



## 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 Kovacik  
Executive Director, TAGNO