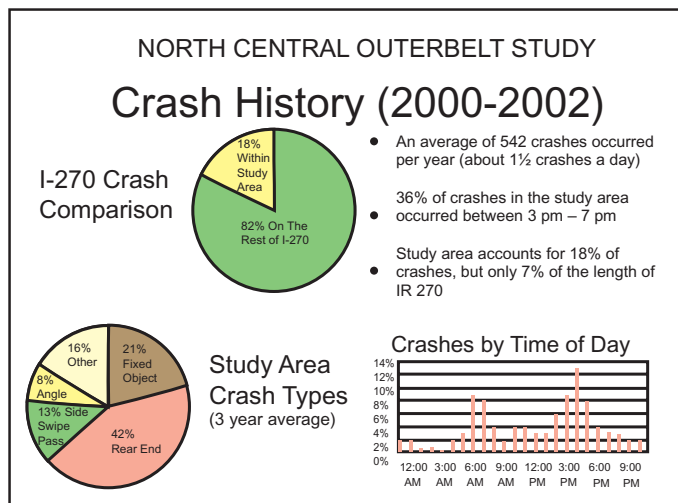


# ODOT MAKES FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FIXING I-270 INTERCHANGES

*Plan Will Now Move to Detailed Design*

The Ohio Department of Transportation is recommending a \$190 million proposal that will rebuild interchanges on I-270 in Columbus at State Route 315, U.S. Route 23 and Interstate 71. The locations are considered the fourth most congested, high-crash freeway section in the state serving about 180,000 vehicles per day.

During 2004 and 2005, ODOT will conduct more detailed design on these recommendations to refine the concepts. Construction could begin on the I-71 interchange as early as 2006.



## Background

“This interchange reconstruction plan will finish what we started during the late ‘90s when we widened I-270 to accommodate explosive north side growth,” said Jack Marchbanks, ODOT district deputy director for central Ohio. “We can significantly reduce accidents and congestion in the area by rebuilding these outdated interchanges and replacing many of the ‘loop’ ramps that force people to weave and merge to get where they want to go.”

The I-270 interchanges were built in the ‘60s and serve about 10 to 20 percent more traffic than they were designed to handle. The outdated design and the close proximity of interchanges, particularly at

S.R. 315 and U.S. 23, cause excessive driver weaving and merging that create congestion during peak hours and contribute to 542 accidents each year.

During 2003, ODOT conducted an analysis of eight concepts to see if they reduce congestion and accidents within the corridor while minimizing the impact of any new highway alignment on the local community. The concepts were identified and evaluated based on input from the public and an advisory committee made up of community and business representatives. The concepts also built on an interchange study conducted by the Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission in the late ‘90s.

## Strategy for Rebuilding Interchanges

Based on public input, ODOT has created a reconstruction plan, which includes rebuilding the following interchanges:

### State Route 315 Interchange

ODOT will replace “loop” ramps at S.R. 315 south to I-270 east and S.R. 315 north to I-270 west with flyover ramps that reduce almost 80 percent of weaving and merging at the interchange. Loop ramps located in adjacent quadrants at an interchange cause intense weaving because motorists exiting and entering a highway must share a lane. Loop ramps also have tighter curves and slower design speeds. Flyover ramps reduce weaving and accommodate higher speeds by separating different traffic movements and flattening curves.



### **U.S. Route 23 Interchange**

Reduce nearly 90 percent of the weaving and merging by replacing the exit ramps from I-270 west to U.S. 23 south and I-270 east to U.S. 23 north. Instead, the ramp design would eliminate the exit “loops” and bring traffic to a signalized intersection on U.S. 23. The ramp design would be similar to the Sawmill Road interchange, but with two signalized intersections instead of one.



### **U.S. Route 23 North**

Separate through and local traffic by creating northbound express lanes down the center of U.S. 23. The concept would construct two through lanes northbound in a trench down the center of U.S. 23, which would allow traffic to bypass signalized intersections. Two northbound lanes for local traffic would be maintained on the outside, with caps at the intersections for turn lanes.

### **York Temple Drive**

York Temple Drive off U.S. 23 will be moved to a safer location, as part of the proposed interchange improvements at I-270 and U.S. 23. The unsignalized

intersection will be moved to a signalized intersection farther from the interchange at U.S. 23 and West Campus View Boulevard.

### **Interstate 71 Interchange**

Replace the “loop” ramp from I-270 east to I-71 north with a flyover ramp. Replacing the ramp will eliminate 100 percent of the weaving and merging and nearly all of the congestion at the interchange.

### **Next Steps**

Over the next few years, ODOT will continue to examine these recommendations in greater detail, including design, right of way, environmental, and aesthetic treatments such as decorative walkways, lighting etc. Due to the complexity of the interchange design at SR 315 and U.S. 23, ODOT will develop the I-71 interchange reconstruction separately. The department intends to begin construction at I-71 in 2006, while construction at SR 315 and U.S. 23 will likely begin in phases between 2008 and 2012.

