



Letter Impact Analysis

In Response to the ODOT U.S. 23 / I-71 Connector Study
February 2026



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Supporting sensible solutions for U.S. 23 in Central Ohio.

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Executive Summary

Review of structured responses and narrative submissions indicates that the highest-ranked concerns focus on permanent farmland loss, preservation of rural character, and prioritizing improvements to the existing U.S. 23 corridor. Property value impacts and disruption to generational family farms also consistently rank among the most significant issues. In contrast, projected travel-time savings are viewed as limited relative to the scale of impact. Overall, the data reflects a clear preference for targeted corridor improvements over construction of a new connector.

Methodology

This analysis draws from two independent forms of input:

1. Open-Ended Personal Impact Statements

Individually written submissions were reviewed using thematic coding. Two analytical lenses were applied:

- **Frequency analysis** to identify the most commonly recurring concerns.
- **Weighted analysis** to elevate statements describing irreversible impacts such as farmland fragmentation, displacement risk, and retirement security implications.

2. Structured Concern Selections

Respondents selected standardized impact categories, allowing for comparative prioritization across submissions.

Methodology Note

Narrative coding and structured category analysis were conducted independently prior to convergence review.

Findings

Across two independent analytical methods, land and property impacts consistently outweigh projected travel-time, congestion, and reliability considerations of a new alignment.

The results are consistent and mutually reinforcing. Separate analytical approaches applied to distinct datasets converge on the same dominant themes, strengthening the credibility of the conclusions.

Core Finding

The data consistently indicates that the issue is not opposition to transportation investment. It reflects deep concern over the scale, geographic dispersion, and permanence of expanding the transportation footprint into multiple communities and currently intact agricultural and rural residential land. This represents a structural land-use decision with long-term community, economic, and agricultural consequences.

Three Dominant Themes

1. Existing Corridor-Based Improvement Is the Preferred Strategy

Across both the structured selections and the coded narrative statements, improving the existing U.S. 23 corridor consistently emerges as the most supported approach.

Open-ended submissions repeatedly call for addressing congestion and safety within the current U.S. 23 alignment.

Structured responses independently reinforce preference for corridor-based mitigation over greenfield expansion.

Impact Assessment

Improvements within an existing corridor concentrate infrastructure along an established transportation spine.

By contrast, a new alignment expands the transportation footprint outward, distributing permanent impacts across cohesive farmland, communities, and local road networks.

2. Agricultural Land & Farm Continuity Are Viewed as Irreversible Impacts

Both frequency and weighted narrative analysis elevate farmland preservation and farm continuity among the strongest concerns.

Open-ended submissions frequently reference:

- Permanent conversion of prime soil
- Fragmentation of contiguous agricultural operations
- Generational continuity of working farms

Structured selections independently prioritize agricultural land conversion and operational disruption.

Impact Assessment

Traffic conditions can be mitigated through phased, adaptable infrastructure improvements to existing corridor.

By contrast, agricultural land conversion is irreversible. Once fragmented and paved, the continuity and long-term viability of that land cannot be meaningfully restored. Agricultural fragmentation is perceived as a structural, irreversible consequence.

3. Community Stability & Residential Security Are Central Considerations

Property value impact, adjacency to new highway infrastructure, and displacement risk consistently appear among the highest themes in narrative coding and structured selection.

Weighted analysis particularly elevates concerns tied to:

- Retirement security
- Long-term residential stability
- Development pattern shifts associated with new interchange nodes

Impact Assessment

A new connector is perceived not simply as infrastructure, but as a permanent land-use action that influences property stability, household financial security, development patterns, and long-term community cohesion.

Policy Distinction

The decision before policymakers is not whether to invest in infrastructure.

It is whether to intensify within an established corridor or permanently expand the transportation footprint into currently intact land.

Corridor Improvement vs New Connector Alignment

Intensification of existing footprint	Expansion of transportation footprint
Corridor Improvement	New Connector Alignment
Enhances existing principal arterial road	Establishes new limited-access spine
Concentrated impact within known corridor	Dispersed impact across intact land
Phased and adjustable over time	Permanent and structural
Limited right-of-way adjustment	Broad agricultural and community segmentation

Key Distinction

Intensification versus Expansion of Footprint

Policy Implication

When corridor-based improvements remain viable, advancing a new alignment represents a materially different and more permanent land-use action.

Long-Term Structural Impacts Surpass Projected Transportation Gains

The documented input indicates that the long-term agricultural, residential, and fiscal implications of a greenfield corridor expansion are viewed as greater than its projected benefits.

Visual Language Pattern Analysis

The accompanying word visualization reflects the most recurrent language across combined datasets. Word size corresponds to frequency of appearance.

The prominence of terms related to addressing issues within the established U.S. 23 corridor, farmland preservation, property stability, community continuity, and existing corridor improvement reinforces the structured findings presented above.

