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## Work on US 127 in Fairfield set for 2015

By Eric Robinette

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**FAIRFIELD** — Fairfield and the Ohio Department of Transportation are gearing up for a construction project meant to reduce accidents on US 127 and John Gray Road.

The \$350,000 project only measures about 900 feet from John Gray to Augusta Boulevard, but the impact is expected to be significant in terms of improving traffic flow through that area, according to Ben Mann, an engineer for the city of Fairfield. The project will extend the southbound turn lane at the John Gray intersection.

The project is expected to go out for bid in October, with the actual work scheduled beginning in March of 2015, according to ODOT.

"It's designed to put a center turn lane and extend the left turn lane from southbound Pleasant (US 127) on to John Gray. It'll make that turn lane longer and make a center double-left turn in between that whole section, Mann said. The bulk of the project, 90 percent, is being paid for by an ODOT safety grant, according to the city's website.

Mann added that there have been a "good many crashes in the southbound direction, which seem to be related to people wanting to turn left at the signal or turn left at that strip (shopping center). With only two lanes, there's nowhere for them to get out of the way. It's to give them some center refuge from all the north and southbound traffic."

According to a safety study ODOT conducted on the John Gray/127 intersection, there were 36 crashes between 2009 and 2011, with 72 percent of those being rear-end crashes, many of those involving drivers heading south toward John Gray. The report also states the average daily traffic at that intersection is 20,010 vehicles

As a result of that study, the city also reduced the speed limit from 50 mph to 40 mph earlier this year, Mann said.

The city had also expected to work next year on widening and adding turn lanes to the intersection of Ohio 4, Gilmore Road and Holden Boulevard, which city officials have said is one of the city's most accident heavy areas. However, due to delays in the design phase, that project has been pushed back to the summer of 2016, Mann said. According to police statistics, that intersection, which is near Fairfield High School, has seen about 20 accidents per year.

That is a federal project costing a projected \$1.5 million. Mann said there wasn't time to get the project in place by summer 2015, but the city didn't want the work to be done while school was still in session, so it was delayed until the summer of 2016.

"When it's a federal project, there are a lot of steps ... there aren't any major problems with the project, it's just a delay in the design. Nothing has changed the scope of the project," he said.

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