Three plans shape future of Lane Avenue

By Jill Boatman
Lantern staff writer

Plans to change the face of Lane Avenue were revealed in three proposals exhibited at the Lane Avenue Transportation study meeting Wednesday.

All three plans include trimming the corner at the intersection of Lane Avenue and High Street on the side of the Shell Station. Lane Avenue will be widened to five lanes from High Street to Olentangy River Road. An additional turning lane will be added at the intersection of Lane Avenue and Olentangy River Road.

The building containing The Bike Source, Sahara restaurant and The Jailhouse will be demolished according to the plans.

The bridge over the Olentangy River will also be destroyed.

The bridge, built in 1917, is an earth-filled arch bridge and its foundation is literally filled with dirt, said David Younger, transportation planning engineer for the city of Columbus. If the bridge was partially torn down, it would fall apart.

Two of the plans would halt traffic on Lane Avenue over the Olentangy River while a new bridge is constructed. The other plan proposes building an adjacent bridge to keep traffic flowing over the river while construction is taking place.

"What you are going to see after this is all done is there is not going to be a long line of traffic waiting to go east on Lane Avenue," said Jean Hansford, senior campus planner involved with the project for Ohio State. "It's going to be a nice, wide street with a good flow of traffic."

The first plan allows space for sidewalks and takes less land from the front yards of the homes and businesses on West Lane Avenue. This plan will allow only minimal space between pedestrians and the road, Younger said.

The second proposal includes green space and sidewalks which will give a buffer between pedestrians and the road, he said.

The third plan not only gives Lane Avenue green spaces and trees but will allow the bridge over the Olentangy River to remain open during the restructuring process, Younger said.

Those involved with the planning process want to utilize bits and pieces from each plan, he said.

"Many of the property owners stand to lose much of their front yards," said Pat Kohr, a partner with Kohr, Rooyer, Griffith Realty. "Most of these residents have parking lots for backyards."

Those involved with the planning process for the city of Columbus say the Varsity Club will be spared but just barely since the plan will involve adding six to eight feet to Lane Avenue, said Doug Bender, traffic engineer with MS Consultants, which is working with the city on the project.

"We want to do it the way the community wants us to do it," Younger said. "This is a long term plan."

The north dorms, for the most part, will be unaffected by the restructuring plans, Bender said.
City plans new lanes for Lane

By Kate Elliott
Lantern staff writer

Campus-area business owners felt left in the cold after they discovered that the Lane Avenue expansion project might cause their business to be destroyed.

Ernie Males, owner of Quarters, a bar at 16 W. Lane Ave., said that he read in The Columbus Dispatch last week that the building that houses his business has been sold to the city and realized only then that it may be demolished, possibly within a year.

Columbus City Council voted on June 5 to spend $700,000 to buy the buildings at the northwest corner of Lane Avenue and High Street.

Males’ partner, Andrew Zamenisky, said that no one has made any attempt to contact them and let them know what is going on.

“It’s not that we’re against everything that’s going on (with Lane Avenue), but what we really want is someone to let us know what the hell is going on,” Zamenisky said.

When Quarters opened in September 1998, Males said he knew the Lane Avenue expansion had been talked about, but claims that the University Area Commission told him and Zamenisky that the project would never happen.

Mark Richard, the Lane Avenue project manager, said that the building needs to be demolished so the east and west legs of Lane Avenue can be lined up. The realignment, coupled with the widening, would allow for left-hand turn lanes in all four directions.

However, not all the space created by the demolition would be used for roadway construction.

Ron Hupman, president of the University Area Commission, said that the demolition would take place only after the commission agrees with plans for redevelopment of the unused space.

“We want there to be firm plans as to what is replacing that building before it is demolished,” he said.

Hupman explained that the commission doesn’t feel the reasons for destroying the building are justified.

One reason for demolition is to improve the radius of the corner. Doing this would allow buses to make right turns onto Lane Avenue more easily.

Hupman said, however, that this turn is not important because it is not a part of a bus route.

“The only bus that would make that turn would be the occasional tour bus,” he said.

The northwest corner of Lane Avenue and High Street is not the only disagreement the commission has with city engineers.

The current plans for Lane include a bridge on the corner of Lane and Olentangy River Road and widening Lane Avenue up to

Businesses located at the northwest corner of Lane and High, face the risk of becoming demolished in the event of the Lane Ave. expansion project.

High Street.

The commission agrees with the bridge and widening until Tuttle Park Place, but it believes there is no need to widen the roadway past Tuttle Park Place.

“As we see it, the primary purpose is to bring traffic into and out of the university,” Hupman said.

For this purpose, Hupman said the primary route should be from the Route 315 interchange or the Upper Arlington area, to the university and back.

Lelia Cady, legislative aid to council member Maryellen O’Shaughnessy, said that the traffic engineers division compiled information proving that to widen Lane until Tuttle Parkway, then to narrow the street before High Street would defeat what O’Shaughnessy and the city engineers see as the primary purpose, which is to keep traffic from cutting through both campus and residential areas.

In a memo to Linda K. Page, director of the Columbus Public
Service Department, O'Shaughnessy commented that drivers heading east on Lane Avenue who need to travel north on High Street currently use Neil Avenue instead to cut through the neighborhood or travel across High to make a left on residential streets in order to get to High Street.

"Likewise, cars traveling north on High Street cannot make the left onto Lane Avenue. Instead, they must travel past Lane, and use neighborhood streets as a cut through to get back to westbound Lane," she said.

Richard said that the debate on whether to widen Lane Avenue is a political issue, not an engineering issue.

"The only good traffic engineering solution is five lanes," he said.

Hupman said the commission doesn't agree with the findings the city engineers have presented.

"The city engineers are doing projections based on assumptions. We don't agree with those assumptions," he said.

O'Shaughnessy, however, does.

"Widening Lane Avenue to High Street would allow left turns at this corner, which according to department traffic counts, would significantly reduce the number of vehicles using residential streets as cut-throughs," she said in the memo.

While the commission and city engineers battle out the technicalities of the project, business owners like Males and Zamensky are left wondering what to do next.

"When you read in the paper that your business is being torn down, you can't run your business as you should run it. If something breaks, do we spend the money to fix it?" Zamensky said.

Cady said that it would be at least a year before any razing will begin. But for now, the owners of Quarters and PJ's Grille and Subs, 8 W. Lane Ave. face an uncertain future as the plans are finalized.
The cable-stayed suspension bridge carrying Lane Avenue over the Olentangy River, on the campus of The Ohio State University (OSU), was opened five months ahead of schedule with a festive ribbon cutting ceremony on November 14, 2003. It is a true celebration of modern engineering, technology and the more than 300 men and women who contributed their expertise and talents to the building of this landmark structure.

Under the jurisdiction of Franklin County Engineer Dean C. Ringle, ground was broken for the bridge on February 27, 2002. Preliminary work involving site preparation and temporary pedestrian bridge construction began immediately. Through the spring and summer months the abutments and pier for the south half of the bridge were built and a water line was relocated.

Closure of the old Lane Avenue Bridge occurred on November 25, 2002 following the OSU football team's final home game of the season. Demolition crews proceeded to clear the site for an intensive year of construction that included the building of the new bridge and reconstruction of the Lane Avenue and Olentangy River Road intersection.

The $15.6 million project was built by the C.J. Mahan Construction Co. of Grove City, with construction management provided by the Franklin County Engineer's Office. Major sub-contractors included Shelly & Sands, Inc. of Columbus; Delta Erecting, Inc. of Harrison; C.J. Bridge Co. of Grove City; Jess Howard Electric Co. of Columbus; Bale Contracting, Inc. of Columbus; and the Paul Peterson Co. of Columbus.

Jones-Stuckey Ltd, Inc. of Columbus prepared the plans for the bridge, which included nearly 200 pages of construction drawings. The unique design was selected by a civic committee to artistically reflect the social and economic vibrancy of the Lane Avenue corridor and to have the least environmental impact on the river. Participants included representatives from the County Engineer's Office, OSU, the City of Columbus and neighborhood organizations. This is the second cable-stayed suspension bridge entirely built in Ohio and Franklin County, and it reflects the latest technologies in bridge construction.
The double-span, steel and concrete structure is 370 feet long, 112 feet wide, and carries six 12-foot wide vehicular lanes and two 12-foot wide sidewalks. The pier towers stand 145 feet above the river and hold ten multi-strand cables on each side of the bridge to support the deck. More than 36 miles of post-tensioned cable strands are embedded within the concrete to strengthen the deck and edge girders.

On May 21-22, 2003, a 550-ton capacity crane was used to install a 52-ton (104,000 pound) cable anchorage assembly atop each of the concrete pier towers. The Engineering News Record cited the anchorage assemblies as the heaviest single pieces of steel ever to be galvanized, and lifting them into place at such a height and angle was a major hurdle in building the bridge.

The busy intersection of Lane Avenue and Olentangy River Road was rebuilt in accordance with plans designed by ms consultants of Columbus. This work involved the construction of newly aligned asphalt roadways featuring turn-lanes, storm sewers, curbing and sidewalks; and the installation of new traffic signals, signage and street lighting.

Funding for the project was provided by the Ohio Public Works Commission ($5 million), Federal Highway Administration ($5 million), Franklin County Engineer’s Office ($3.2 million from license plate fees), and City of Columbus ($2.4 million).

The first Lane Avenue Bridge, built around 1905, was an overhead iron truss structure. It survived the great flood of 1913, but was determined to be inadequate for future flood conditions.
The second bridge was a four-span, earth-filled concrete arch structure opened in 1919. The designer was noted bridge engineer Wilbur J. Watson of Cleveland, who previously designed the King Avenue Bridge (opened 1914) and the Third Avenue Bridge (opened 1917).

In 1998, a condition study of the old Lane Avenue Bridge by the County Engineer's Office concluded that advanced deterioration of the arches, sidewalks and railings combined with the need to have a wider deck to meet growing traffic and pedestrian demands would require the bridge to be replaced.

Our Lane Avenue Bridge was designed and built in the spirit of the county engineer's historic tradition of providing the finest transportation system for the citizens of Franklin County, Ohio. May all those who pass this way feel the grandeur of modern engineering and technology.

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**Hours:**

Monday - Friday  
7:00 am - 4:00 pm

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