



Friday, October 02, 2009

Englewood seeks solution for congested Wenger intersection

City purchases properties to eliminate blight

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For the Independent

To address increasing congestion at the intersection of Main Street (State Route 48) and Wenger Road, the city of Englewood is seeking a roadway improvement grant from the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (MVRPC).

To save the city a substantial amount of money on the project, Englewood City Council approved a resolution to submit an application for Federal Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Program (CMAQ) funds at its Sept. 22 regular meeting. The MVRPC recently solicited local governments to encourage them to take advantage of available Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funds.

The proposed improvements would include a second turn lane for eastbound Wenger Road traffic turning right onto Main Street and northbound Main Street traffic turning left onto Wenger Road.

Construction cost is estimated at \$735,900, but if the city is able to obtain the grant funds, the city's cost would be only 20 percent of that total.

"We want a second turn lane from Wenger headed south. If the Feds are willing to do an 80 percent/20 percent grant, we might as well do it," said City Manager Eric Smith.

The council approved another resolution authorizing the purchase of two Main Street properties in order to eliminate what Smith called "blight."

"Two properties located at 806 and 808 S. Main St. are easily considered the worst eyesores in Englewood," Smith said.

The properties currently are known as the Numbers Building and Tattoo Tech, and are located on the east side of Main Street, just south of the Englewood Dam. "The two-story structure to the back was a machine shop," Smith said. "The asking price was "\$240,000, but we were able to negotiate a price of \$120,000."

"We don't expect the property to have any further commercial value," Smith said.

Therefore, he said, the structures will be demolished and the property will be planted with grass and "will blend in nicely with Englewood Reserve."

Also approved was the city's Five-Year Capital Improvements Program (CIP) for 2010 through 2014, with anticipated costs of up to \$9,738,500.

"This is a routine matter - it's a good idea to see where we're headed for the next several years. It's generally viewed as a 'wish list,'" Smith said.

Charlie Shoemaker, executive director of Montgomery County's Five Rivers MetroParks spoke on behalf of Issue 4, a 1.8-mill replacement levy that he said represents 80 percent of the park system's operating revenue.

Shoemaker, who has been making rounds seeking publicity and endorsements for the levy, said the levy is crucial to provide funds to operate the numerous facilities and programs provided by the MetroParks system for the next ten years.

"For every \$100,000 of property value, it is only \$10.72 added," he said.

"What stands out is the diversity of the system. Over the past 15 years we have taken on an urban presence with things like Riverscape," Shoemaker said.

His plea included preserving the way the parks remain relevant, offering such things as fly-fishing, kayaking and eight miles of Mountain Bike trails at the Huffman MetroPark.

"Also kids have a connection to nature," Shoemaker said. "The programs provide unscheduled free time for kids, who often have structured schedules.

Smith praised the good relationship the city has with the MetroParks and paved the way for the council to approve endorsement of Issue 4.

More information on Issue 4 is available at metroparks2009.org.

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