



# TID works to improve traffic flow in county

Signals will be computer controlled

**Brett Roller**  
**Sun staff**

The Clermont County Transportation Improvement District is moving forward with plans to develop an Intelligent Transportation System to control traffic lights in major thoroughfares in the northwestern area of the county.

The computer based system would be able to coordinate traffic controls from Milford to Beechmont Avenue, something TID Secretary Treasurer Steve Wharton says will reduce congestion and increase safety in the area.

"We want to start to bring in technology to better manage traffic throughout the region," Wharton said. "We want to look at entire corridors instead of individual intersections."

The project is a joint effort between local, state, and federal governments. Wharton said each of the government entities involved have been very supportive and they work well together.

Wharton said currently each intersection's control switches operate independently and are individually programmed based on traffic counts.

"Each signal stands alone, like the cheese," Wharton said.

He said the traffic counts are gathered using tube counters placed directly on the roadway.

The first phase will integrate Eastgate South Drive and Clepper Drive from Glen Este-Withamsville Road to Eastgate Boulevard with Cincinnati-Batavia Pike and Eastgate Blvd. in between.

Wharton said the **TEC Company** will be performing signal timing analysis and the data collected will help the signals perform in a more coordinated manner.

"Right now the traffic signals are on two separate signal systems and will create backups on one side of (state Route) 32 while the other side is going right through," Wharton said. "The ITS will coordinate those signals and minimize traffic in critical areas."

Wharton said one of the major benefits of a centralized ITS system is it will be able to adapt and adjust signal timing remotely based on current traffic conditions through the use of camera monitoring systems.

"We can start to bring all the intersections to a point where they are working together which will allow traffic to get through choke points much more efficiently," Wharton said.

The system will be able to maximize green light times in a way that allows a greater number of vehicles to

move through a particular corridor in a shorter amount of time through computer analysis of current traffic patterns.

Wharton said the ITS system will also save money on infrastructure investments.

"ITS helps get more capacity out of current intersections than they were originally designed for by maximizing their efficiency," Wharton said.

For example, instead of having a set program at rush hour for a particular intersection that sees a lot of left hand turns that gives the center lanes in both directions a green light each change, the computer can control the turn lane so that it is only given a green light when occupied.

"This is technology that has existed for a little while but now its becoming commercially available and affordable," Wharton said. "ITS could do pretty good things for this county."

In addition to the reduction of congestion on Clermont's roadways, Wharton said the system will increase safety, reduce wear and tear on vehicles and fuel consumption by limiting stops.

"So it's a green project," Wharton said.

Wharton said TID recently completed an application for funding for phase 2 through the Ohio Kentucky Indiana Regional Council of Government.

Phase two is a \$2.7 million project that will integrate 54 signals into the ITS system. The signals targeted for the project are along the corridors of state Route 28, state Route 32 and a portion of state Route 125 as well as all of the north/south interconnecting roads.

"At that point we will start bringing in a G3 and ultimately a G4 communications network to link all of the signals to the central based computer," Wharton said.

The third phase of the project would be to integrate the state controlled signals on S.R. 32, S.R. 28, and S.R. 125.

"The state is very excited about the project and they're willing to work with us, but first they want to make sure we're capable," Wharton said.

The system will also be integrated with existing investments such as Miami Township's GPS systems on their emergency vehicles. The systems trip traffic signals as emergency vehicles approach intersections, making it safer to pass through busy intersections.

Wharton said the computer will not start controlling traffic signals for at least another couple years, but the program is constantly moving forward.

"It takes a lot of boots on the ground doing traffic studies and signal studies," Wharton said. "Building the initial software that lets you control all of the signals is also time consuming."

The project is moving ahead even as phase two awaits funding. Wharton said county residents can expect to see a lot more rubber tubes on the road.