

# ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION REPORT

## ANTHONY WAYNE TRAIL GATEWAY I-75 TO ERIE STREET PID NO. 95676



Prepared for:

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>1.</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>1-1</b>
1.1	Executive Summary.....	1-1
1.2	Cost Summary.....	1-2
<b>2.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND.....</b>	<b>2-1</b>
2.1	Purpose and Need.....	2-1
2.2	Study Area (Logical Termini) .....	2-1
2.3	Feasibility Study Results.....	2-1
<b>3.</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVES .....</b>	<b>3-1</b>
3.1	Alternatives Considered.....	3-1
3.2	Alternatives Analysis .....	3-4
<b>4.</b>	<b>TRAFFIC ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>4-1</b>
4.1	Design Speed, Functional Classification.....	4-1
4.2	Safety (Crash) Analysis .....	4-1
4.3	Traffic Volume Projections (Opening day/Design Year).....	4-1
4.4	Capacity Analysis .....	4-4
<b>5.</b>	<b>ROADWAY ASSESSMENT .....</b>	<b>5-1</b>
5.1	Typical Sections .....	5-1
5.2	Preliminary Plan/Profiles.....	5-1
<b>6.</b>	<b>STRUCTURE ASSESMENT .....</b>	<b>6-1</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>GEOTECHNICAL ASSESSMENT .....</b>	<b>7-1</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY ASSESSMENT.....</b>	<b>8-1</b>
8.1	Right of Way Impacts/Cost Estimates.....	8-1
8.2	Identify Potential Total Take Parcels .....	8-1
<b>9.</b>	<b>UTILITY/RAILROAD ASSESSMENT.....</b>	<b>9-1</b>
9.1	Utility/Railroad Impacts.....	9-1
<b>10.</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>10-1</b>
10.1	Environmental Resources.....	10-1
10.1.1	Wetlands, Streams .....	10-1
10.1.2	Historic/Archaeological .....	10-1
10.1.3	Section 4(f) and 6(f) Properties.....	10-1
10.1.4	Ecological/Endangered Species .....	10-1
10.1.5	Environmental Site Assessment .....	10-1
10.1.6	Farmland .....	10-2
10.1.7	Relocations.....	10-2

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

10.1.8	Land Use/Public Involvement .....	10-2
10.1.9	Social/Economic .....	10-2
10.1.10	Floodplain .....	10-2
10.1.11	Environmental Justice.....	10-2
10.1.12	Noise/Air Quality .....	10-2
10.2	Environmental Resource Summary .....	10-3
<b>11.</b>	<b>PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT .....</b>	<b>11-1</b>
11.1	Stakeholder/Public Coordination .....	11-1
11.2	Additional Coordination .....	11-1Error! Bookmark not defined.
<b>12.</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>12-1</b>
12.1	Conclusions .....	12-1
12.2	Identification of Recommended Alternative .....	12-1

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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## List of Appendices

- Appendix A – Study Area – Traffic  
Study Area – Roadway
- Appendix B - Alternatives Considered
- Appendix C – Preliminary Alternatives Traffic Counts and Analysis
- Appendix D – Preferred Alternative Cost Estimate
- Appendix E – Typical Sections and Plan for Recommended Alternative
- Appendix F – Right of Way Property Estimate Summary  
Right of Way Acquisition Cost Summary  
Right of Way Plan
- Appendix G – Certified Traffic Plate LUC-75-1.10
- Appendix H – Ecological Review
- Appendix I - Phase I History/Architecture Survey Resource Mapping and Technical Summary
- Appendix J – Environmental Screening
- Appendix K – Wayfinding Analysis, Plan and Conceptual Design
- Appendix L – Gateway and Landscape Conceptual Design

# 1. – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## 1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Anthony Wayne Trail (AWT) is a transportation facility that extends through the Toledo metropolitan area. Beginning in Grand Rapids, Ohio as a two lane roadway (old U.S. Route 24) which closely parallels the Maumee River, it becomes a four-lane limited access facility near the Fallen Timbers Memorial. Named for a revolutionary war brigadier general and statesman, the facility is an important connecting route into downtown Toledo. In Toledo the facility merges with an exit ramp from Interstate 75 (I-75) and terminates at Erie Street in the Warehouse District. The Anthony Wayne Trail exit ramp from I-75 represents the primary gateway to downtown Toledo for vehicles coming from south of the city. The current ramp presents a gateway image to downtown which can be disorienting, is not attractive, and bypasses the developing Warehouse District.

This Alternative Evaluation Report includes the history of the development of the project, and presents the recommended alternative to create a signature gateway for the AWT at its intersection with Erie and Lafayette Street. It is imperative that the Gateway image reflect the redevelopment and new optimism regarding the region's core in downtown Toledo. The current configuration is not meeting these needs due to its geometric configuration. This project, as sponsored by the City of Toledo will create an iconic gateway and address the deteriorated condition of the AWT pavement. It will also provide better pedestrian access within and signage and identification of Downtown and the Warehouse District.

Multiple study areas were identified by the City of Toledo within the request for qualifications (RFQ) for purposes of modeling traffic and developing roadway concepts. An additional study area was created to assess environmental impacts. Traffic counts, roadway layout, and environmental field studies were performed within the respective boundaries to obtain the data necessary to evaluate conceptual project alternatives. Appendix A presents a General Schematic of the overall study area.

This report summarizes the evaluation of conceptual alternatives developed to create a downtown gateway at the site as well as improve the operation and safety of the AWT/Erie/Lafayette intersection with improved roadway geometrics and pavement surface, and provide safe pedestrian access across the intersection. Five alternatives were developed through collaboration between URS, the City of Toledo, and stakeholder groups. The five alternatives include:

- Roadway No-Build or Gateway Only,
- Lafayette Two-Way,
- Roundabout,
- Ramp Realignment, and
- Ramp Realignment and Extension of Ontario/11<sup>th</sup> Street

There were minor variations developed for each alternative to optimize function. Each alternative eliminates the existing connection of Lucas Street to Erie Street because of the close proximity to the AWT/Erie/Lafayette intersection. The alternatives along with the impacts pertaining to each are discussed in Section 3 and presented in Appendix B of this report.

The alternatives were refined throughout the Alternative Evaluation phase of the project and systematically eliminated from further consideration and development based on: (1) the inability to meet the Purpose and Need; or; (2) adverse impacts; or; (3) unacceptable levels of service. The modified Realignment Alternative

# 1. – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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(4C) with direct connection to the Erie/Lafayette intersection, with a connection to Market Street, modifies the geometry of the combined I-75/AWT ramp at the intersection, creating a four-legged intersection rather than the current five. It is the recommended preferred alternative for this project. The focus of this project was initially the very end of the combined ramp; however, as the project developed, it was influenced by the LUC-75-1.10 project being developed by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) that included major reconstruction and realignment of the I-75 main line and ramps in downtown Toledo. The preferred alternative for the LUC-75-1.10 project would flip the alignments of the existing I-75 and AWT ramps so that the new I-75 ramp would be east of the AWT ramp. This preferred alternative I-75/AWT ramp alignment for the LUC-75-1.10 project was incorporated into the alternatives analyzed for the AWT Gateway project.

Table 1.1 summarizes the evaluation and comparison of various alternatives considered. The Gateway Only alternative provides somewhat limited opportunities to create the desired sense of place and does not improve pedestrian access or safety because existing traffic conditions are maintained. The Lafayette Two-Way alternatives provided more direct access to the Warehouse District; however, they resulted in adverse effects on traffic flow and capacity. One variation of the alternative created a potential for increased vehicular conflicts. The Roundabout alternative resulted in poor pedestrian access and safety, reduced the vehicular capacity of the intersection and impacted adjacent properties. Several variations of the Realignment alternative were developed and evaluated. A ramp directly to the intersection of Market Street and Erie Street improved pedestrian access and safety at the Erie/Lafayette intersection, but resulted in a decreased level of service for the main flow into downtown at Market Street. The other Realignment alternatives had the ramp connect directly into Erie Street before the Erie/Lafayette intersection with a lane merging from Erie Street south of the intersection. The difference between the Realignment alternatives was the number of lanes on the AWT/I-75 ramp (two lanes for 4B and three lanes for 4C). The level of service (LOS) for the overall project was better for Realignment Alternative 4C. Alternative 5 proposed a cross street intersection at existing 11<sup>th</sup> Street to disperse traffic in advance of Lafayette Street; however it did not improve pedestrian access, safety or gateway elements of the project.

Realignment Alternative 4C was established as the Recommended Alternative by the stakeholder group because it was the alternative deemed to best achieve the goals of the project.

## 1.2 COST SUMMARY

Total project costs, including construction of roadway, traffic, gateway and landscaping elements and a general estimate for property acquisition, were estimated for the Recommended Preferred Alternative (4C). The total project cost for the Recommended Preferred Alternative 4C, is \$3.76 million, comprised of \$2.82 million for construction and \$936,000 for right of way. Detailed cost estimates for other alternatives are not provided in the Evaluation Matrix because they were eliminated from further consideration for reasons other than cost. The detailed cost estimate for Recommended Preferred Alternative 4C are summarized in **Appendix F**.

# 1. – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Table 1.1 Alternatives Evaluation Matrix										
	1A	1B	2A	2B	2C	3	4A	4B	4C	5
Evaluation Criteria	Gateway Only	Gateway Only - Add Ped Signal at Erie/AWT	Lafayette Two-Way	Lafayette Two-Way - Add Ped Signal at Erie/AWT	Lafayette Two-Way - Add Ped Signal at Erie/AWT (remove west leg)	Roundabout	Realignment with Intersection at Market Street	Realignment with Intersection at Erie Street - two lane ramp from AWT	Realignment with Intersection at Erie Street - three lane ramp from AWT	Realignment with new cross street at 11th - Three lane ramp from AWT
Accommodate Gateway and Landscape Elements	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Yes	Yes - and good visibility to Market	Yes	Yes	Limited
Pedestrian Access and Safety	No Change	Improved	No Change	Improved	Improved	Degraded	Improved	Improved	Improved	Degraded
Intersection Operating Efficiency (LOS)	No Impact LOS B	No Impact LOS B	Degraded LOS F	Degraded LOS F	Slightly Degraded LOS C	Slightly Degraded LOS C	No Impact at Lafayette LOS B Degraded at Market LOS F	No Impact at Lafayette LOS B	No Impact at Lafayette LOS B	No Impact at Lafayette LOS B AWT and 11th LOS B (if warranted)
Other Traffic Operations	Perceived conflict at AWT/Lafayette Right Turn remains	Perceived conflict at AWT/Lafayette Right Turn remains	Introduces Vehicular Conflicts and Confusion	Introduces Vehicular Conflicts and Confusion	Introduces Vehicular Conflicts and Confusion	Introduces Vehicular Conflicts and Confusion	Connectivity not necessarily Improved	Shortens Weave Improved Access to Market **	Shortens Weave Improved Access to Market **	Shortens Weave Improved Access to Market **
R/W Impacts	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Accessibility to Warehouse District	No Impact or Improvement	No Impact or Improvement	More Direct Access	More Direct Access	More Direct Access	More Direct Access	More Direct Access	More Direct Access	More Direct Access	More Direct Access
Development Opportunities	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, but reduced as 11th St splits the parcel

\* LOS at Market is F at unsignalized intersection and traffic is not the entire ADT of AWT as it is with Alternative 4A which has all traffic entering the intersection at Market and turning left to reach downtown

\*\* The shortening of the weave is a negative impact, although with I-75 on the east side of the AWT, the weave is less than if the original ramp layout was maintained. The lane to the Market provides direct access from the ramp which is a positive.

Legend:
Best
Intermediate
Worst

## 2. - INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

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### 2.1 PURPOSE AND NEED

A formal Purpose and Need statement for this project has not been developed to date because the scope for this preliminary phase of work does not include environmental work beyond preliminary field studies and database research. The following project description included in the City of Toledo RFQ will serve as the Purpose and Need until NEPA tasks are initiated.

*The purpose of this project is to improve the physical (pedestrian and motorist) access and entry image of Downtown Toledo at the terminus point of the Anthony Wayne Trail. The project will reconstruct the deteriorated pavement as AWT approaches Erie/Lafayette and provide visual enhancements including gateway features. The AWT is a major transportation facility carrying daily business traffic and event traffic into downtown. As such, the operation of the facility must be maintained as a component of providing improvements to other features. Pedestrian access across Erie Street is an important element to incorporate into the project so that residents of the Warehouse District are able to safely reach venues to the east of Erie Street.*

### 2.2 STUDY AREA (LOGICAL TERMINI)

The study area was defined by the need to integrate improvements with logical termini into the existing freeway and local roadway system. The study area for developing traffic and roadway alternatives and assessing environmental impacts varies to encompass an area of influence around the project. The limits of the actual physical improvements encompass a small area; however, the limits vary for roadway and gateway/landscaping elements. The study area for traffic and roadway analysis is provided in **Appendix A**. The farthest reaching points for each improvement (roadway and gateway) will serve as the logical termini of the project. This area extends approximately 0.5 miles to the south along the I-75 exit ramp because of the roadway geometrics, and variably along the local street system because of the different improvements which were defined for each alternative developed for the recommended roadway alignment. To the south the study area will include the area where roadway improvements will begin at the northern end of the AWT Bridge over Swan Creek which was recently rehabilitated by ODOT.

### 2.3 PROJECT HISTORY

The City of Toledo, Division of Engineering Services initiated this project in response to deteriorating pavement conditions at the terminus of the AWT with the Erie/Lafayette intersection. With foresight, the project was planned and programmed to not only improve the physical conditions of the pavement, but to also improve the location as an entry point to the City of Toledo, including providing wayfinding gateway elements and improving access to points of interest within this portion of downtown Toledo.

The project was added to the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in 2012 with Surface Transportation Program funding provided to the City and administered through ODOT District 2 as a local public agency (LPA) project. Construction was estimated to cost \$2.29 million with 80 percent federal and 20 percent local funding programmed in the TIP. As preliminary studies for the project progressed, it became apparent that additional funding would be required for construction and Right of Way Acquisition. In November 2013, the City of Toledo presented a TIP

## 2. - INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

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Amendment to TMACOG for the project. The request included an additional \$580,000 of STP funds for construction, and \$940,000 for Right of Way acquisition. The schedule for the project is outlined below.

Environmental Document Approved	9/1/2015
Stage 2 Plan – Submitted	8/1/2015
Stage 2 Plans – Complete	9/1/2015
Local Let PS&E Package to District	12/1/2015
District Right of Way Certification	12/1/2015
Plan Package Received in Central Office	2/1/2016
Sale	3/15/2016
Award	4/15/2016
Estimated Begin Construction	6/1/2016
Estimated End Construction	11/1/2016

Due to the proximity and dependency between this project and a nearby ODOT project (LUC-75-1.10), coordination between the City and ODOT will continue throughout project development so that key elements are coordinated, such as the project limits of construction for each project, maintenance of traffic flows along the AWT during construction, and to ensure that neither project is adversely impacted by the other.

This Alternative Evaluation Report (AER) is intended to summarize the preliminary engineering and initial environmental work, so as to define for the City the recommended alternative upon which the next phase of the project should be based. The next phases of work will include the preparation of NEPA documentation, design, utility coordination, and relocation and Right of Way Plans and acquisition as a part of the ODOT Project Development Process (PDP). This AER includes a discussion of work carried out during the evaluation of alternatives, environmental and design issues, and presents a Recommended Preferred Alternative for future project development.

# 3 – ALTERNATIVES

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## 3.1 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

### 3.1.1 Preliminary Alternatives Traffic Analysis and Conceptual Design

Preliminary traffic analysis of various roadway configurations are based on traffic counts obtained for this project in July 2013. The purpose of the traffic counts and analysis was to create a baseline for the existing operation of the facility and to then determine the operation of the alternatives. Each roadway alternative was modeled to determine if the alternative would operate at acceptable levels, or if traffic operations would eliminate alternatives prior to further development. The traffic analysis was completed in September 2013, and is provided in **Appendix C**. The four traffic/roadway alternatives considered are described below along with an explanation of their traffic impact. Exhibits are included in **Appendix B**.

The Gateway Only alternative operates at the same LOS as the existing condition because it does not change the current roadway configuration. The Lafayette Two-Way alternative operates at a deteriorated LOS because of the signal phasing required to accommodate the additional movement (LOS F with and without a pedestrian phase). The LOS improves with this alternative when the western leg of Lafayette Street is removed creating a four-legged intersection rather than the current five-legged intersection. The Roundabout alternative was operationally cumbersome. Stakeholders agreed that none of these alternatives are desirable from a traffic operations point of view.

Gateway Only alternatives were developed as a measure to minimize costs associated with roadway reconstruction and maximize funding on signage and wayfinding efforts. The current configuration of this ramp as it transitions to the local street network requires that a lot of information be communicated to drivers over a short distance. Therefore, the ability to improve the aesthetics and provide the intended information to the driver without adversely impacting safety is limited. The Gateway Only alternatives do not address the overall functionality and safety issues, particularly related to circulation. Pedestrian accessibility would be minimally improved, at best.

Lafayette Two-Way alternatives were developed as a way to improve vehicular and pedestrian circulation within the Warehouse District. The alternatives provide more direct access to destinations in the Warehouse District; however, they introduce additional conflicting vehicular movements and reduce intersection capacity. Similar shortcomings to the Gateway Only alternatives also exist, because the Lafayette Two-Way alternatives do not address aesthetic and pedestrian issues. Improvement of pedestrian operations resulted in further LOS degradation of the intersection.

The Roundabout alternative was developed as a method of improving traffic flow and safety, and introducing a signature feature that could incorporate landscaping and other gateway elements. Because of the high traffic volumes in a highly directional nature at this intersection, a roundabout would be very large and asymmetrical. This alternative improves direct access to Warehouse District destinations, but is not pedestrian friendly, in part, because of continual movement through multiple approaches. The alternative would also eliminate a portion of an existing green space adjacent to the Erie/Lafayette intersection. Stakeholders agreed that a roundabout does not support the overall goals of the project.

Four separate Realignment alternatives were considered. Each alternative moves the downtown entry toward the south and reduces the complexity of the Erie/Lafayette intersection, thereby simplifying conditions for driver interpretation. This relocation makes it feasible to provide the desired branding and

## 3 – ALTERNATIVES

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signage without adding distraction, and vehicular and pedestrian circulation opportunities are vastly improved. The alternatives also open up and promote redevelopment opportunities for an area currently in disrepair. The differences in the three Realignment alternatives include:

- The first realignment alternative combines I-75 and AWT traffic and intersects Erie Street at a right angle directly opposite Market Street. This alignment inhibits movement of the predominant traffic flow and results in intersection failure. It relocates the high traffic conditions directly to the Toledo Farmers' Market area. Pedestrian accessibility is improved at the Erie/Lafayette intersection, but is adversely impacted at the Erie/Market intersection. There is also a concern that the alignment may increase traffic on Market Street to a point where it impacts negatively on the Farmers Market. Stakeholders were encouraged by the realignment concept; however, the resulting conditions were not expected to meet desired outcomes.
- The second and third realignment alternatives provide a curvilinear approach to the Erie/Lafayette intersection, roughly on the current alignment of Vance Street. This configuration promotes smooth flow for the predominant traffic movements and allows improved pedestrian accessibility at the Erie/Lafayette intersection. The slip ramp which intersects Erie at Market provides direct access to the Toledo Farmers' Market. These two alternatives vary only in how the divergence at Market Street is developed. In Alternative 4B, one of the three lanes is dropped to intersect Market, with two lanes continuing toward the downtown. In Alternative 4C, a lane is extended to intersect Erie at Market Street, with the three original approach lanes continuing on toward downtown and a fourth lane merging from South Erie to Lafayette. Better operations are achieved under Alternative 4C than Alternative 4B. This set of alternatives was deemed to best meet the goals of the project from a traffic perspective, it is further noted that the slip ramp to Market Street is not required, but is desirable as it would improve access to the Toledo Farmers' Market area. If this ramp is not constructed, additional directional enhancements may be needed.
- The fourth realignment alternative, Alternative 5, provided the same curvilinear alignment as Alternatives 4B and 4C, but proposed a perpendicular cross-street intersection at 11th Street to connect to Ontario in addition to access to Market Street. The configuration was developed as an option to transition the ramp to a local street sooner allowing traffic on the ramp to slow and disperse sooner creating a pedestrian-friendly area. Upon review and discussion, reduction of speed on the ramp to the 25mph limit may not be possible prior to or at the 11th Street intersection, which would result in an unsafe pedestrian crossing. Additionally, traffic impacts to the north as a result of the addition of the 11th Street connection, could also adversely affect pedestrians. A signal is most likely not warranted at the cross road that would provide adequate levels of service.

### 3.1.2 Gateway/Wayfinding Conceptual Design

In recent years, the City of Toledo has undergone significant redevelopment within the Downtown. Featuring a diverse range of assets, from its locale along the Maumee River, to its Fine Arts offerings and

## 3 – ALTERNATIVES

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expanding Public Art scene, to its solidly popular professional sports teams and facilities, this manageable and walkable downtown is lacking connection between visitors and assets and connection to their identity.

Through the AWT Gateway reconstruction project, a comprehensive wayfinding system has been investigated and an approach developed which will facilitate navigation to and around Toledo's Downtown. This signage and wayfinding program will greatly enhance visitor experience by providing clear, concise information and directions that make navigation easy and enjoyable. These efforts also provide an opportunity to tell stories and change the perception of the Downtown.

Documented in **Appendix K** is the PRELIMINARY Signage and Wayfinding Framework developed for this project. The wayfinding planning process begins with an exploratory phase where tools such as site visits, surveys, public meetings and brainstorm sessions to garner important information and establish the 'whys and hows' of a community wayfinding program. A PRELIMINARY Conceptual Design exercise was implemented to provide a vision for how recommended sign types and navigational elements would represent a sign program for Downtown Toledo. The results of these efforts have been shared with project stakeholders and community members.

Based on these findings, specific goals and philosophies to guide the development of Downtown Toledo's Wayfinding Program were developed, which will serve as a guideline through the planning, design and implementation process for a Comprehensive Wayfinding System and provide criteria to measure success of the program from development through implementation.

### 3.1.3 Landscape//Public Art/Gateway

Fundamental to creating a signature gateway to Downtown Toledo is the careful coordination of Landscape and Public Art to create an attractive and unique sense of arrival to Downtown Toledo as well as increased awareness of the redeveloping Warehouse District.

Existing buildings and streets in the impacted right of way would be demolished and cleared. The landscape surrounding the AWT ramp is initially envisioned as grassed areas with informal groupings of shade trees and colorful ornamental trees to reinforce the Gateway theme and be easy to maintain. Filtration of runoff from ramp pavements is proposed to be accomplished by bioretention areas on each side of the ramp which are attractively shaped, planted and incorporated into the landscape. A streetscape treatment of street trees and new sidewalks along Erie Street between Lafayette and Market Streets is recommended to result in a finished edge to the Gateway area.

Public Art discussions during Stakeholder meetings focused on Public Art that was integrated with the design of infrastructure improvements versus freestanding art pieces. The Arts Commission of Toledo staff is developing a Request for Qualifications to engage an Artist to collaborate with project engineers and landscape architects to develop Public Art treatments at the Anthony Wayne Trail Gateway to Downtown Toledo. It is anticipated that an Artist will be selected by summer 2014 and collaborate during the design phase.

Included in **Appendix L** are Conceptual Plans for Landscape and Public Art at the Anthony Wayne Trail Gateway.

# 3 – ALTERNATIVES

## 3.2 ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE

The alternatives were analyzed with respect to gateway opportunities and general design issues, consideration of pedestrian access, intersection operating efficiency, other traffic operations, right of way impacts, accessibility to the Warehouse District, and development opportunities. Table 1.1 presents the Alternatives Evaluation Matrix that outlines the criteria used to eliminate the various alternatives. Several criteria within each category were evaluated for comparison of the alternatives, with the criteria becoming more refined as alternatives were eliminated and differentiations were more detailed.

Table 1.1 Alternatives Evaluation Matrix										
	1A	1B	2A	2B	2C	3	4A	4B	4C	5
Evaluation Criteria	Gateway Only	Gateway Only - Add Ped Signal at Erie/AWT	Lafayette Two-Way	Lafayette Two-Way - Add Ped Signal at Erie/AWT	Lafayette Two-Way - Add Ped Signal at Erie/AWT (remove west leg)	Roundabout	Realignment with Intersection at Market Street	Realignment with Intersection at Erie Street - two lane ramp from AWT	Realignment with Intersection at Erie Street - three lane ramp from AWT	Realignment with new cross street at 11th - Three lane ramp from AWT
Accommodate Gateway and Landscape Elements	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Yes	Yes - and good visibility to Market	Yes	Yes	Limited
Pedestrian Access and Safety	No Change	Improved	No Change	Improved	Improved	Degraded	Improved	Improved	Improved	Degraded
Intersection Operating Efficiency (LOS)	No Impact LOS B	No Impact LOS B	Degraded LOS F	Degraded LOS F	Slightly Degraded LOS C	Slightly Degraded LOS C	No Impact at Lafayette LOS B Degraded at Market LOS F	No Impact at Lafayette LOS B	No Impact at Lafayette LOS B	No Impact at Lafayette LOS B AWT and 11th LOS B (if warranted)
Other Traffic Operations	Perceived conflict at AWT/Lafayette Right Turn remains	Perceived conflict at AWT/Lafayette Right Turn remains	Introduces Vehicular Conflicts and Confusion	Introduces Vehicular Conflicts and Confusion	Introduces Vehicular Conflicts and Confusion	Introduces Vehicular Conflicts and Confusion	Connectivity not necessarily Improved	Shortens Weave Improved Access to Market **	Shortens Weave Improved Access to Market **	Shortens Weave Improved Access to Market **
R/W Impacts	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Accessibility to Warehouse District	No Impact or Improvement	No Impact or Improvement	More Direct Access	More Direct Access	More Direct Access	More Direct Access	More Direct Access	More Direct Access	More Direct Access	More Direct Access
Development Opportunities	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, but reduced as 11th St splits the parcel
<p>* LOS at Market is F at unsignalized intersection and traffic is not the entire ADT of AWT as it is with Alternative 4A which has all traffic entering the intersection at Market and turning left to reach downtown</p> <p>** The shortening of the weave is a negative impact, although with I-75 on the east side of the AWT, the weave is less than if the original ramp layout was maintained. The lane to the Market provides direct access from the ramp which is a positive.</p>										

Legend:
Best
Intermediate
Worst

## 3 – ALTERNATIVES

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Evaluation criteria were developed to serve as both the basis for determining whether to carry alternatives forward to the next level of assessment and as a means of comparing each interchange configuration against the others. Alternatives that did not meet key criteria were not carried forward for further consideration. The matrix contains either a “yes/no” answer to design criteria for elements that are straightforward, or a statement explaining the degree to which the criteria are met.

The Gateway Only alternative did not meet the goals of this project because gateway opportunities are limited by the need to convey too much information to drivers approaching the downtown area in a very short distance. It also did not adequately address pedestrian access and safety concerns. Additionally, this alternative retains the Erie/Lafayette intersection alignment, which is dangerous for motorists. Gateway opportunities are limited although wayfinding signage could be provided to direct motorists to Downtown, the Warehouse District, the Toledo Farmers’ Market and other attractions.

The Lafayette Two-Way alternative provided for more direct access to the Warehouse District by converting the roadway from its current one-way westbound function but does not address limited gateway opportunities discussed above. In addition, the Lafayette Two-Way alternative operates at a deteriorated LOS because of the signal phasing required to accommodate the additional traffic movement (LOS F with and without a pedestrian phase). Pedestrian access and safety were not improved until a pedestrian phase is added to the traffic signal (Alternative 2B) which then results in an even further diminished LOS for the operation of the signalized intersection.

The Roundabout alternative was developed as a method of improving traffic flow and safety and introducing a signature feature that could incorporate landscaping and other gateway elements. Due to the high traffic volumes in a highly directional nature at this intersection, a roundabout would be very large, asymmetrical and would be operationally very cumbersome. This alternative improves direct access to Warehouse District destinations, but is not pedestrian friendly, in part, due to the continual movement through multiple approaches.

Four Realignment alternatives were considered. Each alternative moves the downtown entry toward the south and reduces the complexity of the Erie/Lafayette intersection, which would simplify conditions for interpretation by drivers. This relocation makes it feasible to provide the desired branding and signage without adding distraction, and would improve vehicular and pedestrian circulation opportunities. The alternatives also open up and promote redevelopment opportunities for an area currently in disrepair. The differences in the three Realignment alternatives include:

- The first Realignment alternative combines I-75 and AWT traffic and intersects Erie Street at a right angle directly opposite Market Street. This alignment inhibits movement of the predominant traffic flow and results in intersection failure and long delays for the major movement. There is also a concern that the alignment may increase traffic on Market Street to a point where it impacts negatively on the Farmers Market. Stakeholders were encouraged by the realignment concept, but the conditions in this first realignment alternative fall short of meeting the desired outcomes.
- The second and third Realignment alternatives provide a curvilinear approach to the Erie/Lafayette intersection, roughly on the current alignment of Vance Street. This configuration promotes

### 3 – ALTERNATIVES

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smooth flow for the predominant traffic movements and allows improved pedestrian accessibility at the Erie/Lafayette intersection. The slip ramp which intersects Erie near Market provides direct access to Erie Street and to the Erie Street and Farmers Markets from that side. These two alternatives vary only in how the divergence at Market Street is developed, with Realignment Alternative 4B dropping one of the three lanes to intersect Market with two lanes continuing toward the downtown. Realignment Alternative 4C extends a lane to intersect South Erie at Market Street, with the three original approach lanes continuing on toward downtown. The slip ramp to Market Street is not required in any of the alternatives, but is desirable as it would improve access to the Farmers Market. If this ramp is not constructed, additional directional enhancements may be needed.

- The fourth Realignment alternative, Alternative 5, provided the same curvilinear alignment as Alternatives 4B and 4C, but proposed a perpendicular cross-street intersection at 11<sup>th</sup> Street to connect to Ontario in addition to access to Market Street. The configuration was developed as an option to transition the ramp to a local street sooner allowing traffic on the ramp to slow and disperse sooner creating a pedestrian-friendly area. Upon review and discussion, reduction of speed on the ramp to the 25mph limit is likely not be possible prior to or at the 11<sup>th</sup> Street intersection, which would result in an unsafe intersection approach and an unsafe pedestrian crossing. Additionally, traffic impacts to the north as a result of the addition of the 11<sup>th</sup> Street connection, could also adversely affect pedestrians.

As a result of the evaluation of the alternatives as highlighted above (including gateway opportunities, traffic analysis and roadway designs, pedestrian facilities, right of way impacts and development opportunities) the recommended preferred alternative is Realignment Alternative 4C. The alternative will include landscape and public art gateway elements as well as signage/wayfinding within the project limits that will be further developed during the design phase.

Of note during these considerations was the knowledge that ODOT is in the process of making significant investment toward improvements to I-75 in the vicinity of this project. Stakeholders asked that Option 4C be pursued in coordination with this other project.

A graphical representation of the evaluation discussed above is presented in Table 1.1 and the traffic/geometric representation of the alternatives and evaluation can be found in **Appendix B**.

## 4 – TRAFFIC ANALYSIS

### 4.1 \*DESIGN SPEED, FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

Table 4.1 provides a summary of the functional classification, design speed, and legal speed for roadways in the project area.

Table 4.1  
Functional Classification of Project Roadways

Roadway	Functional Classification	Design Speed	Legal Speed
Anthony Wayne Trail	Controlled Access Parkway	50 mph	50 mph
Erie Street – Collingwood to Lafayette	Urban Principal Arterial	40 mph	35 mph
Erie Street – Lafayette through downtown	Urban Principal Arterial	30 mph	25 mph
IR 75/SR 25 Off Ramp	Urban Interstate	varies	varies
Lafayette Street	Urban Local	25 mph	25 mph
Market Street	Urban Local	25 mph	25 mph
Logan Street	Urban Local	25 mph	25 mph
Vance Street	Urban Local	25 mph	25 mph

### 4.2 TRAFFIC ANALYSIS

Average daily traffic counts were collected by DGL Consulting Engineers (DGL) between July 9 - 11, 2013. Additional weekend counts were collected on July 19, 2013 near the Erie Street Market intersection. The City of Toledo also provided turning movement counts that were collected between July 9 and July 12, 2013. Hose counts and manual turn counts used in the study are tabulated below (see Appendix C).

Table 4.2  
Traffic Count Data

Intersection/Location	Date of Data Collection	Type of Count	Length of Count
Erie & Logan	July 10, 2013	Turning Movement	7-9 AM
Erie & Lafayette & SR 25 Off Ramp	July 10, 2013	Turning Movement	7-9 AM
Erie & Washington	July 10, 2013	Turning Movement	7-9 AM
SR 25 / I-75 Off Ramp	July 9, 2013 - July 11, 2013	24 Hour Hose	24 hour for 2 days
Huron between Market & Lafayette	July 19, 2013 – July 23, 2013	24 Hour Hose	24 hour for 4 days
Market between Erie & Huron	July 19, 2013 – July 23, 2013	24 Hour Hose	24 hour for 4 days
Vance Street	July 9, 2013 - July 11, 2013	24 Hour Hose	24 hour for 2 days
Erie & Nebraska	July 9, 2013	Turning Movement	7-9 AM, 11 AM -1PM, 2-6 PM
Huron & Washington	July 11, 2013	Turning Movement	7-9 AM, 11 AM -1PM
	July 12, 2013	Turning Movement	2-6 PM

## 4 – TRAFFIC ANALYSIS

### Traffic Movements

The northbound (NB) I-75 exit (Exit 201B) ramp to downtown Toledo and the AWT/State Route (SR 25) ramp to downtown Toledo merge together approximately 1,200 feet southwest of the Erie/Lafayette intersection. This intersection has five legs with four of the legs being one way movements. Erie Street south of the intersection permits two way traffic, Erie Street north of the intersection is one-way into downtown, while the ramp and the two legs of the Lafayette intersections are one-way into the intersection. There are islands to direct traffic in the intended direction to discourage unsafe traffic movements.

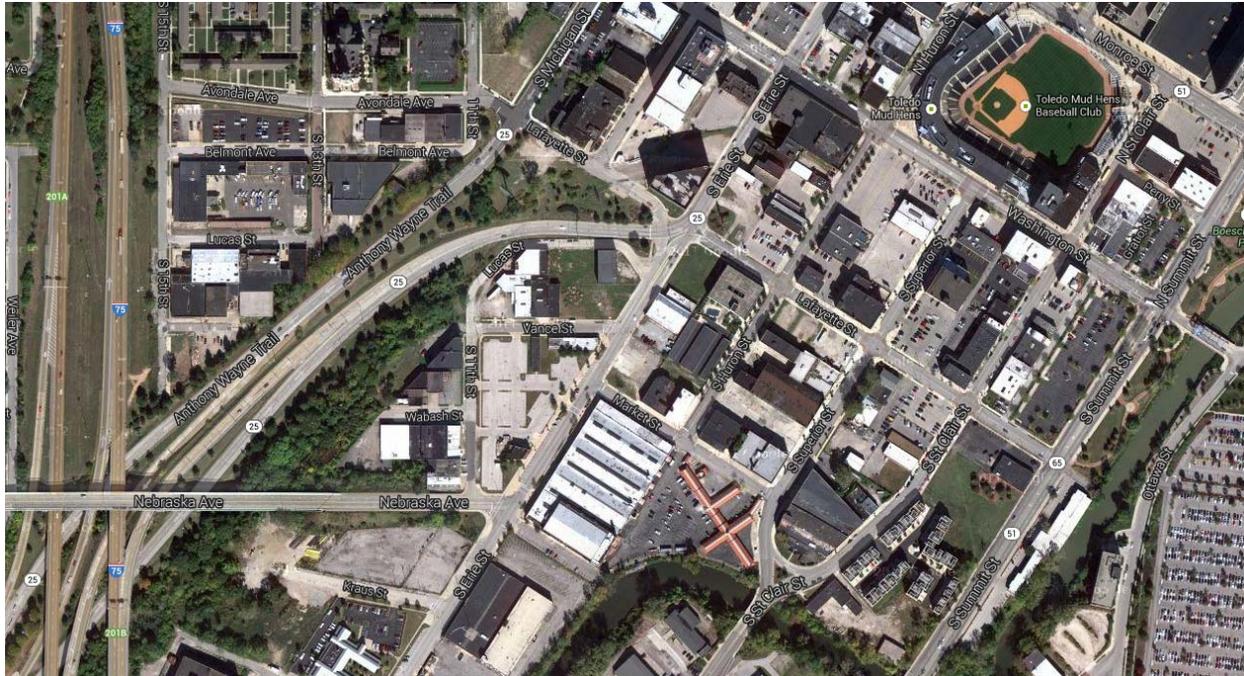


Figure 4.1 – Aerial View of Overall Study Area

This area is known as the Warehouse District and includes various public venues such as the Erie Street Market, The Toledo Farmers' Market, 5th/3rd Field (Toledo Mud Hens baseball), and residential and commercial uses. The project, known as the AWT Gateway, is intended to improve functionality and safety of this entrance into the City, update the signage/branding for the area, and provide better pedestrian access for the Warehouse District.

The heaviest hours for traffic occur in the AM peak hour – specifically the morning commute into downtown. Michigan Street provides the outbound downtown access to southbound (SB) I-75 and SB AWT (SR 25). The outbound component to downtown is not included in the study. The ODOT has a project to upgrade the I-75/SR 25 interchange (LUC-75-1.10) and will eliminate the current left merge conditions on I-75 by adding right merge conditions. All ramps and mainline I-75 will be updated to current geometric standards as a part of the LUC-75-1.10 project. The ODOT project is scheduled for 2016 construction.

## 4 – TRAFFIC ANALYSIS

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### Traffic Analyses

Stakeholders identified several key issues related to their vision for this gateway. The current alignment provides an abrupt entrance to downtown Toledo, and does not offer an opportunity to construct branding or signage without distracting drivers. Pedestrian accessibility is limited by the existing geometry, lack of pedestrian indications, and the continuous flow of traffic through the north leg on Erie Street. The one-way nature of Lafayette Street does not promote a convenient and noticeable entrance to Warehouse District destinations. In summary, stakeholders are interested in developing a signature gateway, which is safe and functional, and provides improved circulation and accessibility for vehicles and pedestrians.

Eliminating the connection of Lucas Street to Erie Street is a viable consideration under each of the alternatives. Currently, Lucas Street does not serve as an access to any occupied property, and secondary access points are available to these properties.

DGL developed Synchro models for existing conditions to determine the base condition for existing traffic. The following five alternatives were modelled:

- 1) Gateway Only
  - a. No changes to geometrics or traffic control
  - b. Minor changes to geometrics and added pedestrian signals
- 2) Lafayette 2-Way
  - a. Lafayette 2-Way, no pedestrian improvements
  - b. Lafayette 2-Way, added pedestrian improvements
  - c. Lafayette 2-Way east of Erie – close Lafayette approach west of Erie, added pedestrian improvements
- 3) Roundabout
- 4) Realignment
  - a. Intersect Erie at Market
  - b. Intersect Erie at Lafayette along Vance (2 lanes), drop lane to Market at South Erie. Adds a third lane to merge with ramp at Lafayette from South Erie.
  - c. Intersect Erie at Lafayette along Vance (3 lanes), drop lane to Market at South Erie. Adds a fourth lane to merge with the ramp at Lafayette from South Erie.
- 5) Realignment with cross-street at 11<sup>th</sup> Street, drop lane to Market

### 4.3 TRAFFIC VOLUME PROJECTIONS (OPENING DAY/DESIGN YEAR)

A request for certified traffic from ODOT was sent to District 2 for this project. The request should be made in conjunction with a request for updated certified traffic for the adjacent LUC-75-1.10 interstate improvement project, which is an ODOT sponsored project reconstructing portions of I-75, including this interchange and the AWT. The current plates for this project provide a 2018 and 2038 average daily traffic (ADT) on the exit ramp both prior to and after the AWT and I-75 ramps merge. This information is provided in **Appendix A** for reference only, because the information should be updated for appropriate opening and design years. Traffic counts were obtained as a part of the scope of work for this study and provided to the City for submittal to ODOT with the certified traffic request. The current traffic information from these counts included in **Appendix C** will allow certified traffic to be provided for not only AWT, but also the

## 4 – TRAFFIC ANALYSIS

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surrounding local roads included in the AWT Gateway project so that future analysis can be performed accurately. This will allow capacity analysis to be updated, and optimization of signal timings incorporated into the final design. The existing certified traffic plates for LUC-75-1.10 are included in **Appendix G** for reference only.

### 4.4 CAPACITY ANALYSIS

Capacity analysis for opening day and design year traffic has not been undertaken for this project because of the preliminary nature of the study. Once the certified traffic for the project has been provided, the capacity analysis will be performed.

# 5 – ROADWAY ASSESSMENT

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Conceptual typical sections and plan view for Realignment Alternative 4C are provided in **Appendix E** of this report.

## 5.1 TYPICAL SECTIONS

The following paragraphs provide information on typical sections for the various roadway types.

**I-75/AWT Ramp** – The existing typical section of AWT approaching the project limits is two-lane concrete pavement with 4 foot shoulders. The exiting typical section of the I-75 NB exit ramp to Erie Street is two-lane asphalt pavement with a 4 foot shoulder on the right and a 2 foot shoulder on the left; the area near the gore has concrete curb behind it. As the ramps merge, the left lane of AWT is taped and a three lane concrete section extends across the railroad tracks toward the Erie/Lafayette intersection. A 6 inch curb is located behind the 2 foot shoulder.

The proposed typical section will consist of a single lane from I-75 and two lanes from AWT. These lanes will merge and continue to the Erie/Lafayette intersection as a three lane section until joined with a single one-way NB lane from Market Street and a four lane section will continue NB into downtown.

**Erie Street** –The existing roadway is three lanes south of Vance Street and four lanes north of Vance Street as the SB curb lane becomes a right turn only at Vance Street. The asphalt pavement is curbed and concrete sidewalks are directly adjacent to the curbs. A narrow raised concrete median is at the SB approach to Lafayette Street. The proposed typical along Erie Street at the Lafayette Street at the merge of the ramps and Erie Street will be a four lane roadway where all traffic is traveling in the northbound direction.

**Market Street Ramp** – This ramp will be a single lane of pavement with 4' shoulders which will transition to 2' shoulders in front of a 6" curb as the ramp terminates at the intersection with Market and Erie Streets.

**Vance Street** – The existing roadway is two lane curbed pavement with adjacent sidewalks and intermittent grassed tree lawns.

## 5.2 PRELIMINARY PLAN

Due to the preliminary nature of the development of the roadway alternatives, a conceptual plan (without profile) has been developed to relay the general alignment and location of the proposed ramp. A field survey will be undertaken in the next phase of plan development and will use the same coordinate points used for the LUC-75-1.10 project, which is currently being reconciled. Conceptual plans for the gateway and landscape elements have also been developed and are included in **Appendix L**.

## 6 – STRUCTURE ASSESSMENT

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There are no structures involved with this project; therefore, a discussion of this project element is not applicable.

## 7 – GEOTECHNICAL ASSESSMENT

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A geotechnical investigation will be performed during the next phase of the project to assist with the design of proposed pavement and traffic signal foundations. No work has been performed to date on this project element; therefore, no additional discussion is provided. The geotechnical investigation will analyze existing geologic and geotechnical conditions and provide design recommendations.

# 8 – EXISTING RIGHT OF WAY ASSESSMENT

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## 8.1 RIGHT OF WAY IMPACTS/COST ESTIMATES

The recommended alternative will require right of way acquisition along Vance Street because the proposed ramp will either directly impact the existing structures, or adversely affect access to the use of these properties. FHWA and ODOT policy require a Limited Access (LA) Line along interstate highways and ramps for traffic safety and efficiency reasons. Furthermore, FHWA and ODOT policy typically dictates that no driveways be allowed within 600' from the terminus of the LA line. It is these access restrictions which directly impact or adversely impact access to properties along the AWT ramp corridor.

A parcel map and cost estimate for the Realignment Alternative was developed and is included in **Appendix F**. A Right of Way cost estimate was not developed for other alternatives as these alternatives were eliminated from further consideration prior to the point in alternative development where it is appropriate to estimate right of way costs. Right of way impacts, in the form of the number of commercial and residential parcels requiring acquisition, were identified and quantified for the Realignment Alternative and are presented in the Alternative Evaluation Matrix included in **Appendix F**. The parcel information is listed in the cost estimate provided in **Appendix F**.

## 8.2 IDENTIFY POTENTIAL TOTAL TAKE PARCELS

A parcel summary of properties impacted by the recommended preferred alternative for the project are included in **Appendix F** and are illustrated in pink on **Exhibit 2**, the Recommended Alternative diagram. Fifteen commercial properties with 7 different property owners would be affected by the project. The two parcels owned by Norfolk Southern (NS) do not have structures on them and only one requires some acquisition to avoid being landlocked. There are six commercial properties with buildings that require acquisition and relocation. Because parcels 12, 13, and 14 have access from both Erie and Vance Street a more detailed investigation into the use of the access from Vance Street is needed. This investigation would determine if a relocation of this business would not be necessary or if it can remain in operation after the project is constructed and Vance Street is closed.

# 9 – UTILITY/RAILROAD ASSESSMENT

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## 9.1 UTILITY/RAILROAD IMPACTS

Numerous utilities are present along local city streets within the project area. A call was placed to the Ohio Utilities Protection Service in July, 2013 to begin coordination. This inquiry has resulted in the identification of the following utilities within the project limits:

- AT&T Long Distance – In leased conduits belonging to AT&T Ohio
- AT&T Ohio – Underground conduit banks along Erie Street, Lafayette Street, Vance Street and Lucas Street
- Columbia Gas – Medium pressure lines on Vance Street, Lafayette Street and Erie Street
- Level 3 – Underground lines along the east side of Erie Street
- Toledo Edison – Aerial facilities on poles along the north side of Lafayette Street, south side of Lucas Street, east side of 11th Street and on both sides of Vance Street. Street lighting is fed aerially along Lafayette Street and Vance Street. Underground facilities are located along Erie Street with streetlights fed from those facilities.
- Toledo Water and Sewer - Waterlines are located along the east side of Erie Street and along the south side of Vance Street, Lucas Street and Lafayette Street. Storm and sanitary lines are also present.
- Zayo – Underground lines along the east side of Erie Street

Utility coordination will be continued as the project progresses to accurately locate existing facilities with the field survey assess the impacts of the proposed improvements on these facilities, and work with utility owners as relocation designs are prepared and facilities relocated ahead of construction.

Parcels 1 and 15 are owned by the NS Railroad consisting of an abandoned rail corridor with no rail service or activity but where the rails themselves have remained in place. The proposed improvements extend across this parcel. The existing AWT/I-75 also crosses this property in a location slightly to the north of the proposed ramps; therefore, coordination with the NS Railroad regarding the property and the proposal to construct improvements across it will be performed as the project develops through final design.

# 10 – ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

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## 10.1 ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Preliminary studies described below were conducted to document resources in the project study area.

### 10.1.1 Ecological

A preliminary evaluation of the ecological resources within the project area was conducted. This evaluation found no evidence of wetlands within the study area. Swan Creek is located south of the study area and impacts are not anticipated as a result of this project. Based on these results, the ODOT Office of Environmental Services (OES) determined that an ecological survey of the study area would not be required. A technical summary is provided in **Appendix H**.

### 10.1.2 Historic/Archaeological

A Section 106, Request for Review report, consisting of a cultural resources literature review and a field check, was prepared by URS and submitted in January 2014. Background research included a review of the Ohio Archaeological Inventory (OAI), Ohio Historic Inventory (OHI), National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), National Historic Landmark (NHL) list, Determination of Eligibility (DOE) files, and ODOT's Historic Bridge website. A search of these sources using a one-mile search radius of the project area identified 374 OHI resources, 36 NRHP properties, 43 DOE files, one NHL, three cemeteries, one historic bridge, and five previous cultural resource investigations. Two NRHP resources are located within 100-feet of the project area. These include the Huron-Superior Streets Warehouse/Produce Market District and the Standart-Simmons Hardware Co. building. Coordination with the ODOT OES will be conducted to determine the need for a Phase I history/architecture survey. A technical summary is provided in **Appendix I**.

### 10.1.3 Section 4(f) and 6(f) Properties

A review was conducted to determine the potential impacts to parkland. The results determined that no parks are located within the project area, making it unlikely that the project will require further evaluation under the requirements of Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966.

### 10.1.4 Endangered Species

The Ohio Biodiversity Database Program was reviewed; there were no records of rare, federal or state-listed species within the study area. There were no records of bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) nests within a 0.5-mile radius of the study area. The project is in an Indiana Bat (*Myotis sodalis*) generalized urban area, which indicates that the area is characterized by dense residential or industrial land use. Based on these results, the ODOT OES determined that an ecological survey of the study area would not be required. A technical summary is provided in **Appendix H**.

### 10.1.5 Environmental Site Assessment

An environmental site assessment (ESA) screening was completed to assess the environmental conditions for the AWT project area. As a result of this screening analysis, six sites are recommended for additional environmental investigation in the form of a Phase I ESA. Coordination with the ODOT OES will be

# 10 – ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

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conducted to determine the need for a Phase I ESA. The six sites are listed in the Phase I ESA Report included in **Appendix J**.

## 10.1.6 Farmland

A preliminary review of project base mapping was conducted to determine the extent of agricultural land within the project area. Based on this review, active agricultural land was not identified within the project area. The project area is identified as an Urbanized Area on U.S. Census Maps. The project area is also identified as an Urban Area that is mapped with tint overlay on the U.S. Geologic Survey topographic maps. The project area is identified as Urban-Built Up land on U.S. Department of Agriculture Important Farmland Maps.

## 10.1.7 Relocations

Relocations of residential and commercial uses are required for construction of the project. The Right of Way Parcel Summary and associated mapping in **Appendix F** identifies the parcels that are total takes and require the relocation of either residential or business occupants.

## 10.1.8 Land Use/Public Involvement

Land use will change as a result of the construction of the project. Commercial buildings within the project footprint will be demolished for roadway construction. The remaining parcels will be available for future development upon completion of the project, and are likely to be used for commercial/industrial or residential land uses. The preferred alternative has been presented to project stakeholders and to the public for review and comment.

## 10.1.9 Social/Economic

The project will impact numerous residential and commercial properties, resulting in not only property impacts, but also complete acquisition and relocation. The reconstruction of the interchange and the surrounding local roadways, including changes in traffic patterns will also have an impact on people trying to reach a place of business or a home. Additional public involvement meetings as the design progresses will be held to keep the public up to date on the progress of the project and to show new roadway connections, traffic patterns, and pedestrian connections so that motorists and pedestrians can locate businesses and find their way.

## 10.1.10 Floodplain

The southeast portion of the environmental study area is within the 100-year floodplain. The proposed improvements to be constructed in Realignment Alternative 4C do not extend within the floodplain; therefore, no floodplain coordination is anticipated.

## 10.1.11 Environmental Justice

The evaluation of environmental justice effects as a result of this project is in the process of being completed for the preferred alternative. The project area includes minority and low-income populations. Whether the project will have disproportionately high and adverse impacts on these populations is currently being assessed and will be addressed in a Categorical Exclusion.

# 10 – ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

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## 10.1.12 Noise/Air Quality

Noise sensitive receptors, predominantly residences, have been identified within the study area. Because the project does not bring travel lanes closer to these noise sensitive receptors, a noise analysis is not required.

Because existing total truck traffic volumes will not significant increase as a result of the project, air quality analysis is not expected to be required.

## 10.2 ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Minor impacts to environmental resources are expected as a result of this project based upon the limited investigations that have been performed during this preliminary phase. Additional environmental studies, including an evaluation of environmental justice effects, will be undertaken as the project progresses. However, impacts to environmental features are not a differentiating factor in evaluating alternatives for this project, because similar environmental impacts are associated with each alternative.

# 11 – PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

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## 11.1 STAKEHOLDER/PUBLIC COORDINATION

Project stakeholders, have been engaged throughout the development and preliminary engineering of the project to review and evaluate geometric alternatives and options for gateway/wayfinding. An initial project stakeholder group included representatives from: City of Toledo Engineering and Traffic Divisions, Toledo Arts Commission, Downtown Toledo Development Corporation, Toledo Design Center, the Toledo Warehouse District Association, Toledo YMCA, and Toledo Metroparks. Stakeholder representatives attended all meetings. At the fourth stakeholder meeting two new stakeholders were identified and added to the group:

The Stakeholder group first convened on September 6, 2012 to review the purpose and scope for the project, to review consultant proposals and select consultant teams to be interviewed for project preliminary engineering. On November 4, 2012 consultant teams were interviewed and presented qualifications and ideas for the project to the stakeholder team. Four Stakeholder meetings were held during project development to provide input and guidance to the consultant team. The first stakeholder meeting was held on 8/6/2013 at the Toledo Urban Design Center and consisted of a planning workshop to review traffic analysis of alternatives, review geometry of traffic alternatives, and signage and wayfinding concepts. At this meeting it was emphasized that the purpose of the project was to enhance the Downtown Gateway image. After considerable discussion, stakeholders expressed initial support for the ramp relocation alternatives. The second stakeholder meeting was held on 1/8/2013 in the offices of Division of Engineering Services to review project progress, ODOT coordination, right of way requirements, cost estimates, and discuss Signage and Wayfinding concepts.

The third Stakeholder meeting was held on 3/4/14 in the offices of the Division of Transportation to discuss limited access limits required for the ramp relocation and their impacts on right of way acquisition. Also discussed were project impacts on development potential of surrounding property. Alternative Five, which shortened the AWT ramp relocation and extended local streets in order to foster redevelopment of the Vance Street neighborhood, was discussed and group consensus was that this alternative had many negative impacts. It was agreed that Alternative Five should not be considered further for selection as the preferred alternative.

The fourth Stakeholder meeting was held on 5/29/2014 in the offices of Division of Engineering Services. Two additional City of Toledo Divisions (Economic Development Department, Plan Commission) and a representative from the Standart Lofts and Berdan Buildings were added to the group and attended the meeting. At this meeting project progress was reviewed and the draft Alternatives Evaluation Report evaluation and recommendation were presented. Graphics of the refined Preferred Alternative 4C were reviewed and this alternative was affirmed for presentation to the public as the Stakeholder group's recommendation. Refinements to the Market Street Slip Ramp were reviewed to address concerns by the Division of Economic Development to minimize traffic directly onto Market Street.

In addition to the Stakeholder meetings one property owner meeting and one public meeting were held to present the recommended preferred alternative for review and comment. A Property owners meeting was held on 6/3/2014 at the Erie Street Market where the affected property owners were briefed on the project. Copies of the draft Preferred Alternative were distributed. Topics discussed at this meeting included project

# 11 – PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

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purpose, limited access line impacts to property access, and project Right of Way Acquisition requirements. City Real Estate staff discussed real estate acquisition and compensation policies.

A Public Meeting was hosted on June 11, 2014 at the Erie Street Market to present and receive public feedback on the Preferred Alternative. Legal notices of the public meeting were posted in the Toledo Blade two weeks prior to the meeting, and the Toledo Blade ran a newspaper article on the project as well. Two television stations did interviews with city staff at the meeting and publicized the meeting beforehand. Attendees included 55 persons signed in to the meeting and 7 comment cards were received. At the Public Meeting topics presented included: the project purpose and need, review of the alternatives evaluation matrix, discussion of the preferred alternative, and right of way requirements. After the presentation, small group discussions fostered individual questions and comments. Affected property owners voiced their concerns. General support for the project was voiced by a majority of attendees. All comment cards received were responded to via email. Copies of the sign in sheets and comments and responses will be included in environmental coordination documents as appropriate and required.

## 11.2 ADDITIONAL COORDINATION

Coordination with the ODOT District 2 staff and their consultant for the LUC-75-1.10 interstate project has been ongoing for this project and has included face-to-face meetings, emails and telephone conference calls. This engagement is important because of the proximity and construction schedule of both projects, and because of the information that can be shared between the projects, including survey control and traffic data. Additionally, the AWT Gateway project is being administered through the ODOT LPA Program which automatically engages ODOT in the review and approval of project development documents, including environmental documentation and construction documents. As the project moves into final design, ODOT will receive all staged review submittals.

# 12 – RECOMMENDATIONS

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## 12.1 CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the AWT Gateway project is to create a signature Gateway to Downtown and improve the physical (pedestrian and motorist) access at the terminus point of the AWT. The project will reconstruct the deteriorated pavement as AWT approaches the Erie/Lafayette intersection and provide visual enhancements including gateway features. In order to determine the most appropriate way to meet these needs, an Alternative Evaluation process was undertaken. Five conceptual alternatives, including variations of some, were considered. The Gateway Only Alternative was considered the No-Build as it provided limited opportunities for signature Gateway improvements and it did not provide physical improvements to transportation infrastructure. Other alternatives included the Lafayette Two-Way, Roundabout, and Realignment alternatives. The number of alternatives considered was reduced based on stakeholder input and a series of detailed evaluations which included traffic analysis, geometric design, pedestrian analysis, analysis of potential environmental impacts, and gateway/wayfinding development. The recommended preferred alternative was determined following a presentation to project stakeholders that provided input and feedback on the ability of each alternative to meet the purpose and need of the project.

## 12.2 IDENTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Following the Alternative Evaluation process described above, the feasible alternatives for the AWT Gateway project were systematically evaluated and eliminated. Based on the various criteria evaluated, and feedback from the public meeting the Realignment Alternative 4C has been identified as the Recommended Preferred Alternative (see **Appendix H**).