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Improvements planned for Fairfield’s most-accident prone intersection

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By Eric Robinette

Staff Writer

FAIRFIELD — By this time next year, the city will begin a \$1.5 million project for one of its busiest and most accident-prone intersections: Ohio 4, Gilmore Road and Holden Boulevard.

The intersection sits between Fairfield High School on one end, Jungle Jim’s off to the side, and Ohio 4 at the end, making it one of the city’s most heavily traveled intersections. It’s also the one where police see the most crashes, said Officer Doug Day of the Fairfield police. The city’s website states that average daily traffic is approximately 13,670 along South Gilmore, 13,880 along Holden Boulevard, and nearly 35,000 along Ohio 4.

“By far, it’s our worst intersection for accidents ... Dixie and Symmes is second. I’m sure that’s why they’re addressing this,” said Day, who noted that Ohio 4/Gilmore Holden has seen an average of 17 accidents per year since 2009.

On Monday, City Council passed a resolution of intent and necessity for the project, which notes that the estimated cost of right-of-way acquisition for the project is \$335,416 — an amount that may increase through negotiation and litigation. The project includes 13 parcels with seven different owners, according to city documentation.

The city’s plan is to widen the intersection to accommodate additional turn lanes onto Ohio 4 and an additional through-lane from Holden to South Gilmore. The traffic signals will be upgraded to include mast arm signals and illuminated advance lane use signs. Work is expected to begin in the spring of 2016 and be complete by the end of that year.

The city had hoped to do the project this year, but City Engineer Ben Mann said there wasn’t time to get the project in place by now. The city didn’t want the work to be done while school was still in session, so it was delayed until next year. The district will also soon begin construction on two new buildings in that area: the new Freshman School, to be located behind the high school, and a new elementary school, to be built across the street from the high school on Holden. Those buildings, along with a new Central Elementary on Ohio 4, are expected to be complete in time for the 2017-2018 school year.

The majority of the project, 90 percent, is being paid through an Ohio Department of Transportation grant.

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