

December 9, 2009

Howard R. Maier
NOACA
1299 Superior Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44114-3204

RE: Innerbelt Bridge – Access for Cyclists and Pedestrians

Dear Director Maier,

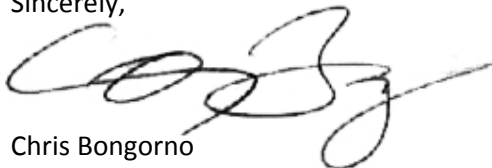
I am writing to express my support for integrating bicycle and pedestrian access into the new Innerbelt Bridge project. As a Cleveland resident by choice and an urban planner by training and profession, I believe that ensuring multi-modal access in our major infrastructure projects is a necessity. This is true not only because of the options it provides to individuals moving within and throughout our city, but also because of the message it sends and the identity it creates and reinforces for our region.

In Cleveland, cycling and walking are the only options for many households and individuals of modest means. They are also conscious choices for many individuals who prefer healthier, more affordable transportation that has no negative impact on the environment. Our infrastructure investments, large and small, must take these factors into account and must provide more options, more choices for all segments of our community. These choices can also become the signatures or landmarks of an inclusive, forward-thinking community, both literally and figuratively.

Opportunities to connect the broader region via healthy modes of transportation are broad, but instances of this magnitude are exceptional. This route would not only connect Near West Side neighborhoods to downtown Cleveland and points east, but it could provide a new link to the Cuyahoga Valley and the Towpath Trail. It could connect people to jobs, recreational amenities, and places to shop, worship and learn. The plan today is to do this for vehicles moving at 55 miles per hour. I believe it is imperative that we broaden the impact of this project to become an amenity for those of us moving at a slower pace between more local destinations as well.

It is with these factors in mind that I urge your support for the addition of bicycle and pedestrian access to the new Innerbelt Bridge. Thank you for your time and your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,



Chris Bongorno
Cleveland Resident & Urban Planner

Cc: John Hosek, NOACA
Jolene M. Molitoris, ODOT
Bonita G. Teeuwen, ODOT District 12
Craig Hebebrand, ODOT District 12
Robert N. Brown, Cleveland City Planning Commission