

In a Plain Dealer article dated January 12, 1964 titled, “Bottleneck Uncorked Come Wednesday”, it was reported that in a 1928 report by the Division of Highway Economics, U.S. Bureau of Public Roads, the Detroit Road Bridge was greatly congested and needed relief. Although this report was passed on to the Cuyahoga County commissioners that same year, it took 35 years to finally give the Detroit Road Bridge relief. The delays between 1928 and the opening of the Clifton Blvd. Bridge were caused by the Depression, World War II, and the post-war inflation.

In 1951 the county voters passed a \$10 million bond issue. County engineer, Albert Porter considered the Clifton Blvd Bridge as the top priority over any of the other projects. In 1953 the City of Rocky River, the State Highway Dept., the US Bureau of Public Roads, and Porter all agreed with the recommendations of the consultants hired by Porter as to where the bridge would be placed. The City of Lakewood, however, did not agree. The path of the new road to the bridge would cut through the Clifton Park neighborhood, destroying a dozen of its beautiful homes.

Although the City of Lakewood did not consent to the bridge, in 1957 the State of Ohio acted under a seldom used law allowing projects of “urgent necessity”. Therefor this project was legally permitted without the consent of the local municipality. From April 1957 until September 1962 multiple lawsuits were filed in an effort to stop the construction of the new bridge. It all ended when the Ohio Supreme Court refused to hear the case. Construction started October 1, 1962 and ended with the opening of the bridge on January 15, 1964.

In March 2013, the Clifton Park community organization, Clifton Beach Improvement Association, (CBIA) decided to contact ODOT, NOACA, and Mayor Summers to see if it was possible to reduce the four lanes of traffic to two, add sidewalks, and change the highway lighting to neighborhood friendly lighting. This started a four year process.

On December 18, 2016 Lakewood City Council included the requested changes into the budget. Over the next three years \$300,000 was committed by the city for this project. The current four lanes of automobile traffic will be reduced to two lanes with the remaining lanes being converted for bicycle use. Eventually sidewalks will be installed. The ultimate goal of this project is to make this portion of Clifton Blvd. a “complete street” that is more environmentally, neighborhood, and people friendly with plans that include a cross walk, park benches, new lighting, and landscaping.

This grass roots effort is a great example of a community working with their local officials and state and federal agencies. We are grateful to Mayor Michael Summers and Lakewood City Council members Sam O’Leary, Davis Anderson, John Litten, Dan O’Malley, Tom Bullock, Cindy Marx and Ryan Nowlin for their support.

The work and financial support handled by CBIA is now being done by a new organization. The Clifton Blvd. Extension Support Organization is represented by Lakewood residents both within and outside of Clifton Park. The changes to this small ½ mile stretch of road will have a tremendous impact on all of Lakewood.