

Veterans Trail Phase 3 – Update

Meeting with ODOT on the Project 1-23-2020

City Staff met with ODOT District 4 officials today to discuss the possible design changes to the Veterans Trail Phase 3 Project and below are summary minutes from our meeting.

Staff discussed with ODOT the following possible design revisions to help reduce the tree clearing and still maintain the ODOT standards on the project:

Based on the comments we heard from residents from our notes this past week we discussed the following with ODOT:

1. Can we reduce the width of the proposed trail on the sloped area from 14-foot to 10-foot width?
2. Could the City increase the slope of the trail in this area to reduce the excavation and embankment and reduce the tree clearing?
3. Could the City modify the Best Management Practices that were approved by the Ohio EPA, which are swales parallel to the proposed trails and encroach into the wooded area?
4. Paved vs. gravel path?

ODOT Response:

- ODOT indicated that small modifications to the existing approved projects horizontal and vertical alignment would likely be permitted, but would need justified and reviewed by the State. The project was designed to the State and Federal regulations as required by ODOT, which makes for larger trail curves and gentler slopes.
- ODOT noted that alterations to the bid set of plans may justify a change order with the contractor price as the method of construction in this area would change.
- ODOT *strongly cautioned* the City on making major modifications to the plans that would create significant delays (10+ days or more) to the project, as the contractor would be eligible for not only any labor and material costs incurred thus far, but also down time for unused labor forces.
- ODOT encouraged the City to continue an on-going conversation with the contractor to identify any contractor methods to reduce tree loss, and to keep the contractor informed and work to keep the project on schedule. One option expressed, was to possibly begin clearing at the north end of the project in Cascade Park and proceed south to keep the contractor working and meeting the deadline for the project.
- ODOT will not approve a gravel path.

City follow-up needed:

- **The City would need to survey this area and redesign with our consultant.**
- **Our preliminary estimate based on these proposed revisions to the plans in this area could reduce the 12" diameter tree clearing from 40+ to approximately 20-25 trees that need to be cleared. (See the attached plans sheets and shaded areas that would not be disturbed with these allowable modifications if approved by ODOT.)**

- The slope could be increased to a maximum of 10% which would help us to minimize impacts adjacent to the trail and tree clearing. ODOT would permit one pull-off that would need to be installed on the slope in lieu of the wider trail width.
- The City could modify the BMP's to be less impactful in keeping with the OEPA approval.
- ODOT cautioned us to keep the changes to a minimum and to a small area of the project.

These modifications would be a compromise on the # of trees cleared in this area, and to help to buffer the residential properties from the golf ball issue they incur.

If the Project was to be Cancelled?

We asked ODOT if the City decided to cancel the project, what would be the effects and issues we would have with canceling the project?

ODOT's Response:

- ODOT strongly recommended the City not to do this.
- ODOT would require both State and Federal Authorization to cancel the project, along with justification from the City, since in the agreement a commitment was made by the City to build the project as designed and within the approved timeline with ODOT.
- ODOT also noted that the project requirements contain a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) goal as part of the project. As the prime contractor is the DBE for this project, additional ODOT scrutiny for cancelling the project using a minority owner business may occur if this project is cancelled.
- The Contractor would have incurred costs that would need to be paid on the project.

End of minutes.