

Press Release**July 17, 2015****North Street Gaysport - Lane Reduction**

Traffic on North Street on the Gaysport Bridge over the Muskingum River will be reduced to one lane due to findings from a recent annual inspection. The deck edge and outermost supporting floor stringers have been weakened by corrosion requiring the shifting of traffic to the middle of the structure and the installation of temporary traffic signals. No load reductions are required at this time. Lane restrictions will remain in place until further notice.

The bridge is inspected annually as required by law and on June 25, 2015 it was discovered that the deterioration of several sections had accelerated. The lane restriction is required due to the deterioration of the corrugated steel decking and stringers.

The 688-foot long, seven span structure, built in 1971 was constructed of unpainted self-weathering steel with a corrugated steel deck filled with asphalt. Self-weathering steel is designed to form a protective coating similar to the patina on a copper roof; however, road salt and moisture absorbed by the asphalt wearing surface accelerates the surface corrosion and the steel continues to rust and flake away. The deterioration of the structural steel results in section loss of the steel beams and will continue at an accelerated rate, resulting in a reduction in load capacity. Currently only the decking and stringers are limited in load capacity; however, three floor beams that support the stringers and transfer the load to the truss are deteriorating and may require repair or replacement in the next 5 to 10 years.

Deterioration of the structure has been accelerated by cyclical loading from additional traffic and heavy loads utilizing the bridge due to the load reductions on the Bridge Street Bridge (Philo Bridge) over the Muskingum River and the CR-6/SR-555 (Grantcliff) Bridge over Moxahala Creek immediately south of Zanesville. The closing of SR 60 north of Gaysport in the spring of 2014 increased the average daily traffic by over 300 percent, from approximately 1,200 to 3,800 cars per day. Construction of natural gas pipelines and a compressor station in the southern portion of the county have resulted in loads over 80,000 pounds crossing the bridge.

Several major repairs have been made to the bridge over the years. The steel beam approach span on the County Road 6 side was replaced in the fall of 2001 with galvanized beams and decking, Deck replacements (replacement of the stringers, decking and wearing surface) were made to: two deck sections in November of 2007, three deck sections in the spring of 2010, and two deck sections in spring on 2014.

Our office recently applied for Ohio Public Works Emergency funds; however, funding was denied. An application for federal funds available in 2021 to rehabilitate the bridge for an estimated cost of \$6,250,000 has been submitted; award of this funding is pending.