

# ODOT seeking input on US 23 problem areas

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U.S. Route 23 as seen near Olentangy High School in Orange Township on a drab Thursday morning.

LEWIS CENTER — Feedback is needed once again on the U.S. Route 23 Connect study.

The Ohio Department of Transportation began the study last spring to determine a faster connection between Toledo and Columbus, centering on U.S. 23 between Waldo and Interstate 270, including Delaware County. Six different concepts were evaluated, each with their own sets of pros and cons. However, all were found to be ultimately lacking.

“This study concludes that all of the proposed concepts for a fully free-flowing connection between Waldo and I-270 would substantially impact natural and cultural resources and would cost much more than they provide in benefit,” said the executive summary. “As a result, none of the proposed concepts, as presented, are feasible to advance for further study.”

Just because these options were dismissed doesn't mean nothing will be done to the route, though. Congested areas were identified above U.S. Route 42, below U.S. Route 36 and state Route 37, and above I-270

“However, the study is not complete and has shifted its focus to further identify opportunities toward making smaller, but impactful improvements along the existing U.S. 23 corridor,” said an email sent by the study project team on Thursday. “The second phase of the study will focus on identifying specific intersections and segments along U.S. 23 that are particularly problematic as well as potential solutions.”

The team said the data already gathered, as well as the new information, will help ODOT to prioritize any improvements along this busy stretch of the route. An action plan is being put together for new projects, with more chances to offer feedback. Recommendations are expected to be offered next fall.

“This is your opportunity to share your thoughts on where you see congestion or safety concerns, and/or where you'd like to see improvements on U.S. 23! Please share this opportunity with your friends and neighbors – ODOT would like to hear from as many people as possible,” the email said.

A fact sheet issued by ODOT gives the why of the study.

“Route 23 already has 30% more traffic than the roadway was designed to accommodate, leading to increased congestion, unpredictable travel times, bottlenecks, and higher crash rates,” ODOT said. “This study will also support Columbus as a national logistics hub by strengthening connection and access to northwest Ohio, Michigan, and Canada.”

The input will be collected through Jan. 15, 2023, on a Public Comment Map at [www.publicinput.com/23connect](http://www.publicinput.com/23connect).