



August 28, 2023

The Honorable William J. Seitz  
Ohio House of Representatives  
77 South High Street, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, OH 43125

Dear Representative Seitz,

Thank you again for your interest in the Brent Spence Bridge Corridor Project.

Throughout the life of this project, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) has conducted extensive public engagement, collaborating with local governments and stakeholders in a variety of ways. The Bi-State Management Team, comprised of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet and the Ohio Department of Transportation, has formally met with Bridge Forward on five different occasions in 2023. During that timeframe, the Bridge Forward group has changed its concept for the project several times. ODOT has actively reviewed the information that members and proponents of Bridge Forward have provided.

At our most recent meeting in June, ODOT confirmed the current Bridge Forward concept was far enough along that we would now engage the Design Build Team in a review, especially in terms of constructability. ODOT has conducted a preliminary review of Bridge Forward's June 2023 concept and can provide the following information:

- *There would be no delay with the Bridge Forward June 2023 Concept because all the changes are confined within the "envelope" of what has been previously approved and permitted.*
  - From an environmental standpoint, ODOT views the Bridge Forward June 2023 concept as a refinement to the current design, and evaluating this concept is not anticipated to cause a delay.
- *There would be no impact on the Western Hills Viaduct project because the Bridge Forward June 2023 Concept and ODOT's proposal are in complete alignment north of the Western Avenue / Union Terminal Exit on Interstate 75.*
  - The Interstate 75 interchange with the Western Hills Viaduct is part of the Brent Spence Bridge Corridor project environmental review, so if there is no delay related to the Bridge Forward evaluation, then the Interstate 75 interchange with the Western Hills Viaduct will remain on schedule. This is just one of the major components for the full project.

- *The Bridge Forward June 2023 Concept is superior to ODOT's proposal not only because more developable land is created thereby, but also because the concept would retain a 5<sup>th</sup> Street Exit off Interstate 75 that the ODOT plan would eliminate.*
  - There are a variety of changes proposed to the current project under the Bridge Forward concept. Based on our preliminary review, the Bridge Forward concept potentially has significant issues related to traffic operations, constructability, design, cost, and long-term maintenance and operations and therefore may not be feasible
- *The Bridge Forward June 2023 Concept would not upset any construction schedule since construction is not scheduled until 2025 and the "progressive design" is in its earliest stages.*
  - There is a significant amount of detailed design work that must occur after this proposal is reviewed to keep the project on schedule with early construction work anticipated in 2024 and major construction beginning in 2025. If the decision is delayed for any reason, there is a risk that the overall project will be delayed.
- *The added construction cost of the Bridge Forward June 2023 proposal is \$65-80 million, a sum that is a very small fraction of the overall cost and one that would be funded exclusively by local sources.*
  - At the most recent meeting with Bridge Forward, ODOT emphasized the estimate of \$65-80 million was a very preliminary number based on an initial review of the original concept. After reviewing the June concept, ODOT believes this cost will now likely exceed \$100 million. A driving factor will be the constructability aspect of the concept, which could further increase the cost to \$140 million. In short, the question is can this be constructed.

The Ohio Department of Transportation will continue to closely collaborate with the City of Cincinnati to evaluate the Bridge Forward concept as it evolves, along with other potential innovations to accomplish our shared goals. Those goals include minimizing the project footprint, increasing developable land in the downtown Cincinnati area, delivering the project within budget, and completing the project on-time.

A more detailed evaluation of the latest design concept will be published on the project website and distributed to you. We will continue to keep you and your staff updated on the progress of the Brent Spence Bridge Corridor Project.

Respectfully,



Jack Marchbanks, Ph.D.  
Director