



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Initial Site Preparation for Western Hills Viaduct Replacement Starts This Week**

*Beginning with Demolition of First Building in Footprint of Future Bridge*

CINCINNATI, MARCH 1, 2022 – Initial site preparation for the Western Hills Viaduct replacement project begins this week with the demolition of a vacant building at Harrison and State avenues in South Fairmount. It's the first of several buildings that will be removed by the mid-2020s to make room for the future bridge.

"This is an important milestone," said John Brazina, director of the City of Cincinnati Department of Transportation & Engineering (DOTE). "It marks the start of a major transportation infrastructure project that ultimately will transform a critical connection between Cincinnati's West Side, Interstate 75, Downtown and Uptown."

The City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County are leading a joint effort to replace the 90-year-old viaduct, which connects to I-75 and carries 55,000 vehicles a day over the Mill Creek Valley and a large, active railroad yard.

Site preparation will continue to take place over the next several years. It includes the demolition of six buildings as well as the relocation of a Duke Energy substation and transmission line, railroad track relocations and other utility relocations, and construction of foundational supports for roadway ramps on the west end of the project footprint. The project team also must finalize detailed design and engineering plans for the bridge in conjunction with the Ohio Department of Transportation's project to replace and reconfigure the I-75 interchange, which is in preliminary design.

Construction of the new bridge is expected to begin by 2025. The work will extend nearly a half mile over CSX Transportation's Queensgate Yard. The existing viaduct will remain in place and continue to carry traffic until its replacement is finished.

The full project, which includes the I-75 interchange and removal of the existing viaduct, is expected to be complete by 2030.

### **Bridge Design and Construction Manager**

The replacement bridge will be a single deck, “extradosed” design built approximately 50 feet south of the existing viaduct. An extradosed bridge combines the major elements of cable-stay and box girder bridges.

The new bridge will include a protected, shared-use path on the south side and a sidewalk on the north side to improve pedestrian and bicycle accessibility.

The city, which maintains the viaduct based on a long-term agreement with the county, plans to hire a construction management company for the project this year through a qualifications-based selection process.

### **Building Demolitions and Funding**

The first building to be demolished at 1400 Harrison Ave. is the former home of Q Laboratories. DOTE has awarded the demolition contract to Cincinnati-based Battle Axe Construction. Demolition is expected to take approximately two months. A second building at the same address will be removed at a later date.

The next building slated for demolition is on the east side of the project site at 2261 Spring Grove Ave. Its removal is expected to begin by the fourth quarter of this year. It will create space for the new Duke Energy substation.

The city and county team has secured \$152 million in federal and local match funding toward the estimated \$398 million needed to build the new bridge. The secured funding to date includes federal and state grants and local matching funds from the city and Hamilton County.

The team announced a significant funding update with news last September that it would receive a \$205 million grant for the project from the Southwest Ohio Transit Authority (SORTA). The grant will be payable in annual installments of approximately \$8.2 million over 25 years beginning in 2022.

Hamilton County voters approved a transit tax last year to fund SORTA. Proceeds from the tax are being used for transit-related infrastructure such as the viaduct replacement.

The city expects to use funds from the SORTA grant to pay direct construction costs and to repay principal and interest on long-term bonds issued for the project. The funding from SORTA will come over time, not in a single one-time payment.

### **Media Briefing Reminder**

The media is invited to a question-and-answer session at 1400 Harrison Ave. in South Fairmount at 2:00 p.m. today, Tuesday, March 1.

For more information about the project, please visit: [www.cincinnati-oh.gov/WHV](http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/WHV), which includes answers to frequently asked questions.

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