

The City of Hamilton and Butler County Improvement District (BCTID), in coordination with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), are developing the North Hamilton Crossing (NHX) project to reduce congestion and make travel in northeastern Hamilton and surrounding township areas easier and safer.

TIMING

The NHX will be built in phases due to the magnitude of cost. Due to the condition of the 100-year-old Black Street Bridge, we're currently planning to start with the West Section first. The West Section focuses on improving the connection between North B Street and US 127 and includes a new bridge across the Great Miami River. Once the recommended route has been approved and we have the necessary funding in hand, we'll be able to proceed with preparing detailed project designs, relocating utilities and securing the right-of-way needed. We expect these tasks will take between three and five years to complete. It will take another several years to build the bridge. Timing for the Central and East sections, which extend from US 127 to SR 129, is not yet known. Like the West Section, a considerable amount of planning and preparation must be completed and funding must be secured before construction can begin.

Planning and building the NHX is expected to be a long-term process. Due to limited funding sources, funding will come from a combination of federal, state and local resources over many years. Although we expect work to progress primarily from west to east, we will pursue funding opportunities as they become available. This could shift the order in which some parts of the project are built.

RIGHT-OF-WAY AND RELOCATION

The NHX is planned to be a boulevard-type roadway with two lanes of traffic in each direction, a landscaped median and sidewalks. As such, it will be wider than current roads in the area and will require more space. Most of the properties along the corridor are privately owned, and the amount of land required will vary property by property.

The BCTID could purchase a right-of-way easement on

your property, buy a portion of your property, or a combination of the two. A right-of-way easement is an agreement to use a portion of your property to support the road (or sidewalk, shared use path, etc.), but ownership remains with you, the property owner. If a property purchase is made, the impacted area of your property would change ownership to the BCTID.

If the property needed includes buildings or if the entire property is needed, residents or businesses on the property will need to move to another location. The BCTID will engage an independent team of property acquisition experts to help guide property owners and occupants through the process of selling their property, finding a new place and settling in.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Although the timing for any needed relocations is not yet determined, we know there are a lot of questions. Following are answers to some we hear most often.

When will I know if my property will be affected?

With the completion of the Environmental Assessment (EA), we now have a better understanding of which properties will likely be subject to relocation. However, we need to get further into detailed design to better understand specific right-of-way needs and the degree to which individual parcels along the project corridor will be impacted.

We're focusing first on securing funding for the West Section of the project which includes building the new bridge across the Great Miami River. No relocations are anticipated in this section of the project, but we will need to acquire some right-of-way. Once we get into detailed design development, we'll be able to get more specifics on right-of-way needs.

If your property is located in the West Section area, you'll be notified when funding has been awarded and that the detailed design process will soon begin. It typically takes two to four years to complete the design and negotiation process before any right-of-way is purchased.

Timing for the Central and East sections is not yet known, but detailed design development isn't expected to begin for several more years yet.

When will I need to move?

Nobody needs to move for quite some time yet. The NHX will likely be built in phases as separate projects based on available funding. We're focusing on the West Section first and that phase of work will take between five and 10 years to complete. Although some right-of-way acquisition will be needed in the West Section, no relocations are expected. Specific timing for the Central and East sections is not yet known.

All construction is dependent on funding availability. Once funding has been awarded for a project, the BCTID will notify affected property owners that work has been funded and that the design process will soon begin. It typically takes two to four years to complete the design process before right-of-way is purchased and relocations would occur.

Where am I going to go?

If your property is subject to relocation, you may choose to move away, or you may prefer to stay in the area. If you want to stay, we'll help you find a new home or location for your business within Hamilton that's equal to or better than what you have at the time of acquisition. A property acquisition team will work closely with you every step of the way – from property negotiations to moving in – to help smooth the process for you as much as possible. This will be the same process we used when relocating residents for the South Hamilton Crossing project.

Right now, we're looking into ways we can help keep more residents in the neighborhood. Options include moving into existing houses and renovating outdated homes. Another idea we're exploring is building new housing – single and/or multi-family – on vacant lots throughout the area. We're also looking into the possibility of subsidizing the costs of these new homes to make them affordable for relocated families and individuals.

How will the value of my home be determined?

If we need to purchase your property, we will bring in an independent, licensed real estate appraiser to determine a fair market value of your property and any structures on it, including your home (the appraiser will be unaffiliated with the City or BCTID). Fair market value is the price your property would likely sell for on the open market under normal circumstances. The appraiser must consider recent sales of similar properties in the area, the condition of the property/home, its location, size, any improvements made and/or unique features. The BCTID will make you an offer for your property largely based on the appraisal amount. It's important to know that the BCTID is required by federal law to make you an offer that is fair.

What if I can't afford to move?

We will follow a federal process that makes sure you're offered a replacement home that's similar in size, quality and features to the one you have at the time of acquisition. While we can't match older construction materials or styles exactly, your new home will meet current standards and offer similar space. If the new home costs more than your current one, financial assistance will be available to cover the difference. This includes helping with higher mortgage rates or adjusting rental rates. The housing costs for your new home won't be more than what you pay at the time of acquisition. If you want it, you can also get assistance with moving your belongings to your new home.

Should I stop planning improvements to my home?

We'll be focusing on the West Section of the NHX first and no relocations are expected in this area. Work will take five to 10 years to complete. We don't know when detailed design and property acquisitions will begin for the Central or East sections, but it isn't expected for several more years yet. If your property is subject to relocation, any improvements made now will be factored into the property valuation process later (but not on a dollar-for-dollar basis). With this information in hand, it's up to you to decide if your planned improvements will help keep you safe and comfortable in the meantime.

What if I rent my home or own a business?

Renters and property owners will receive assistance similar to the help homeowners will receive. If you have to relocate, the property acquisition team will help guide you through the relocation process and can help find a replacement property that meets your specific needs. You can also get help with coordinating your move and reestablishing your business. For businesses, this will be the same process we used when relocating 12 businesses for the South Hamilton Crossing project.

Where can I get more information?

Visit NorthHamiltonCrossing.org. New information is posted as it becomes available, particularly on the Participate and Project Documents pages. Questions and comments can be submitted on the website under "Contact Us." In addition, you are welcome to reach out to the City and BCTID any time by email, mail or phone. Contact:

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