

**Alternatives Development**

Two conceptual build alternatives (Alternatives 1 and 2) and Alternative 3 (the No-Build/No Action Alternative) were identified in the early planning stages of the project. The build alternatives are to be a 12 foot wide paved surface and designed to meet the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and ODOT's design standards. Alternative 3, the no-build/no action alternative is required by NEPA regulations to provide a base level for impact analyses and is carried forward through the NEPA process for that reason.

In early 2008, as a result of the initial public involvement effort utilizing the NPS's Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website and direct mailings, a modification to the proposed trail alignment was identified to avoid potential conflicts with the operations of DiGeronimo Aggregate's Haydite facility along Hemlock Road. During coordination between the City of Independence, ODOT, CVNP, and DiGeronimo Aggregates LLC, the City of Independence identified an alternative alignment to the trail along the northwest side of Hemlock Creek in the valley floor area within the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. This trail alignment, initially identified as the DiGeronimo Alternative and referred to in some environmental investigations, has been identified as Alternative 4.

***Alternative 1***

Alternative 1 starts at the eastern terminus, proceed westerly following the existing Stone Road R/W, crosses the Cuyahoga River on a new bridge using the existing stone bridge abutments, and proceeds along the Hemlock Road R/W to approximately 100 yards east of where Hemlock Road has been closed. Alternative-1 then proceeds north into CVNP property along the former haul road, crosses Hemlock Creek using the existing concrete bridges, continues along the former haul road up the hillside, and then proceeds west along the former haul road to the Independence Technology Center (ITC) property. Alternative 1 departs from the former haul road within CVNP property in two locations to comply with ADA grade requirements. Alternative 1 then follows the ridgeline of the ravine west towards the western terminus at the ITC entrance on Brecksville Road.

***Alternative 2***

Alternative 2 is similar in alignment to Alternatives 1 from the eastern terminus to where Alternative 1 departs Hemlock Road R/W. Alternative 2 starts at the eastern terminus, proceed westerly following the existing Stone Road R/W, cross the Cuyahoga River on a new bridge using the existing stone bridge abutments, and proceed along the Hemlock Road R/W to the point where it meets active traffic and proceeds westerly either along either the north side (Alternative 2, Option A) or the south side (Alternative 2, Option B) of Hemlock Road to Brecksville Road/SR 21. Alternative 2 proceeds north along the east side of Brecksville Road/SR 21 to the western terminus at the ITC entrance on Brecksville Road.

### **Alternative 3**

Alternative 3 is the No Build or No Action Alternative. The No Build Alternative as defined for this project is equivalent to a do nothing alternative. That is, there would be no improvements that would address any of the issues identified in the project's purpose and need analysis. However, NEPA regulations require that a Do Nothing or No-Build Alternative be included in the environmental analysis to provide a baseline to use to determine the significance of environmental impacts associated with any of the build alternatives that are carried forward.

### **Alternative 4**

Alternative 4 is similar in alignment and termini to Alternative 1 and has overlapping common elements. Alternative 4 departs from Alternative 1 at the intersection of Stone Road and Hemlock Road. Alternative 4 proceeds from the Stone/Hemlock Road intersection west along the north side of Stone Road, crossing over Hemlock creek on a new bridge structure, crosses over Stone Road approximately 325 feet west of the Stone/Hemlock Road intersection, proceeds along the valley floor in a southerly directions and connects back with Alternative 1 trail alignment approximately 150 feet southwest of the Hemlock Road Bridge over Hemlock Creek.

During the 2008 coordination between the City of Independence, ODOT, and CVNP and after review of preliminary environmental investigations and secondary resource reviews, it was determined by the City of Independence that conceptual Alternative 2 (Options A and B) were not viable alternatives due to potential for a large number of impacts to residential properties, impact to Hemlock Cemetery, the acquisition of commercial and residential properties, an increase in project costs, and the involvement of hazardous materials. It was determined that Alternative 1 and Alternative 4 would be carried forward as feasible alternatives in the NEPA process. Alternative 3 (No Build) is being carried forward through the NEPA process to provide a base level for impact analyses as required by NEPA regulations.

<b>CONCEPTUAL ALTERNATIVES COMPARISON TABLE</b>					
<b>Comparison Feature</b>	<b>Alt. 1</b>	<b>Alt. 2A</b>	<b>Alt. 2B</b>	<b>Alt. 3</b>	<b>Alt. 4</b>
Residential Impacts	1	4	14	0	1
Residential Relocations	0	1	0	0	0
Business Impacts	2	3	3	0	1
Business Relocations	0	1	1	0	0
Cemeteries	0	1	1	0	0
Parks (CVNP)	1	1	1	1	1
Hazardous Waste Sites	0	1	1	0	0
Construction Costs	\$1,579,564	\$2,723,302	\$2,558,302	\$0	\$1,786,923

### **Feasible Alternatives Analysis**

Following the elimination of the two Conceptual Alternatives (2A and 2B), the three remaining Conceptual Alternatives (1 and 4) were designated Feasible Alternatives and were carried

forward for additional analysis and considerations. Alternative 3 (No Build) is being carried forward through the NEPA process to provide a base level for impact analyses as required by NEPA regulations.