

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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www.SaveOurAccess.com

Grassroots Initiative Launched to Stop ODOT from Closing I-90 Carnegie and Prospect Innerbelt Ramps

Kick-off rally event: Wednesday, July 8th, 4:00 PM during the rush-hour log-jam at the Prospect Avenue ramp to I-90 eastbound (behind Central Cadillac). Banners will be hung urging the public to voice their opinion through the www.SaveOurAccess.com web site.

Cleveland, Ohio - July 2, 2009 - A grassroots effort – “Save Our Access” -- is underway to stop the Ohio Department of Transportation from closing the I-90 Prospect Avenue and Carnegie Avenue ramps as part of the Innerbelt reconstruction project.

The initiative is led by business owners and ramp users who are convinced that ODOT’s plan would do serious damage to the economic and social vitality of Downtown and MidTown Cleveland out to University Circle.

“We live daily with the traffic flow made possible by these ramps and know that closing them and redirecting drivers to fewer access points will be disastrous,” said Don Scipione, president of software developer Acme Express, Inc., one of the organizers of the initiative. “Chester Avenue, in particular, would become a rush-hour nightmare if ODOT has its way.”

The group supports the position taken by the Cleveland Clinic and MidTown Cleveland, Inc. (the community-based development corporation) which jointly have requested that ODOT and the Federal Highway Administration agree to maintain the ramps or separate the final decision on the ramps from the rest of the reconstruction project, thus giving time to arrive at an acceptable solution.

Tom Bier, part-time staff at the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs of Cleveland State University, another organizer, stressed that Save Our Access is not challenging the rest of the Innerbelt project involving the new bridge over the Flats and the improvement of Deadman’s Curve. “We believe work on the bridge and the curve can proceed and be separated from the decision concerning the ramps.”

The Cleveland Clinic and MidTown Cleveland, Inc. maintain that ODOT failed to carry out mandated procedures in doing its analysis and planning for the ramp changes – in particular it failed to take into account the increased traffic stemming from employment and visitor growth at the Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals and the Stokes VA Hospital.

Save Our Access is posting signs and distributing information at the ramps urging people to go to its website – www.SaveOurAccess.com – where they can get more information and send an email message of support to local, state and federal officials.

About Save Our Access

We, the organizers of the Save Our Access campaign, are:

- Business owners who know how customer and visitor traffic depends on the access provided by the Innerbelt Carnegie Avenue and Prospect Avenue ramps,
- Frequent users of those ramps,
- People who care strongly about the condition and future of Cleveland and who are convinced that the Ohio Department of Transportation's plan to close the ramps and funnel traffic to fewer points would inflict severe economic and social damage on Downtown and the MidTown Cleveland out to University Circle,
- People who do not accept ODOT's assertion that its plan will bring "Positive regional economic benefits due to improved facility, reduced congestion, efficient access",
- People who have tried repeatedly to get ODOT to recognize the likely impacts of its intended changes - but with absolutely no success.

For more information go to www.SaveOurAccess.com