

Athens County Regional Planning Commission

1 South Court Street, RM 122
Athens, OH 45701

April 1, 2021

Ms. Darla Miller
Deputy Director, ODOT District 10
338 Muskingum Drive
Marietta, OH 45750

RE: US-33/Johnson Road intersection closure

Ms. Miller,

The membership of the Athens County Regional Planning Commission discussed the potential closure of the US-33/Johnson Road (Athens County CR 7) intersection at its regular meeting on March 19, 2021 and voted unanimously to issue a statement regarding the ODOT proposal discussed at a public meeting on March 10, 2021. This topic has been discussed over the past several months at our meetings and is a concern to many members of the commission and the community at large. Many commission members drive this area frequently and have a great deal of professional and observational knowledge of the situation. We understand and appreciate ODOT's long term goal to eliminate at-grade intersections on US-33 between Columbus and Athens for safety of the motoring public. There has been a great deal of progress toward that goal in the last 10 years and several improvements have no doubt increased safety and efficiency for motorists along this section of highway.

The Athens County Regional Planning Commission's concerns center on a few key points. While we support the closure of the left turn option from westbound US-33 to Johnson Road and eastbound US 33 to River Road, we object to the closure of access to/from Johnson Road from eastbound US-33. Regarding options for the interchange at US-33/SR 682, we believe and support Athens County Engineer Jeff Maiden's letter to you dated February 4, 2021 that provides backing information and a reasonable alternative to the current project ODOT has proposed. After the median is closed, we believe the impact on traffic flows and patterns on SR 682 through The Plains and in the vicinity of Athens High School and The Plains Elementary School should be evaluated before consideration of closure of Johnson Road. Additionally, the Athens County Regional Planning Commission believes that further study of traffic patterns driving between The Plains and Athens is warranted prior to a total closure of the Johnson Road at grade intersection because such a closure will greatly increase traffic at the US 33/682 interchange in Dover Township and the SR 682/SR 56 intersection in the City of Athens.

The comments and considerations contained in this letter were discussed and voted upon after a motion by member Steve Patterson (Mayor, City of Athens) and were seconded by member Lenny Eliason (Athens County Commissioner). The motion was approved unanimously by the 10 voting members present. Those members include County Commissioner Lenny Eliason, County Commissioner Charlie Adkins, County Commissioner Chris Chmiel, Athens Township Trustee Steve Pierson, City of Athens Mayor Steve Patterson, Village of Amesville Mayor Gary Goosman, Waterloo Township Trustee Gregg Andrews, member Boone Troyer, member Warren Jeffers, and myself.

Thank you for reviewing the carefully considered comments and recommendations of the Athens County Regional Planning Commission on this matter.

Sincerely,

Paul Logue, AICP

President, Athens County Regional Planning Commission
Planner, City of Athens
plogue@ci.athens.oh.us
740-592-3338 (office)
614-309-4508 (mobile)

cc: Jay Edwards, Ohio House District 94
Frank Hoagland, Ohio Senate District 30