

Mr. John Hosek  
Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency  
1299 Superior Avenue  
Cleveland, Ohio 44114

December 6, 2009

Dear Mr. Hosek:

I am writing to convey my support for providing a cycling and pedestrian lane on the proposed I-90/71 bridge and disagree with the decision of the Ohio Department of Transportation not to incorporate one into their plan. As ODOT proceeds through design and contracting, there are still chances to fix this. A bike and pedestrian lane can be a dramatic, beautiful, healthy and practical connection to downtown Cleveland and a wonderful new asset for Cleveland residents and visitors.

I live and ride or walk in \_\_\_\_\_. Providing cyclist and pedestrian access to the bridge is the right thing to do.

ODOT's "old mindset" -- focusing on cars, not people -- is costing "New" Ohio money and opportunity. The new bridge should be available for all residents, not just those driving to or through downtown Cleveland. Please provide a copy of my written comments to all NOACA Board members at the December 11th meeting.

Sincerely,

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

cc: Craig Hebebrand, ODOT District 12

**NE OHIO WANTS TO BE ABLE TO BIKE AND WALK ON THE INNERBELT BRIDGE!  
SOME REASONS FOR YOUR LETTER**

**A new vision for NE Ohio:** A bike/walk path on the bridge will provide NE Ohio residents and visitors with a dramatic, beautiful, healthy and practical connection to downtown Cleveland. Whether they bike, walk or drive, the bridge should be available for all Cleveland residents, not just those driving to or through downtown Cleveland. Bridge access is a great way to leverage the Towpath Trail investments and share downtown and the sports and entertainment centers. It's a sound investment with a terrific health and environmental return for the community, offering a big impact for modest investment.

**Equity and Fairness:** 25% of Cleveland households do not own a car -- 30% of Tremont households, 65% of Central households and 42% of Downtown households, yet ODOT is proposing its biggest highway investment ever. Bicycles account for 10% of trips, 13% of fatalities, but only 1% of federal funding. ODOT is sacrificing pedestrian and cyclist safety and health, though they are lawfully on the road, for the benefit of motor vehicle traffic.

**Riding and walking can reduce transportation costs for household budgets:** For most Americans, transportation is an expense second only to housing (higher than health care, education and food). Even before runaway gas prices, the average American spends 19% of their income on transportation, with some households spending 50% or more. Based on AAA reports of typical transportation costs 56.1 cents/ mile and \$5 daily parking, typical car commuter costs are more than \$11,500/year. In tough economic times, every bit helps.

**Addressing our climate change challenge:** Important health gains and reductions in CO2 emissions by replacing urban trips in private motor vehicles with active travel in high-income and middle-income countries:

- **The Lancet, the world's leading medical journal:** 'health gains and CO2 reductions can result from replacing urban car trips with active travel in high- and middle-income countries;' policy-makers should invest in infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists, to "increase the safety, convenience, and comfort of walking and cycling."
- **Rails to Trails" Conservancy report:** The financial value of improved mobility -- fuel savings, greenhouse gas reductions and health care savings -- ranges between \$10-65 billion, outstripping any public spending costs in creating a bike/walk transportation infrastructure. Modest increases in bicycling and walking could lead to an annual reduction of 70-200 billion miles of car travel/ year, equal to cutting oil dependence and greenhouse gas emissions from passenger vehicles by 3-8%.

**A bike and pedestrian lane makes financial sense:** Bicycle and pedestrian accommodation on the bridge makes financial sense. During development of bridge options, ODOT posted acceptable cost ranges for a variety of bridge options, yet successful cyclist and pedestrian accommodation was already acknowledged to be well below these acceptable cost ranges. ODOT still says "no," without any explanation or analysis. It's a sound investment with a terrific health and environmental return for the community, offering a big impact for modest investment.

**Proposed "alternatives" don't work:** ODOT says there are two other ways to get downtown on bike or foot. However, these options, even if improved, have serious problems involving safety, distance and time. We don't ask cars to go a 1/2 mile out of the way, why should we ask a bicyclist or pedestrian to do the same?

**Improved health and fitness:** A walking and biking transportation infrastructure is a practical way to achieve recommended levels of physical activity. Modest increases in bicycling and walking for short trips could provide enough exercise for 50 million more Americans to meet recommended activity levels and reduce our activity deficit.

**Other communities have done it and we can too:** At least 30 communities across the country benefit from cycling and pedestrian access to an interstate highway bridge. In many cases, these are dramatic and beautiful shared spaces that enhance the city's life. If they can "figure it out" and successfully integrate bike, pedestrian and automobile access, so can Northeast Ohio. Snow and cold isn't an obstacle either. Bike and pedestrian paths are common in lots of places which receive snow, including Boston, Chicago, Minnesota and Sweden, to name a few.