



**Department of
Transportation**
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Mike DeWine, Governor
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November 21, 2024

Micah Conley, President
Olentangy Highbluffs Village Community Association
president@myohca.org

Mr. Conley,

Due to the substantial number of comments received from the residents of the Olentangy Highbluffs Village Community, ODOT would like to specifically thank your community for your continued participation and interest in the Route 23 Connect Study. Our team has reviewed these comments and have prepared this letter to respond to location-specific comments raised by your community residents.

Please note that a Response to Comments document was distributed to all individuals on the project mailing list on October 29, 2024. This document contains answers to frequently asked questions raised during the Summer 2024 public engagement, thus some additional topics are discussed there. The Response to Comments document can be found on the project website (<https://publicinput.com/23connect>).

Safety

As you are aware, the existing signal at US 23 and Windsong Way/Highbluffs Boulevard presents numerous safety concerns, particularly for rear-end and angle crashes. ODOT has developed concepts that are expected to alleviate existing safety issues. The current high-performing concept (Concept 1N-C) shown is anticipated to see over 70 fewer injury/fatal crashes at the intersection over a 20-year period, compared to the existing signal. Other concepts are expected to produce similar benefits at this intersection.

We understand your community's concerns with the potential future removal of the Windsong Way/Highbluffs Boulevard signal. Any of the proposed concepts, if advanced, would be designed to allow traffic to travel safely between Highbluffs Boulevard and US 23.

Emergency Response Times

Emergency response times are always an important consideration in any potential ODOT improvement. It is too early to determine specifically how emergency response times would be affected by any proposed concept. If a concept is advanced into project development,

ODOT will continue to coordinate with local police, fire, and EMS agencies to address concerns. During future project design, ODOT and the City of Columbus would evaluate potential measures, including designing medians to allow for emergency vehicles to pass through to help facilitate emergency response times.

Travel Times

As noted by many residents, the build concepts would introduce new travel patterns for entering and exiting the Olentangy Highbluffs Village subdivision. The table below provides some estimates on how the travel times would be affected by each concept, compared to the current operation.

The results indicate that some movements are expected to have increased travel times (+) with the proposed concepts. However, some movements are expected to have lower travel times (-) because of the signals eliminated or improved at adjacent locations. The travel time impacts for a particular resident will depend on an individual’s direction of travel. Please note that travel time improvements for shorter trips may not show a substantial change compared to those that are traveling longer distances along the corridor.

PM Peak Hour Travel Times Compared to No-Build (Year 2050)

	Flint Road		Highbanks MetroPark	
	To Flint Road: Highbluffs Blvd to US 23 south	From Flint Road: US 23 north to Highbluffs Blvd	To Highbanks: Highbluffs Blvd to US 23 north	From Highbanks: US 23 southbound to Highbluffs Blvd
Concept 1N-D	No Change	+ 1 min.	- 0.5 min.	- 0.5 min.
Concept 1N-C	- 0.5 min.	+ 1.5 min.	- 1 min.	- 0.5 min.
Concept 1N-B	- 0.5 min.	+ 1.5 min.	- 1 min.	- 0.5 min.
Concept 1N-A	- 0.5 min.	+ 2.5 min.	- 3 min.	+ 1.5 min

Although some concepts do show a minimal increase in travel time, they will however provide for safer access to/from your community by reducing the number of vehicle conflict points utilizing overpasses/ramps and reducing congestion along US 23. While not considered as part of this study, there may also be the potential for future connections to other public streets, which may be desirable to improve connectivity and/or emergency response times. Such potential future connections can be explored in conjunction with the local jurisdictions.

Next Steps

The feedback provided during the Summer 2024 meetings is being taken into consideration by our project team as we finalize the Feasibility Study and Action Plan. In early 2025, the final Feasibility Study and the Action Plan will be available to the public to review.

The Feasibility Study will summarize the high-performing concepts to be advanced. The Action Plan will recommend an implementation strategy for these identified future projects. Future projects will further develop and study the high-performing concepts per the ODOT project development process, evaluating them against other concepts and the No-Build condition. Additional public meetings and comment opportunities will be part of any future studies in this process. You will receive notification to join the mailing list(s) of those projects as well.

We again thank your community for participating in our recent public engagement and for providing valuable feedback. Please feel free to contact me with further questions. If desired, we would be happy to meet with you to discuss in further detail.

Respectfully,

Jessica Ormeroid

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c: Project File