

Stimson Avenue Improvement Project Public Comment and Response Information

An Open House Public Involvement Meeting was held for the Stimson Avenue Improvement Project (ATH-Stimson Avenue, PID 106687) on Tuesday December 11, 2018, from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm at the Athens Community Center, located at 701 East State Street, Athens, OH 45701.

A press release for the Open House was issued by the City of Athens on November 21, 2018.

Twenty-nine individuals signed the Open House attendance record. Comment forms and handouts were made available to all attendees. Open House exhibit information was uploaded to the City of Athens website on December 12, 2018.

Questions and comments submitted at the Open House, through the online comment form, or through email within the comment period are below, along with the response from the Engineering and Public Works Department.

Questions/Comments and Responses

Please list specific likes, dislikes, concerns, or comments for the proposed alternatives.

<p>Comment: I am mostly fine with all the alternatives. I lean toward alternative 1, but I don't see how parking can be omitted for delivery trucks without turn lanes.</p>
<p>Response: Thank you for your comment.</p>
<p>Comment: Alt 1: Would be a preferred option- A shared use path with separation from the road feels safer as a rider. The width feels safe for pedestrians and bikers. Alt 2: I think if there is safe way to calm traffic with lane reduction and include a separate path that is safe for all.</p>
<p>Response: Thank you for your comment.</p>
<p>Comment: Likes: Accessibility for pedestrians and bicyclists. Concerns: That you route traffic down Morris Ave. Making Grant one way has already turned Morris into a commercial street instead of residential. City buses and speeding school buses come down it as well as truck drivers and other drivers cutting through between State Street and Stimson.</p>
<p>Response: Thank you for your comment. The City will continue to review methods to deter neighborhood cut-through traffic during the construction of the project.</p>
<p>Comment: I would advocate for solution 1 (shared use path). 10 feet width seems to a <u>minimum</u> to be comfortable as pedestrians w/bicycles. Vertical separation elements, e.g. concrete planters, should be installed to increase safety. This would be better than using parked cars, bc. opening doors can conflict w/bicycles.</p>
<p>Response: Thank you for your comment.</p>

Comment: I am not particularly in favor of the bike lane. It is going to place cars and trucks too close to bicycles. With riders on the road, vehicles have to pay more attention when passing. I think the shared use path is a stronger alternative.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: I do not want to see any existing sidewalks removed and turned into shared use lanes. This is too dangerous for walkers going in and out of the businesses. In particular because my elderly parents go into Hocking Valley Bank & the Post Office I would not want those sidewalks in front turned into shared lanes. So my preference is alternative 2 first and then alternative 1.

Specifically I would also like to see the parking in front of Prokos (Palmer and Stimson) marked in such a way that there is a space for walkers to pass between the parking and the chain that is in front of Prokos Property. Because people sometimes park right up to the chain in front of Prokos' we pedestrians are forced to either hop the chain, risking tripping and annoying Prokos (they told me and my child that we really should not walk on their property) or walk around cars whose ends often very far but into Palmer Street and risk being hit by cars going down Palmer Street. Perhaps the parking spaces immediately by the Prokos building can be diagonally placed? In any case, there should be a way for pedestrians to pass between the parked cars and Prokos' property at least single file. Perhaps a space of 1-2 feet would be enough.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The project will include improvements at the Palmer Street intersection, including a widened sidewalk and crosswalk markings.

Comment: Concerns about shared lanes. If they are to be used, should be wide and divided with a clear marking for the bicycles and walkers. Would probably prefer separate lanes for walkers and bikes.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: I like shared lanes. They must be explicitly marked.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: I personally would prefer the bike lanes, if properly marked/separated from the road. The mixed use path is also a good idea, though issues of large numbers of driveway crossings need to be carefully considered. I think more casual cyclists and walkers would benefit more from the mixed use path.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: Don't like to see pedestrians and bikes on same path.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: Getting bicycles off the sidewalks would be a good start. Getting bicyclists to obey traffic laws would help too.

Response: Thank you for your comment. Per Athens City Code Section 7.03.39, bicyclists are allowed to ride on sidewalks in Athens, except adjacent to Court Street, or on sidewalks adjacent to Union, Washington, State or Mill Streets between Congress and College streets.

Comment: I do not support the idea of a shared use path. This is very dangerous for bicyclists in particular. Bikes going east on Stimson would be going the wrong direction relative to car traffic. That makes it very difficult to safely cross traffic when a bicyclist needs to turn across traffic. More importantly, the curb cuts would be incredibly dangerous. If a car at Bella Vino, for example, were making a right out of the parking lot they may only be looking for traffic coming from their left. A bicyclist could be moving very quickly down the hill coming from the motorist's right. A motorist, would arguably not have a reason to look far up the hill to the right to notice that they might pull out in front of a fast moving bicyclist who technically has the right of way. This sounds very dangerous. Additionally, a shared use path is confusing for motorists who then think that bicyclists are only allowed on the bike path or sidewalks. I can't tell you how many times passing motorists yell at me on my bike- "Get on the sidewalk!" Having designated bike paths that are part of the road is consistent with already existing patterns around town. It also sends the message that bikes belong in the same space as cars. It is confusing to motorists if a bicyclist on a shared use path needs to then make a left hand turn. Motorists expect bicyclists on shared paths/sidewalks to interact with cars the same way that pedestrians do- by going to an intersection and waiting for traffic to stop. This is not how bicyclists legally should interact with car traffic. They should be in the lane, signaling a left hand turn, for example, with car traffic behind them yielding. Finally, it is not uncommon for me to go about 25 mph going east on Stimson Ave because it is a downhill. This speed is better suited for the road, not a mixed use shared path where there may be pedestrians standing still while waiting to cross at an intersection, people walking out of stores or bicyclists going 10 mph in the other direction.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The preferred alternative does not include a shared use path, but widened sidewalks and improved signage for cyclists.

Comment: I am concerned about the multiuse pathways. I think pedestrians will be afraid to use them because they think the cyclists, skateboarders, etc. will not respect the pedestrians and give way to them, or travel at walking pace. I think the cyclists will not like sharing the pathway. As a cyclist, I prefer to travel on the road and not the sidewalk. We need more information (signs PSAs etc.) to inform cyclists (and skateboarders etc.) on how they should use the streets and sidewalks. They all need lights at night, and some electric skateboards do. As a pedestrian, I have been forced off the sidewalk on Stimson more than once by a cyclist traveling on the north sidewalk between Cornwell and Palmer.

I do not really have a preferred scheme. I think they all suffer from the lack of awareness of the needs on pedestrians in the culture of all the users of the road, sidewalks, and multiuse pathways. Maybe this an educational opportunity?

I think the scheme with the bike lanes on either side is my preferred scheme but will the skateboarders etc. use the bike lanes and not the sidewalks? Will they travel in right direction? I have had to deal with cyclists traveling against the flow of traffic on the road both as a cyclist and a motorist with a car that has a collision avoidance system which is triggered by a cyclist traveling against the flow of the traffic, for example on Mill St.

I think the loss of the light at Stimson and Campbell will be a challenge for those of us turning left, but maybe that extra delay will convince those that cut through from East State St. not to do so.

I applaud the City for trying to come up with solutions that do not privilege the car user over the other users of the roads and sidewalks.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The project is intended to address the needs of Stimson

Avenue users for the future and find the balance of improvements that can fit within existing right-of-way.

Comment: Of the three plans presented for this project, I strongly prefer the plan with bike lanes and of course sidewalks on both sides of the street. The foremost reason for this is safety for bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists. The other two plans, with a shared use path on the south side of the street, would see more collisions between bicyclists, pedestrians and motor vehicles.

Visibility is very important. A bicyclist in a bike lane would be 5-10 feet further out than on a shared use path. A bicyclist travelling in a shared path is in the peripheral vision of motorists on Stimson or approaching Stimson. And vice versa, motor vehicles would be in the peripheral vision of bicyclists. So everyone is more easily seen (and seen sooner) if there are bike lanes vs. a shared use path. In the event of a conflict, there is more reaction time for all parties if the bicyclist is in a bike lane vs. a shared path. Furthermore the bicyclist has more options in that case such as using the next lane.

Very important here is the number of “conflict points”: i. e. Intersections and driveways. There are about 20 here, that is about 10 per quarter mile. Many of the driveways are commercial. At many of these conflict points, drivers approaching Stimson have limited views due to buildings (e.g. Palmer Street , Hocking Valley Bank parking lot, Post Office) or due to drivers entering Stimson at an angle (e.g. Post Office, laundry, and gas station). I have spent considerable time in Gainesville Fl., which has a number of shared use paths paralleling roadways (some of these roads also have bike lanes); but where these shared use paths exist; there is about 1 to 2 crossings per quarter mile, not 10 per quarter mile as we have here. A shared use path on Stimson is more or less “sidewalk” riding. Sidewalk riding is a significant factor in bicycle accidents as is borne out by statistics.

The number of conflict points and amount of pedestrian traffic requires due diligence for a bicyclist using either a shared use path as bike lanes. But bike lanes are clearly safer, particularly here with poor visibility in places. A bicyclist on a shared use path might be distracted by pedestrians and not see a motor vehicle (or vice versa). (My personal preference would be neither lanes nor path, but that is not an option and would not work for some).

Gravity plays an issue here. Bicyclists travelling eastbound could be moving over 20 MPH. It is not good with heavy pedestrian traffic.

The Hocking Valley Bank front door would be only 3 feet from the proposed shared use path. In that case, there would likely be collisions between people exiting the bank and bicyclists. A similar situation holds for an office building.

Bicycle lanes would mean less crossings of Stimson by bicyclists than a shared use path on one side. Those doing errands on a path would need to cross more often and probably do so in unexpected places.

If there is a shared path, I’m afraid there would be frequent occurrences of bicyclists unexpectedly moving from the path to the road (sometimes to avoid conflicts), a problem that occurs with sidewalk riding. Bicyclists in a lane would be more predictable.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The preferred alternative does not include a shared use path, but widened sidewalks and improved signage for cyclists.

Comment: Strongly prefer option 3. Advocate for crossing refuges (2) for ped crossing at grant and existing stairs to montrose. Bicycle lanes provide better access to Carpenter St. for westbound bicyclists.

If a shared use path is chosen, it is important that it be signed that bikes are permitted in the road.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The preferred alternative does not include a shared use path, but widened sidewalks and improved signage for cyclists. The design team will continue to review locations for crossings and pedestrian refuges.

Comment: The option of no bike lane, no shared use path wasn't presented. I appreciate the city's efforts to move toward increased access and safety for bikes/pedestrians. Though I am likely in the minority, I am perfectly happy with how I am currently able to manage Stimson Ave. without any other paths/lanes. Car traffic volumes are relatively low and moving slowly compared to other places. A sign is always nice to remind people that bikes belong there, too. But otherwise, Stimson is the least of my headaches when it comes to commuting by bike.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The preferred alternative does not include a shared use path, but widened sidewalks and improved signage for cyclists.

Comment: Alternative 3 is the only option that considers parking on Stimson. That is essential for the businesses on the street. Alternative 2 is the worst option.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The preferred alternative does include on-street parking on the north side of Stimson Avenue.

Comment: I personally would prefer the bike lanes, if properly marked/separated from the road. The mixed use path is also a good idea, though issues of large numbers of driveway crossings need to be carefully considered. I think more casual cyclists and walkers would benefit more from the mixed use path.

Response: Thank you for your comments.

Comment: If you really want to prepare for the future Make Stimson Ave and Mill St. into a one-way loop. Use cross streets as they are.

Response: Thank you for your comments. There is no current plan to change the Stimson Avenue and Mill Street into one-way streets.

Comment: The Stimson Ave Alternatives Matrix does not include a consideration for the benefit of parking (Alternative 3 has 15 parking spaces). This should be considered as a Best (green) option under an evaluation criteria for enhanced access to businesses, especially with the possibility of additional handicapped parking spaces and as a Best option criteria for the revenue collected from metered parking and parking enforcement.

Response: Thank you for your comments. Parking was not considered as a separate evaluation criteria, but was evaluated as part of Alternative 3 (Shared Use Path and Parking Alternative).

Comment: Prefer the option with 2 bike Lanes. I worry that the dual use lane will result in pedestrians getting in cyclist's path. It also necessitates riding on the wrong side of the road instead of with traffic.

Response: Thank you for your comments.

Comment: I think that a shared-use path is problematic because of the two-way bike traffic, especially on a street that likely sees a lot of pedestrians too. I especially don't see the logic in the Alternative that provides a sidewalk directly adjacent to a shared use path. While there are some problems associated with it, I think separate bike lanes are the best option of the three.

Response: Thank you for your comments.

Comment: Bikelanes encourage people to bike more, but bikelanes can hold a lot of road grit and other debris and can be hazardous. I no longer ride adjacent to curbs so that I don't have to deal with road grit. It would be very sad to have parking go away on Stimson, and I would rather NOT have bikelanes than to lose parking. A bikelane on the uphill side of Stimson would be reasonable, if parking could be preserved. The existing bikelanes and bikepath in Athens do not get plowed, and I am concerned about maintenance of the bikelanes and shared use path for this project.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The concerns about snow and road grit will be communicated to the Street Supervisor.

Comment: I prefer alternative 3, with the shared-use path and the on-street parking on the West end of the street. Key design factors for the shared-use path will be to design it so vehicles exiting/entering parking lots or driveways across the path will be aware that they are crossing the path and will observe that the path is clear before entering it. This could be accomplished using a path design that has continuity along the path, not being broken up by driveways and curb cuts. Design it to make it clear that cars crossing the path are entering a different space. This continuous design could also be continued across the few side streets along the south side of Stimson Ave (Kern, Campbell, Elliott, Palmer), maintaining the shared-use path at the same height as it crosses the side streets will create a low speed table that will force drivers to slow down and make sure it is clear before crossing the path.

Response: Thank you for your comments.

Comment: I see alternative #2 as the best. The addition of specific bike lanes to the roadway is the safest way for cyclists to travel. I feel that options 1 and 3 -- the addition of a shared use, 1-foot wide space on the south side -- is less desirable for these reasons: cyclists should not cycle facing traffic which a shared lane on one side requires; cars entering from businesses do not respect this as a lane with traffic, i.e. cyclists and are a danger; it creates two places for cars to look for cyclists, this shared lane and on the road (for serious cyclists will use the road not a shared lane.)

Response: Thank you for your comments.

Comment: I live on Morris. I drive out to Stimson on Campbell, mainly at weekends. I cycle to work every day taking Campbell to Stimson to Elliot and back again. I am not sure how I will negotiate the traffic at 5:30 PM on Stimson with any of the schemes. Now, I have a turn left lane on Stimson to get into. With any of the schemes, I am going to have to rely on the straight through traffic stopping and waiting for me to turn. Maybe I will get a rear facing camera to record the day someone does not stop for me. In the morning I can see enough of Stimson to know when to turn out and move to turn left into Elliot. On the way home, the sightlines west on Stimson from Elliot do not give me enough distance to see cars coming from far enough away. I have to risk turning before I am sure I am not going to cross the path of a vehicle coming a straight through.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The design team will continue to review sight-distance concerns and the location of turn-lanes and refuge islands during detailed design.

How do you currently use the project area (i.e. do you walk, drive, bike, etc.)?

Comments

- Walk, drive, bike (in that order of frequency, high to low)
- I drive and bike this section of road
- Walk, Drive
- Drive and walk
- Walk and drive
- I use this corridor in all three ways, however I mostly drive and ride my bicycle.
- Yes, constantly. I walk across Stimson to take child to East Elementary, to go to the post office, Hocking Valley Bank, Farmacy & to other businesses. I both walk and occasionally drive to Good laundromat
- Walk + drive + bike. Eat at China Fortune. Post Office, Busy Day, Farmacy
- Usually drive
- Walk & drive
- Walk, Drive
- Drive & walk
- I walk, drive, and bike along Stimson Ave and surrounding roads and paths
- Bike
- Drive to work, on this road at least 4 times a day.
- Bike, walk, drive, and Disco Roller Skating
- Bike
- I bike to work multiple days a week throughout the entire year. I come into town via Rock Riffle and work uptown. On the days I don't bike, I drive in the same way.
- Stimson is our access into downtown Athens so driving route and parking for businesses we frequent (i.e., China Fortune, Bella Vino, The Farmacy).
- I regularly bike and drive. I use parking on Stimson.
- I regularly walk along Stimson to go to businesses such as Jackie O's Taproom, Busy Day Market, Farmacy, Post Office, and Bella Vino. Ride bike on Stimson almost daily, usually only short stints to get to Elliott or Palmer Streets to go to OU campus. I occasionally drive from Campbell to the roundabout to get onto the highway.
- Cycle to access bikeway or Rock Riffle area; Walk between businesses; drive to the Post Office, Farmacy, dry cleaners frequently; drive to get to highway

Response: Thank you for submitting comments about how the street is utilized.

Do you have concerns or comments about the environmental, social or economic impact of the project?

Comment: A decisive move towards pedestrian and bicycle use reduces car use and pollution, improves physical and mental health of active users.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: Not really, I imagine the businesses will voice their concerns but I think this is very important to be undertaken to improve the safety of users as well as the appearance of the entrance to Athens

Response: Thank you for your comment.

<p>Comment: I would caution the buffer being grass as a long term maintenance cost. A need exists to have a clearly defined buffer though.</p>
<p>Response: Thank you for your comment.</p>
<p>Comment: I can't even sit on my front porch anymore due to increased traffic.</p>
<p>Response: The City will continue to review methods to deter neighborhood cut-through traffic during the construction of the project, and is reviewing methods on how to address daily cut-through traffic.</p>
<p>Comment: I absolutely do not want to see any existing sidewalks removed to be made into "shared use" paths that would require pedestrians to "share" the walkway with bikes. We who walk to businesses and schools on Stimson & Morris/Wallace want to be safe from passing bikes.</p>
<p>Response: Thank you for your comments.</p>
<p>Comment: One of my concerns is impact on business with the removal of parking. I believe that maintaining sidewalks on both sides of the road should be a part of any solution.</p>
<p>Response: Thank you for your comments.</p>
<p>Comment: Need accurate traffic light at Stimson and state with walk lights well timed.</p>
<p>Response: The signal at Stimson Avenue and State Street/Carpenter Street is being reviewed and is expected to be upgraded as part of this project.</p>
<p>Comment: Water run off?</p>
<p>Response: Storm system improvements are being planned with this project.</p>
<p>Comment: The maintenance of adequate rainwater runoff must be considered to prevent making any of the solutions from become difficult to navigate. Making Stimson Ave friendlier to bikes and pedestrians has obvious advantages to reducing car traffic for local business interactions and getting between east side neighborhoods and downtown Athens.</p>
<p>Response: Thank you for your comments. Storm system improvements are being planned with this project. The project also will improve conditions for cyclists and pedestrians using the corridor.</p>
<p>Comment: Need the bike lane for safety. Consider taking the bike lane through one of the less travelled streets parallel to Stimson. May be much safer and less impact.</p>
<p>Response: Thank you for your comments. Bicycle facilities are an important component to the Stimson Avenue project, and incorporating bike facilities into this project correspond with the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and Comprehensive Plan for this corridor.</p>
<p>Comment: Keeping the existing turn lanes is critical, and expanding on them would be a good thing. Whoever said the traffic levels don't support them has obviously never sat behind someone attempting to make a left turn. Do something about drivers exceeding the speed limits on Stimson!</p>
<p>Response: The design team will continue to review the location of turn lanes. One of the goals of the project is to address speed concerns on Stimson Avenue - with narrowing lanes, adding cross-walks and intersection improvements, the speeding issues are expected to be reduced.</p>

Comment: One concern I have is that we are losing about 50 parking spaces mainly at the west end of the project. I think this will adversely affect the small businesses in that area. I think the City should pay attention to their concerns and solutions in this regard.

Response: The preferred alternative retains parking on the north side of the project, and adds parking along Kern Street. The project will also include better signage for existing public parking on Palmer Street and along State Street.

Comment: If you do not provide parking for those businesses on Stimson, they will close - no revenues for the City! When some of these businesses close, citizens will not be happy!!!

Response: Parking has been included in the preferred alternative.

Comment: Make some money and include metered parking spaces either now or include parking and add meters later.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The installation of parking meters will be reviewed with the Service-Safety Director and Athens Police Department.

Comment: The project should improve traffic flow. There doesn't seem to be that much pedestrian traffic there. A main focus should be on cars and cyclist's.

Response: Thank you for your comments.

Comment: Stimson is not currently a very friendly place to walk or bike. The vehicle lanes are too wide, the sidewalks too narrow, and are impaired in many places. This inhibits the potential of Stimson to be a successful social and economic zone in the city of Athens. Making Stimson a pedestrian-friendly street with aesthetically pleasing and pedestrian-scale lighting, street trees, and improved and widened sidewalks will greatly improve the potential for infill development, pedestrian friendly development, and local businesses rather than more national chains.

Response: Thank you for your comments.

Comment: I would like the planners to consider Shade Tree Commission recommendations. Basically, I don't think the city should take on any new roadway improvements without adding trees to enhance the view of users and enhance the environment.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The design team will continue to review the project with the Shade Tree Commission and the Urban Forester for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

4. Do you have knowledge of any archaeological or architectural resources within the project area?

Comment: The house next to Athens Bicycle at the corner of Cornwell is the last worker cottage originally built, and still in original form from the old Athens Bicycle Co. that used to be on Stimson. Athens bicycle front is also an old worker cottage, but it has been extended & altered so much it no longer looks like the old worker cottage it use to be. It was a shame the city allowed the other cottages to be torn down and also the old brick factory building itself. I have been told the Ambassador laundry building was also part of Athens Brick Co. but I am not sure about that. I would like to see the stairway to Montrose fixed up so it is in better shape. Now it is tilted, much more so than when I was a child.

Former site of brick company

Old mining houses should be preserved

Response: Thank you for the information. The project is not expected to impact the historical resources.

5. General Comments:

Comment: My concerns as a frequent walker are mainly that pedestrian access across the bridge be protected, and that Grant be restored to 2-way, or be reversed, to provide access from the eastbound traffic on Morris to Stimson. Failing all that, I would like the parking on Morris to be switched to the north side so parked cars don't have to do a u-turn on Morris to access Stimson.

Response: Thank you for your comments. Grant Street cannot return to two-way traffic or be reversed due to sight-distance issues. The comment about parking cars on the north side of the street has been shared with the Mayor's Office.

Comment: For intersections, raised intersections, curb-outs, or "rescue islands" are better than only stop signs.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The design team is reviewing adding curb-outs (also referred to as "bump-outs") and crossing refuges to the project.

Comment: This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for the community to strengthen the connection between the city and the university with this business corridor. This is more than an engineering problem.

Response: Thank you for your comment. The planning for this project is being completed in coordination with the Comprehensive Plan update, and planning for the next 20 years.

Comment: Ped leading interval imp. at Stimson & State intersection. Other safety at this intersection. Ped crosswalk at State/Campbell should be on west side of intersection.

Response: Thank you for your comment. The design team is reviewing a leading pedestrian interval as part of the signal update at the State/Stimson/Carpenter intersection. The design team will also review crosswalk locations.

Comment: Hope there is good landscaping and dark skies lighting.

Response: Thank you for your comment. Lighting upgrades will be dark skies compliant. The design team is reviewing landscaping options. The right-of-way space is limited, but the City is planning to coordinate with the Shade Tree Commission and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Urban Forester to review if there are suitable locations within the project area for shade trees. The City will also coordinate with the Athens Soil & Water Conservation District to review if landscaping can be used in any areas for stormwater treatment.

Comment: I like alternative 3 that includes some parking.

Response: Thank you for your comment. Parking has been included in the selected alternative.

Comment: Thank you for focusing on a progressive approach to transportation in Athens!

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: The more bike use lanes the better

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: The focus of any improvements should be on the intersection of Stimson and Rock Riffle Road. Certain times of day vehicles can be backed up 30 deep on Rock Riffle, with drivers trying to make left turns onto Stimson. The roundabout has added to this problem. Speeding and running the stop sign by the bank are huge problems.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The City's Stimson project will address the speeding and stop sign issues, however, the Rock Riffle/Stimson Avenue intersection is outside of the corporation boundary. The comments about the Rock Riffle/Stimson Avenue intersection has been shared with the Athens County Engineer and the Ohio Department of Transportation.

Comment: 3 cheers for the bike lane option!!! This is the safest option. It also sends a consistent message to motorists that bikes belong on the roads. If you're wondering why I continue to use Stimson instead of just going up Mill St which already has a bike lane, it's because that bike lane always have lots of glass in it. I was fixing a flat tire every couple weeks, so I finally gave up on that route. I haven't had a flat tire in over 2 years since I stopped going that way to work.

Response: Thank you for your comment. Your comment about glass in the bike lane will be shared with the Street Supervisor. The preferred alternative incorporates improvements for pedestrian and cyclist safety, but unfortunately a bike lane does not fit within existing right-of-way when on-street parking is included.

Comment: I am not sure how the current street width (~35') and the two sidewalks on Stimson at Campbell give 50', maybe you have a way of stretching the space-time continuum.

I think the retaining walls on the south side of Stimson south of Campbell will be costly for the City to retain but necessary. They will also reduce the effective width of the multiuse pathway or sidewalk at that point.

It is disappointing, but not unexpected, that no shade trees will be planted as part of this project. The tiny "green" strips on the plans need to be turned brown or grey as they should be concrete or stones. A shade tree needs 240 sq. ft of permeable space to thrive. There is no room in this project for trees.

Response: Thank you for your comments.

The Right-of-Way width near Campbell is approximately 55-foot wide, and extends behind the sidewalk. If there are questions about the width measurement, please contact the Engineering & Public Works Department to review additional information.

The selected alternative includes a 7-foot wide sidewalk adjacent to the retaining walls.

The City will consult the Shade Tree Commission and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Urban Forester to review the possibilities of adding shade trees to the corridor.

Comment: Add LPI to signals in all directions at this intersection. According to NACTO, adding LPI can reduce crashes by 60%. <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/intersection-design-elements/traffic-signals/leading-pedestrian-interval/>

Add median bollards to keep left turning vehicles from short-cutting the turn. NYC has been using a Basic Hardened Centerline treatment on 2-way street intersections to great success. In NYC, intersections treated as such have average left turn speeds decreased by 20.5%, maximum left turn speeds decreased by 11.7%, and the rate of crossing the double yellow line while turning dropped by 100% for locations that have a treatment extending all the way to the crosswalk. <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/pedestrians/left-turn-traffic-calming.shtml>

Since the signals will be updated for the intersection under the Stimson Ave project, it would be good to add signals that can allow the LPI. I also would like to suggest that that this intersection is the perfect place to test the hardened center line treatment in Athens.

Response: Thank you for your comments. A Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI) is expected to be added to the signal at State/Stimson/Carpenter. The comment about the median bollards has been provided to the design team for review.

Comment: I understand the city of Athens goes to the end of the bridge on Stimson Ave on the way out of town. I have very strong safety concerns about the bridge. People from the bike path, the apartments, and community members, whether on foot, or bike, cross the bridge coming to our cafe and to go hiking on bong hill and witches hill. The bridge does not have any guard rails or other type of safety net in place for our community members. Since I see the traffic that crosses the bridge along with joggers, walkers and bicyclists, I see the near misses that occur. Students, parents and children, all community members should have basic safety measures on the Stimson Ave bridge. People are always going to cross the bridge regardless of safety measures, as hiking, biking and walking promote health, and it is up to Athens to provide a safe way to do so. Please, please consider a barrier between the cars and the pedestrians on the Stimson Ave bridge. Also, another suggestion as far as beautification, and something that would make sense, is another (yes another) round about at the Rock Riffle Rd and Stimson Ave intersection. It would make traffic flow a lot more manageable and I love our roundabouts. They are pretty and quaint. Fits right into Athens. Thank you for allowing me to voice my concerns.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The comments about the Stimson Avenue bridge and the Rock Riffle Road intersection have been provided to the County Engineer and the Ohio Department of Transportation.

Comment: The construction on Stimson will almost certainly mean increased traffic through the near-eastside, specifically Morris Avenue. How will the city respond to that increase and what steps will the city take to monitor and control speeding in our neighborhood? The city's track record, including the recent construction on the State Street highway ramps, leaves much to be desired. We do not look forward to another summer of high traffic on our street.

How long will the project take?

We have been told that Grant Street is to remain one-way, northbound, permanently. What steps will the city take to make the intersection of Morris and Grant more visually appealing (i.e., get rid of the large "Road closed" sign) with more effective one-way signage.

Response: Construction of the project is anticipated to begin in spring 2020 and be completed in fall 2020. The timeline will be refined once detailed design is complete (expected this year).

During the East State Street project, the City's Contractor installed temporary speed bumps on Morris Avenue and other neighborhood streets, installed temporary signage to notify vehicles they were entering a residential area, and the City coordinated with the Athens Police to install the temporary speed assessment monitor (this occurred later in the summer/fall). The same steps will be taken during the Stimson Avenue project, and communication will also continue with the Athens Police Department about speeding complaints, if the Engineering & Public Works Department receives them.

The Engineering and Public Works Department is reviewing installation of a sidewalk on Grant, likely to be completed with the Stimson Avenue project.

Comment: Just in case I don't make it to the open house, something I hope you'll consider: installation of a pedestrian-activated crosswalk at Cornwell and Stimson. I believe this is the likely crossing point for people walking from the near east side to the bank, post office, or gas station.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The City will continue to review the crosswalk locations with the design firm as design is completed.

Comment: Will the project include any Complete Streets elements including but not limited to extended sidewalks, bike lanes, marked on-street parking etc? As discussed in the 2010 Athens Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan: https://www.athenscyclepath.com/Athens_Bicycle_and_Pedestrian_Plan.pdf

I would encourage consideration of striped on-street parking spots as it is unclear where vehicles can and cannot park with low curb cuts. As a former resident of the street, there were many vehicles parked blocking driveway and curb access.

Would also consider a mid-block crosswalk or crosswalk be installed, preferably with notification such as flashing beacon to alert drivers. Palmer at Stimson as an example location.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The preferred alternative includes widened sidewalks, marked on-street parking, improved signage for cyclists and pedestrians, and marked crosswalks. Other design considerations will be considered as the project develops.

Comment: We get into and out of Athens via the access road from CR25 to Stimson. If you plan to make Stimson a major access road into Athens, you need to consider a better traffic flow pattern for that intersection.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The intersection with County Road 25 is outside of the city limits. The comment has been provided to the County Engineer and the Ohio Department of Transportation.

Comment: I would like to see the sidewalk continue through business parking lots. It can be difficult to travel to the entrance of a business if cars are parked where the sidewalk should be. My biggest issue biking on Stimson is turning left onto State Street. A landscaping component to this project would be nice. Perhaps there is room to have great landscaping by the roundabout or add trees along the street. A roundabout by the bridge and the coffee shop is desperately needed and something the City should review.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The intersection with County Road 25 is outside of the city limits -the comment has been provided to the County Engineer and the Ohio Department of Transportation.

The City is working with the design firm to continue the sidewalks through parking lots, and the City is also planning to work with the Shade Tree Commission to locate potential planting sites for shade trees along the corridor.

Comment: It seems unnecessary to have both a shared use path and a sidewalk directly next to each other, as I think some sections of the other possible alternatives had. Additionally, I think that separate bike paths may be the best option for students, as I think pedestrians and cyclists alike find it problematic and stressful when they both end up trying to use the same paths within the context of getting around the city. Since Court Street also has the either walk your bike or ride it in the street policy, perhaps it makes the most sense to make Stimson the same way?

Response: Thank you for your comments. The preferred alternative includes widened sidewalks to allow cyclists to ride on the sidewalk if they prefer. More experienced cyclists may opt to ride on Stimson Avenue.

Comment: I appreciate the care that the city has taken to come up with good design alternatives at this point in the project. I would like to have seen more details provided on street lighting and street trees as part of this project. These are elements that if missing, can make or break the potential for the Stimson corridor to attract pedestrian traffic, and make this a place that will attract new businesses and infill development. Please install pedestrian-scale street lighting that is located near the curb and is aesthetically pleasing. Cobrahead street lights are not appropriate on a re-designed Stimson Ave. Street trees should be included in the new streetscape of Stimson Ave, to the greatest extent possible. This is a win-win, both improving aesthetics and making Stimson Ave a safer and more comfortable place for pedestrians. To make Stimson a real destination in Athens, add street trees. Additionally, please pay careful attention to safety improvements for the intersection of Stimson/Carpenter/E. State. It is the most dangerous intersection for pedestrians in Athens County, and needs significant interventions to make it safe. Adding 3-4 second leading pedestrian intervals on all pedestrian signals, and making high visibility crosswalks are a good start. Additionally, trying left turn bollard restrictions like what New York City has been testing, to huge success is a good idea here. These restrictions keep left-turning vehicles from short-cutting the turn and crossing the double yellow line at intersections, thus forcing them to turn at slower speeds, significantly improving the likelihood of seeing and yielding to a pedestrian crossing the street.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The Stimson Avenue project will include decorative street lighting and the removal of the existing overhead lighting. The exact placement of the lighting will be identified during design.

The City will coordinate with the Shade Tree Commission to review potential planting sites for shade trees.

The signal at State/Stimson/Carpenter will include a Leading Pedestrian Interval, and the bollard restrictions have been forwarded to the design team for review.

Comment: Glad to see that utilities will be underground. If planners decide on shared lane option, please consider ways to make this lane obvious to drivers coming out of businesses, with things such as raised areas where cars enter or bumps on paved lane or something to make it safe.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The City is coordinating with utility companies to review the possibility of underground relocation, but it depending on right-of-way needs and funding, the relocation may not occur.

Comment: The drive entrance to USPS office needs to be improved, particularly the radius.

Very little bike traffic has been observed, and prefers the shared use path alternative. It would be safer for cyclists to use the sidewalk rather than be out in the street.

Prefers existing conditions to remain.

Do not want the entire sidewalk replaced, if it is in good condition.

Greenspace does not work on Stimson Avenue.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The City will review the entrance to the post office with the design team.

Comment: Will there be a bike box at the intersection?

The USPS drop-off box should be relocated.

Would like to see more information on removing the turn lane and adding refuges for pedestrians, and slowing down the speed of vehicles traveling on the street.

There are water issues at KFC, drainage issues at the USPS entrance, and backups.

The overhead utilities should be relocated underground.

Maintenance of Traffic is a concern for the construction period.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The City will review the drop-off box location with the post office and review the utility issues.

Since bikelanes were not selected as the preferred alternative, a bike box will not be installed at the intersection with State Street.

The design team will continue to review the turn lane and pedestrian refuge locations as design work continues.

Comment: Watt Street could be made one-way by the school - this would tie-in to the one-way on Wallace.

Keeping the turn lanes seem important for turning left at Campbell, Sonic, or Grant. There seem to be more speeding issues at the east end of the project.

There seems to be a lack of right-of-way available for planting shade trees.

Pedestrian crossing islands are needed on Stimson, specifically near Grant Street. Crosswalks at Grant Street and Campbell would be utilized. Bus stops should be designed with the project.

If the shared use path alternative is selected, texture changes are needed at each intersection, to inform the users of the crossing. Signage is also important. There is concern that "fitness cyclists" would travel 25 mph on the path and pedestrians would be unsafe.

Stimson to State cut-through traffic is an on-going issue.

A sidewalk should be installed on the north side of the roundabout to connect to the other sidewalks. Grant Street needs a sidewalk, or some other improvement that includes removal of the cones.

Side street parking should be opened up to alleviate some of the parking concerns with the project.

Response: Thank you for your comments.

There are no plans at this time to change Watt Street to one-way. The design team is reviewing turn lanes, crosswalk locations, pedestrian refuges, and bus-stop locations.

A sidewalk is being planned for Grant Street and plans will develop as the design work continues. A sidewalk on the north side of the roundabout isn't possible without the City acquiring additional right-of-way.

The City will review side-street parking. One of the goals of the Stimson Avenue project is to provide better way finding and signage to public parking that already exists (near the Palmer/Stimson intersection and along State Street).

Comment: Speed as an issue on Stimson. Additional cross-walks are needed, especially where heavy pedestrian traffic crosses each day.

The Shared Use Path alternative, along with a buffer strip, with space for bike racks, trash receptacles, and benches, would enhance Stimson Avenue.

On-street parking and loading zones are critical to businesses along Stimson Avenue.

Response: Thank you for your comments. Crosswalk locations are being reviewed. The preferred alternative includes on-street parking as well as some areas that could be used for bike racks, trash receptacles, and benches.

Comment: A crosswalk is needed at Busy Day Market/Farmacy area, as the Palmer Place residents cross Stimson Avenue to access the businesses.

Parking is important on the north side of the street.

Will parking meters be installed on Stimson Avenue?

Response: Thank you for your comments. The City is reviewing cross-walk locations with the design team.

The preferred alternative includes parking on the north side of the street, and parking spaces opened on Kern.

Parking meter installation will be reviewed with the Service-Safety Director and the Athens Police Department.

Comment: Sidewalks are preferred on both sides of the street, and Alternative 1 or 3, or a combination of the two is preferred over Alternative 2. Parking needs to remain on Stimson and overhead utility lines should be buried.

Decorative lights should be continued on Stimson Avenue.

Vehicles typically run the stop sign at Palmer Street.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The preferred alternative includes sidewalks on both sides of the street and on-street parking.

The City is reviewing the possibility of overhead line removal with the utility companies. Decorative lights will be added to the project and the existing overhead lights will be removed by AEP.

The City is reviewing changes to the stop at Palmer Street to make it more visible to drivers.

Comment: A cross-walk is needed at Grant because of the bus drop off; a sidewalk connecting the roundabout would be useful.

I prefer Alternative 3, it looks like it will slow traffic. The roundabout project helped decrease speeding and turning issues, but speed is still an issue on Stimson.

Response: Thank you for your comments. A crosswalk with pedestrian refuge is being planned for the Stimson Avenue/Grant Street intersection, and crosswalk locations will continue to be evaluated during design.

A sidewalk cannot be added to the north side of the roundabout without the City acquiring more right-of-way.

Comment: The narrowing of Stimson Avenue is problematic - speed isn't currently an issue. If the sidewalk is replaced, owners should be given guidance from the City on how to complete ice control efforts without damaging the sidewalk.

The "no-turn on red" at State Street isn't helpful for moving vehicles through the intersection.

Parking is extremely important for businesses, especially businesses that receive deliveries.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The design team is reviewing improvements for the Stimson/State/Carpenter intersection.

The preferred alternative includes on-street parking.

Comment: A bus shelter could be installed at the south-side of Campbell Street. There would likely be a sight-distance issue if a shelter were installed by Hocking Valley Bank near Palmer, but perhaps a bench at Hocking Valley Bank would be possible.

A bench at Citizens Bank would be beneficial.

A crossing refuge at Campbell or Grant would be a positive improvement.

Response: Thank you for your comments. Crossing-refuges are being incorporated into the project. The City will continue to coordinate with Athens Transit to review the design and the preferred locations for shelters and benches.

Comment: Cyclists should be using the sidewalk rather than the street, as the lanes already feel narrow, even if parking is eliminated. Parking should be removed; it creates congestion and sight-distance issues when exiting businesses. If parking is removed from Stimson Avenue, would some parking be allowed during the day to allow deliveries?

Utility poles should be relocated. The same style of decorative lighting used elsewhere in Athens should be used on Stimson Avenue.

The Ambassador Laundries building and property were part of the brick factory. A gas station was located at the top of the State Street intersection, where the island is now.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The preferred alternative includes wider sidewalks and on-street parking on the north side of the street only, with other public parking available at East State

Street, Kern Street, and Palmer Street.

The City is considering using decorative lighting on this project, but the light may be different than the fixtures used on Court Street and Richland Avenue.

Comment: Parking should be extended on the entire street.

There are sight-distance issue at Campbell, and the radius of Campbell needs to be reviewed, it is a narrow street, and there are issues turning onto Campbell if a vehicle is already in the street waiting at the light.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The preferred alternative includes on-street parking on the north side of the street only, with other public parking available at East State Street, Kern Street, and Palmer Street.

The City will review the Campbell Street sight-distance issues and width issues with the design team.

Comment: A detector is needed at the Campbell signal to assist the signal timing.

Parking is needed for businesses.

Decorative lighting is needed on both sides of the street.

The Shared Use Path should be on the north side of the street, since the largest parking lot areas are on the south side of the street. A bike lane may also be installed in the center of the street. There is a concern if cyclists and pedestrians share the same space.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The preferred alternative includes sidewalks on both sides of the street, but parking on the north-side of the street only.

The project will include decorative lighting on both sides of the street.

Comment: Stimson Avenue needs to be repaved and the utility poles need to be relocated.

Reducing parking would hurt businesses.

The reduced lane width and eliminating the turn lane are concerns. Traffic backups will become an issue if the turn lane is removed and there will be a greater rear-end crash risk.

Concerned about disruption to businesses during construction

Response: Thank you for your comments. The street will be re-surfaced with the project, and the City is still coordinating with utility companies to review the feasibility of relocating the overhead lines.

The preferred alternative includes on-street parking. The turn lane is being reviewed by the design team.

Traffic will be maintained during construction, the details of the maintenance of traffic plan are still being developed.

Comment: How will the bikepath connect to the shared use path? How will the shared use path exit onto the street?

My least favorite alternative is No. 3 because it still allows parking. Pedestrians use Stimson Avenue all year long and providing parking is not as important as providing pedestrian facilities.

Response: Thank you for your comments.

The preferred alternative includes wide sidewalks and on-street parking, so details showing the connection to the shared use path won't be developed.

Comment: The area that needs the most assistance is the entrance to Jackie O's and the monument shop - the area gets bottlenecked and the entrances are unclear. There are also issues at Bolleana, Sonic, and at Jackie O's when vehicles are waiting to turn at any of these locations.

Parking on Stimson Avenue is extremely important for businesses. Some of the meters on State Street have a 10-hour limit, but there is no signage, so the general public is unaware of the time limit.

More people park on Stimson that have come from the uptown area rather than from out of town, so it makes more sense to have parking on the south-side of the street.

I am interested in the solution for the State/Carpenter/Stimson intersection, as there are a lot of near-misses. In general, there are speeding vehicles coming from Carpenter trying to make the light, and issues as vehicles wait to turn left from Carpenter. There are also issues with east-bound vehicles traveling on E. State and waiting to turn left - this can cause vehicles to sit through another cycle at the intersection and traffic to backup.

The shared use path seems feasible. The shared use path may feel more like a sidewalk, and I do not expect to use it, if it is constructed. I would continue to ride on the street.

Response: Thank you for your comments.

The preferred alternative includes wide sidewalks and on-street parking. Parking will be opened up on Kern Street, where possible, and the City will install signs with this project to better sign the public parking areas.

The City will continue to review each intersection with the design team. Improvements that can help delineate the intersections will be completed with this project.

The City and the design team are still reviewing the signal at the State/Stimson/Carpenter intersection. The signal will be replaced with a signal that includes backplates (for increased visibility of the signal), and the lanes will be shifted to slightly to improve the alignment through the intersection.

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by ODOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 11, 2015, and executed by FHWA and ODOT.