF-Lovers Lane / Ft. Steuben Drive
Intersection Improvement (PID 90234)
Public Open House Meeting, April 24, 2014**

Public Comments and Responses

Comment 18

Call me crazy, but does there really need to be a lot of expensive modification to Lovers Lane and Mall Drive? There are fewer than 70,000 souls in all of Jefferson County, and how many on any given day are traveling to the mall?

Response: The primary cost associated with either intersection alternative is in the reconstruction of pavement constructed in 1928 that has far exceeded its service life, not in the cost of the revised intersection geometry. Lovers Lane and Ft. Steuben Drive are public roadways that need to be maintained in a manner that is both suitable and safe for public use. When these roadways and their intersection are improved, they are done so in a manner that meets current design standards that also account for traffic volumes.

If, in the beginning, there had been no access onto Lovers Lane, all shoppers would have made their way along John Scott Highway and would have been happy. There are a lot of very nice homes along Lovers Lane, and they were there long before the mall was. Putting in a roundabout or turning lane is foolish and needless, and it won't solve the slowdowns caused by mail trucks or school buses.

Leave the residents of Lovers Lane alone. Close and abandon the Mall Drive access onto Lovers lane and let everyone go one more mile to John Scott Highway and shop all day.

Response: Please refer to our response to Comment 3.

Comment 19

The option I would like to see is not listed. Please consider closing the road from Lovers Lane to the mall. Pave Lovers lane and enforce the weight limits, reduce over-sized trucks.

Response: Regarding comment to close access to the mall from Lovers Lane, please refer to our response to Comment 3. Whichever alternative is selected, it will include full reconstruction and widening of the pavement to meet current design standards. Regarding truck weight limit restrictions on Lovers Lane, consideration will be given to improving the signing at the intersection of Sunset Blvd.

The mall is not busy. Two roads to the mall is more than adequate.

Response: Please refer to our response to Comment 3.

Tear down all dilapidated structures with the money.

Response: Any funding secured for this improvement is solely to be used for said improvement, and cannot be used for other purposes.

**JEF-Lovers Lane / Ft. Steuben Drive
Intersection Improvement (PID 90234)
Public Open House Meeting, April 24, 2014**

Public Comments and Responses

Comment 20

The only thing that needs to be done on Lovers Lane is pavement improvement. A roundabout or third lane is not a necessity. I am against the roundabout! The only time there is some congestion is when the mail truck is delivering mail. I am not against change but I don't believe this will improve traffic operation.

Response: Whichever alternative is selected, it will include full reconstruction and widening of the pavement to meet current design standards. Based on our traffic analysis and field observations, improvement of the intersection is warranted. Either alternative will improve operation of the intersection.

The "Public Open House" on April 24 was a "JOKE". We sat around waiting for someone to talk to us, which didn't happen. Poor communication.

Response: The meeting was advertised as an open house and was not intended to include a presentation, since people continually come and go over the 2 hour duration. Future meeting notices will clarify the format of the meeting. We appreciate you taking the time to attend the meeting(s), and welcome you to ask us any questions. When we are not engaged in conversation with other attendees, we attempt to walk the room and ask people if they have any questions or require assistance.

Comment 21

Lovers Lane does not need a roundabout or a 3rd lane or turning lane. There is not enough congestion on Lovers lane to warrant either of these changes. The only time there might be a small amount of congestion is when you happen to get behind a mail truck.

Response: Based on our traffic analysis and field observations, improvement of the intersection is warranted. Either alternative will improve operation of the intersection.

The April 24th meeting at the Senior Citizen Center was poorly organized. Many concerned citizens had the impression there would be a presentation, not just looking at pictures and trying to figure out questions to ask.

Response: The meeting was advertised as an open house and was not intended to include a presentation, since people continually come and go over the 2 hour duration. Future meeting notices will clarify the format of the meeting. We appreciate you taking the time to attend the meeting(s), and welcome you to ask us any questions. When we are not engaged in conversation with other attendees, we attempt to walk the room and ask people if they have any questions or require assistance.

The only thing Lovers Lane needs is to be completely torn up and resurfaced.

Response: Whichever alternative is selected, it will include full reconstruction and widening of the pavement to meet current design standards. This project is just the first of several phases to reconstruct and widen Lovers Lane.

**JEF-Lovers Lane / Ft. Steuben Drive
Intersection Improvement (PID 90234)
Public Open House Meeting, April 24, 2014**

Public Comments and Responses

Comment 22

First of all, permit me to thank you for the work you have done on Lovers Lane. There is much to be done, but this is a tremendous improvement.

I am writing to submit my two cents for the future Lovers Lane project. I have held off, while considering the options, and I really would like to be on your side for this project. But the truth is, I absolutely feel that both the roundabout and the traffic light are a waste of money, federal or otherwise. I would like to see Fort Steuben Drive closed completely. I realize this is not one of your options, but this would also reduce the amount of traffic on Lovers Lane.

I don't understand why you can get Federal money to add something so nice to a road that is such poor shape. These plans serve ONLY the mall, and not the residents and taxpayers of that area.

We've heard over and over that Lovers Lane was never intended to be a main access to the Mall, but these improvements only make it even more of a major access. It does not serve the residents at all.

I know many others feel the same way, but I'm certain they will not take the time to submit their thoughts, the same way they did not attend the meetings.

Thanks for listening and allowing us to voice our opinions and concerns.

Response: Regarding your suggestion to close access to the mall from Lovers Lane, please refer to our response to Comment 3. Whichever intersection alternative is selected, it is important to note that this improvement is just the first of several phases to reconstruct and widen Lovers Lane, which will serve the mall, residents and taxpayers as a whole. Also of note, the primary cost associated with either intersection alternative is in the reconstruction of pavement, not in the cost of the revised intersection geometry. Thank you for your input.