



Village of Mariemont

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August 7, 2012

Mr. Theodore B. Hubbard
Hamilton County Engineer
138 East Court Street, Rm. #700
Cincinnati, OH 45202-1232

Dear Ted:

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me earlier today regarding the new proposed route of the Eastern Corridor. As mentioned during our conversation, the Village of Mariemont has some very legitimate objections to the new route due to the impact it would have on our community.

To begin with, the new preferred route goes right through the middle of one of our parks, known as the Mariemont Lower Gardens and Walking Trails Park. This 75+ acre parcel was added to the Village in 1976. The land is clearly marked on the Hamilton County Recorder CAGIS map as a park. (See Attachment #1.) It is also included in the list of parks in the Mariemont Code of Ordinances. (See Attachment #2.) For the past 36 years, that parkland has been used as a community garden park area, allowing Mariemont residents to plant and grow vegetables. (See Attachment #3.) Recently, it also was developed to include hiking and biking trails to the east of the gardens. (See Attachment #4.) Those trails are now used by the Mariemont High School Cross-Country Track Team as a safe route for training. It is one of the favorite parks of our residents.

In the future, we hope to make additions to the park by developing a Frisbee golf course, a primitive camping area for our Boy Scouts, river access to allow for canoeing and fishing, and nature studies.

This park also lies within the southern border of the Village, as described in Attachment #5 from our application for National Historic Landmark status, and is shown on the map that was also part of that application. (See Attachment #6.) Our application was approved by the Department of the Interior's National Park Service in 2008. Putting a road right through the middle of our park would not only destroy this recreation area but would also alter the landscape of our National Historic Landmark community. This is unacceptable! It is in direct opposition to the National Parks Service guidelines for preserving historic landmark properties. (See Attachment #7.) That is why such areas are protected by Section 106 of National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and must be reviewed if a project is receiving federal funds. I am attaching a copy of information about Section 106 and ask that you pay special attention to the highlighted areas. (See Attachment #8.)

Adjacent to the Lower Gardens/South 80 Biking Trails and Hiking Park is the Madisonville Site, a prehistoric archaeological site in the Village of Mariemont. The earthwork was first documented and mapped by Dr. Charles Metz in the 1870s and a hundred years later (October 16, 1974) it was added to the list of the National Register of Historic Places. (See Attachment #9.) While it would not be directly impacted by the proposed new route of the Eastern Corridor, the feeling of this historic and protected archeological site would certainly be altered by the proximity of a major four-lane highway.

Another reason we need to preserve the Madisonville Site *and the land surrounding it* is that on Monday June 18, 2012, archaeological geologist and quaternary scientist, Dr. Kenneth Barnett Tankersley, and a group of archaeology graduate and undergraduate students from the University of Cincinnati conducted a surface survey of the Madisonville Site and Mariemont Earthwork. They also extracted a suite of solid sediment cores across and to the center of the earthwork. Surprisingly, the cores showed that the earthwork is composed of anthropogenic (i.e., human origin) layers of sand. The sand was likely mined by Fort Ancient peoples from a glacial deposit *at the base of the bluff*. A plethora of artifacts collected from the earthwork are consistent with the Fort Ancient peoples, ancestors of the present day Shawnee). Paving over the South 80 with a four-lane highway would forever eliminate any possibility for future discoveries of Native American artifacts from the area they occupied and worked at the bottom of Miami Bluff.

This letter has just touched on the surface of the importance of this park to the quality of life in the Village of Mariemont and its place in our history. The question I have to ask is why the state and/or the county would choose to destroy forever a park, hiking and biking trails, a National Historic Landmark community that includes a Native American site listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the banks of a nationally recognized scenic river, and a possible path for the continuation of the scenic bike trail when the Eastern Corridor could be routed just a few hundred feet farther to travel over land that is only being used as fields. I just cannot see the logic in altering the preferred route of the Eastern Corridor when the previous route served all the purposes of the original concept.

Finally, for years the Village of Mariemont has been an active partner with the state, the county, OKI, and ODOT in the development of the Eastern Corridor. It was shocking and disappointing to find out such significant changes had been made to the preferred route without any request for our input.

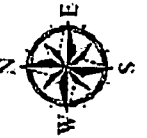
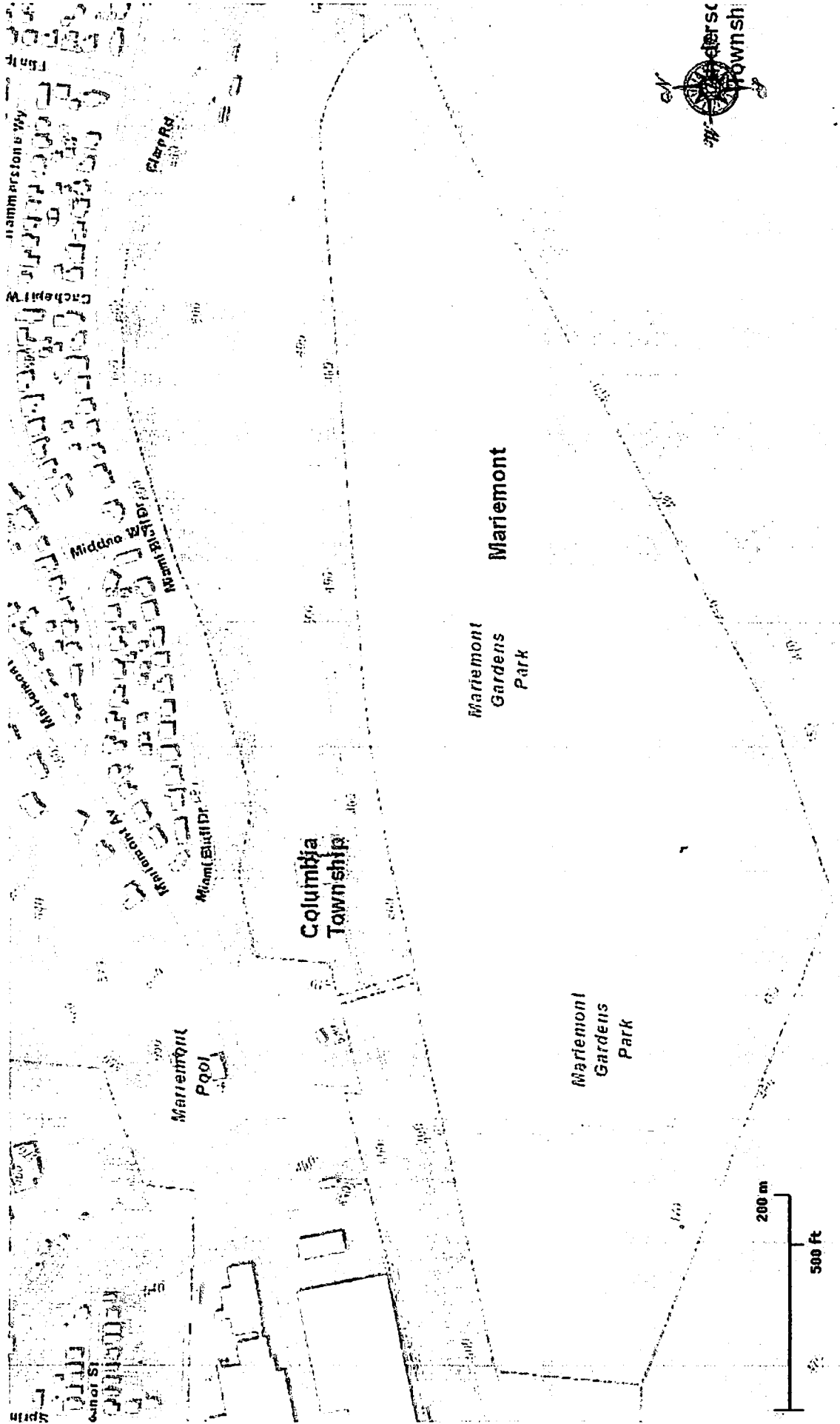
After you and the other officials have considered the objections raised in this letter and reviewed the attached documents, I would appreciate hearing from you to find out if you still plan to proceed with the revised route. If so, I will need to get in touch with the Mariemont Preservation Foundation, the Ohio Historic Preservation Office, and the National Parks Service who I know will want to join in the Village's opposition to the new route.

Sincerely and Respectfully,



Dan Policastro
Mayor

CC: Hamilton County Commissioners



CAGIS Online Map



Hamilton County Ohio

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