



February 21, 2023

Ohio House Finance Committee

Re: House Bill 23 Language on Bicycle Lanes in 2024-2025 Transportation Budget

Dear Chairman Edwards, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeney, and Members of the Ohio House Finance Committee:

As the Executive Director of MidTown Cleveland, Inc, the community and economic development organization representing the MidTown, AsiaTown, and Hough neighborhoods in Cleveland, I am writing to share concerns regarding the language that has been added to HB23, the 2024-2025 Transportation Budget.

The language reads: “Compels ODOT to establish for the uniform application of the construction of bicycle lanes. Prohibits a bicycle lane in the middle of a street or highway in a municipality with a population over 300,000.”

This language specifically jeopardizes protected bicycle infrastructure that is identified and planned for in Cleveland’s Midway Cycle Track Plan. The Superior Avenue Midway will provide a safe, convenient, and comfortable linkage for people biking along Superior Avenue between Public Square and E. 55<sup>th</sup> Street. This is a critical piece of cyclist infrastructure that will link neighborhoods, between Cleveland’s East Side and Downtown. The project is the result of almost 12 years of planning, community engagement, and study; the concept rose out of a grassroots to make Cleveland streets safer.

MidTown Cleveland, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) community and economic development organization pursuing a vision for our neighborhoods to be places for connection, belonging, and the joyful celebration of culture. For 40 years, we have served this neighborhood, which sits between two of the largest employment centers in Ohio – Cleveland’s downtown and University Circle. Just over a decade ago, the Euclid Corridor HealthLine bus rapid transit line opened along Euclid Avenue, our central spine, and the results have far exceeded our expectations for the neighborhood. The \$200 million transit investment led to a surge of over \$350 million of investment along the Euclid Avenue corridor, including over one million square feet of commercial space, 300 units of housing, a full service grocery store, healthcare, and the new

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home to our community foundation. Furthermore, Euclid Avenue provides a safe spine for cyclists and pedestrians across MidTown. The Midway cycle track will operate similarly, and we believe it will offer transformational impact for the residents and workers who rely on our streets every day.

The Superior Midway is part of a transformational vision for a stress-free, physically buffered bike network which will connect neighborhoods to each other and connect residents to key regional assets. Superior Avenue previously included the former streetcar network, and today, the excessively wide streets encourage speeding and unsafe driving behavior. Superior Avenue runs through the AsiaTown neighborhood, which is home to a diverse population, including families and seniors who primarily speak languages other than English. The improved safety of this transportation network is essential, particularly for people who walk, bike, or take the bus, especially for this spine that connects families to a recreation center, produce distributions, markets, and jobs. Just last year, an elderly man in the community who was cycling home from a produce giveaway died in a car crash close to Superior Avenue.

Please do not limit the ability of cities like Cleveland to implement such facilities in our urban areas. I urge the Ohio House Finance Committee to remove this language. Thank you again for the opportunity to submit this written testimony regarding concerns with the current HB23.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ashley Shaw".

Ashley Shaw  
Executive Director  
MidTown Cleveland, Inc..