

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**FIRST PHASE OF STUDY FOR BIG CREEK/I-71 RELOCATION & RESTORATION INITIATIVE
IS COMPLETE**

**Brooklyn and Cleveland Partner in Funding Request to Solicit Public Input;
Assess Traffic and Economic Impacts; and Develop a Preferred Plan**

Cleveland, Ohio—The first phase of study for the Big Creek / I-71 Relocation and Restoration Initiative is complete. The Initiative looks at a number of environmental, economic, and community challenges and opportunities in the heart of a highly urbanized area straddling the cities of Cleveland and Brooklyn, Ohio and proposes land use changes that could significantly improve the character of those communities.

The study proposes removing the Denison Access ramps of the abandoned “Parma Freeway” and opening up land in the Big Creek valley that will allow the creek to be naturalized by re-routing it into much of its historic streambed. Broader transportation, economic, community and land use issues adjacent to the valley were also examined. Industrial, retail and other commercial activity was found to be underperforming, particularly in the industrial areas north of the area in both Brooklyn and Cleveland. And, housing in the Stockyards and adjacent Cleveland neighborhoods was found to be distressed, due in part to the lack of community assets found in other neighborhoods.

"[The] objective —to remake the area in question in ways that are best suited for the next 50 years, at least—is right on target...[This] project is exactly what Cleveland and old inner suburbs like Brooklyn need" – Tom Bier, Senior Fellow, Levin College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University

Concept plans were developed that propose the stream re-alignment along with expanded recreational space and a trail system that connects the Brookside and Big Creek Reservations to each other and the surrounding communities. Another set of concept plans add a new I-71 interchange at Ridge Road to capitalize on its economic potential and its potential to divert truck traffic away from residential areas. They propose that the interchange would help address issues related to urban sprawl and redirect investment into this urban core.

“This is an impressive body of work and makes good sense. Now we have to find the will—and dollars—to make it happen” – Jim Rokakis, Director, Thriving Communities Institute, former Cuyahoga County Treasurer and former Cleveland City Councilman

- More -

Land, stream, highway, roadway and trail data based on these concept plans were calculated along with cost estimates ranging from \$83,130,000 to \$115,900,000. The study can be downloaded at: bigcreekconnects.org/BC_I-71.

The study acts a foundation for further study that will:

- Solicit public input
- Assess economic impacts
- Perform traffic modeling, and
- Develop a preferred plan with recommendations

In March of 2015 the City of Brooklyn, in partnership with the City of Cleveland and Big Creek Connects, applied for funding for this purpose through the Northeast Ohio Coordinating Agency's Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative (TLCI) grant program. Grant award announcements are anticipated in June 2015.

For further information, contact:

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