

West Life

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Snowy conditions hit Northeast Ohio last weekend, and this cardinal was looking for some place to find warmth. With another two months before spring arrives, there should be many more days like last weekend to deal with winter weather.



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BAY VILLAGE

Columbia Gas to replace nearly 2½ miles of gas lines

By **MADISON MacARTHUR**

Columbia Gas of Ohio will replace older main and service lines in two Bay Village neighborhoods this month with more effective plastic pipes.

Ben Cutler, Columbia spokesperson for the project, said this is the 13th year of a 25-year initiative to replace 20,000 miles of pipe across the service area.

“Our infrastructure that’s in the ground right now is old steel and cast iron and it’s served us well, but it’s been in the ground since the ’50s or ’60s,” Cutler said. “Just like any infrastructure, things deteriorate and corrode over time so they need to be replaced and upgraded.”

The company will replace an estimated 13,000 feet of pipe, or nearly 2½ miles.

Cutler said the new plastic system, which has enhanced safety features, can contour to the earth and expand and contract with different temperatures. It is expected to last about 100 years.

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ROCKY RIVER / LAKEWOOD

Input sought on Hilliard bridge replacement

By **MADISON MacARTHUR**

Community members have until Saturday to comment on a proposed \$34.5 million plan to replace the 97-year-old Hilliard Road Bridge over the Cleveland Metroparks Rocky River Reservation.

Plans call for razing the existing bridge and replacing it with a five-span, open-spandrel arch bridge. The bridge roadway will be reduced from four to two lanes to accommodate a bike/hike lane that will be added along the bridge’s south side.

Open-spandrel arches have columns resting on the arch ring that support floor beams, which in turn support the road.

The project will also reconfigure the intersection of Hilliard and South Marginal roads and Riverside Drive by adding a roundabout that will remove the left-turn lane onto Riverside.

The comment opportunity is part of the online public input period that Cuyahoga County and the Ohio Department of Transportation opened in mid-December. The purpose is to share information from previous public comment sessions.

Initially, the study favored a haunched girder bridge due to its cost-effectiveness. Deck haunches are commonly used on both prestressed concrete and structural steel girder bridges. The haunch is the area between the top of a girder and

the bottom of the concrete deck. However, public feedback was negative. Commenters wanted an arch-type and/or historic bridge design.

“Rocky River, Lakewood and the Cleveland Metroparks are all stakeholders,” said Rich Snyder, public safety service director for Rocky River. “The bridge is a historical piece within not only the connecting communities but also the region. You don’t see architecture like that anymore.”

Snyder, serving as a liaison from the city on the project, said the county worked with engineers to cost-effectively merge community wishes into the plans.

“They factored in a traffic analysis to determine the traffic usage for the bridge and for the intersection with Riverside on the east and Valley View on the west,” Snyder said. “They determined that with a roundabout on the east side we would be able to reduce the overall width of the bridge.”

Work is expected to start in 2024.

Engineers determined the bridge would need to be rebuilt rather than rehabilitated because of its decay. For several years netting along the underbelly of the 1925 bridge has protected pedestrians, bicyclists and cars in the Rocky River Reservation from falling concrete and debris.

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