

Chapter 10 – Enhancing Mobility

I. Introduction

A transportation system that provides safe, convenient, and efficient movement of vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic is vital to the well-being of a community. It has significant influence on the appearance, character, and economic viability of the area. It is an important consideration when current and future land use decisions are made. It affects the “where, when, and way” that development takes place.

Within a comprehensive plan, the transportation plan sets broad guidelines to assist public officials, developers, and other interested parties in making decisions relating to traffic flow, reserving rights-of-way for future roadway improvements, selecting pavement widths, public and private funding for infrastructure, location of community centers and facilities -- (for example, schools) -- and other transportation issues.

This chapter will present the goals and strategic recommendations related to providing an accessible, safe, and comprehensive thoroughfare system serving residents, businesses and institutions.

II. Goals and Strategic Recommendations

Goal A: Provide an Accessible, Safe, and Comprehensive Thoroughfare System Serving Residents, Businesses, and Institutions

1. Transportation Issues

Today, because of the growth patterns of nearby communities, a farsighted transportation plan is of even greater importance to Granville than it was in previous years. There are a number of traffic and transportation facility issues that need to be addressed:

- The relative inaccessibility of parts of the Township to Downtown and to each other.
- The increased vehicular traffic resulting from residential development in Granville.
- The high volume of truck traffic through the Village.
- The potential impact of ever-increasing traffic on State Routes 16, 161, 661, and 37.
- The impact of the planned interchange at State Route 16 east of Cherry Valley Road and the closure of the Cherry Valley Road intersection at SR 16.
- Because of the delay in the funding for the construction of that new Cherry Valley Road interchange, the impact that heavy back-up traffic on SR 16 will have on vehicles diverting into the Village at Cherry Street or Main Street to avoid SR 16 when traveling east to Newark.

- The potential impact of the proposed construction of the Thornwood Boulevard connection between State Route 79 in Heath and State Route 16 east of Cherry Valley Road.
- The protection, preservation, and enhancement of the entries into the Village: Columbus Road/State Route 16, Lancaster Road/State Route 37, West Broadway/State Route 161/37.
- The provision for safe and efficient vehicular traffic on Township roads without compromising their rural character.
- The integration of bicycle, pedestrian, and other non-vehicular traffic into the transportation system.
- The accommodation of peak-hour traffic on Newark-Granville Road, State Route 37, State Route 16, South Main Street, Burg Street, New Burg Street, North Pearl Street, the Cedar Street and Pearl Streets intersection, and Broadway.

a. State Route 37

Over the past few years, there has been an overall increase in traffic along State Route 37. A 57.5% increase between the SR 161 convergence and SR 16 was recorded from 1996 to 2002.¹ Counts in 2005 were slightly lower, but this could be attributed to construction delays. Some passenger vehicle and truck traffic may be using SR 37 as a short cut between I-71 and I-70. SR 37 is one of seven major state routes that have experienced multiple accidents and, as a result, has been designated as a top safety corridor by the Governor's Task Force on Highway Safety.

All of SR 37 is classified as rural minor arterial according to the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) functional classification system. As defined, such roadways connect cities and larger towns and form an integrated network providing interstate and inter-county service. They also provide service to corridors with relatively high speeds and minimum interference to through movement.

b. State Route 161

SR 161 is designated as a principal arterial. Such roadways serve corridor movements having trip lengths and travel density indicative of substantial statewide or interstate travel. They connect nearly all urban areas with 50,000 and over population and the majority of urban areas with 25,000 and over population. Additionally, such roadways provide an integrated network of continuous routes. Traffic along SR 161 from the County line to the SR 37 convergence generally increased by 72% between 1996 and 2002 (Counts in 2005 were slightly lower, but this could be attributed to construction delays.²)

2. Access Management

One of the most critical components of transportation planning today is access management. The proliferation of poorly located and closely spaced driveways, intersections, and other direct

¹ Most current traffic data from Licking County

² Most current traffic data from Licking County

accesses to major thoroughfares is a primary contributor to the functional deterioration of roadways and traffic congestion. It can destroy a roadway's ability to move traffic and to provide convenient access. As new development occurs, the number of curb cuts to a roadway increases, the speed and capacity of the roadway decreases, and congestion and safety hazards multiply. According to ODOT:

- Poor access management can reduce highway capacity to 20% of its design.
- Travel delay is as much as 74% greater on highways without access management than on those utilizing access management techniques.
- Nearly 52% of all accidents are driveway related.
- Studies have shown as much as a 50% decrease in accidents on access managed roads.
- A typical four-lane roadway with planned access management can handle 10,000 more vehicles per day.
- Travel speed increases an average of 42% on access managed highways.

Access management is a method to plan these features and balance the competing demands for traffic mobility and site access. The rationale for considering access management practices along major thoroughfares is a relatively recent effort being strongly encouraged (and in some instances required) by ODOT, especially along State Highways. ODOT is encouraging parallel access roads where possible, limiting the number of curb cuts (driveways) onto State Highways, and other practices that will promote safety and reduce the potential opportunity for collisions and injuries or deaths.

3. Policy & Strategy Recommendations

The following are the policy and strategy recommendations for providing an accessible, safe, and comprehensive thoroughfare system serving residents, businesses and institutions:

* To assure that development occurs in a well-planned and controlled manner, Granville Village and Township should develop sound access management policies to assure the functional quality of the roadways as well as traveler safety. Such policies should, at minimum, include restricting curb cuts; instituting landscaping, streetscaping, and signage regulations; and requiring traffic impact studies for all major developments.

* The following recommendations are intended to meet future traffic volumes generated by development and population growth and are to be implemented on an "as-needed" basis.³

- Create an east-west road that connects Loudon Street with Burg Street.
- Consider ways to relieve the traffic pressure on Burg Street or North Pearl street including the possibility of providing alternate ways to connect to New Burg Street or by requiring new developments north of the Village to provide means of ingress and egress other than by Burg Street or North Pearl Street.

³ Granville Comprehensive Plan (2001)

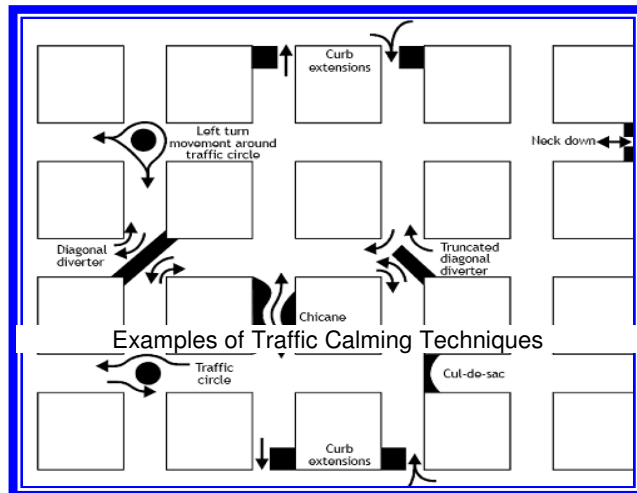
- Extend Cambria Mill Road west to meet Battee Road at Louden Street.
- Improve the alignment of New Burg/Burg Street intersection.
- Construct Cherry Valley Road between Newark-Granville Road and State Route 16 as a boulevard with a grass median.
- Construct an overpass on River Road over SR16 and/or at Cherry Valley Road over SR16 because a cul-de-sac is proposed for each leg of existing Cherry Valley Road when the new Cherry Valley interchange is constructed. Without those overpasses, the Granville community north of Route 16 will be virtually cut off from the Granville community south of Route 16 and the response times for safety vehicles will be significantly increased.

* Granville officials should continue to develop a process to manage access to areas of new development so that vehicular and pedestrian traffic flows safely and at the desired capacity and speed.⁴

* Require traffic calming techniques where traffic speeds and/or volumes through residential and urban areas are excessive.

* Transportation is a regional issue. Higher levels of cooperation between the Granville community and the surrounding cities and townships will only help alleviate future transportation problems.

- Township officials should establish a dialog with McKean Township Trustees to discuss potential improvements to Dry Creek Road.



- To resolve the problem of truck traffic in downtown Granville, Township and Village officials should initiate a joint effort with the City of Newark and the State of Ohio to find alternate routes.

* Village and Township officials should closely monitor the local traffic-related impacts that result from the expansion of State Route 161/37. The impacts of this roadway improvement and its proposed crossings may forever alter the character of the community.

* Currently, ODOT's analysis of the traffic impacts does not extend much beyond the immediate physical impact of the roadway itself. A more comprehensive study of the impact of the new highway is imperative if the Granville Community is to avoid negative impacts which accompany such narrow analysis.⁵

⁴ Granville Comprehensive Plan (2001)

⁵ Granville Comprehensive Plan (2001)

Goal B: Provide a Variety of Transportation Alternatives

1. Sidewalks and Bike Paths

A key alternative transportation element for any community is the provision of sidewalks or multi-purpose pathways. A pathway plan that identifies where new sidewalks or multi-purpose pathways are needed and where existing sidewalks need to be replaced should be prepared and kept current. The plan should include provisions for a system of sidewalks or pathways that provide residents with access from the residential developments to other community destinations or points of interest, such as the parks, schools, commercial areas, downtown, etc.

Commercial areas should be served by the pathway or sidewalk system to make travel less dependent on the automobile and to minimize roadway congestion. Commercial areas should also have an internal system of pathways or sidewalks to allow pedestrians to access and support individual commercial uses, such as restaurants, banks, dry cleaners, etc. Asphalt paths in research and technology parks can function as employee exercise paths as well as connectors between work and residences and recreational areas.

2. T.J. Evans Bike Trail

The T.J. Evans Bike Trail parallels SR 37 and now connects Johnstown to Newark via Granville. A major long-term goal for the T.J. Evans trail is to connect the path to the Ohio to Erie Trail that will eventually run from Cincinnati to Cleveland.

3. Rail Transit

The Ohio Rail Development Commission is currently studying the Columbus-Pittsburgh corridor for potential passenger rail transit options for a rail line south of Granville in Union Township. The Governor's office has also asked Amtrak to study various options. Given the recent severe increases in gasoline prices, general interest in potential passenger rail service has increased.

4. Policy & Strategy Recommendations

The following are the policy and strategy recommendations for providing a variety of transportation alternatives:

- * Encourage various forms of non-motorized transportation.
- * Consider expending more effort to connect existing sidewalks and other bike paths to the T.J. Evans Recreational Trail throughout the Village. Connectors and access to the T.J. Evans Trail within the community should be a priority.
 - Create a "walkable" community.
 - Emphasize pedestrian circulation in planning efforts.
 - Require sidewalks along both sides of the streets.
 - Encourage sidewalks and/or bike paths for minor arterial, arterial, and rural roads.

- Encourage a preference for pedestrian-oriented uses over auto-oriented commercial uses.
 - Keep streets no wider than necessary to accommodate the volume of traffic and parking needs anticipated.
 - Consider where community facilities are to be located and how accessible these facilities are by pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized traffic when land uses are determined. The goal is to encourage these alternative modes of transportation.⁶
 - Encourage connectivity via a comprehensive network of sidewalks and bikepaths.
 - Develop land use patterns with a logical system of roads including collector, subcollector, and access streets laid out in a grid pattern similar to the traditional core of the Village.
- * Provide street trees at a spacing of no more than 40 feet on center in all residential neighborhoods so that they will serve as a vital element in the creation of attractive neighborhoods. Along rural roads, street trees shall be provided at irregular intervals in a loose, natural fashion.
- * Promote and permit road networks of neighborhood-scaled streets with high levels of connectivity and short blocks in areas targeted for urban and suburban residential uses.
- * Use visual cues and design elements to indicate pedestrian rights-of-way and minimize conflicts.
- * Encourage developers to reduce off-street surface parking.
- * Adopt the “Complete Streets” principles for new streets and roadways and/or when major improvements are carried out on existing ones. A Complete Streets policy is aimed at producing roads that are safe and convenient for all users. Complete Streets promote safe usage and access for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders.⁷ The planning goal should be a safe and efficient network that allows functional travel to school, errands, jobs, and recreation throughout the community. Such policies may require that all roads be routinely built and reconstructed to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists, including disabled travelers. These policies differ from typical bicycle and pedestrian plans in that they are not limited to roads that are part of designated bicycle or pedestrian networks, but cover all roads, or at least all major roads, in the system. For example, the US Department of Transportation issued design guidance in response to the new language in TEA-21. The guidance document, “Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel,” states that “bicycling and walking facilities will be incorporated into all transportation projects unless exceptional circumstances exist.” Some of the new requirements include: new street standards calling for narrower roads and wider sidewalks, refuge islands for pedestrians, bike lanes, plenty of crosswalks, audible pedestrian signals, wide shoulders, medians, raised crosswalks, bus pullouts, special bus lanes, and sidewalk bump-outs.⁸

⁶ Granville Comprehensive Plan (2001)

⁷ www.completestreets.org

⁸ <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/design.htm>

- * Monitor the outcomes of the passenger rail studies closely and assess the impacts that this transportation alternative may have on the community.
- * Pursue supplementary funding sources to offset the cost of expanding and improving transportation infrastructure.
 - Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a mechanism to finance public infrastructure improvements that facilitate private sector development. TIF allows the future increase in the real estate tax revenue stream of a proposed private improvement project (e.g., new industry or expansion of existing industry) to pay for infrastructure necessary for the project.
 - A municipality can use a TIF program to pay for public improvements that support development, including water, sewer lines, streets, lighting, and parking areas. The TIF authorizing legislation must declare that the specified real property improvements have a public purpose. In addition, the TIF revenue stream can only be used to finance public infrastructure directly serving the real property specified in the authorizing legislation. Only that portion of the public infrastructure directly attributed to the incremental demand resulting from the specified real property improvements are eligible for TIF financing.
 - ORC Section 5709 provides for the maximum real property exemption to be capped at 75% for up to 10 years (without school board approval), or up to 100% for up to 30 years (with formal school board approval). While the specified portion of the value of the real property improvements is exempt, the property owner must agree to make a service Payment-in-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILOT) equal to the amount of real property taxes the improvement would have generated had the property not been exempted. This payment is due at the same time property taxes are payable and is placed in a special fund that can be used only to finance public project costs. Bonds are often sold at the outset of the redevelopment project by a designated development agency so that funds are available for up-front infrastructure costs.
 - General Revenue Bonds are funds borrowed to finance public service expansion that are repaid through future revenues pledged to the bond issuer. Bonds must be approved by public vote.
 - General Obligation Bonds are funds borrowed to finance public service expansion, such as sewer, water, and parks, that are repaid through future property tax revenues. Typically, the Village could borrow up to 20% of its secondary assessed valuation with an additional 6% available for special projects. Bonds must be approved by public vote.
 - Municipalities may impose development impact fees on landowners in a benefit area to pay for a proportionate share of the public facilities required to serve a development. The statute applicable to municipalities allows development fees to be assessed for necessary public services, which has been interpreted to include parks and open space areas. A benefit area is a geographic area in

which public facilities are of direct benefit to development within the area. For a development fee to be imposed, three standards must be met:

- There must be a reasonable relationship between the cost of the public facilities for which the development fee is assessed and the service demands of the benefit area.
 - The development fees assessed must not exceed a proportionate share of the costs incurred or be incurred in providing a public facility.
 - Development fees must be used and expended for the benefit of the area that pays the development fee. Development fees are typically assessed at the time of issuance of a building permit. If the open space or planned park is not located near a proposed development, then development fees will not be a viable mechanism for the funding of that park or open space.
- Grants are available for some public service expansions, including transportation-related projects, water and sewer expansion, historic building renovation, economic development projects, police and fire vehicles, and public facility improvements. Grant sources may be federal, state, corporate, or private funds. Grants may require matching funds through cash match or from in-kind sources. Grants are typically competitive and can not be expected as a guaranteed source.
 - The federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) - Economic Development (ED) Program could be pursued for any specific project that will result in 10 or more new jobs being created. The Village can request up to \$400,000 in grant funds for infrastructure or up to \$500,000 to loan to a business. Up to \$25,000 per new job can be requested for loans, or \$10,000 per job created for grants. Of those jobs created, 51% must be targeted to persons from low and moderate income households.
 - Roadwork Development (629) Account Loans assist companies and/or communities with the costs of improving project site infrastructure. These funds can be used to reduce costs incurred to construct or improve on-site public access roads. Each project must create or retain jobs.
 - The State Capital Improvement Program (SCIP) is administered by the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC). Local governments are eligible to receive funds for capital improvement projects, such as: bridges, culverts, and roads; solid waste disposal facilities; storm water and sanitary collection and treatment facilities; and water supply distribution, and treatment systems. Eligible associated costs may include: acquisition of property and facilities, engineering and design, construction, purchase of equipment, and related financing costs. Funds can cover up to 50% of a project's total cost for new or expansion projects. Districts can allocate 80% of its funds in grants (a minimum 10% in matching funds is required) and 20% in interest-free loans or local debt support. Applicants can request up to 100% funding as a loan.
 - Local Transportation Improvement Program (LTIP) funds can be requested for new roads and bridges in the Village. There is one deadline per year when funds

can be requested. Applications are submitted to the County and forwarded to the District and the State.