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Fairfield to remove South Gilmore bottleneck with road widening

**NEWS**

By **Michael D. Pitman**

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Fairfield is set to fix a longtime congestion point on South Gilmore Road by removing a bottleneck point.

City Council approved last week an engineering contract with Strand Associates, Inc. to design improvements that will widen southbound South Gilmore Road between Resor and Mack roads.

The city will pay the engineer slightly more than \$386,000 to design the project that could cost just under \$3.2 million, but Fairfield Public Works Director Ben Mann said that price tag could alter once Strand completes its engineering work.

But whatever the engineering estimate of the project turns out to be, the majority of the construction cost will come from the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments. OKI will pay for around 70 percent of the construction project, Mann said.

“It’s always been a bottleneck,” he said. South Gilmore Road has two southbound lanes, starting at Fairfield High School, and narrows to one as it approaches Resor Road.

“As we widen this, we’ll have two southbound lanes from the high school all the way to (Interstate 275),” Mann said.

Mann said besides the congestion, there are some accidents — which he says isn’t considered a high number — but this will eliminate the weaving as people merge along the heavily traveled route, especially during the peak hours.

There will be some improvements at the Resor and South Gilmore roads intersection, Mann said.

“We’ll rebuild the traffic signal and make it as safe as possible, and add whatever new signage that might help make the project safer,” he said.

The road will be four lanes with dedicated turning lanes at Resor Road.

The project will incorporate taking portions of properties, which Mann said could be more than 30.

Mann said he hopes a lot of those will be temporary right-of-way easements, or “strip takes,” which are narrow portions of properties. Temporary easements could be needed to build

retaining walls within the existing right-of-way.

“We’re not anticipating many of them will be real big impact-takes, but there will be a lot of property negotiations that we’ll have to do,” Mann said.

With every road project, the city looks at ways to add to its connectivity as outlined in the [Fairfield Connects Master Plan](#). Mann said they’ll include a new sidewalk along the west side of South Gilmore between mack and Resor roads and from Resor Road north to Planet Drive. Some portions of this stretch have some sidewalks, but are narrow, Mann said.

This stretch of South Gilmore was identified in the [Fairfield Connects](#) plan, which “serves as a primary arterial road and a north-south axis for the community.” The sidewalk ticks two of the city’s six connectivity goals: connecting residents to neighborhoods and major destinations.

“Having a complete sidewalk network will allow for community residents and workers to walk between neighborhoods, parks, schools, and commercial and employment destinations,” according to the plan. “The area around South Gilmore Road and Mack Road is a major employment center with additional development opportunities.”

The project is slated to begin construction in 2024.

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About the Author

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Michael D. Pitman has been a reporter in southwest Ohio since 1999. He's covered local governments in Warren and Butler counties, as well as state and national issues. He currently covers the cities of Fairfield and Hamilton.

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