

## **Sue Krejci - Testimony for Ohio Senate Transportation Committee 11/15/2023**

Good morning Chair Kunze, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Transportation Committee. Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Sue Krejci, and my 74 year old mother has lived on Boston Road for more than 35 years. I also grew up there, and I am strongly supportive of SB 155.

Last March, language was added to the transportation bill on the day of the vote, with no warning to Brunswick or its representatives. This language applies to exactly one area in the entire state of Ohio and forces an I-71 interchange to be built between Route 82 in Strongsville and Route 303 in Brunswick. This same approach was undertaken in 2017, but the governor at that time did a line item veto, citing conflicts with ODOT rules and federal regulations. It was disappointing to see the same playbook employed again by the same representative.

Many of you may not be familiar with this area, but Strongsville is a city of 50,000 people - 40% larger than Brunswick's population of 35,000. Not only is Strongsville's median household income over \$20,000 higher than Brunswick's, but Strongsville also has retail that blows Brunswick out of the water, including a large shopping mall and a Costco - both on SR 82 near the highway ramps. Yet when Strongsville sought to build another interchange to help their traffic issues, they chose to put it on Boston Road, a residential two-lane road which is half in Strongsville and half in Brunswick... nearly 3 miles beyond their commercial corridor and resulting traffic backups.

The justification from the representative responsible was that 43% of the traffic using the SR 82 / Howe Road intersection is from Brunswick. However, Strongsville's feasibility [study](#) - done by a Strongsville firm - shows on page 59 that only about 8% of those exiting at Route 82 continue southbound on Howe Road into Brunswick. 8%. That's a long way from 43%, and certainly not enough to impact Strongsville's traffic issues. Please see the PowerPoint supplement I have provided to document the facts in my testimony.

The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA), Northeast Ohio's metropolitan planning organization, determines where interchanges are built. NOACA has done multiple studies over the years, and all have all shown that a potential interchange at Boston Road will NOT meaningfully improve traffic on Route 82 in Strongsville OR Route 303 in Brunswick.

Despite this and the fact that NOACA's Executive Director & CEO Grace Gallucci testified that "this approach infringes on the decision-making authority of local elected officials," the bill passed and was signed into law.

The representative from Strongsville responsible for the language explained his motivation for this unorthodox approach to a news outlet on March 30, stating that "The intersection of Route 82 and Howe Road is in most years the highest or no better than the second highest accident area in the region. There's times when the 82 exit ramp will back up all the way to the Turnpike ramp, which is almost a full mile."

Strongsville's own feasibility study shows that regardless of proposed interchange design, "the SR 82/Howe Road intersection typically resulted in poor/failing level of service throughout each scenario, including No Build conditions" (page 195). When doing NOTHING nets the same result as displacing 14 to possibly 90 families to build an interchange, that tells me this is not the right choice. If this is truly about improving safety at that intersection and you're taking that many homes, the results should be a home run - not "poor/failing".

Also, per Appendix K, a Boston Road interchange is actually projected to slow traffic on I-71 north of 82 - the exact area the representative from Strongsville described as already having backups up to a mile. This interchange would only make that worse, not better.

But ironically, because of the language that is now law, an interchange is **required to be built, even though it will not resolve the safety issues at Route 82/Howe Road - its whole ostensible purpose**. This is a huge waste of potentially \$50 - \$100 million of taxpayer funds (did I mention there's also a 50+ year old jet fuel pipeline that lies alongside Boston Road that will need to be moved at a minimum cost of \$5 million+ ?).

To meaningfully impact traffic on SR 82 with an interchange, they probably need to be looking to place it north of SR 82 before the backups begin - but this is not even an option now, as it falls **outside the narrow criteria defined by the language in this new law**.

I understand that this was done with the intention of solving a problem - and it's a solution that looks good on paper. But traffic engineering is complex, and things aren't always what they seem at first glance. Unequivocally, Strongsville's study shows the truth - a Boston Road interchange will not improve safety at the SR 82 and Howe Road intersection, and it will actually negatively impact traffic on I-71.

Or maybe this is not about safety at all, if we take Strongsville leadership at their word. Ten years ago, Strongsville at-large councilman Duke Southworth (and son-in-law of the representative responsible for this language), is quoted in the Post Newspaper as saying "the whole point of the Boston Road interchange is to connect it to the [Foltz] industrial parkway" in Strongsville. They told us their plans a decade ago, and it seems they are now moving forward to execute those plans under the guise of "safety".

While you may live far away from our city, please be aware that this law sets a dangerous precedent for the entire state. If this language is not removed, the precedent will be set that someone from another community in another county can bypass the normal channels and decide something should be built in YOUR community without your consent.

I urge you to support SB 155 and let these things be determined by the proper channels. Thank you for your time, and I am happy to answer any questions.

# Ohio Senate Transportation Committee SB 155 Proponent Hearing

Sue Krejci Testimony – Supporting Evidence

November 15, 2023

## Councilman raises possibility for I-71 Boston Road interchange

Duke Southworth said connecting to industrial parkway key

By TERRY BRLAS, Strongsville Post editor

Apr 20, 2013

[https://www.thepostnewspapers.com/brunswick/local\\_news/councilman-raises-possibility-for-i-71-boston-road-interchange/article\\_f322d4f4-353a-52ff-b97b-1d80d1932e22.html](https://www.thepostnewspapers.com/brunswick/local_news/councilman-raises-possibility-for-i-71-boston-road-interchange/article_f322d4f4-353a-52ff-b97b-1d80d1932e22.html)

[Strongsville Councilman-at-Large Duke] Southworth admits that the city of Brunswick could be the lynch pin to getting an I-71 interchange at Boston Road accomplished. He is open to talking with city of Brunswick officials to draft a joint resolution between the two municipalities.

“We might be in a better financial position than they are,” he said. “I think it’s something worth pursuing and I think it’s something we need to talk to Brunswick about and see what the barometer is reading down there.”

Strongsville would benefit more from a Boston Road interchange than Brunswick would due to better access to the Strongsville Business & Technology Park, according to Southworth.

**“We have a huge stake because the whole point of the Boston Road interchange is to connect it to the industrial parkway,”** the councilman said. **“Our stake in the industrial parkway is a lot bigger than Brunswick’s stake.”**

## **Long-debated highway interchange may become reality between Strongsville and Brunswick**

Project included in newly passed \$13.5 billion Transportation Budget

By: [Catherine Ross](#)

Posted at 10:33 PM, Mar 31, 2023 and last updated 11:16 PM, Mar 31, 2023

<https://www.news5cleveland.com/news/local-news/long-debated-highway-interchange-may-become-reality-between-strongsville-and-brunswick>

**“The intersection of Route 82 and Howe Road is in most years the highest or no better than the second highest accident area in the region,” Patton said on March 30.**

**“There's times when the 82 exit ramp will back up all the way to the Turnpike ramp, which is almost a full mile.”**

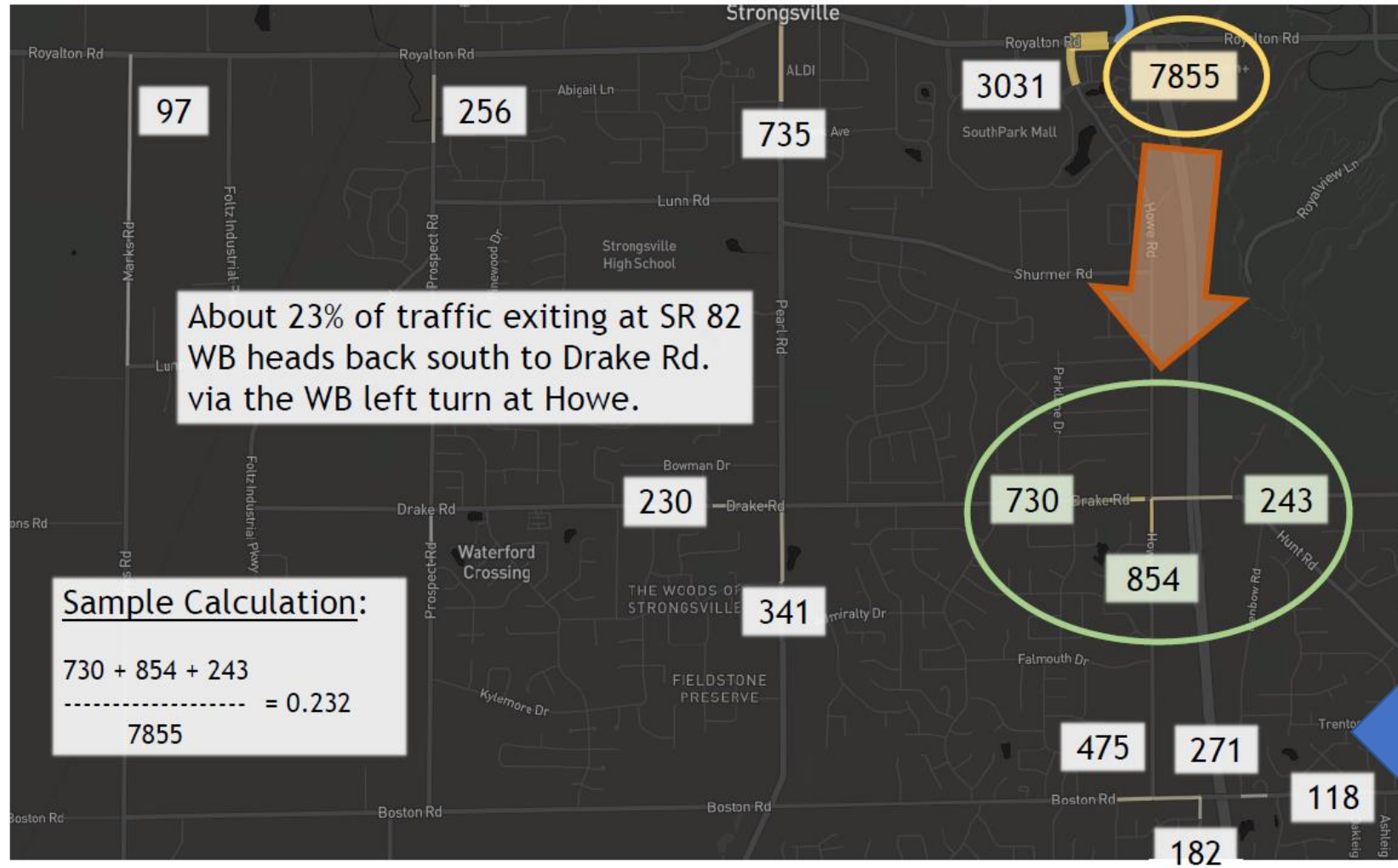
# STREETLIGHT ESTIMATES

Confirm Analysis Details		✕
Analysis Name:	116069 OD SR 82 SB-WB Exit	
Unit of Measurement:	Miles	
Country:	US	
Mode of Travel:	All Vehicles LBS+	
Analysis Type:	Origin-Destination	
Zone Kinds:	Custom Zone OSM	
Origin Zones:	SB Exit to SR 82 WB / 18714877 / 1	
Destination Zones:	Roylton Road / 371687006 / 1, Howe Road / 651621827 / 2, Drake Road / 651621824 / 1, Drake Road / 651621826 / 6, Boston Road / 281233735 / 16, North Carpenter Road / 19153547 / 18, Boston Road / 281233735 / 17, Boston Road / 38900244 / 2, Grafton Road / 732289700 / 14, North Carpenter Road / 19153547 / 13, Grafton Road / 732289700 / 15, Pearl Road / 651621823 / 4, Drake Road / 651621824 / 11	
Data Periods:	04/01/2021 – 05/31/2021, 09/01/2021 – 10/31/2021, 03/01/2022 – 04/30/2022	

## • Streetlight OD Analysis

- Looked at March-April 2022
- Only Tue/Wed/Thu, 3PM-7PM
- Considered Exit Ramps as “Origins”
- Evaluated percentage of trips in downstream links likely to be shorter using Boston Rd SB exit to be “Destinations”
- *Assumed* fractions for “peak period” would hold up for “peak hour” as well
- Most recent 2-month period available
- **THESE ARE NOT TRAFFIC VOLUMES!!**

# SR 82 WB Destinations in PM Period, 3P-7P



Assuming half of traffic turning from Howe Rd onto Boston Rd is from Brunswick  
(475+271+118 = 864/2 = 432)  
432+182 = 614

614/7855 = 7.8% is Brunswick traffic



#### No Build

The LOS for opening year 2027 and design year 2047 peak hours for the study intersection was calculated. These LOS values are used to identify capacity and or operational deficiencies in current conditions.

*SR 82* - With the exception of the SR 82-Howe Road intersection, all intersections along SR 82 result in acceptable delays and LOS for both opening year 2027 and design year 2047. Results ranged from LOS A to LOS C. The I-71 SB ramp intersection and West 130<sup>th</sup> Street intersection resulted in LOS D during the 2047 PM period.

The SR 82/Howe Road intersection typically resulted in LOS D for the AM periods and LOS E for PM periods for both opening year 2027 and design year 2047.

The SR 82/Howe Road intersection typically resulted in poor/failing level of service throughout each scenario, including No Build conditions. The results at this location should be appraised for degree of improvement.

*Boston Road* - All intersections along Boston Road result in acceptable delays and LOS for both opening year 2027 and design year 2047. Results ranged from LOS A to LOS D.

*SR 303* - All intersections along SR 303 result in acceptable delays and LOS for both opening year 2027 and design year 2047. Results ranged from LOS A to LOS C.

*Drake & Grafton* - The Drake Road-Howe Road intersection results in LOS C or D. The Drake Road-Hunt Road intersection is stop controlled with a LOS B for AM periods and LOS D and E for PM periods. The North Carpenter Road-Grafton Road intersection results in LOS B in all periods.

#### Build - No Interchange (referred to as “No Int. - Build” in Table 5 below)

A build scenario with no interchange has been provided for the Boston Road area intersections that were determined to have a failing level of service for the No Build condition.

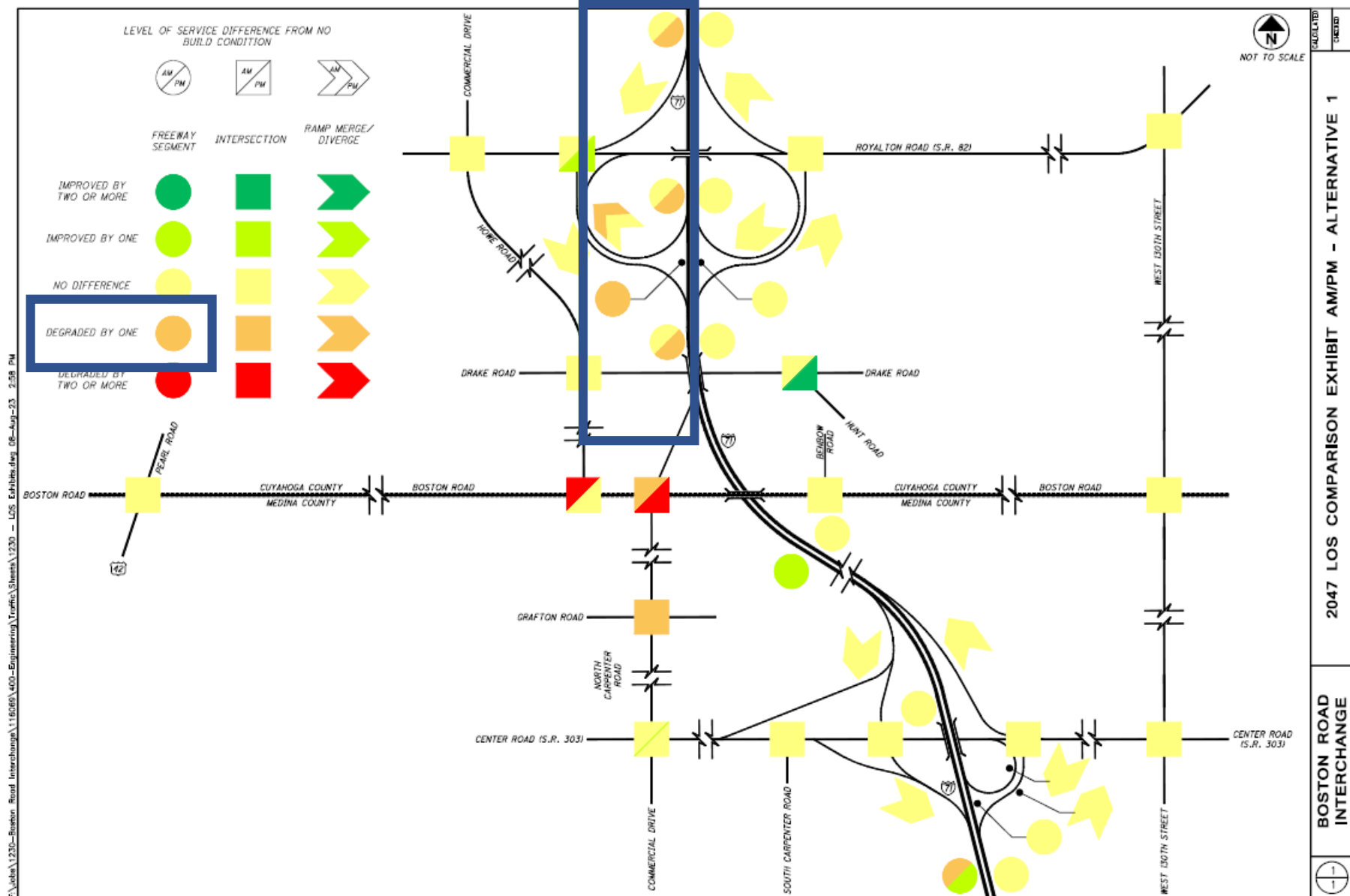
There were no intersections that failed for the 2027 No Build conditions. It was determined that the intersection of Drake Road-Hunt Road would not meet the capacity needs for the 2047 PM peak No Build conditions. This intersection was then analyzed with an improved roadway configuration to achieve acceptable results. A build alternative was analyzed with this configuration to estimate which improvements may be driven by the project. For the Drake Road and Hunt Road intersection, an eastbound right turn lane is necessary for the No Build condition and that satisfies the build conditions. Therefore, no improvements are driven by the project for this intersection. The intersection of Boston Road and US 42 has an acceptable level of service for the no build condition but has a large queue storage ratio. Therefore, a no interchange build condition was included in the analysis.

#### Alternative 1

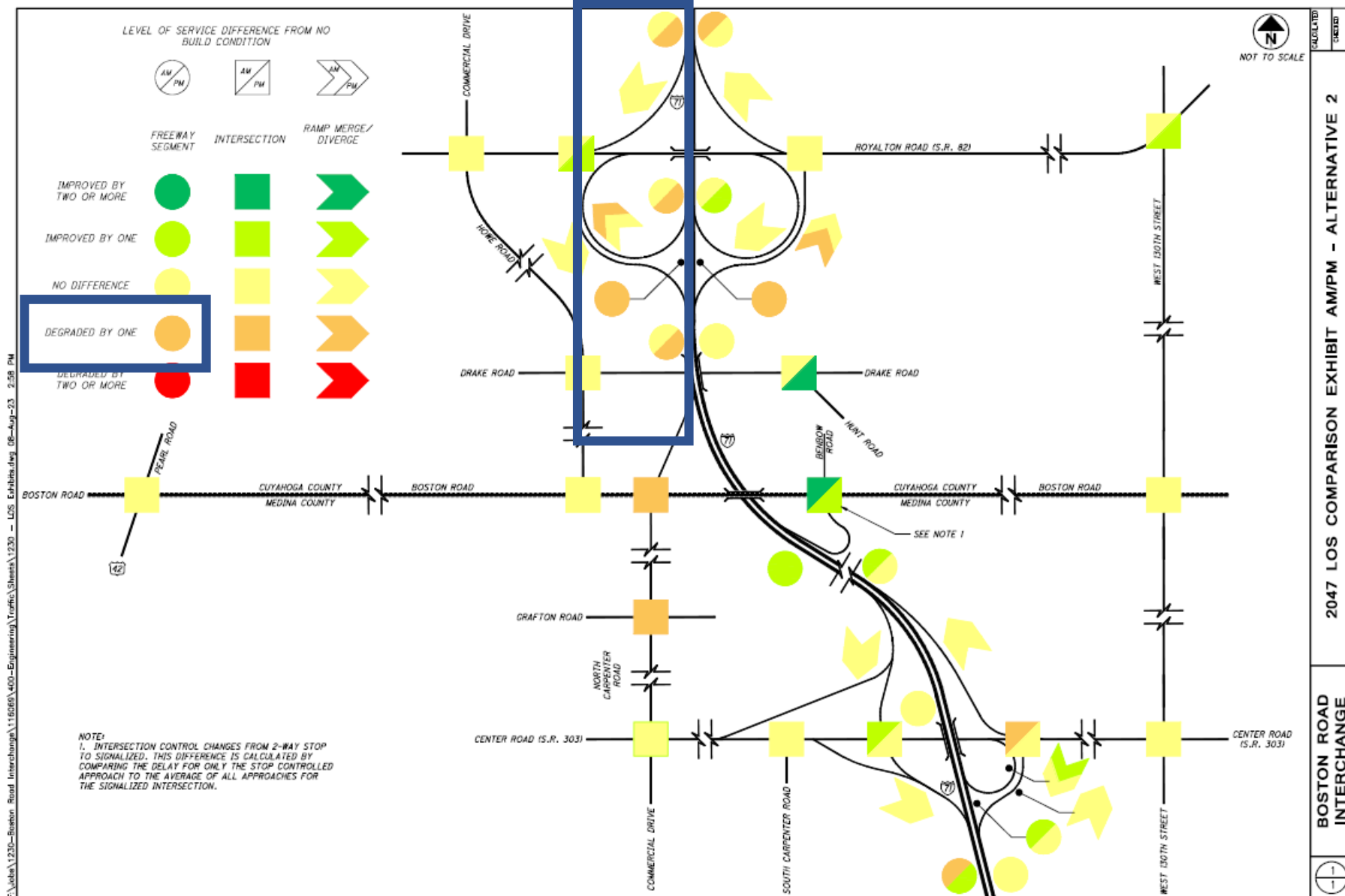
*SR 82* - Delay and LOS along SR 82 are mixed with some having an increase in delay and some having a decrease in delay. The LOS range from LOS A to LOS E. Generally, as the decrease in delay is moderate at each individual intersection, the LOS is unchanged over No Build scenario. However, the I-71 SB ramp intersection decreased from LOS C to LOS D for 2027 PM period and improved from LOS D to LOS C for the 2047 PM period.



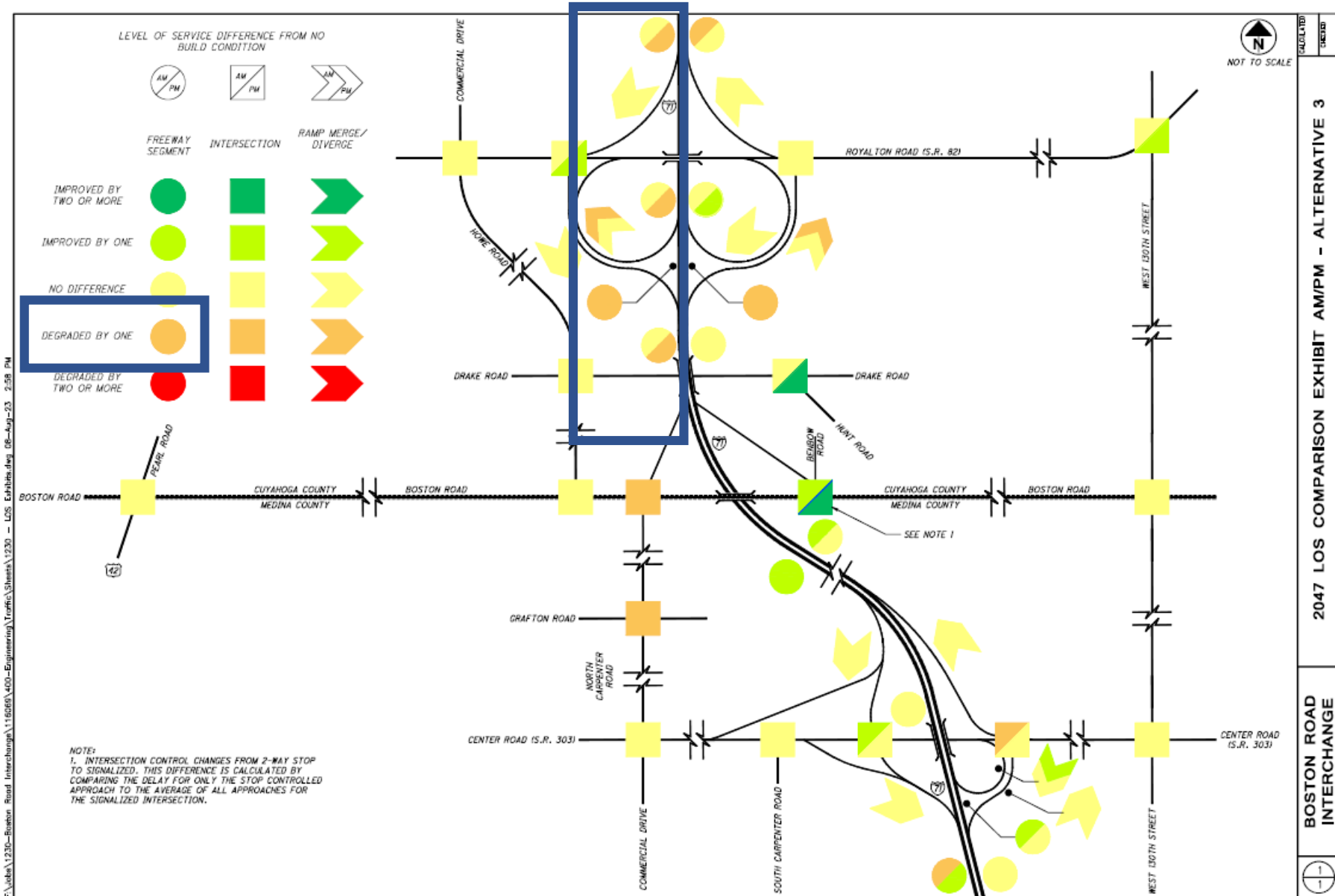
# Appendix K – Levels of Service Alternative 1



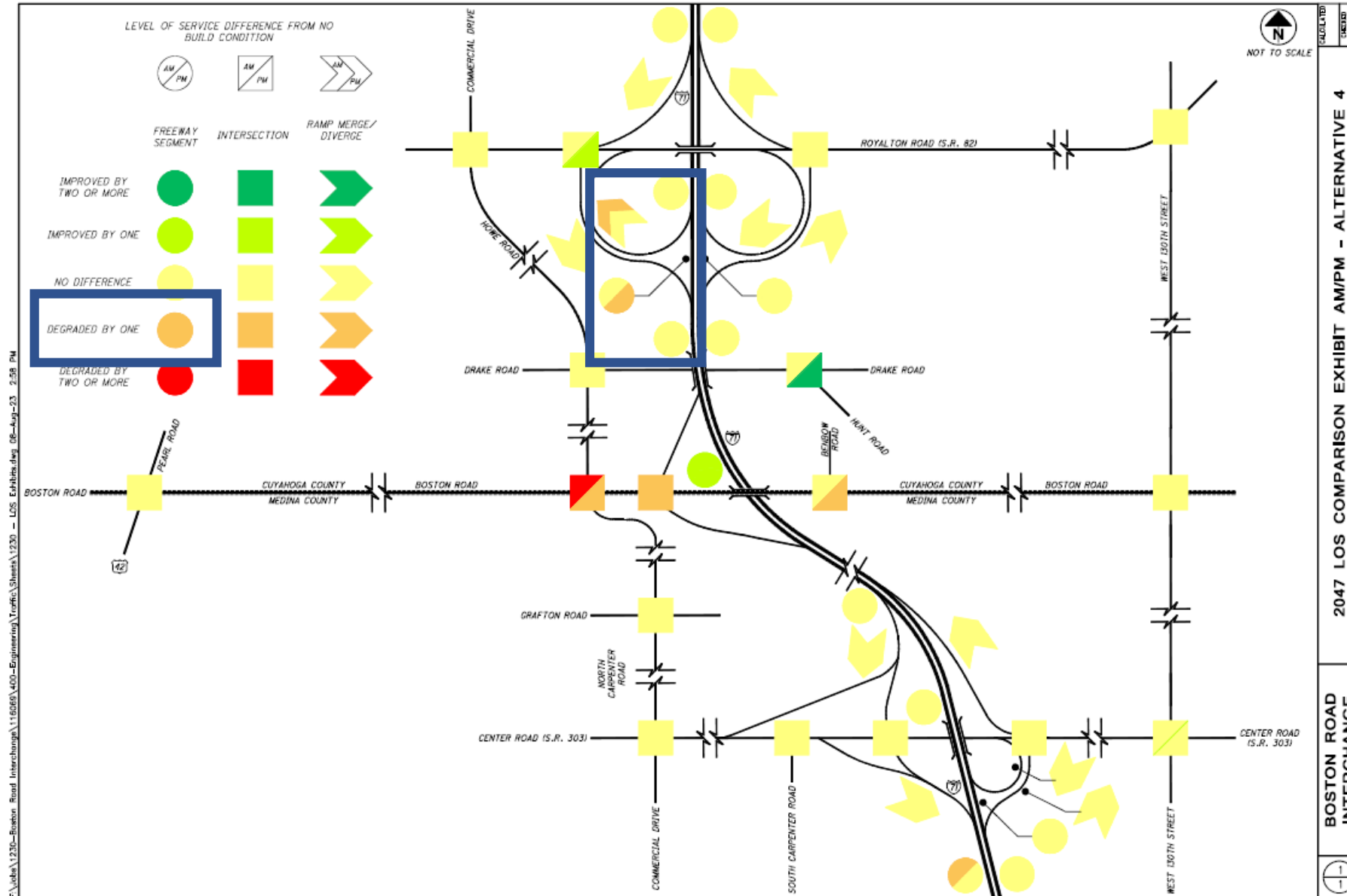
## Appendix K – Levels of Service Alternative 2



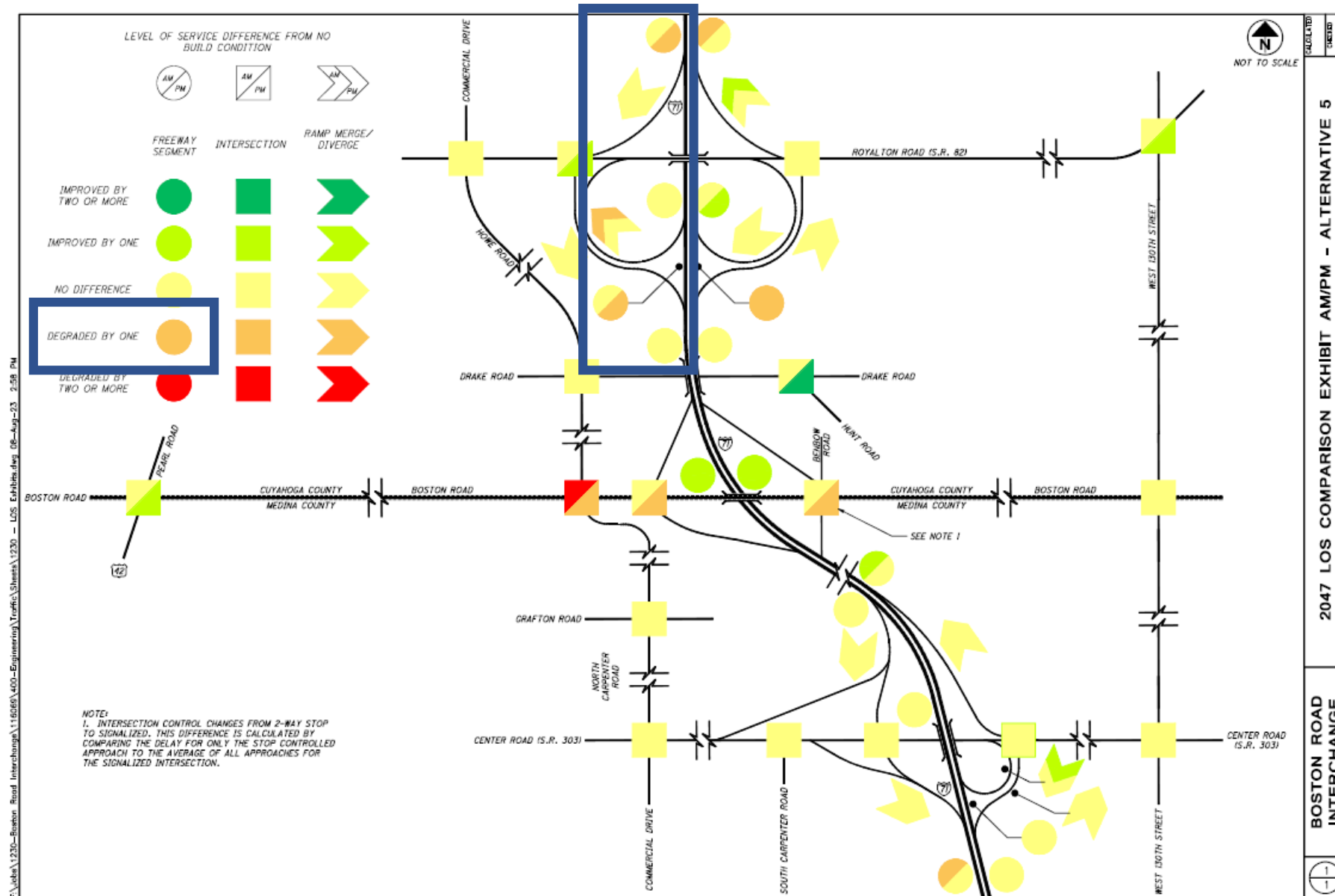
## Appendix K – Levels of Service Alternative 3



# Appendix K – Levels of Service Alternative 4



## Appendix K – Levels of Service Alternative 5



Chair Kunze, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Transportation Committee, thank you for accepting my written testimony in favor of SB 155. My name is Aaron Harrison, I am a resident of Montville Township, Ohio and one of the Medina County Commissioners. I am also a native of Seneca County, not too far from where Vice Chair Reineke calls home.

The proposed I-71 interchange at Boston Road is, plain and simple, a bad idea. I hear from residents daily about the negative impact this interchange will have on our community, their homes and livelihoods and Medina County as we know it.

The most heartbreaking stories are from people who face losing their homes. The stories come from folks who have been here their whole life and others who, like me, discovered Medina County later in life and loved it so much they couldn't leave. The love these people have for their chosen community makes it even harder to witness their emotions as they consider the unspeakable – losing their homes and being forced to move to a new area that is both unfamiliar and intimidating. Even those whose homes are not directly threatened by the interchange face an uncertain future as their once quiet neighborhood is involuntarily transformed into a thoroughfare with the resulting exponential increase of commercial traffic.

Many of these homeowners are retired, or soon-to-be retired and living on fixed incomes. They spent their working years saving wisely for the future and paying off their mortgage so they could enjoy their golden years with sufficient means to fix up their house and spend their spare time in the company of their loved ones. This proposed interchange rips that dream away from so many. Even when they are compensated for their homes, the current real estate market and inflationary interest rate environment will make it virtually impossible to purchase an equivalent replacement home without borrowing additional funds.

The personal impact of this interchange is my primary concern, but it is not the only concern. Boston Road is a hilly road with a jet fuel pipeline running directly beneath it. Moving a jet fuel line is a logistical nightmare, and every relocation scenario puts it closer to the front doors of the residents who remain. Levelling Boston and moving a 30-year-old jet fuel line are massive, expensive undertakings that would deplete resources from both the City of Brunswick and Medina County for a project that is being demanded by an adjacent community located in another county.

Together with my fellow Commissioners, Steve Hambley and Colleen Swedyk, we have taken a stand by offering our own resolution opposing this forced interchange. On December 1, I will be participating in a board meeting with NOACA, the Northeast Ohio MPO at which our board will be voting on a similar resolution. This proposed interchange violates the procedural requirements established by NOACA's existing interchange policy. In light of this, and in light of NOACA's previous testimony in support of HB 276 and opposition testimony to HB 23 which originally gave rise to this initiative, I expect NOACA to take a clear stand in support of repeal as well.

I commend Senator Romanchuk for his leadership in sponsoring this repeal legislation, along with Representatives Miller and Ray who have been involved in lending support to the corresponding bill in the House and the countless citizens of Brunswick and surrounding communities who have become tireless advocates of their own interest. I hope all of you will heed the concerns that are being raised in support of the repeal, consider this proposal with fresh eyes, recognize the injustice that is inherent

in this flawed legislation and realize that inaction on this repeal initiative means your community, or another one within your district, could become the next Brunswick.

I ask that you accept this testimony in support of this critical legislation that so many residents are counting on to save their community. Thank you for your consideration of my written testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Aaron M. Harrison  
Medina County Commissioner