

NEWS RELEASE

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Concord Township -- Recently, the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA), which works with communities in Northeast Ohio in furthering infrastructure projects, has identified the Connector Road Project (*Capital Parkway Extension*) in Concord Township to be added to its Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) worth approximately \$3.2 million in funds toward the Concord project. These funds will become available beginning in July 2013 through 2014.

The Connector Road Project relates to infrastructure improvements to be made along the State Route (SR) 44 Corridor near the intersection with Interstate 90. This Corridor has seen increasing growth from residential and commercial developments in recent years. Two recent, major projects are Lake Health System's TriPoint Hospital and University Hospital's Concord Health Center. Between these two facilities over 1,300 employees, as well as patients and visitors now use this Corridor. Added to this is a 45% increase in population in Concord Township over the past 15 years. There have also been additional population increases in nearby Chardon and other Geauga County communities which are among the fastest growing counties in the region. Many of these people use SR 44 on their way to Interstate 90. This added traffic has resulted in one of the worst intersections in the state of Ohio between State Route 44/Auburn Rd and Crile Rd. It is the site of numerous accidents and many unreported near misses.

The Lake County Engineer and Concord Township have been looking ahead to the traffic situation in this area and have conducted an extensive study of the current and projected traffic situation throughout the Corridor out to the year 2030. The result of the study along with other studies by Concord Township resulted in a recommendation for a reengineering of the SR 44/Auburn/Crile Rd intersection and the establishment of a Connector Road which will be newly built to intersect SR 44 midway between Auburn and Girdled Roads. "The proposed improvements will greatly increase safety in this area, benefitting residents and transients as well," in the opinion of Trustee Caroline Luhta. The Connector Road is designed to do just that: relieve congestion and turning in the vicinity of the troubled intersection. It will also reduce car and truck traffic now utilizing Auburn Road as well as stacking in the vicinity of the medical facilities and Auburn Career Center school at the southern end of Auburn Rd.

Trustee Chris Galloway stated, "This project will allow Concord Township to proactively correct our traffic patterns while simultaneously working to open new economic development opportunities for our region." As a byproduct of the Connector Road and improved traffic conditions, additional development will open up for commercial and retail space. The Corridor is missing much of the type of retail and commercial development that would be found in similar commercial districts. There are opportunities for pharmacies, restaurants, dry-cleaners, and many other retail businesses. The Township has developed a vision for this area which would be characterized as a mixed use lifestyle center, creating the first commercial town center in Concord's history reminiscent of other Western Reserve town centers.

"We are very pleased with the support that we received as we have pursued this infrastructure improvement which has included Cong. LaTourette, the Lake County Commissioners, ODOT and the Lake County Engineer -- everyone along the way has recognized the safety and economic development importance of this project," said Paul Malchesky, Chairman of the Concord Board of Trustees.