THE CHATP DISPATCH · ISSUE 5 · WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2026

Hopkins' $1.6 Billion Overhaul Is Officially Under Construction

Six years of roadway and parking work at the airport start now. Plus two late Cavs nights, Hadestown all week, and a windy, rainy Wednesday.

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

DRIVER QUICK CARD

This week in 30 seconds

- **The money:** two Cavs home games at Rocket Arena: **Fri 11/6 vs. Philadelphia (7:30 PM)** and **Sat 11/7 vs. New York (8:00 PM)** (Rocket Arena). Playhouse Square is full all week, with **Hadestown** at the Connor Palace through Sunday and **Jeff Dunham** at the KeyBank State Theatre on Sat 11/7 (Playhouse Square).
- **Hopkins banks:** morning waves at 9 AM and 1 PM (9 arrivals each on the latest saved CHATP board). Afternoon and evening: 4–5 PM and 6–7 PM. Late bank: 10:30 PM–12:30 AM.
- **Closed until further notice:** the SR 176 N / I-71 N ramp to I-90 W (News 5). Lane restrictions on Huron and Ontario near Rocket Arena. Huron is now one-way eastbound to E. 9th, and Prospect is one-way westbound to Ontario (Rocket Arena).
- **Gas:** Ohio averaged **$4.22** and Cleveland-Lorain-Elyria **$4.27** on 10/30, down 15¢ in a week (AAA data via Stacker).
- **Taxes:** log every business mile at 76¢ (IRS).
- **Route:** Hopkins to Playhouse Square: I-71 N to I-90 E, then the Chester Ave exit. Drop off on E. 14th, not Euclid.
- **Weather: today brings rain and south winds gusting over 30 mph** (Cleveland 19). It's dark by the 5 PM hour now, so clean your headlights and wipers.
- **Bottom line:** work the Friday and Saturday Cavs nights, stage for Hadestown curtain-down, and leave earlier today.

Lead HOPKINS

Cleveland Hopkins has started construction on its **$1.6 billion** upgrade, Cleveland 19 reported on 10/26. City leaders say it will change how the airport looks and works by 2032. Phase one includes a new head house (ticketing, curbside arrivals and departures, baggage claim and TSA), a new international customs facility, a 6,000-car garage and a new RTA station. Director of Port Control Bryant Francis said the current building is undersized for roughly 10 million passengers a year. Airlines are paying most of the cost.

What it means here: the station reports that roadways and parking will be under construction for about six years. Every airport run between now and 2032 goes through a work zone. Two things to do now: build 10 extra minutes into early-morning Hopkins departures, and confirm the pickup door and level with every arriving rider. A PUCO-licensed livery ride is booked ahead, so the rider expects you at the right curb. Pin the exact spot before you roll. The Gold Lot (1,600 spaces) is due in spring 2027, and the Orange Lot closes after that to make room for the new garage (Axios, 10/13).

Radar WHERE THE RIDES ARE

CLE arrival banks (from CHATP flight data): the latest saved board (Thursday 10/29, 43 flights scheduled 9 AM–2 PM ET) shows **9 arrivals in the 9 AM hour** (ORD x2, LGA x2, MDW, ATL, IAD, MSP, ERI), 7 at 10 AM, 8 at 11 AM, a dip to 5 at noon, then **9 in the 1 PM hour** (DCA, DTW, ATL, FLL x2, BNA, MCO, LGA, IAD). Several early flights were running 27–64 minutes late, so track the flight before you leave. The 10/21 board showed the afternoon peaks: **10 arrivals at 4 PM and 11 at 6 PM**. Airline schedules are set in local time, so the banks hold their clock times after the fall-back.

Field rule: be staged for 9 AM, 1 PM, 4–5 PM and 6–7 PM, plus 10:30 PM–12:30 AM at night. Use noon and 5 PM for fuel and food.

Events driving rides

- Wed–Sun 11/4–8 — **Hadestown**, Connor Palace (touring Broadway; the biggest Playhouse draw of the week)
- Wed–Sun 11/4–8 — Sweeney Todd (Great Lakes Theater), Hanna Theatre, final week
- All week — Private Lives (Cleveland Play House), Outcalt Theatre, through 11/22
- Thu–Sun 11/5–8 — Rent (Cleveland State University), Allen Theatre, final weekend
- Fri–Sun 11/6–8 — Handel's Serse, The Helen
- **Fri 11/6 — Cavs vs. Philadelphia (NBA Cup game), Rocket Arena, 7:30 PM**
- **Sat 11/7 — Cavs vs. New York, Rocket Arena, 8:00 PM**
- Sat 11/7 — Jeff Dunham, KeyBank State Theatre, and Charlotte Ballet (DANCECleveland), Mimi Ohio Theatre
- Sun 11/8 — Browns at New Orleans, 1:00 PM (away). Expect fans flying back into CLE Sunday night and Monday.
- Coming up: Journey (Thu 11/12) and SOMBR (Fri 11/13) at Rocket Arena; Cavs vs. Dallas (Sat 11/14); Browns home vs. Houston (Sun 11/15).

Event sources: Playhouse Square calendar · Rocket Arena events · Cavaliers schedule (NBA.com) · ClevelandBrowns.com

Driver-ops weather: rain moving west to east today with gusts over 30 mph, so expect slower Hopkins arrivals and wet curbs. No snow or lake-effect is in the forecast so far.

Cleveland THIS WEEK

- **Ramp closed until further notice:** ODOT closed the SR 176 north / I-71 north ramp to I-90 west on 10/16 for pavement repairs, and no reopening has been announced (Cleveland 19). Posted detour: I-490 east → I-77 north → Woodland Ave → I-77 south → I-490 west.
- **Downtown near Rocket Arena:** lane restrictions remain on Huron Rd. and Ontario St. between the Detroit-Superior and Lorain-Carnegie bridges. Under the city's new street layout, Huron is one-way eastbound toward E. 9th and Prospect is one-way westbound toward Ontario. After games, the Great Day Improvements Garage still empties west on Huron to Ontario (Rocket Arena). The eastbound I-90 exit to E. 9th St. was listed as closed through late October. No reopening notice has been found, so treat it as closed until confirmed.
- **Dark earlier:** since the 11/1 time change, the evening Hopkins bank and every Playhouse curtain now happen in full dark.

Game Day SPORTS

- **Browns (5-3):** lost 27-6 at Pittsburgh on Sunday 11/1 (Browns official recap). They are 2-1 in the AFC North. Next: **at New Orleans, Sun 11/8, 1:00 PM** (away). The next home game is **Sun 11/15 vs. Houston, 1:00 PM**, at Huntington Bank Field. That game will be covered in the 11/11 issue.
- **Cavaliers:** won four of five heading into this week, including a 136-111 win at Milwaukee on Saturday 10/31 after a 114-111 loss at Atlanta (CBS Sports). **Home the rest of this week: Fri 11/6 vs. Philadelphia, 7:30 PM** (NBA Cup game); **Sat 11/7 vs. New York, 8:00 PM**.
- **Guardians:** offseason. Monsters: no home games at Rocket Arena this week.
- **Getting there (Rocket Arena, 1 Center Court):** the on-site garages are the Great Day Improvements Garage (formerly Gateway East; the bridge into the arena requires an event ticket) and the JACK Casino garage, about 3,300 spaces between them. Reserve through SeatGeek; plates are read automatically. Event passes open the Great Day garage three hours before the event. Rocket Arena names Lyft as its official rideshare partner but publishes no pickup-zone map (Rocket Arena).
- **When the rush clears (CHATP field note, an estimate):** a 7:30 PM tip ends around 9:45–10:00 PM, and an 8:00 PM tip around 10:15–10:30 PM. Pickup demand peaks in the first 20–30 minutes after the final buzzer. Wait a block or two off Huron and Ontario, set pickups on Prospect or E. 4th, and stay clear of the garage exit flow onto Huron.

Curb Report MILES

"Browns lost big and they're on the road again, so the football money is two weeks out. But look at the arena: Cavs Friday and Saturday back to back, both late tips. Saturday's an 8 o'clock, so they'll let out around 10:15 and run straight into the bar crowd. Hadestown is at the Palace all week, and that's a crowd that books rides ahead. Jeff Dunham is at the State on Saturday too. Hopkins has officially

started its six-year build, so get used to orange barrels at the airport, and ask every rider which door. And today brings rain with thirty-mph gusts, so leave early."

By the Numbers ALEX

NUMBER	WHAT IT IS
$1.6 billion	Hopkins' modernization program, now under construction (Cleveland 19, 10/26)
2032	Phase-one target: new head house, customs facility, 6,000-car garage, RTA station (Cleveland 19)
~10 million	Annual passengers the current terminal is undersized for (Cleveland 19)
2	Cavs home games left this week, Fri and Sat (Rocket Arena)
5-3	Browns after the 27-6 loss at Pittsburgh (ClevelandBrowns.com)
9	CLE arrivals in each of the 9 AM and 1 PM hours (CHATP saved board, 10/29)
$4.22 / −15¢	Ohio regular gas on 10/30 and its one-week drop; Cleveland metro $4.27 (AAA data via Stacker)
$6.480	Midwest diesel, week of 10/26 (EIA)

"Six years of construction is roughly 300 weeks of airport runs through a work zone. Ten extra minutes on each early departure is cheap insurance against a missed flight, and a missed flight is a lost customer." — Alex

Weather DRIVER OPERATIONS

- **Wed 11/4 (today):** breezy, with rain developing west to east. Highs around 70, and south winds gusting over 30 mph at times (Cleveland 19). Expect wind-related delays to CLE arrivals and slick ramps, and allow extra time for 5 AM departures Thursday if the rain lingers.
- **Thu–Sun:** check the morning forecast before the weekend Cavs nights. We'll have the full weekend picture in next week's issue.
- No lake-effect snow or ice in the forecast so far. Sunset is now in the 5 PM hour, so clean your headlights, wipers and windshield inside and out.

The Locker DRIVER BENEFITS

- **ACA Marketplace (HealthCare.gov, used in Ohio):** 2027 open enrollment opened Sun 11/1. Enroll by Dec 15 for coverage starting Jan 1 (HealthCare.gov).

- **Medicare Open Enrollment:** runs through Dec 7. Changes take effect Jan 1 (Medicare.gov).
- **Mileage:** 76¢ per business mile from Jul 1 to Dec 31, 2026 (IRS). Log the start, stop and purpose of every trip, including deadhead miles to Hopkins.
- **Q4 estimated tax:** due Jan 15, 2027.

Route of the Week HOPKINS → HADESTOWN

From the airport, take I-71 north to I-90 east through the Innerbelt, exit at Chester Ave, then go west on Chester to E. 14th. The SR 176 ramp closure is on the northbound SR 176 / I-71 ramp to I-90 **west**, so it does not affect this route. **CHATP tip (field note):** drop off on E. 14th rather than Euclid. At curtain-down, set the pickup a block off on Chester or E. 14th, away from the Euclid crush. Going back to Hopkins, reverse the route on I-90 west to I-71 south. On Fri and Sat, leave Playhouse Square before the Cavs let out at Rocket Arena so you don't hit the Ontario/Huron traffic.

Hopkins Renovation Watch STANDING LOG

Photos: none this week. Drive the loop and see something new? Text a photo (garage, curb or the Gold Lot construction) to 216-293-6500 and it goes in next Wednesday.

- **It has started:** Cleveland 19 (10/26) reports construction has begun on the $1.6B program. Phase one opens by 2032; phase two (amenities past security) has no date yet.
- **Parking shuffle:** the 1,600-space Gold Lot is under construction and opens spring 2027. The Orange Lot then closes for the 6,000-space garage and ground transportation center (Axios, 10/13).
- **Next milestone:** the airport plans to issue the request for qualifications for the new head house by year-end. Site work, utilities and roadway contracts go out to bid in early 2027 (Axios, 10/13).
- **Right now:** no specific curb or roadway closures at the airport have been announced. We'll list them here the week they're posted.

Close

Two late Cavs nights, a full week of Hadestown, a windy rainy Wednesday, and an airport that is now officially a construction site. Plan the curb, confirm the door, and log the miles. See you next Wednesday. Book or drive with us at airport-transportation.net · Dispatch 216-321-3000.

Sources

- Hopkins construction begins (10/26/26) — cleveland19.com
- CLEvolution timeline, Gold Lot (10/13/26) — axios.com
- Browns 27-6 at Steelers, record and next game (11/1/26) — clevelandbrowns.com
- Cavs recent results (11/1/26) — cbssports.com
- Cavaliers 2026-27 schedule — nba.com/cavaliers
- Rocket Arena events (Cavs 11/6, 11/7; Journey; SOMBR) — rocketarena.com/events

- Rocket Arena parking, street changes, lane restrictions — rocketarena.com/directions-parking
- Playhouse Square calendar — playhousesquare.org/events
- SR 176 ramp closure (10/16/26) — news5cleveland.com ; cleveland19.com
- Weather (11/2/26) — cleveland19.com
- Gas: Ohio and Cleveland, 10/30 (AAA data) — stacker.com ; Midwest diesel — eia.gov
- IRS mileage — irs.gov ; ACA — healthcare.gov ; Medicare — medicare.gov
- CLE arrival banks — CHATP flight data (saved arrival boards, 10/29/26 9 AM–2 PM ET and 10/21/26 2–7 PM ET)

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