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Office

H.B. 465
134th General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

[Click here for H.B. 465's Bill Analysis](#)

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Sheehy and Bird

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

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Highlights

- The bill expands the types of projects for which the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) is required to provide public notification to include any roads with a significant change. This could result in additional project notification costs to ODOT. However, it is uncertain how many additional projects would fall under the changes in the bill.
- The bill requires that traffic safety studies that ODOT prepares currently also consider impacts to designated school zones affected by ODOT projects, focusing on student safety. Presumably ODOT currently considers such factors to some extent as they apply to state highway systems projects, therefore any additional costs associated with these traffic safety studies is unclear.

Detailed Analysis

Overview

Under current law, the Director of Transportation must notify the general community and offer an opportunity for appropriate public involvement when establishing a new state highway or making a significant change to an existing state highway. The public involvement must meet the requirements set forth in the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. This is achieved through such means as public hearings or meetings, meetings with local officials, news releases, public notices via electronic communications or mail, and other activities the Director considers appropriate. The opportunity for involvement must be provided in each county where the highway is located.

Additional projects requiring public notification

The bill would appear to increase the project notification costs to the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) by expanding the required notifications to the public to include significant changes to any other street or roadway, not just state highway system projects as under current law. Furthermore, the bill requires ODOT to specifically notify any school that will be impacted by significant changes to a state highway or other roadway. The bill broadly defines schools to seemingly include most public and private schools. The bill does not define what types of projects or changes would classify as significant for the purposes of these required notifications. This decision would presumably be left up to the Director of Transportation. As a result of the two changes under the bill, ODOT may incur some additional project notification costs, mostly borne by the Highway Operating Fund (Fund 7002).

According to the ODOT 2021 Construction Summary Report, in FY 2021 ODOT completed 917 total projects. Of that number, 219 were local let projects, meaning that local agencies advertised, awarded, and administered those projects. Of the projects completed in FY 2021, 210 were “System Preservation – Paving” projects, which primarily consist of paving of two-lane, four-lane, and interstate roads. ODOT also completed 139 “Safety Upgrade” projects, which consists of traffic control, interchange and intersection improvements, and other roadside or roadwork safety improvements. Finally, ODOT completed 14 “Major-New” projects. These are projects approved by the Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC). The other projects completed by ODOT in FY 2021 pertain to bridge repair (139), bike trail and other miscellaneous projects (167), as well as 207 completed Local System (local let) projects.

Traffic safety studies for projects affecting school zones

The bill also expands the analysis that must be done when the Director of Transportation is preparing a traffic safety study to include impacts on designated school zones. Specifically, the study must consider both the impact of the proposed project on traffic in a designated school zone and how the increase or decrease of traffic could affect student safety. It is unclear as to the extent that such factors are currently examined during traffic safety studies. However, it can be assumed that these factors are already considered in some capacity. As of the most recent data available to LBO, there are just over 4,900 school buildings in Ohio. It is unclear how many designated school zones have been established for these facilities.