

US-23 to I-71 Connector Feasibility Study

INFORMATION



Department of
Transportation



We know you have questions and concerns about this study, we want to address them!

The Legislature instructed ODOT to **study** this new freeway connection.

They have not instructed ODOT to *build* it.

- ➔ Yes, ODOT was directed to examine the feasibility of establishing a new freeway connection between US-23 and I-71 north of Columbus. While the Legislature directed what to study, how we study it will follow ODOT's standard, federally guided process for projects of this magnitude. Our role is to identify the least impactful, most beneficial, technically sound option.
- ➔ This study stems from longstanding regional conversations about access, mobility, and economic growth. ODOT's goal is to determine the alignment that best balances impacts and costs with the greatest potential benefit to travel efficiency and regional connectivity.
- ➔ Once this study is complete, there are no funds currently identified for any future advancement.



After the Feasibility Study is delivered in October 2026, it will be up to the Legislature and state leadership to decide whether the concept advances beyond the study phase.

The previous 23 Connect Study did not reject the freeway connection idea forever.

- ➔ The 23 Connect Study was focused on addressing congestion and safety issues on existing US-23, not long-term regional connectivity. It evaluated many ideas from a planning level and prioritized improvements to the existing US-23 corridor because that was the immediate need.
- ➔ This new study has a different purpose, different data, and a different directive. We are evaluating the US-23 to I-71 freeway connection on its own merits.
- ➔ The directive to initiate this study does not change ODOT's commitment to implementing the improvements along existing US-23 that were identified in the 23 Connect Study.

The study area for the US-23 to I-71 Connector is huge.

It is 67 square miles, which is 48,000 acres. If a freeway connection was to be built, its actual footprint would be much smaller, closer to 1 square mile or 640 acres.

- ➔ We started big on purpose. The intent is to understand the area, impacts, and opportunities. The actual footprint of any considered alignment is a fraction of the study area, around one square mile, or less than 2% of the identified study area.

The 2,000-foot-wide corridors shown in the Planning Study are not *actual footprints* of a proposed roadway.

They were broad study areas used to understand regional travel patterns and identify where a freeway connection between US-23 and I-71 would be most utilized. The actual footprint now being evaluated is approximately 300 feet wide for each alignment.

- ➔ The 2,000-foot screening corridors were intentionally wide so the team could look broadly at environmental features, community assets, potential impacts, and travel behavior to identify the areas along US-23 and I-71 where a freeway connection would have the highest utilization.
- ➔ Now that the planning study has moved into a more detailed engineering study phase, we are evaluating much narrower 300-foot corridors. This tighter footprint allows us to assess design constraints, refine new alignments within the Study Area, and identify opportunities to avoid or minimize impacts.

We recognize that any potential impact to private property is *deeply personal*.

Our intent is not to discount any individual concern, but to provide the most accurate engineering possible so the community and Legislature understand what the potential impacts truly are. Based on the preliminary engineering completed to date, all alignment alternatives are showing potential residential impacts closer to a dozen homes, not the “hundreds of homes” currently being circulated publicly.

- ➔ We understand that even “a dozen or so” homes is meaningful, and we treat it that way. That’s why every step of the evaluation process is focused on refining the alignments, avoiding homes wherever possible, and ensuring that any recommendation ultimately reflects the minimum number of impacts that can be achieved.

- ➔ Farmland is irreplaceable, and preserving the rural character of the area is a key priority. Each alignment under consideration is being evaluated to minimize impacts on farmland and day-to-day agricultural operations. This includes maintaining access to fields, avoiding or reducing disruption to field tiles, minimizing bisected parcels, and preventing “orphaned” pieces of land.

Public input is already shaping the study.

Over 150 comments have been received, and concerns are being analyzed.



- ➔ We’re listening. Public feedback is a huge part of the evaluation process and will continue to guide our work.
- ➔ We value your input.
- ➔ Each comment we receive will receive a response. Comments and responses will be shared on the project website periodically or monthly

A US-23 to I-71 freeway connection cannot be evaluated in isolation.

Any new freeway link must be studied within the context of the larger regional network, including traffic operations on I-71 south and the I-71/I-270 interchange.

- ➔ A freeway connection would influence traffic volumes, freight movement, and capacity on I-71. We are evaluating both the connection itself and its effects on other roadway segments. A viable solution must function for the entire system, not just one segment.

No decisions have been made.

Construction, if it ever happens, is many years away.

- ➔ This is step one of many. We’re gathering information to complete this study, we are not building anything.
- ➔ This is a federally regulated, multi-year process with multiple decision-making points where the study and/or project can change or stop.



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