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Hopkins Shows Its $3 Billion Hand — Two New Concourses, and Every Old One Comes Down

The full masterplan is public. Concourses A, B, C and D all get demolished. A $301 million ground transportation center opens by 2029. And the lot where you stage today is the first thing to change.

Weekly briefing for Cleveland airport drivers and the people who ride with them. Published every Wednesday by CHATP Airport Rideshare.

Lead HOPKINS

On October 13 the airport released the full Terminal Master Development Plan. The headline number is **$3 billion over about two decades** for the complete build-out — on top of, not instead of, the **$1.6 billion CLEvolution** package already announced.

What the full plan calls for:

- **Two new concourses, roughly 20 gates each**, built on either side of today's Concourse B. Today Hopkins runs 46 active gates across A, B and C; the closed Concourse D holds another 36 that have sat dark.
- **All four existing concourses demolished** — A, B, C and D.
- A consolidated **rental-car facility on airport property**, on the Concourse D site, within walking distance of the new head house. The rental cars have been across I-480 on Maplewood Avenue since 1998, reached by shuttle.
- A new terminal and access roadways **as early as 2032**.

Nearer term, the pieces that touch our work: the **Gold Lot** (1,600 spaces, $22 million, under construction since July) opens by spring. That clears ground for the **$301 million Ground Transportation Center** — a new parking garage plus an upgraded Red Line station — approved by the city's design review committee last month and due by 2029. A

request for qualifications for the head house (ticketing, security and the passenger drop-off curb) is expected by the end of this year; the roadway and utilities package follows in early 2027. Nearly 800 contractors showed up to the airport's industry day on October 13.

> **What it means at the curb:** the drop-off and pickup roadway you know is on the demolition list. Between now and 2029 expect the Gold Lot to open, the Orange Lot to close, and staging to move at least once. We'll track every change here, in the Renovation Watch section below.

Cleveland THIS WEEK

- **Cavaliers home opener** — Saturday, October 24, 7:30 PM, Rocket Arena, vs. Brooklyn. The Cavs open the season in Philadelphia Thursday night. Betting win total this year: 47.5. Donovan Mitchell signed a four-year, $273 million extension over the summer.
- **Browns** are away — Sunday at Tennessee, 1:00 PM. Next home game isn't until after the Pittsburgh trip November 1. Airport traffic from the team: light.
- **Playhouse Square** runs six shows Thursday through Saturday — Jo Koy (State, Thu 8 PM), Cleveland Ballet's *Giselle* (Fri), *Sweeney Todd* (Hanna, Fri), *Walking with Ghosts* (Ohio, Fri), Zarna Garg (Ohio, Sat 7 PM), *Private Lives* (Outcalt, Sat). Downtown curb pressure Friday and Saturday 10 PM–11 PM.
- **Sunday**: Disney's Descendants/ZOMBIES show at Rocket Arena, 7 PM — minivans and car seats.
- **Lyft pays $272.5 million** to settle California's claim that it misclassified drivers as contractors from 2016 to 2020 — the state is giving its share to drivers who filed wage claims. Lyft admits nothing. Uber is still fighting the same suit.
- **Washington, D.C.** is debating the first rideshare overhaul since 2015: stronger driver insurance, shorter waits for wheelchair-accessible vehicles, a ban on "surveillance-based" fare discrimination. Uber's own projection: fares up 10% in year one. Worth watching — Ohio cities copy these.

Curb Report MILES

Dry week, and it stays dry — the best stretch of driving weather we'll get until April. Three things anyway. One: it's **dark by 6:45** now, and the first frost already came through last weekend. A 5 AM Hopkins run means a frosted windshield; start the car before you load the bags, not after. Two: the Gold Lot construction has fencing and trucks on the airport road — give yourself three extra minutes on the inbound loop until you've seen the new pattern yourself. Three: Saturday night. Cavs out at 10, Playhouse Square out at 10, Streetlight Manifesto at the Agora out at 11 — all within a mile of each other. If you've got an airport pickup landing between 9:30 and 11:30 Saturday, route around downtown, not through it.

By the Numbers ALEX

NUMBER	WHAT IT IS
$3,000,000,000	Full Hopkins build-out, over roughly 20 years
40	Gates in the two new concourses (46 active today)
2029	Ground Transportation Center due — new garage, new Red Line station
1,600	Gold Lot spaces opening by spring
$272.5M	Lyft's California misclassification settlement
10%	Uber's claimed first-year fare increase if D.C.'s reform passes
61°F	Wednesday afternoon at Hopkins, sunny, wind 6 mph. 43° overnight.

Weather DRIVER OPERATIONS

Northeast Ohio is in an extended dry stretch — the local forecasters called it a "dry, mild week" Sunday night and it has held. Highs around 60, lows in the low 40s, no rain in the hourly through Thursday morning, no lake effect yet (the lake is still warm; that's a November problem). The one hazard is the overnight: the first frost of the season hit Saturday night into Sunday morning, October 17–18, and with clear skies and no wind the same can happen any night this week away from the lake — Gates Mills, Hudson,

Medina. Scrape before you roll; a clear windshield at 4:45 AM is the difference between seeing Door 6 and missing it.

The Locker DRIVER BENEFIT

NEW THIS WEEK

Your guest sees your car before you get there

When you tap **On the way**, your guest now gets a text with your car, your windshield number and your plate — and a **View vehicle** link that opens the four photos of your vehicle: front, passenger side, rear, driver side. Same pictures by email. No more "what are you driving?" calls at baggage claim, no more guest climbing into the wrong black car.

Three of four drivers don't have photos on file yet. Four shots, send them to dispatch, done in a day.

Route of the Week GATES MILLS → HOPKINS

44040 Gates Mills to CLE: 30.1 miles, about 44 minutes, $55 flat. This is a Thursday 7:30 AM run on the board this week. The route is I-271 south to I-480 west, and 7:30 is the heart of the morning rush on 480 through Independence and the airport interchange. Leave Gates Mills by 7:30 means pickup at 7:30 — be in the driveway at 7:20. Out-of-county rule applies on the long ones past Hudson; Gates Mills is Cuyahoga, so it doesn't here.

Hopkins Renovation Watch NEW SECTION

Starting this issue, a standing log of what's physically changed at the airport, with our own photos. Entry 1, October 21: Gold Lot earthwork and fencing visible along the airport road; no change yet to the arrivals or departures curb; Orange Lot still open. If you drive the loop this week and see something new, text a photo to 216-293-6500 and it goes in next Wednesday.

Close

Forty gates, two concourses, and everything you've ever parked next to gone by the early 2030s. The airport is going to be a construction site for most of the rest of this decade, and the drivers who know the pattern each week are the ones who'll be on time. That's what this page is for. See you next Wednesday.

Sources read for this issue (October 21, 2026): NEOtrans, "Hopkins Airport full masterplan released" (Oct 13); Axios Cleveland, "Cleveland Hopkins prepares next phase of $1.6B airport renovation" (Oct 13); Cleveland Scene, "15+ Things to Do in Cleveland This Weekend (Oct. 22–25)"; ClevelandBrowns.com schedule; Yahoo Sports Cavaliers 2026–27 preview; TechCrunch, "Lyft is paying $272.5M to settle lawsuit over how it classified drivers" (Oct 1); Axios D.C., "As DC weighs rideshare reform, Uber warns of higher fares" (Oct 19); National Weather Service hourly forecast for Cleveland Hopkins (Oct 21); Cleveland 19 First Alert, "Dry, mild week ahead" (Oct 18) and frost/freeze alert (Oct 17–18); CHATP rate table (44040).

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