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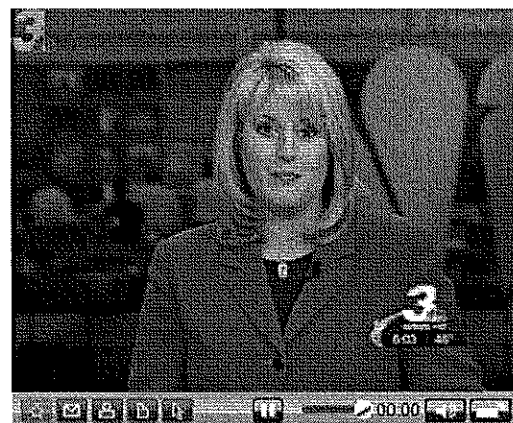
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## Midtown businesses claim Innerbelt changes will force them out of Cleveland

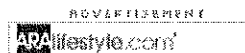
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CLEVELAND -- The last public hearing about the Innerbelt project drew warnings from businesses in the Midtown...



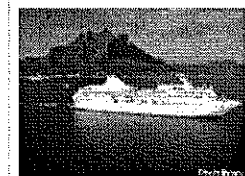
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CLEVELAND -- The last public hearing about the Innerbelt project drew warnings from businesses in the Midtown corridor.

The Innerbelt makeover has been talked about since 2001. And for much of that time companies in the Midtown corridor argued removing Carnegie and Prospect exit ramps would hurt their business.

Many -- including Dodd Camera, Blonder's and Applied Technologies -- now warn if the project excludes those ramps, it will make it harder for workers and customers to reach them. And they threaten to move out of the city.

The state's concerned about improving Innerbelt safety. Dead Man's Curve is the most dangerous stretch of highway in the state, averaging two wrecks a day.

The state wants to use access roads to reroute traffic to Chester and claims that will be safer and just as efficient.

The Cleveland Indians and Cleveland Clinic have both spoken up against the state's proposal, claiming it would be inconvenient for fans and patients.

Many businesses claim ODOT's held hearings, but didn't really listen to them. The Midtown corridor group is now asking that the highway component of the project be separated from the bridge component. That would allow the bridge repair and replacement project to start while the debate over Innerbelt changes continues.

Project director Craig Hebebrand says, "there may be some adjustments," but the project will proceed with the plan that's been reviewed by the city and Federal Highway officials.

Innerbelt work is likely six years away from starting.

The Midtown corridor has about 600 companies and 18,000 workers.

Some businesses think Mayor Frank Jackson should be standing up on their behalf. Andrea Taylor, the mayor's spokesperson, says the mayor sent Planning Director Bob Brown to Tuesday's meeting to assess the situation.

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republican4sure wrote:

Do it in a conservative way without spending the amount of money that Russo would spend on