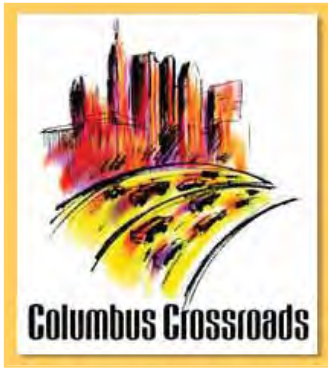
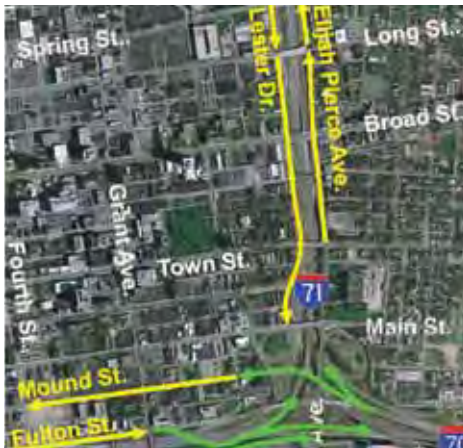


70/71 Columbus

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New Urban Avenues



Future Phases Not so Distant

A lot can change in a few months. On that snowy evening in January when we met to share the latest on the future of the I-70/71 projects, the news was about as bleak as the weather. A lack of funds had pushed the project back several years.

However since then, ODOT has identified \$400 million in future savings: \$200 million in fiscal year 2013 and \$50 million for each of the four following fiscal years.

The \$200 million in savings includes:

- \$20 million not used by ODOT's district offices in 2012,
- \$90 million in workforce reductions and improved agency efficiency (\$40 million in savings from fiscal year 2012 and \$50 million in 2013),
- \$90 million in higher than projected gas tax receipts and the elimination of federal earmarks.

These savings mean the next phase of work on I-70/71 will be moved up from 2026 to 2020. ODOT will continue to look for savings so construction can begin even sooner.

Bridge Concepts and Urban Avenues Take Shape

Seven new bridges and four urban avenues are part of the I-70/71 Columbus Crossroads project and when finished, will provide a safe and reliable transportation system through downtown Columbus. The reconstruction will reduce congestion, establish city gateways and create better neighborhood connections.

Nearly 100 people took part in the January 2012 public meeting where the concepts for the bridges and roadways were showcased. While still in the conceptual stage, the planning for the urban avenues has taken into account numerous comments and suggestions from residents, business, local governments and policymakers.

Seven new bridge designs

- Broad Street
- Town Street
- 18th Street
- Grant Avenue
- Parsons Avenue
- Oak Street
- Main Street



Broad Street Bridge Proposed View

Oak Street Bridge Proposed View

Public Comments Changed the Look of Downtown Urban Avenues

The finished renderings included many neighborhood recommendations. Here are the key community suggestions and how ODOT modified the urban avenue design to address them.

- More on-street parking** → Changed the parking width from nine to eight feet to accommodate more parking.
- Narrower streets** → Reduced lane widths from 12 to 11 feet.
- Bike lanes** → Added bike lanes.
- Bump-outs on pedestrian crossings** → Improved pedestrian safety by shortening crosswalk lengths.
- More landscaping** → Added more trees and green space to the design.

Urban Avenues Nearing Design Completion

ODOT has worked closely with the City of Columbus and MORPC to assure that the new urban avenues are in line with the *Complete Streets* policy of the City.

The avenues maximize on-street parking – an important community request – landscaping and sidewalks. They also mesh

with the Columbus' Bicentennial Bikeways Plan, adding five-foot wide bike lanes where appropriate.

The speed limits will match other city streets in the area and the number of lanes will vary from one to three depending on traffic. ODOT is coordinating with COTA on transit stops.



Elijah Pierce Avenue Cross Section (Broad St. to Spring St. shown)



Lester Drive Cross Section (Spring St. to Broad St. shown)



Fulton Street Cross Section



Mound Street Cross Section

Urban Avenues – Summary of Public Meeting and Online Comments

Residents offered comments that reflected their concern for safety, biking, greenery and neighborhood impact.

ODOT did receive some high marks for aesthetics, planning and outreach. Trees in the median and along the urban avenues were requested, and some residents asked for even more trees and landscaping if possible. One concern was maintenance.

ODOT noted that the greenery was selected and planned with an eye toward easy maintenance, with the City assuming this responsibility after the urban avenues are built.

Bike lanes also received attention. One suggestion was to paint the bike lane a different color to draw more attention to it.

Others appreciated the addition of bike lanes and would like to see more lanes, along with a greater emphasis on walking and transit.

One comment suggested greater sidewalk continuity and concern about speeding. Speed limits will be set to comply with city standards at 35 mph or less.



Before and After Renderings Show Big Changes in Downtown Bridges

The bridge designs unveiled in January are more than five years in the making.

Starting in 2006 and through 2007, ODOT held nine public meetings, met with more than 50 stakeholder organizations and hundreds of individuals to brainstorm ideas for the new interstate bridges. These early discussions focused on aesthetic bridge designs, and locations for caps and gateways.

Bridges - Summary of Public Meeting and Online Comments

Residents uniformly agreed that the bridge aesthetics were very important and that low maintenance on the bridge greenery was essential.

While there was an initial preference for caps to be built on all bridges now, residents understood the budget constraints and understood that retaining walls near bridges would be designed capable of supporting caps, which could be developed in later years.

Assorted comments included safety concerns about the width of Main and Broad Street bridges, the use of more brick on bridges, and the addition of a signature design element to mark the bridges as gateways.

Community comments clearly influenced the concepts, and they will continue to shape this project in the months and years ahead.

Making the retaining walls capable of holding a cap was a priority as well as building wider sidewalks, adding decorative architectural features, along with trees, railing and lighting. To meet these needs and move the bridge design beyond the industry standard, ODOT, the City of Columbus and MORPC added an additional \$26 million to the project to pay for enhancements.

The additional dollars were allocated to the bridge projects based on the following:

1. City and regional planning for current and future use of each of the city streets
2. Opportunities for city gateways
3. Economic development and revitalization potential
4. Ability to maintain the landscape enhancements, and
5. Community priorities set through stakeholder voting.

ODOT will continue to refine the bridge concepts.

Town Street Bridge Existing View



Town Street Bridge Proposed View



Grant Avenue Bridge Proposed View

18th Street Bridge Existing View



18th Street Bridge Proposed View



Grant Avenue Bridge Existing View



Parsons Avenue Bridge Proposed View

Main Street Bridge Existing View



Main Street Bridge Proposed View

About the Columbus Crossroads Project

The Columbus Crossroads project dates back ten years when ODOT began to seek strategies for fixing an outdated, 40-year old freeway that was dangerous, congested and interfering with access to key downtown destinations. The highway was designed to carry 125,000 vehicles a day. Today approximately 146,000 cars and trucks use the I-70/71 interstate to travel through downtown Columbus.

The new freeway is being reconstructed in six phases and includes many innovations like moving freeway ramps to downtown edges, building retaining walls capable of supporting caps, and launching one of the State's first design/build projects, which saved \$40 million in construction costs over estimates.

The first phase – the redesign of the I-71/670 exchange – is under construction now.

For more information visit www.odot7071.org or call 1-877-381-7071



Project Savings Worth Noting



Construction is underway on a new retaining wall on eastbound I-70/71 near the Africentric School in downtown Columbus. ODOT will use pre-cast concrete panels for the new retaining wall, which is manufactured off site and assembled on location, saving nearly 20 percent of the total cost.

The wall will measure 388 feet in length and stand 25 feet tall when completed

this December. The project was originally scheduled to coincide with a Columbus City Schools project.

Even though the school project has changed, ODOT went ahead with the pilot project for the new pre-cast walls. If successful, the design will carry forward throughout the corridor.