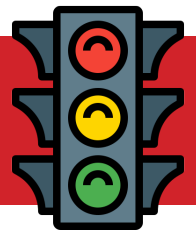




38 traffic lights between Northwest Ohio and Columbus



We all deserve a highway system that doesn't slow down our travel or our economy.

- ⦿ A high concentration of traffic lights and development along U.S. 23 north of Columbus creates severe congestion that drivers must navigate before reaching Interstate 270.
 - ⦿ Route 23 already has 30 percent more traffic than it was designed for. This has caused increased congestion, unpredictable travel times, and higher crash rates.
- ⦿ Bottlenecks are frustrating for travelers and impede commerce and freight, making it harder to do business and attract new companies.
- ⦿ As the area continues to develop, this problem will only get worse.
 - ⦿ Central Ohio is the fastest-growing area in the Midwest, quickly becoming a freight and logistics hub.
 - ⦿ The region expects to add more than 1 million households and 1 million jobs over the next 20 years, according to the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission.
 - ⦿ The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) expects truck traffic to approximately double by 2050.

No other metropolitan area in Ohio faces the same challenges in accessing the state capital.

- ⦿ Northwest Ohio drivers pass through 38 stop lights between Waldo and I-270. Drivers from Cleveland, Youngstown, Akron, Canton, Dayton, and Cincinnati encounter zero stop lights to Columbus.
- ⦿ A free-flow connection would provide substantial regional mobility benefits and support Columbus as a national logistics hub.
- ⦿ Continuing to wait will only make a solution more necessary and more expensive in the future.

A permanent solution is critical to our region's continued economic success.

- ⦿ U.S. 23 corridor improvements are not only needed to better connect Toledo and Columbus, but to access additional domestic and international markets.
- ⦿ Ohio's connection to the Southeast United States is growing due to expansion of the Interstate 73/74/75 corridor, and an expanded bridge to Canada opening in 2024 will allow for increased international trade.
- ⦿ U.S. 23 cannot continue to be the biggest remaining obstacle to a streamlined connection from Canada, through Toledo, to much of the eastern U.S.

Improving the Toledo-Columbus connection has been a long-standing priority for both cities.

- ⦿ TMACOG has provided \$250,000 toward studying ways to solve the problem over the past year.
- ⦿ The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) recently decided to end the study, determining that expected costs were too high for major improvements.
- ⦿ Yet even recently, the state has sponsored projects of similar cost and scope to solve congestion issues much less severe than the one that exists north of Columbus.



- ⦿ It is severely disappointing to hear that ODOT has suggested only non-specific half-measures that won't make a long-term difference.
- ⦿ The federal government is doing its part putting America on track to address our nation's infrastructure needs, with a myriad of potential funding opportunities. Fixing Route 23 should be among the priority projects for Ohio.

**EXPECT CONGESTION
NEXT 30 MILES**

TMACOG needs your help to ensure that our leaders do not allow our already poor connection to Columbus to continue to deteriorate.

- ⦿ A growing list of partners is adding powerful voices to this conversation, and we encourage your active participation.
- ⦿ TMACOG's members and partners, including the Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce, have championed this project as an important priority.
- ⦿ This is not the time for ODOT and our Governor to shut the door and walk away. We need state leadership and action. State Route 23 is a clogged arterial connection to the heart of our state, and a determination that nothing significant can be done is unacceptable.

**Now is the time to be heard.
Please contact your legislators and the Governor!**



**Toledo Metropolitan Area
Council of Governments**
www.tmacog.org



**Transportation Advocacy
Group of Northwest Ohio**



TRANSPORTATION ADVOCACY GROUP OF NORTHWEST OHIO

THOMAS L. KOVACIK MA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PO Box 7
Maumee, Ohio 43537
419.867.3738
Fax 419.867.3730
TLKconsulting@aol.com

Route 23 Disconnect

The anticipation regarding the improved direct route from Toledo to Columbus has been an issue for a long, long time. The direct routes to Columbus from Cleveland and Cincinnati especially encouraged Toledoans to expect the same. The Transportation Advocacy Group of NW Ohio (TAGNO) has been involved in making the Toledo to Columbus connection more direct for almost 2 decades.

Fifteen years ago, in 2007, TAGNO was contacted by the 73-74 organization, requesting input and involvement from Ohio. The 73-74 group was attempting to create a six state coalition in order to improve the corridor from Myrtle Beach S. C. to Mackinac Mi. TAGNO was invited to join the committee in Washington D. C. At this meeting, I made the suggestion to add 75 to the 73-74 coalition name. This addition was accepted and since then, the organization has been known as 73-74-75.

About 1/2 of the corridor is on 75, from Findlay through Toledo to Mackinac. In order for Ohio to connect to the 73-74 route, two major bypasses are necessary. The Portsmouth bypass brought 73-74 into Ohio and was recently recognized by the Ohio legislature. The second major connection was through Columbus to Toledo. Critical to the second connection was a Delaware bypass.

Therefore a special group known as 23 connect was established in order to achieve a direct route through Delaware. The existing 23 route has over three dozen stop lights, obviously creating a significant bottleneck. This second bypass would not only be the 73-74-75 anticipated connector, but also would be the long awaited Toledo - Columbus connector also.

This study was expected to review data through this summer but was unexpectedly and abruptly canceled months early? TMACOG contributed a quarter of \$1 million to the first stage of this study which was supposed

to continue into phase 2. A half dozen possible bypass routes were originally proposed. It is reasonable to assume that one or two would prove to be too difficult or expensive. It is also just as reasonable to believe that two or three would present challenges but surely be possible. The discussion and further review process was supposed to continue this summer. To be suddenly informed that all six were deemed not feasible is incomprehensible at best and seemingly bad politics at worst.

The totally unexpected announcement came as a complete shock to TAGNO and TMACOG. Since then, TAGNO, TMACOG and the Toledo Chamber of Commerce have been working diligently in order to put the study back on track. ODOT Director Jack Marchbanks has been a supporter and ally in developing the infrastructure in NW Ohio. We hope he gets the political support to help continue the study.

The Toledo Blade “ Build the road“ editorial on 5/15/22 stated it correctly with the beginning sentence, “It’s time to stop dawdling and build a U.S. 23 freeway from Toledo to Columbus”.

Tom Kovacic
Executive Director, TAGNO