

BEAVERCREEK

Bicycle/pedestrian bridge across I-675 proposed

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BEAVERCREEK — The disconnect between Wright State University and the Mall at Fairfield Commons caused by Interstate 675 may be bridged by 2010 if a proposed bicycle/pedestrian path across the interstate is built.

"If anyone wants to get across I-675, they have to do it by automobile. The bridge will provide an alternative means of getting across I-675," said Roger Brislaw, chairman of Beaver Creek's Bike Advisory Board.

"The only option currently is the bridge along North Fairfield Road. It's a hazardous option."

A pedestrian bridge across I-675 had been proposed in the 1970s before the interstate was fully completed, but was never built.

After Brislaw heard about the bridge, he raised the issue about a year ago with the city of Beaver Creek.

The city of Beaver Creek asked the Ohio Department of Transportation to conduct a study on the best location for the bridge, which ODOT did at no charge. Their findings from the study were as follows:

- Build a tunnel under I-675.
- Add a pedestrian/bike lane to the current bridge on North Fairfield Road.
- Build a pedestrian/cyclist bridge extending from behind Sam's Club on New Germany-Trebein Road to behind the Holiday Inn on Colonel Glenn Highway.

Brislaw said the most viable option, the dedicated bridge, would be an extension of Commons Boulevard and would cost \$2.8 million.

He estimated the price of the bridge would include \$1.2 million in federal funds, \$1 million in state funds, and a 20 percent local match of \$560,000 from the cities of Beaver Creek and Fairborn, and Greene County.

Brislaw said his goal is to raise about 50 percent (\$280,000) from private donations.

Brislaw said a marketing class at Wright State has offered to undertake a bridge marketing study to help promote the bridge.

The bridge would connect about 50,000 people who work or attend school in the immediate area. It would also serve as a north-south connector to the Creekside trail in Beaver Creek and the Fairborn bike path, which would ultimately connect to the entire Miami Valley regional bike system.

Clete Buddelmeyer, executive director of the Beaver Creek Chamber of Commerce, said the chamber voted to support the bridge after a presentation by the Bike Advisory Board.

"It's a safety issue, and it will also open commerce between the north and south sides of I-675," Buddelmeyer said. "If you look at the whole of Greene County, this is the commerce center of Greene County."

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