

**BRAD FOSTER, P.E., P.S.**

**FRANKLIN COUNTY ENGINEER**

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April 12, 2024

**RE: Cooke Rd CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT FRA-CR80-2.67, PID 115411**

Dear Residents and Property Owners,

The Franklin County Engineer's Office hosted a public involvement meeting on Thursday November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, where residents and stakeholders were invited to review information about a future reconstruction project along East Cooke Road between Karl Road and Cleveland Avenue. We received several comments during the meeting and during the open comment period. This letter is to serve as an update on the design of the project and how those concerns are either addressed or not addressed due to project constraints. As reported in the public meeting documents, construction could start as early as March 2026 and last through October 2026.

**Comment #1: My primary concern is a lack of accommodation for crossing roads. This project does add significant improvements, but the exhibits lack many crosswalk markings, and there is no connection across Karl Rd for either the sidewalk or the SUP. Please extend crosswalks across Karl Rd.**

**Response:** There is an existing unmarked crossing on the north side. After review, the project will include a marked crossing on the north side of the intersection of Karl Rd with E Cooke Rd. We are not installing a curb ramp on the south side of Karl Rd because there is not an existing curb ramp on the west side of Karl Rd to connect to.

**Comment #2: Who will remove snow from 10' multiuse paths?**

**Response:** The 10 ft shared use path will be in both City of Columbus and Franklin County jurisdiction. The maintenance shared use path and sidewalk from Karl Rd east to around Walford St is within Columbus's jurisdiction and is subject to City Codes 902.03 and 905.06, which specify the abutting property owners are responsible for repair and maintenance of sidewalks and shared-use paths adjacent to their property. This is the same condition that applies to the existing sidewalk in the Columbus jurisdiction. The maintenance of the roadway, path, and sidewalk from Walford St east to Cleveland Ave will remain the Franklin County Engineer's Office's to maintain. However, we do not have the equipment or crews to clear snow from paths. In these areas the snow would not be cleared unless individual property owners choose to do so (this is not a requirement). If the path is damaged or needs repaired, FCEO will perform that type of maintenance in this area of the project.



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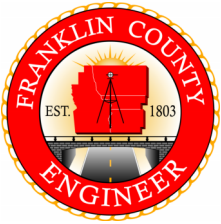
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**Comment #3: I do have a couple of concerns; it seems that trees are not high on your plans. I feel a 5' concrete sidewalk is sufficient on the north side just like the south side of the road. Cooke Rd does not have the foot traffic to warrant a 10' wide path. If you still feel a trail is going in, then I suggest you move the path closer to the road leaving less than a 5' tree lawn and making the path not as wide as 10'.**

**Response:** Street trees are proposed on the north side of E Cooke Rd between Walford St and Cleveland Ave. We are showing a total of 42 trees to be removed across the entire project area. 36 of the 42 of these trees are encroachments that are located within the existing public right-of-way. From Karl Rd to Walford St, due to aerial utility lines in the north tree lawn, and storm sewer and gas main in the south tree lawn, the planting of street trees would conflict with the function of the critical utility infrastructure along the corridor. From Walford St to Cleveland Ave, where there are no aerial utility lines along the north side of E Cooke Rd, we do plan to plant street trees in the northern tree lawn. The Franklin County Engineer's Office standard for newly installed shared-use paths is 10' wide, which is consistent with FHWA standards that this project is required to meet due to the federal funding received. There are also offset requirements that specify the width of buffer required between the shared-use path and the roadway. A buffer between the shared-use path and edge of the roadway is also needed to smoothly transition driveways down from the shared-use path which sits above the curb, down to the roadway which sits at the bottom of the curb. A 10' shared-use path serves a different purpose than a 5' sidewalk. Both are requirements when reconstructing corridor projects according to the Franklin County Commissioner's adopted Complete Streets Policy. The shared-use path serves as a separated off-street bicycle facility. The 5' sidewalk serves as a pedestrian only facility, where walkers and/or more vulnerable road users can feel safe to travel without moving off the path for oncoming/passing bicyclists. The shared-use path and sidewalk are also going to provide a last-mile connection for cyclists and pedestrians to the bus stops, restaurants, shopping, and jobs along Karl Rd and Cleveland Ave.

**Comment #4: In all the discussions I have had with neighbors and what I heard at the meeting; everyone is asking why. We do not currently have any major problems with the things you are planning to change. The things that you talked about, safety, speed, bikes, the school, pedestrians, drainage, and utilities are all either false or exaggerated as far as any of us are concerned. 2. I am very concerned about your plans for the easement/right of way. If it ceases to be my property, who is going to maintain it? Will I have an easement so that my driveway can cross the public space? I want to focus my comments on the main objection I have to the entire plan. I suggest that the entire north side of Cooke Rd. objects to the 10 foot**



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**swath of asphalt that you will put across our front yards, and we consider it to be unacceptable.**

**Response:** Certain drives across the project area have temporary easements just for the reconstruction of the drives during the construction period. You will still own your driveway up to the public right-of-way line. Some properties will also have permanent right-of-way acquisition and those owners will be compensated for their property. In any right-of-way acquisition area, the intent will be to re-plant grass seed in any area that is not the roadway, driveways, or sidewalk/shared use paths. The individual property owners will mow this area, just as they do now within the existing right-of-way limit. The maintenance of the shared use path and sidewalk from Karl Rd east to around Walford St is within Columbus's jurisdiction and is subject to City Codes 902.03 and 905.06, which specify the abutting property owners are responsible for repair and maintenance of sidewalks and shared-use paths adjacent to their property. This is the same condition that applies to the existing sidewalk in the Columbus jurisdiction. The maintenance of the roadway, path, and sidewalk from Walford St east to Cleveland Ave will remain the Franklin County Engineer's Office's to maintain. However, we do not have the equipment or crews to clear snow from paths. In these areas the snow would not be cleared unless individual property owners choose to do so (this is not a requirement). If the path is damaged or needs repaired, FCEO will perform that type of maintenance in this area of the project. The land use in the corridor is nearly 100% residential, schools, and a community center. The proposed work will provide residents with a connection to shopping, transit, and jobs without the use of motorized vehicles. The shared-use path will also provide recreational opportunities for improved health and well-being. Existing drainage issues were also noted by attendants of the public involvement meeting. As part of this project, drainage improvements will be made throughout the corridor, and impacted utility services throughout the project area will be replaced with new lines. The proposed shared-use path is located within the existing footprint of the existing sidewalk and will require 0.5 feet to 5.5 feet of additional pavement from the existing sidewalk to incorporate a shared use path within the corridor. From Karl Rd to near Walford St, the location of the shared-use path will be no closer to homes than the existing sidewalk footprint. This area of the project requires right-of-way acquisition for re-grading purposes only. From Walford St to Cleveland Ave, the shared-use path width will be between 1 to 4 feet closer to homes than the existing sidewalk footprint and will also require area for regrading. The posted speed limit on E Cooke Rd is 25 mph. We are aware that speeding is a problem along the corridor, as noted by attendants of the public involvement meeting. The measured speed of 85% of the vehicles along the corridor is 40mph. Speed tables



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are proposed to be installed at the Cooke Rd/Dresden St intersection as well as the Cooke Rd/Walford St intersection to provide traffic calming.

**Comment #5: I do not want even more property taken from us. Put a sidewalk on the other side since there's not one there already. What were the determining factors for putting the 10' SUP on the north side of the street?**

**Response:** The plan will construct a 5' concrete sidewalk on the south side of the road. The plan also calls for a 10' asphalt shared-use path on the north side of the road. There were several engineering reasons why the shared-use path was added to the north side of the road: 1. The south side of the road has more individual properties which would result in more right-of-way acquisition. Additionally, the homes generally sit lower and closer to the road than the homes on the north side of the roadway. The regrading needed to add a shared-use path to the south side of the road would have increased impacts to property owners. 2. The school as well as Fedderson Community Center are located on the north side of the road. 3. The south side of the road includes a business on Cleveland Ave that utilizes this area for parking. Adding the shared-use path here would result in more right-of-way acquisition and eliminate their parking which would have a negative impact on this local business. 4. If the shared-use path were added to the south side, additional drainage infrastructure would be required and would add significant costs to the project.

Sincerely,

Brad Foster, P.E., P.S.

Franklin County Engineer

Matthew Rehfus, P.E., S.I.

Highway Design Engineer

mrehfus@franklincountyengineer.org

614-525-3021