



EcoCity CLEVELAND

IDEAS AND TOOLS FOR A SUSTAINABLE BIOREGION

\$2

Vol. 8, Numbers 2-3 March/April 2001
Editor/writer: David Beach

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runs into creek



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will be new home for enviros



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Good words

March is a month of rebirth,
the first hint of the warmth
and blue skies of spring to come.
Signs of spring are in amazing places.

One warm March afternoon
in Rocky River Reservation,
I borrowed a sensitive medical stethoscope
and listened carefully against the bark
of a sugar maple tree.

Sure enough, I was rewarded
with the soft hiss of sap
flowing upwards into the treetops,
feeding the buds and leaves
and flowers to come,
bringing life to another year.

— Robert Hinkle
Cleveland Metroparks

Treat nature as a model and a mentor,
not as an inconvenience
to be evaded or controlled.

— William McDonough

RAIL VISIONS IN THE MIDWEST



High speed for the Midwest: Passenger trains like this could soon be traveling rail corridors in Ohio and other Midwestern states. This train from Talgo Corp. tilts when rounding curves, enabling speeds of up to 125 mph on conventional track.

As highways and airports
grow more congested,
passenger rail is looking less like a relic of the past
and more like an economically and environmentally
preferred alternative.

And the Midwest is the perfect place
for a high-speed rail network,
since major cities are spaced to make rail
a competitive transportation option.

See pages 8-11

What if rail?

One of our jobs at EcoCity Cleveland is to ask, "What if...?" As a small, nonprofit organization, we have the political independence and the mission to question assumptions, challenge the status quo, provoke debate, and help people imagine how to create cities that are in better balance with nature.

One of our most persistent questions is "What if we were not so dependent on the automobile?" This is a tough one. The automobile is such a part of our psyche, daily reality, and regional economy that it's hard to imagine a world in which people had real choices about how to get around. But we keep wondering: How much traffic congestion can we tolerate? How much polluting fossil fuel can we burn for transportation? How can we design great cities for people when so much land is required to serve the automobile?

In this issue, we raise one of the most promising alternatives to the car — passenger rail. There is growing support for a greatly expanded passenger rail system in the Midwest. And it's not just support from nostalgic rail buffs. It's broad support from people who understand how a 21st century rail system could provide competitive service between Midwestern cities, protect the environment, and help redevelop urban centers.

Try to imagine the incredible rail system we could have in the Midwest if a portion of all the billions of dollars now being spent to widen highways and expand airports was instead invested in tracks and trains. Imagine taking a fast, convenient train to your next meeting in Columbus (no more boring drive down I-71!). It could happen. It's just a matter of changing the public policies that currently support cars and planes and neglect the alternatives.

You liked it

Our last issue, which featured our project, "What We Love...and What We Don't: Images of the Western Reserve," was one of our most popular. We have received many comments from readers that they enjoyed looking at all the pictures of the built environment and comparing their preferences with the scores of our workshop participants. We also have heard from several local communities who are interested in developing visual design guidelines, and we have received inquiries from around the country, including from the Maryland Department of Planning and from the leading growth management organization in Pennsylvania.

Thanks

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—David Beach
Editor



Mission

EcoCity Cleveland is a nonprofit, tax-exempt, educational organization.

Through the publication of the *EcoCity Cleveland Journal* and other programs, it will stimulate ecological thinking about the Northeast Ohio region (Cuyahoga Bioregion), nurture an EcoCity Network among local groups working on urban and environmental issues, and promote sustainable ways to meet basic human needs for food, shelter, productive work and stable communities.

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Airport expansion crashes into creek

The biggest obstacle to the expansion of Cleveland Hopkins Airport may turn out to be a little creek – not the \$1.4 billion cost of new runways and other facilities, not the long approval process of the Federal Aviation Administration, not the opposition of surrounding communities.

The creek is Abram Creek, a tributary of the Rocky River that winds around the southwest end of the airport runways. In order to build a new runway and extend an existing one, airport officials plan to bury more than a mile of the creek in a culvert. Eighty-eight acres of wetlands would also be filled.

The problem is that it may be illegal to destroy that much of a living stream by placing it in a culvert. Water quality experts at the Ohio EPA believe that the project would render Abram Creek unable to meet warmwater habitat criteria. This would require the creek's "use designation" to be downgraded to modified warmwater habitat (see quote below). And the federal Clean Water Act does not allow states to allow such degradation of water quality.

This puts the Ohio EPA in a difficult position. The agency is now considering the permit application from the airport that would allow the creek and wetlands to be filled. If the Ohio EPA grants the permit, the agency will likely be sued for violating the Clean Water Act. Such a lawsuit would have a good chance of success, and even if unsuccessful, the case could tie up the airport expansion project for years. In addition, the agency is concerned about the precedent it might set by allowing a mile of



Abram Creek by Cleveland Hopkins Airport: Runway expansion plans would bury a mile of the creek in a culvert.

Photo by Ohio EPA

stream to be destroyed. The action would seriously undermine Ohio EPA's regulatory authority and invite proposals to destroy streams all over the state.

But if the agency does not approve the permit, it invites the anger of elected officials and business leaders throughout Northeast Ohio. The airport expansion is the top priority of the local business community, as convenient air service is viewed as a key to economic development. The expansion is already several years behind schedule, and the City of Cleveland

is desperate to get the job done as soon as possible. Already, the airport's major airline, Continental, is being forced to cancel flights for lack of runway capacity.

Some time ago, Ohio EPA staff warned airport officials that the culverting plan might run into regulatory problems. But the warnings were ignored.

The airport officials seem to have assumed that the

destruction of the creek was a given and that all they had to worry about was how much mitigation would be required to make up for the damage. Indeed, they devised an elaborate mitigation plan, promising to spend lots of money to preserve and restore streams and wetlands throughout the region (including two wetlands sites in Lorain County, Woodiebrook Creek and Spring Brook in Geauga County, Doan Brook in Cuyahoga County, and Elk Creek in Lorain County). The mitigation funds won political support even from local stream protection activists, who were eager to get funds to restore the streams they cared about and were willing to write off Abram Creek as a lost cause. (Although not a bad stream, Abram Creek is largely inaccessible to the public and does not have a constituency of defenders.)

In recent weeks, Ohio EPA staff have pleaded with the airport officials to devise a compromise expansion plan that would not obliterate the creek. But at this late date, that will be difficult to do. The logical alternatives (shorter runways? relocate I-480 to permit expansion to the north?) are either unacceptable to airport planners or very costly.

So it's a real dilemma. It is extremely unfortunate that airport expansion plans have gone this far in the face of this possible violation of the Clean Water Act.

Downgrading aquatic life

The proposal by the City of Cleveland Department of Port Control would permanently alter a significant portion of the lower segment of Abram Creek which currently has the highest quality and highest potential for restoration. In addition, the installation of the culvert would effectively isolate the upper watershed of Abram Creek from the Rocky River, and would permanently eliminate the potential for fish passage from the Rocky River to the upper watershed. This isolation would further depress the potential for the restoration of the upper segments of Abram Creek by eliminating any possibility for the natural recolonization of the upper Abram Creek watershed by fish from the Rocky River. The likely consequence of this modification would be a future decision to downgrade the aquatic life use designation of the upper stream reaches of Abram Creek to Modified Warmwater Habitat...

— Ohio EPA, *Total Maximum Daily Loads for the Rocky River Basin*, November 2000

Home at last

Local environmental groups plan center in green building

Ecological innovation is becoming contagious on the west side of Cleveland. Now there are plans for a Cleveland Environmental Center to go along with the budding successes of the EcoVillage development, waste reduction projects involving local businesses, and restaurants serving local, organic cuisine.

The idea of having an ecologically-friendly building to house Cleveland's environmental organizations has been discussed for more than 10 years. The project is now moving forward thanks to an innovative partnership between non-profit and for-profit groups—the Cleveland Green Building Coalition (GBC), Ohio City Near West Development Corporation, and Cleveland Urban Properties—and the availability of a 25,000-square-foot landmark bank building at 3500 Lorain Ave. Having secured major funding from the George Gund Foundation, the Cleveland Foundation, and the Abington Foundation, the project partners hope to have the building ready for tenants by the Spring of 2002.

Historic and green

Ed Small, the for-profit developer associated with the partnership, believes the project will result in a building that combines cutting-edge environmental design and historic renovation to create a one-of-a-kind office environment in Cleveland. The project hopes to be the first commercial retrofit in Ohio to earn LEED certification (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), signifying superior resource efficiency. It will also be one of the first examples in the nation of reconciling LEED with historic tax credit requirements.

The restoration of an existing building is itself a green thing to do, since it allows the reuse of materials on a site that has already been developed. With this particular building, the massive limestone walls will contribute to energy conservation. The abundant windows will facilitate natural daylighting, which saves energy and improves occupant productivity. Other green building features could include a geothermal energy system, radiant floor heating, high-efficiency windows, and a variety of healthy and recycled materials, such as recycled and recyclable low-VOC carpeting, zero-VOC paints, and bamboo flooring. The building also is well served by transit and will have facilities to encourage commuting by bicycle.

In addition to demonstrating green building techniques, the development also will have a positive impact on community redevelopment efforts. The building is at the corner of Lorain Avenue and Fulton Road in the Ohio City neighborhood. Both streets are receiving concentrated redevelopment attention.

After completion, the building will become the home of a consortium of nonprofit environmental organizations, who will qualify for below-market rate rents and be able to share office facilities. EcoCity Cleveland, the GBC, League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, Environmental Health Watch and others are considering joining the consortium. The building will also include for-profit tenants, who will be able to take advantage of the building's beauty, healthy indoor air quality, and energy savings.

The consortium concept is gaining popularity. Pittsburgh is the home of a similar environmental consortium with a green building. The Thoreau Center in San Francisco houses various organizations promoting socially responsible missions. And Portland, OR, is currently retrofitting a building to showcase both ecological principles and organizations.

The benefits of such building consortiums include the synergies of groups working together and increased prestige in the community. The Cleveland Environmental Center will be a visible manifestation of the ideals championed by the environmental community. □

— Manda M. Gillespie



Green rehab: Planning is underway to turn the old bank building at the corner of Lorain Avenue and Fulton Road in the Ohio City neighborhood into office space for local environmental organizations and other businesses.

Photo by Sadhu Johnston/Cleveland GBC



Community generates ideas for EcoVillage homes

The Cleveland EcoVillage project kicked off the design process for its first major housing development with a community design workshop on February 3. More than 60 participants provided input on landscaping, community issues, architecture, material use, and energy sources.

The new development is expected to include 20 town houses on a site along W. 58th Street just north of Lorain Ave. The homes will integrate green building techniques, such as energy efficiency, passive solar design, reduction of storm water run-off and healthy materials, while striving for urban design that fosters pedestrian character, neighborly interaction, and architectural quality.

Here are some of the ideas produced at the community workshop:

Landscaping

- Incorporate community space into the town house site.
- Arrange buildings to support native plants.
- Keep existing trees and incorporate larger shade trees.
- Create rear yards that offer some privacy and protection.
- Provide porches to allow interaction between public and private spaces.
- Include a solar dial to track the progress of the sun.
- Pay attention to rain water—integrate systems with slanted roofs to bring rain water into the soil, avoid allowing the rain water to flow through gutters and then into the sewers.
- Not everything can go onto the site—work with the Zone Rec Center and other facilities to create a play area for kids, parks, dog walking sites, and bike trails in a nearby area.

Community issues

- Focus on making houses fit into the neighborhood.
- Create programs that prohibit absentee landlords.
- Work as a group to monitor the site before construction and watch the streets after construction.
- Work with Zone Rec to create more usable community recreational space.
- Create retail activity across from Zone Rec to help watch over that space.

- Insure that the homes are marketable.
- Design the homes to attract a variety of people into the neighborhood—singles and couples, old and young, etc.

Architecture and material use

- De-emphasize the automobile—keep them out of public spaces and create a garage option (maybe use car-ports or have optional garages/parking spaces in rear).
- Have the houses front the street—set back one or two to create a public space in front.
- Develop a diversity of buildings with architectural texture and distinctiveness.
- Design the inside unit for versatility—possibly a half-story basement/first floor space for rental, expansion, or office.



Detroit-Shoreway residents discuss plans for new town homes on W. 58th Street.

- Create beautiful buildings with native materials.

Energy sources

- Create an ultra-efficient building, the best source of energy is conservation.
- Ensure long-term and up-front affordability through efficient energy systems.
- Design for adaptability in regard to energy systems, allowing for homes to upgrade as technologies advance.
- Make the homes educational for the occupants and neighborhood by explaining ecological features.
- Incorporate salvaged materials.
- Include new technologies as demonstrations.
- Design for cohabitation of nature and building.

The Cleveland EcoVillage project aims to incorporate the best environmental thinking in the redevelopment of the neighborhood around the W. 65th Rapid station. Project partners are the Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization and EcoCity Cleveland. Because the EcoVillage aims to introduce many new design techniques to the Cleveland area, a special effort is being made to create opportunities for the lessons learned to be shared with the local neighborhood and the local building community.

For more information, call David Rowe at 216-961-4242 or Manda Gillespie at 216-932-3007.

Green building workshops and speakers

April 23

Integrating Green Design into Residential Building workshop with instructors Joseph P. Lustibureck, Ph.D and P.Eng. and Betsy Pettit, AIA. This workshop is an opportunity to work with two of the country's leading experts to review plans and develop strategies to improve indoor air quality and decrease environmental impact while maximizing financial savings. The workshop will use as a case study 20 green town homes currently being developed by Detroit Shoreway in the Cleveland EcoVillage. Advanced registration required. Discount offered to EcoCity Cleveland members.

May 8

John Knott, Jr. will be speaking as part of the *Redesigning Cleveland Speaker Series*, 5:30 p.m. at the Cleveland Public Library, Louis Stokes Wing. John Knott is the managing director of Dewees Island, an oceanfront island retreat dedicated to environmental preservation and recognized as one of the leading environmental developments in the nation. Free and open to the public, but please preregister at www.clevelandgbc.org.

July 21-23

Workshop on **Natural Building Construction: Straw Bale, Cob, and Straw/Clay**, an opportunity to learn natural building design principles while contributing toward the construction of a hybrid straw bale, cob and straw/clay building. Conducted by Mark Hoberecht, NASA engineer and founder and president of Natural Homesteads Inc.

To register or find out more about these workshops and educational events contact the Cleveland Green Building Coalition at 216-623-0033 or see www.clevelandgbc.org.

Hot air

President Bush announced recently that he would reverse a campaign pledge and not seek to regulate power plants' emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂), a gas that is a major contributor to global warming. The reversal came despite mounting evidence of climate change, as well as the admission of major corporations, such as Ford Motor and BP, that the key to a sustainable—and profitable—future lies in redesigning our industrial economy so that it runs on clean, renewable energy sources that do not destabilize global climate.

The U.S. continues to be the largest emitter of global-warming emissions—producing per capita more than double that of our average industrial counterpart. U.S. emissions of regulated pollutants (such as lead, ozone, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter) have decreased significantly in recent years, while CO₂ emissions have continued to rise—nearly 12 percent in the 1990s. In 1997, the Kyoto Protocol treaty established a goal of returning to pre-1990 emission levels for industrial nations—with the U.S. target set at a 7% reduction by 2012. But the U.S. Senate has refused to ratify the treaty, and the Bush Administration is seeking to withdraw from previous Kyoto commitments, a move which is being denounced by the leaders of more responsible nations.

On February 24, Oberlin College hosted a panel of climate-change experts to discuss the latest research on global warming. Here are some of the disturbing trends:

- **Temperature rising:** The average global temperature is now projected to rise between 2.5 to 10.4 degrees Fahrenheit by 2100, probably the highest rate of warming in the last 10,000 years. This will cause acute heat waves and water shortages, declining food production, the proliferation of deadly diseases such as malaria and dengue fever, and a more variable hydrological cycle (greater precipitation and flooding in some regions, and more severe droughts in other regions).

- **Glaciers melting:** Between one-third and one-half of existing mountain glacier mass could disappear during the next 100 years. In Glacier National Park in Montana, the number of glaciers has dwindled from 150 in 1850 to fewer than 50 today, and the remaining glaciers could disappear within 30 years. Greenland's melting ice sheet is losing 51 billion cubic meters of water each year, an amount equal to the annual flow of the Nile River. And within 50 years, the Arctic Ocean could be ice-free during the summer. All this melting ice can accelerate



global warming — with less ice to reflect sunlight back into space, more sunlight is absorbed by the earth.

- **Sea levels rising:** Melting mountain glaciers and ice sheets lead to rising sea level. In the past 100 years, sea level has risen four to six inches, and it is expected to rise another six inches to three feet by 2100. A 19-inch sea level rise would put approximately 92 million people at risk of flooding.

- **Ecosystems disappearing:** Entire forest types may disappear, and northern boreal forests are likely to experience large-scale losses of living trees. Many coastal ecosystems are also at risk, including saltwater marshes, mangroves, wetlands, coral reefs and river deltas. Already, the world has lost 27 percent of its coral reefs.

- **Costs accruing:** Environmental degradation is also leading to more severe natural disasters, which have cost the world \$608 billion over the last decade (as much as in the previous four decades combined).

- **U.S. pollution continuing:** The United States uses more than one third of the world's transport energy. The transportation sector is the fastest-growing source of carbon emissions. Road traffic, which accounted for 58 percent of worldwide transportation carbon emissions in 1990, claimed 73 percent by 1997. In addition to transportation, power plants are a major source of carbon dioxide releases in the U.S.

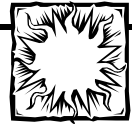
— Manda M. Gillespie

See page 17 for upcoming speakers and events on energy and global warming.

Global warming resources

- Business Environmental Leadership Council, <http://www.pewclimate.org/belc/index.html>.
- Global Climate Coalition, <http://www.globalclimate.org/>.
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, <http://www.ipcc.ch/>.
- Midwest Global Warming Leadership Council, www.elpc.org/energy/mgwlc.htm.
- Ozone Action, <http://www.ozone.org/>.
- Pew Center on Global Climate Change, <http://www.pewclimate.org/>.
- Public Agenda Online, <http://www.publicagenda.org/>.
- World Watch Institute, www.worldwatch.org.

A global citizen



The global movement for sustainability lost one of its best and clearest thinkers with the recent death of Donella Meadows. Meadows was a professor at Dartmouth College and the writer of a widely syndicated weekly column, "The Global Citizen." She also was a pioneer in systems analysis and was the author or co-author of nine books, including: *The Limits to Growth* (1972), *The Electronic Oracle: Computer Models and Social Decisions* (1983), *The Global Citizen* (1991), and *Beyond the Limits* (1992).

Here is the last column Meadows wrote, dated February 2, 2001. As with most of her writings, it focuses on relationships – the relationships between the trends affecting global ecosystems, and the relationships between human beings and our hopes and fears.

Polar Bears and Three-Year-Olds on Thin Ice

The place to watch for global warming — the sensitive point, the canary in the coal mine — is the Arctic. If the planet as a whole warms by one degree, the poles will warm by about three degrees. Which is just what is happening.

Ice now covers 15 percent less of the Arctic Ocean than it did 20 years ago. In the 1950s that ice averaged 10 feet thick; now it's less than six feet thick. At the current rate of melting, in 50 years the northern ocean could be ice-free all summer long.

That, says an article in *Science* of January 19, would be the end of polar bears. In fact many creatures of the Arctic Ocean are already in trouble.

Until recently no one knew that there were many creatures of the Arctic Ocean. In the 1970s a Russian biologist named Melnikov discovered 200 species of tiny organisms, algae and zooplankton, hanging around ice floes in immense numbers, forming slime jungles on the bottoms of bergs and plankton clouds in every break of open water. Their carcasses fall to the bottom to nourish clams, which are eaten by walrus. Arctic cod live on algae scraped off the ice. The cod are eaten by seabirds, whales, and seals. The king of the food chain, hunting mainly seals, is the great white bear.

That was the system until the ice started to thin. In 1997 and 1998 Melnikov returned to the Beaufort Sea and found most of the plankton species, many named by him (and for him), were gone. The ice was nearly gone. Creatures dependent on the plankton (like the cod), or on the ice for dens (seals) or for travel (bears) were gone too.

Many had just moved north, following the ice, but that means moving farther from land, with widening stretches of open water between. Creatures like the black guillemot, a bird that depends on land for shelter and the ice floe for food, can no longer bridge the gap.

The Arctic is changing faster than scientists can document. Inuit hunters report that ivory gulls are disappearing; no one knows why. Mosquitoes are moving north, attacking murre, which will not move from their nests, so they are literally sucked and stung to death. Caribou can no longer count on thick ice to support their island-hopping in search of the lichens that sustain them. One

biologist who spots caribou from the air says, "You sometimes see a caribou trail heading across [the ice], then a little wormhole at the end with a bunch of antlers sticking out."

Hudson's Bay polar bears are thinner and are producing fewer cubs. With the ice going out earlier, their seal-hunting season is shrinking. Hungry bears retreat to land and ransack garbage dumps. The town of Churchill in Canada has more jail cells for bears than for people. The bears are also weakened by toxic chemicals that drift north from industrial society and accumulate in the Arctic food chain.

Every five years the world's climatologists assess current knowledge about global warming. Their latest report was just released. It erases any doubt about where this warming is coming from and warns that we ain't seen nothing yet. If we keep spewing out greenhouse gases according to pattern, we will see three to ten times more warming over the 21st century than we saw over the 20th.

Some biologists are saying the polar bear is doomed.

A friend of mine, in response to this news, did the only appropriate thing. She burst out weeping. "What am I going to tell my three-year-old?" she sobbed. Any of us still in contact with our hearts and souls should be sobbing with her, especially when we consider that the same toxins that are in the bears are in the three-year-old. And that the three-year-old over her lifetime may witness collapsing ecosystems, north to south, until all creatures are threatened, especially top predators like polar bears and people.

Is there any way to end this column other than in gloom? Can I give my friend, you, myself any honest hope that our world will not fall apart? Does our only possible future consist of watching the disappearance of the polar bear, the whale, the tiger, the elephant, the redwood tree, the coral reef, while fearing for the three-year-old?

Heck, I don't know. There's only one thing I do know. If we believe that it's effectively over, that we are fatally flawed, that the most greedy and short-sighted among us will always be permitted to rule, that we can never constrain our consumption and destruction, that each of us is too small and helpless to do anything, that we should just give up and enjoy our SUVs while they

last, well, then yes, it's over. That's the one way of believing and behaving that gives us a guaranteed outcome.

Personally I don't believe that stuff at all. I don't see myself or the people around me as fatally flawed. Everyone I know wants polar bears and three-year-olds in our world. We are not helpless and there is nothing wrong with us except the strange belief that we are helpless and there's something wrong with us. All we need to do, for the bear and ourselves, is to stop letting that belief paralyze our minds, hearts, and souls. □

For more information about Donella Meadows, see www.sustainer.org.

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Reviving rail in the Midwest

By Ken Prendergast

Many plans have come and gone over the years for improving passenger rail service in the Midwest. But none have advanced past the STP stage — Study, Talk, Plan. That is, until now.

The latest plan is the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MRRI), which proposes a 12-route network of fast passenger rail services spider-webbing outward from Chicago across nine states. Most routes would feature short, nimble, fossil fuel-powered trains on existing rights of way, traveling at speeds of up to 110 mph.

Over the next 10 years, tracks would have to be upgraded, stations expanded or built new, signal systems modernized, as well as road-rail crossings improved — such as by building new underpasses, adding “full-closure” gates or closing surplus crossings. The price tag for developing all 12 routes is \$4.8 billion, which would be funded by a mix of federal, state, local and Amtrak dollars.

In the past, some high-speed rail proposals were to cost as much for a single route, such as previous plans for the Cleveland-Columbus-Dayton-Cincinnati (3-C) Corridor. Those were electrically powered “bullet trains,” which required all-new railways before a single wheel could turn. Even some rail advocacy organizations, while supportive of high-speed rail, had many concerns about those



Midwest Regional Rail Initiative: Planning is underway for a passenger rail network that could revolutionize transportation between cities in the Midwest.

earlier plans. On the other hand, the MRRI project seeks a “building block” approach to upgrade existing rail services and increase train velocities, rather than employ the “big bang” approach attempted before. That is why a broad base of support is lining up behind the MRRI project.

Already, a number of states and Amtrak are making the MRRI plan come to life by pumping money into track and station improvements. Amtrak has put \$25 million into Chicago-area track improvements, Illinois plans to invest \$140 million, Michigan has already put up \$25 million, and Wisconsin plans to invest \$60 million. While Ohio has committed no funding thus far, two independent advocacy efforts have been initiated — the 3-C Corridor Campaign and the Cleveland-Toledo-Chicago Corridor Campaign (see page 9). And that’s just the start.

New trains arriving

Last September, Amtrak requested bids from manufacturers for 13 tilting, high-speed trains for use on Midwest routes. Eventually, Amtrak will require another 60 to 70 trains, company officials said. The specifications for these trains offers an exciting insight to future travel in the Midwest’s busiest transportation corridors.

The trainsets, capable of 125-mph, will be powered by diesel-electric or liquified

natural gas engines. As “tilting trains,” they would be able to round existing curves at higher speeds by automatically tilting the entire train to counteract the effects of centrifugal forces. Each train will be able to seat 300-400 passengers in two classes, such as economy and business. In addition, there will be a cafe car, as well as two cars to carry express packages. Amtrak wants to introduce the new trains in 2003 on three routes from Chicago: to Detroit, to St. Louis, and to Madison via Milwaukee.

Challenges and opportunities

Two of the MRRI routes from Chicago would serve Ohio — to Toledo and Cleveland; and to Cincinnati. A third route — the 3-C Corridor — is being added to the network by the Ohio Rail Development Commission. It, like the other routes, will be developed incrementally, as funding becomes available.

The addition of multiple-daily passenger trains operating at 110 mph seems like an engineering and operational challenge. In reality, those are the least of the challenges facing the MRRI. While freight train traffic is heavy on many remaining rail lines across Ohio, most of the MRRI routes would use rail lines that once had one or two more tracks than they have now. Laying a new, passenger-only track along these lines typically costs about \$1 million per mile

Time for trains

- Trains provide more mobility and travel choices.
- Trains are energy-efficient — Intercity (Amtrak) trains are far more efficient than airlines (2441 Btu's per passenger-mile vs. 3999 for airlines in 1998, according to the Oak Ridge National Laboratory).
- Increased use of trains reduces America's dependence on foreign oil.
- Trains are safe, especially in bad weather.
- Trains contribute to development which is more compact and less wasteful than auto-oriented development.
- Trains pollute less than other modes of transportation.

— National Association of Railroad Passengers

(including trackside signals, rebuilt bridges and other accessories).

This is a veritable bargain compared to adding lanes in highway medians or building more airport runways. The 10-year widening and reconstruction of I-71 between Cleveland and Columbus will cost more than \$500 million while airport expansions costing in excess of \$1 billion each are planned at Chicago, Cleveland and Dayton.

The cost differential between rail projects and their road/air competitors is becoming more noticeable to transportation planners and elected officials, as the lowest-cost highway and airport solutions are being exhausted. Highway medians and existing airport properties are being filled in, meaning that future expansions will require property to be acquired, buildings to be demolished and natural lands to be leveled. Developing advanced passenger rail services involves none of these challenges.

The real challenge in Ohio is twofold — there is no ongoing, taxpayer-financed program to pay for advanced passenger services; and there is enough skepticism about the desirability or need for passenger rail among elected officials to prevent them from legislating an ongoing source of funding.

Past rail proposals offered either too little or too much for skeptical rail officials to sink their teeth into. A recent, \$50 million plan for adding service between Cleveland and Columbus, for example, offered only two daily round trips, a 45-mph average speed, omitted Dayton and Cincinnati, and would carry only 82,000 people a year. At the other end of the scale, a sales tax was proposed during the recession of the early 1980s to build all-new bullet trains for more than \$11 billion. Both plans failed to win support.

In contrast, the MRR1 takes a middle-ground approach. While 110 mph is the goal, the plan would begin with modest steps, such as implementing train service with one or two daily round trips using mail and package express shipments to provide a market-driven alternative to state-sponsored operating subsidies. This approach is already occurring on the Cleveland-Chicago corridor, where three trains in each direction are now available (with a fourth train due in 2001), but top speeds are still restricted to less than 80 mph.

This is where the MRR1's strength lies. If a basic level of passenger rail service fails to meet ridership expectations, then no further development is warranted. But if it is warranted, then each route can be

improved, section by section, targeting the slowest parts first. Over a period of a decade or so, as more sections are upgraded and ridership grows, more trains would be added.

Connections to Ohio

At full build-out, advanced passenger rail services as early as 2010 would offer at least eight daily round trips from Cleveland to Toledo and Chicago, and Cleveland to Columbus, Dayton and Cincinnati, plus a number of intermediate cities like Sandusky, Elyria, Galion-Mansfield and a suburban station in Brook Park, serving Cleveland Hopkins International Airport.

Express trains from Cleveland would make the run to Cincinnati in 3.5 hours, and

to Chicago in four hours. Local trains would serve more stations, therefore taking about a half-hour longer to make these runs. Considering that the Federal Aviation Administration says the average time airline passengers spend in airports is now up to 70 minutes per flight, the train becomes increasingly competitive on those 100- to 400-mile trips. This is especially true since trains not only serve the central business districts of cities, but enroute suburbs as well.

Why rail?

Not only would trains be faster than cars and almost as fast as air travel, but rail fares would be about two-thirds the cost of



Campaigns promote Ohio rail corridors

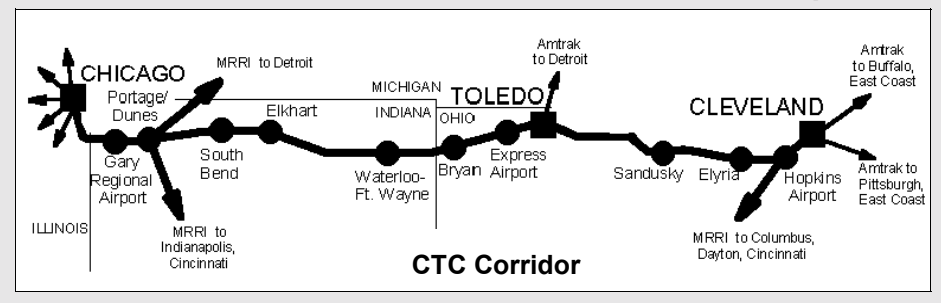
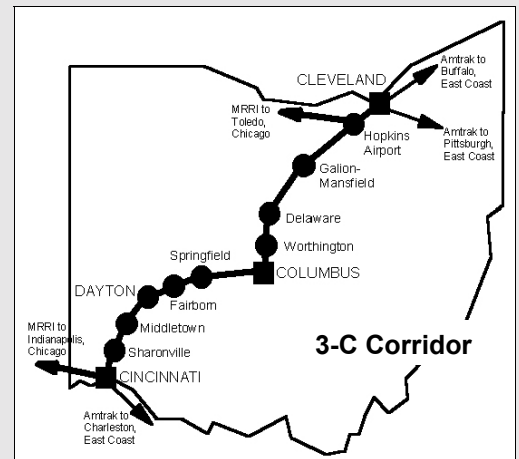
A number of businesses, economic development groups, environmental organizations and public officials have announced campaigns to promote fast, modern passenger rail services along two routes in Ohio — the Cleveland-Columbus-Cincinnati (3-C) Corridor and the Cleveland-Toledo-Chicago (CTC) Corridor.

The 3-C and CTC Corridors are part of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative, a cooperative effort between nine state departments of transportation, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and Amtrak. The FRA recently designated the 3-C and CTC Corridors as eligible for federal high-speed rail planning and construction funds. Plans developed by the MRR1 and the Ohio Railroad Development Commission envision eight daily round trips on both corridors, offering endpoint-to-endpoint travel times of less than four hours.

This level of service will give weary travelers convenient alternatives to the region's growing traffic congestion on the highways and in the airways. For time-conscious travelers, modern trains offer cafes, meeting rooms, fax machines, telephones and other amenities that convert travel time into productive time.

Advanced rail service will also pull redevelopment dollars into older central cities (where most rail stations are, or will be located), creating a counter force to urban sprawl. And there are many direct environmental benefits. For example, a diesel-powered high-speed train, with an average passenger load, is 177 percent more efficient (in terms of energy use and pollution emissions) than a commercial jetliner with an average load, and 131 percent more efficient than the average car on the road today.

Maps from OARP



driving, or about half as much as flying. Amtrak also provides some air-rail fare plans, suggesting the possibility that trains can fill the role of connecting flights in this country, just as they do in Europe.

More than one third of all flights at most major airports like Cleveland Hopkins are to cities less than 400 miles away — a market where rail can be very competitive. The FAA predicts that domestic air travel will rise from 650 million trips in 2000, to 1 billion by 2010, a statistic that should keep elected officials awake at night, as airport congestion increases and airport expansions reach their practical limits.

Last, but certainly not least, building advanced passenger rail services means advancing the cause of our urban cores. Rail services will go where the rail lines go — to the hearts of cities, both big and small. In Elyria, on the Cleveland-Chicago rail corridor, the Lorain County Commissioners recently purchased the historic New York Central depot so it could be renovated for use as a transportation center. It would not only serve passenger rail, but Lorain County Transit buses, Greyhound buses, taxis, bicycles and pedestrians. The 75-year-old depot is located in the heart of Elyria, and figures prominently into the city's plans for rejuvenating its downtown core with shops, offices and housing in a pedestrian-oriented setting.

In downtown Cleveland, trains to and from Chicago, Cincinnati, plus Pittsburgh and the East Coast, would focus on the city's lakefront, at a place to be called the North Coast Transportation Center. The seeds for this multi-modal transportation center already exist — Amtrak's Lakefront Station today hosts daily trains, Greyhound buses, taxis and is an on-request stop for the Regional Transit Authority's light-rail



Cleveland's lakefront, now site of a second-rate Amtrak station, could become a multi-modal transportation center for high-speed trains, RTA's Waterfront Line, buses and taxis.

Waterfront Line.

Plans for the North Coast Transportation Center have been proposed by the RTA as part of an expanded convention center. But the current station is inadequate now for a major city like Cleveland, particularly as Amtrak and Greyhound services continue to increase here. If commuter rail services happen to any degree, then this only underscores the need for an even larger investment to expand and improve this transportation facility.

Funding rail

How will funding happen? Probably in bits and pieces. The key, however, is your state and federal legislators.

At the end of January, the High Speed Rail Reinvestment Act (S. 250) was introduced in the U.S. Senate with 51 Senators cosponsoring the bill, including Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, Senate Minority Leader Thomas Daschle and Ohio Senator Mike DeWine. The measure allows Amtrak to raise \$12 billion in capital funding for high-speed rail projects nationwide. The bill has strong bipartisan support from lawmakers and is considered a top legislative priority of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National Governors Association, and many other business, labor and environmental organizations.

Senators and Congressional

representatives from other states haven't been waiting at the station platform. They've been working hard to secure federal funding, earmarked for speeding up passenger rail services in their states, such as in Nevada, Oklahoma, North Carolina and others which have far less population density than Ohio does. Some states are taking the initiative themselves. Vermont, Virginia, New York, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Michigan and many more states are committing hundreds of millions of dollars to their own rail programs and leveraging federal funds where they can. Ohio can and should follow suit.

Ohio is the eighth-most densely populated state in the nation. Yet, among the 15th-most populous states in the union, Ohio is the only one not to have an active, ongoing passenger rail program. That has to change if we are to compete for jobs with those states that are offering a diversified transportation system. That system includes fast passenger rail services, providing an environmentally benign, stress-free, low-cost and productive alternative for Ohioans who no longer want to be handcuffed to the steering wheels of their cars. □

Ken Prendergast is vice president of the Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers and a longtime rail transportation advocate.

Getting involved

For more information about supporting the 3-C Corridor Campaign and the Cleveland-Toledo-Chicago Corridor Campaign, call 216-529-7677 or the hotline of the Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers, 614-470-0334.

Rail resources

- Amtrak, www.amtrak.com or 1-800-USA-RAIL.
- Environmental Law and Policy Center of the Midwest, 312-673-6500 or www.elpc.org.
- Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, www.gcrta.org.
- Midwest High Speed Rail Coalition, www.midwestsr.com or 312-409-7723.
- Midwest Regional Rail Initiative report, www.dot.state.wi.us/opa/rail.html.
- National Association of Railroad Passengers, www.narprail.org.
- 3-C Corridor and C-T-C Corridor Campaigns and the Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers, 216-529-7677 or 614-470-0334, on the Web at www.oarprail.org.
- Ohio Rail Development Commission, www.dot.state.oh.us/ohiorail/ or 614-644-0306.

Highways at the limit

Traffic volumes in the (I-71) corridor... have grown at a rate of over 20 percent over the past five years and are projected to grow at a rate of 50 percent in the next 20 years. ODOT is approaching its ultimate build-out of the I-71 Corridor with respect to the interstate. Additional right of way would likely be required for additional pavement beyond the third lane in the rural sections of I-71. The need for additional right of way may make more pavement on I-71 cost prohibitive.

— Ohio Department of Transportation report on the I-71 pavement reconstruction program, 1998



Poll says Ohioans want trains

More than eight of 10 Ohio adults want the state government to develop passenger rail service, as it does with highways. And, among the solutions for reducing highway and airport traffic, twice as many Ohioans favored developing high-speed rail services than their next favorite option — expanding highways or airports.

Those are some of the results from a recent poll conducted by Ohio State University's Center for Survey Research for the Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers (OARP).

"The public is saying they want changes to our government's public policy toward transportation spending," said OARP president Bill Hutchison. "People are tired of congestion and they want to use advanced passenger trains as the way out."

Among the poll's other findings:

- If federal funding is available for improving passenger rail services, two of every three (65%) Ohioans said state money should be used to attract these funds to Ohio, while fewer than one out of five (18.1%) neither favored nor opposed the state doing that. Only 13.7% of Ohioans opposed using state funds to attract federal dollars for Ohio passenger rail improvements.

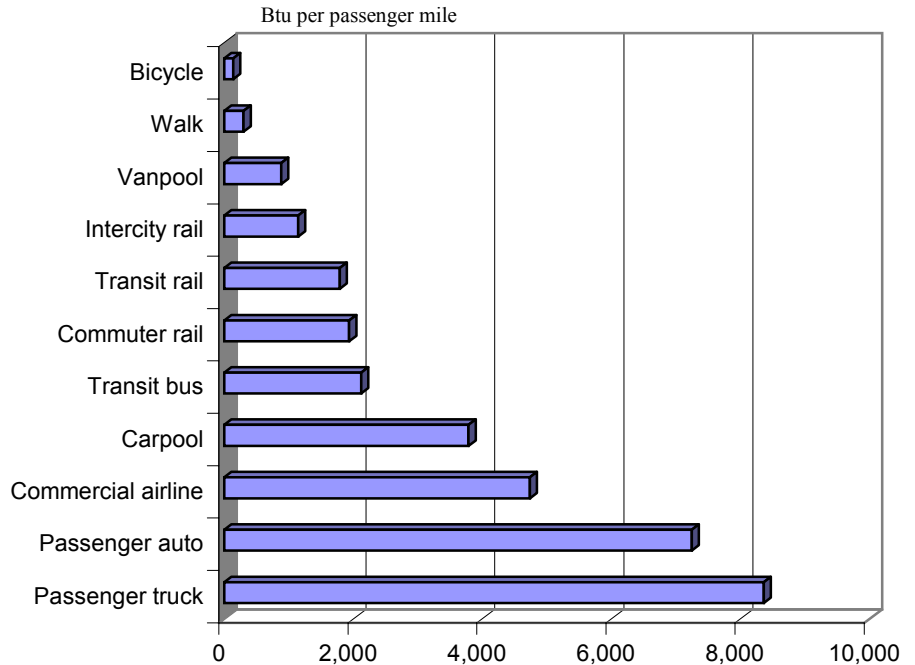
- More than half of Ohioans, 53.5%, said the best way to relieve road traffic congestion is to "improve all forms of transportation including mass transit and high-speed rail." Another 10.2% said traffic congestion should be reduced by changing land use patterns, such as curbing urban sprawl. A clear minority — only about one out of four Ohioans (27.9%) — said the solution is to expand or build more highways and roads.

- If a system of fast, modern passenger trains were available to Ohioans, more than four out of five polled (83.8%) said it was somewhat likely or very likely they would consider taking a train to a destination 75-300 miles from home.

- Nearly three out of four Ohioans, or 74%, said they believed a modern, convenient and efficient passenger rail network would improve the quality of life in Ohio. Only three out of 20 people (16.5%) said it would not.

For more information about the poll, call 216-529-7677 or see www.oarprail.org.

Energy use by vehicle for commuting



Relative energy intensity of passenger commute vehicles, 1987. Source: Union of Concerned Scientists; reprinted from *Steering a New Course* by Deborah Gordon

Mayors for rail

Rail transportation can be a solution to the growing crisis of traffic and air congestion — problems that are strangling economic growth and threatening the quality of life in cities and communities from coast to coast. That was the message from the more than 300 mayors from across the country who attended a recent U.S.

Conference of Mayors "Summit on a National Rail Policy" in Washington, DC.

The mayors urged President Bush and the Congress to make passenger rail service a top priority. And they released a groundbreaking, nationwide poll that showed strong public backing from residents living outside the central city for passenger rail investment, with a vast majority of respondents (82%) supporting funding for a rail service network as an option to driving their cars.

"We have run precipitously away from rail, as if it were a nostalgic mode of the 1900s, said New Orleans Mayor Marc Morial. "We want to say to President Bush — fuel rail the same way we have fueled airline expansions and highways. It's clear we need other solutions. Ask parents how much time they spend away from their children sitting in traffic. Walk into any major airport. Passenger rail can help us reduce congestion and commuting times."



Acela Express trainset by Bombardier that is now being used for high-speed service in the Northeast corridor.

Linking I-90 and I-480

As new development moves across western Cuyahoga County and eastern Lorain County, there is increasing pressure for wider roads. That part of the region has good highway access running east and west, but it lacks north-south connectors.

One such north-south connector – the \$35 million Crocker/Stearns road through Westlake and North Olmsted – is now moving forward. The Cuyahoga County Engineer is proceeding with wetland mitigation work that it hopes will clear the way for eventual construction.

The next congestion hotspot to the west could be SR 83 through Avon Lake, Avon, and North Ridgeville. The state has long planned a new, high-capacity road to parallel the old SR 83 (and has already built the interchanges on I-90 and I-480). There also is pressure to add another I-90 interchange in Avon to promote more commercial development.

Lakewood mayor joins RTA board

Cleveland and the inner-ring suburbs have new advocates on the board of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority. Lakewood mayor Madeline Cain was added to the board in March, replacing Westlake mayor Dennis Clough. Cain is active in the First Suburbs Consortium.

Other new board members include Ed Kelley, mayor of Cleveland Heights, and Paul Volpe, head of City Architecture and an articulate proponent of urban revitalization and transit-oriented development.

Extending the Towpath Trail through the Flats

At the recent luncheon of the Flats Oxbow Association, Tim Donovan of Ohio Canal Corridor urged the audience to capitalize on the Flats' key location at the northern end of the Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor. The entire corridor stretches more than 110 miles from Lake Erie south through Cuyahoga Valley National Park, through downtown Akron, and onward to Dover and New Philadelphia.

Cleveland Metroparks will extend the popular Towpath Trail north to Harvard Road by late 2001, completing the trail in Cuyahoga County except for a four-mile segment through the Flats (estimated to cost \$9 to \$12 million). County Commissioners have committed more than \$400,000 for a series of planning studies in that final leg.



Good idea

Cleveland Heights is starting to experiment with traffic-calming devices on residential streets where speeding has been a problem. Two humps now force cars to slow down on Scarborough Road.

Some members of the industry-packed Flats Oxbow group question the safety of mixing bicyclists and pedestrians with increasing numbers of heavy trucks in the Flats. Others welcome the plans, hoping an increase in recreational visitors will boost the district's sagging restaurant and club scene, as well as give it a more family-friendly image.

City officials say that completing the Flats Transportation Study (FTS), which will recommend truck routing between the Port of Cleveland and nearby highways, is necessary before bikeways and community development issues can be settled. City Planning Director Hunter Morrison wants to be sure that neither FTS nor the Cleveland Innerbelt Study interfere with a world-class Towpath extension, and he pledges the studies will improve transportation choices and intermodal connections in and around downtown, while also improving truck access.

For a full report on the towpath trail extension, visit <http://planning.co.cuyahoga.oh.us>.

Bike maps

To encourage more bicycle riding, local transportations planners are creating bicycle suitability maps for Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain and Medina counties. The maps rate major roads according to the skill level (basic, intermediate, experienced)

needed to navigate them safely by bike. Other bike paths and facilities are also mapped.

Maps for Lorain and Medina counties have been completed to date. They cost \$2 and are available from the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, 1299 Superior Ave., Cleveland, OH 44114 (also soon available at local bike shops). For more information, call 216-241-2414, ext. 273.

Less driving?

New data from the Federal Highway Administration reports that for the first time in twenty years, the number of vehicle miles driven each year in the U.S. declined in 2000. Yearly Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) dropped by 0.11 percent from 1999 to 2000; VMT in December, 2000 was a full 5.5% below that of December, 1999. In contrast to what may be a new downturn in driving, transit use has increased by 25% over the past several years. The number of boardings grew by 3.5 percent in 2000 alone.

For details on the increase in transit ridership, visit <http://www.apta.com>. For more details on the decrease in vmt, visit <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim/tbtw/tbtpage.htm>.

—Updates compiled by Ryan McKenzie

Green car guide

The greenest cars sold in the U.S. are both made by Honda, says the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy in its annual guide to cars and trucks. The group ranked more than 1,000 vehicles in the model year 2001 and found that the Honda Civic GX, which runs on compressed natural gas, and the Honda Insight, a gas-electric hybrid, were the most environmental on the road. The hybrid Toyota Prius came in third.

The GMC Sierra, Dodge Ram Pickup, and the Ford Excursion, as well as a Ferrari sports car, brought up the rear. For more information, go to www.greencars.org.

Bigger is better?

A surefire competitor for least-green vehicle in 2002 was recently unveiled by DaimlerChrysler. The Unimog mega-SUV is three feet taller than a Chevy Suburban and nearly seven feet longer than a Volkswagen Beetle.

"This thing makes the Hummer look anemic," says a DaimlerChrysler spokesman.

Weighing in at up to 27,500 pounds and achieving only 10 miles per gallon, the Unimog will be available next fall starting at \$84,000.

Car-free days gaining support

Meanwhile, an increasing number of people suggest that the greenest transportation choice is to reduce reliance on cars of all kinds. The first Earth Car-Free Day will be held in communities around the world on Thursday, April 19. The organizers are encouraging participants to focus on the quality of their city's transportation system, social equity and environment, and they're promoting "team work, sustainability, social justice, and direct action by concerned and responsible citizens."

The worldwide event was inspired, in part, by the 6.5 million citizens of Bogotá who recently celebrated their second car-free day, with a city-wide 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. ban on private car traffic. The traffic-choked Colombian capital is the country's largest city and one of South America's fastest-growing metropolitan areas.

Following a successful grassroots event early in 2000, Bogotá's citizens voted last September to annually make the first Thursday of February a car-free day. In the same election, they voted to dramatically restrict city automobile use every day during morning and evening peak hours.

For more information on Car-Free Day



Bus story by Erin Brown

activities around the world, visit www.carfreeday.com.

Wider roads may not be safer

Advocates for highway widenings and capacity additions often justify new projects with claims of traffic safety benefits. But new research suggests the opposite.

A recent study Robert Noland, a lecturer in Transport and the Environment in the Centre for Transport Studies at Imperial College of Science, Technology & Medicine in London and a former policy analyst at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, analyzed data from 50 states over 14 years to determine the effect of highway infrastructure "improvements" (mainly lane widenings and increases in road capacity) on both fatalities and injuries.

His results strongly refute the hypothesis that engineering design improvements have contributed to the reduction in the fatality rate. Instead, findings suggest that such changes have actually led to about 2,000 additional fatalities per year. Other factors, including demographic changes, increased seatbelt use, and advances in medical technology have accounted for a large share of overall reductions in fatalities.

These results have major implications for how highway agencies improve road safety, the cost benefit analysis of highway projects, environmental impact analysis, and new Federal planning regulations that require safety to be considered as a planning factor.

For more information, contact the Smart Growth America and the Surface Transportation Policy Project at 202-974-5131.

Grants for the environment

The following environmental grants were awarded by The George Gund Foundation during the first quarter of 2001. For more information, see www.gundfdn.org.

Conservation of natural systems and biodiversity

\$4,000 Coalition on Biological Diversity
Operating support for this coalition of over 45 foundations interested in biodiversity conservation. CGBD provides program research, coordination and meeting support. Contact: Lynn Lohr, 415-561-6575.

\$73,800 (over two years)

The Nature Conservancy

The Great Lakes Program has identified 270 biodiversity conservation sites in the Great Lakes region, but only 5% of them are under formal protection. This grant will assist identification of threats, planning and coordination of site protection with other agencies and organizations. Contact: Heather Potter, 312-759-8017.



Protection of human health

\$28,000 Citizen's Environmental Coalition
CEC will assist three organizations by providing citizen education workshops in Ohio on groundwater contamination. Contact: Ann Rabe, 716-885-6848.

\$30,000 Greene Environmental Coalition
There are over 1,650 contaminated sites in Ohio. To date, only 14 have been addressed. GEC's Cleanup 2000 project is documenting the state's record of cleanup and advocating for increased cleanup activities. Contact: Bruce Cornett, 937-767-2109.

\$45,000 National Wildlife Federation
The Great Lakes Natural Resource Center continues to work towards elimination of mercury contamination of the Lakes and the human health threats from mercury contaminated fish consumption. Contact: Tim Eder, 734-769-3351.

\$150,000 (over two years)

Ohio Environmental Council

OEC's program encompasses education, policy and technical assistance to groups in Ohio on water and air quality, utility deregulation, energy efficiency, watershed protection, and industrial farms. General support. Contact: Vicki Deisner, 614-487-7506.

Leadership development, non-profit capacity building, and coalition building

\$20,000 Center for Env. Citizenship
CEC's college campus training programs will organize students in Ohio and the Midwest on action issues—both environmental justice and environmental journalism topics. This grant will support training of Ohio-based students. Contact: Susan Comfort, 202-234-5997.

\$2,000 The Tides Center
The first national conference, "Collaborating for Success, Creating and Operating Multi-tenant Nonprofit Centers" will gather together experiences in creating and operating these types of buildings to support nonprofit capacity building. Contact: China Brotsky, 415-561-6337.

Urban sprawl/smart growth

\$65,000 EcoCity Cleveland
ECC's broad agenda includes the Sustainable Communities Symposia, regional open space planning, watershed restoration, the Cleveland EcoVillage, transportation planning and policy reform as well as a variety of public education activities to promote a sustainable Cleveland bioregion. General support. Contact: David Beach, 216-932-3007.

\$25,000 Ohio & Erie Canal Corridor
OECCC works with 45 communities in the Heritage Corridor south of Akron to promote and coordinate Corridor development. Contact: Dan Rice, 330-434-5657.

\$21,300 (over two years)
League of Women Voters Ohio Ed Fund
Working through local civic organizations, the LWV in Cuyahoga County will conduct a series of workshops to assist communities in understanding and addressing local land use and transportation issues. Contact: Carol Gibson, 216-932-8733.

\$45,000 (over two years)
Rails to Trails Conservancy
RTC's Ohio chapter provides statewide planning and assistance to the over 100 trail groups across the state. In 2001 RTC Ohio will establish regional networks in the four quadrants of the state, and assist in the structuring of a state-funded program to award \$35 million for trail development. General support. Contact: John Houser, 614-841-1075.

\$70,245 Western Reserve RC&D
The Countryside Program promotes conservation development zoning in suburban Northeast Ohio. Currently there are 33 communities in Northeast Ohio that have these zoning ordinances in place or in progress. Future plans include research and development

of models for small town/township commercial center conservation development, and research on conservation development for commercial and industrial centers. Contact: Kirby Date, 216-295-0511.

Green Buildings

\$50,000 Ohio City Near West CDC
For the development of the Cleveland Environment Center, a rehabbed green office building that will enhance capacity building by providing below-market rate shared office space for nonprofit environmental organizations in Cleveland. This grant will also purchase equity and subsidize rental rates in the building for the nonprofit environmental tenants. Contact: John Wilbur, 216-781-3222.

\$250,000 Ohio City Near West CDC
Program-related investment (low interest loan) for the Cleveland Environment Center (see above for information).

\$30,000 U.S. Catholic Conference
Common Ground is a non-denominational rural retreat center in Lorain County. This grant will assist green design for expansion of day-use meeting facilities and construction of overnight accommodations. Contact: Rose Bator, 440-965-5552.

Environmental media/public ed.

\$55,000 Citizens Policy Center
CPC's Money and Politics program gathers and analyzes data on campaign contributions in Ohio. This past year emphasis was on Supreme Court election contributions. This project includes training on the CPC database. Contact: Sandy Buchanan, 216-861-5200.



\$22,000 Society of Environmental Journalists
This grant will allow SEJ's Ohio chapter to conduct an annual reporting tour, support an intern and provide fellowships for participation in the national conference. Contact: Beth Parke, 215-884-8174.

\$20,000 Michigan State University
The Great Lakes Environmental Journalism Training Institute gathers 25 journalists from the region for a five-day intensive summer institute on Great Lakes environmental issues. Contact: Jim Detjen, 517-353-9479.

\$25,000 University of Michigan
The Great Lakes Radio Consortium provides 30 minutes of environmental programming a week to 143 public radio stations in 18 states, and reaches an estimated 2.58 million listeners. This grant will also assist training radio journalists. Contact: David Hammond, 734-764-9210.

Cincinnati divided

Northeast Ohio is not the only metropolitan region in Ohio suffering from increasing disparities between rich and poor and inefficient patterns of development. Such trends are also threatening the long-term social and economic prospects of the Cincinnati area, according to a new study by Metropolitan Area Research Corporation (MARC), the consulting firm of Minnesota state legislator Myron Orfield.

The study says: "Despite a strong regional economy over the past decade, sustained population growth and significant reinvestment, concentrated poverty persists in many of its core areas, destabilizing schools and neighborhoods not only in Cincinnati itself but also in a growing number of cities surrounding Cincinnati, such as Covington, Newport and Norwood. The social need associated with this concentrated poverty dramatically limits the life opportunities of those left behind in dense poor neighborhoods. They also contribute to sprawling development patterns at the edges of the region as these communities become less desirable places to live or locate businesses—increasing the pressure to accommodate population growth elsewhere.

"At the same time, fast-growing communities on the fringes of the region are struggling to provide the schools, roads, sewer systems, and other basic yet costly infrastructure that their growth requires. Ever-present pressure for development is also threatening the region's unique and valuable open spaces, forests, and rural landscapes as the size of the region grows. All of these stresses are contributing to rising public discontent with the many side-effects of the region's rapid growth, including increasingly congested roadways, rising taxes and development fees, crowded schools, and a feeling of powerlessness to shape the region's growth in more productive ways.

"There is a growing recognition that the problems of racial and economic separation, congested highways, degradation of the region's valuable natural resources, and wasteful intra-regional competition cannot be addressed through the actions of individual local governments alone. Stabilizing struggling communities and minimizing sprawling development will require that local government leaders, the business community, concerned citizens, and the many organizations interested in creating a stronger region work together to develop comprehensive, coordinated strategies for addressing regional problems with regional solutions."

To achieve a more socially and economically sustainable future, the Orfield report recommends the following strategies: (1) greater fiscal equity among local jurisdictions to reduce wasteful competition for economic investment; (2) a comprehensive regional approach to land use planning in the region; and (3) a stronger focus on governance from regional perspective to shape the development of the region.

The full report, *Cincinnati Metropatterns*, may be found at www.metroresearch.org. For additional information about the Cincinnati study, call Citizens for Civic Renewal at 513-381-1034.



Chagrin Highlands galvanizes region

An amazingly broad and united front of opposition has risen up against the recent proposal to build big box retail stores at Chagrin Highlands. From the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency to local newspapers, people are outraged that Cleveland City Council has introduced legislation that would allow developers to build low-end retail instead of a high-class office park on the prime, 630-acre site at I-271 and Harvard Road. (The City of Cleveland owns the land, which is located in Beachwood, Orange, Warrensville Heights, and Highland Hills.)

In a letter to Cleveland Council President Michael Polensek, the 12-community First Suburbs Consortium outlined the following concerns:

- Chagrin Highlands should be developed to attract the greatest number of higher paying jobs to the site, as envisioned by the present development agreement, thereby generating the highest tax revenues for Cleveland and the participating suburbs. The proposed legislation removes the controls needed to achieve this vision.

- Accelerating development of big box retail at the site will cannibalize existing retail districts in Cleveland and its suburbs, pulling more consumers' dollars away from currently operating merchants.

- The regional decision to target \$150 million in transportation funds to the I-271 corridor, rather than elsewhere in our communities, was conditioned on commitments by all of the stakeholders that Chagrin Highlands would be developed consistent with the amended Master Agreement [which requires the developers, the Jacobs Group, to

build an office park and limits retail development]. Nullifying those commitments now, after spending the transportation funds, will undermine future cooperation on long-term strategies to benefit our region.

- By removing essential development guidelines, the proposed legislation will allow haphazard development throughout the Chagrin Highlands, reducing the long-term value of this unique Cleveland asset in return for short-term gains.

Other observers of the local development scene say this is another case of the clout of national retailers manipulating development in our communities. Developers can make more money by selling land to retail chains than they can by constructing higher quality developments that benefit communities more in the long run. The only defense is smart land use planning and tough controls on the types of development allowed.

A failure of imagination...

I believe that reverting to Big Box Retail represents a failure of imagination. It will worsen the county's documented glut of retail, intensify traffic congestion, undermine our quality of life, and sell our taxpayers short.

— Judy Rawson,
mayor of Shaker Heights, in letter
to Cleveland Council president
Michael Polensek

Drugstore glut

The cut-throat competition for market share among national drugstore chains is creating casualties. In Cleveland Heights, two new Rite-Aid stores are closing. The stores were built close to CVS stores (the one at Noble Road and Monticello Boulevard was on the opposite corner of the intersection).

Communities are worried that overbuilding by drug chains will result in abandoned stores and sites that will be difficult to redevelop. The automobile-oriented design of most new drugstores has already harmed the pedestrian character of many neighborhoods.

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Energy and the environment

Oberlin lectures

The Oberlin College Environmental Studies Program is offering a series of lectures by top experts on global climate change:

- April 10 — George Woodwell, founder and director of the Woods Hole Research Center, on “The Struggle for Enlightenment: The Science and Politics of Climate Destruction in a Dark Age.”
- April 19 — Bill Moomaw, director of Tufts University Institute of the Environment, on “Climate Change: Is an International Treaty Really Possible?”
- May 3 — Jonathan Patz, director of the Program on Health Effects of Global Environmental Change at Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, and Howard Frumkin, chair of the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health at Rollins School of Public Health of Emory University, on “Global Climate Change and Human Health: From Meteorology to Moral Imperative.”



All lectures are at 7:30 p.m. at the Adam Joseph Lewis Center for Environmental Studies on the Oberlin campus. Visit www.oberlin.edu/~envs/2020proj/speakers.htm for more information.

Ohio's energy future

The Ohio Alliance for the Environment's spring conference will focus on “Ohio's Energy Future: The impact of restructuring, conservation and renewables.” The conference will be April 25 in Columbus. For more information, call 614-487-9957 or e-mail probasco@ohioalliance.org.

Green Energy Ohio

Groups working on energy conservation and renewables in the state formed a new organization, Green Energy Ohio (GEO). To learn about new projects, learn about recent developments in green power in Ohio, and meet the group's new director, Bill Spratley, attend a meeting at 6 p.m., April 17, at the Great Lakes Brewing Co. Tasting Room, Carroll Avenue near W. 28th St. in the Ohio City neighborhood. For more information, call 440-526-9941 or see www.greenenergyohio.org.

Saving Edison Woods

One of the largest and best open spaces left in northern Ohio, the 1,400-acre Edison Woods in Erie County, will finally be saved.

Preservationists were disappointed in November by the loss of an Erie County tax levy, which would have provided funds to purchase the land from present owner FirstEnergy. But a creative new funding mechanism has been discovered.

The Ohio EPA's Water Pollution Control Loan Fund and Water Resource Restoration Sponsorship Program will lend money at reduced interest rates for a water treatment plant upgrade in Marion, OH, and the city of Marion will agree to assume \$6 million of additional debt to protect and restore Edison Woods. The surplus loan money will go to the Trust for Public Land (TPL), a nonprofit organization that brokers land preservation deals. TPL will buy Edison Woods, restore wetlands on the site, and then turn title over to Erie County MetroParks.

Coastal Zone 2001 in Cleveland in July

The Coastal Zone conference series is the world's largest, most prestigious gathering of coastal resource management professionals. Presentations will delve into the most pressing coastal resource management issues of today and tomorrow. For more information, see the Web site of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Coastal Services Center at www.csc.noaa.gov/cz2001/.

Great Lakes United

One of the year's best meetings for Great Lakes activists is the annual meeting of Great Lakes United. This year the meeting is June 8-10 at the University of Windsor in Windsor, Ontario. Workshops will focus on strategies for clean production, biodiversity and habitat, a nuclear-free Great Lakes, and sustainable waters. For more information, call 716-886-0142 or see www.glu.org.

Regional art benefits land trust

The Medina-Summit Land Conservancy and Harris-Stanton Gallery in Akron will present an exhibit of works by regional artists on the theme “Land: Our Heritage, Our Legacy.” A portion of the proceeds from works sold will benefit the conservancy.

The exhibit will run from April 6

through April 27 at the gallery, 2301 W. Market St. For more information, call 330-867-7600.

Ohio's (secret) brownfields list

The Ohio EPA used to keep a public list of nearly 2,000 sites in Ohio where toxic pollution was known or suspected to exist. But last year a court case brought by Dayton Light & Power forced the agency to keep the list secret – on the grounds that being on the list created a stigma and hurt property values.

Recently, the Columbus Dispatch filed an open records request and obtained the list. It's available at www.dispatch.com/news/news01/feb01/606094.html, along with a story about the lack of progress Ohio has made in cleaning up brownfields.

The best places to live don't sprawl

The folks who rate the best places to live are paying more attention to metropolitan regions with successful programs for growth management and urban revitalization. Money Magazine's Best Places to Live 2000, for example, listed the following top choices: Portland, OR; Providence, RI; Chicago, IL; Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill, NC; Salt Lake City, UT; and Sarasota, FL.

The magazine explained, “...this year we focused on economically vibrant cities that are also successfully managing their growth and providing the highest quality of life around. Along with our usual emphasis on solid schools, low crime and job growth, we also wanted areas that have avoided urban sprawl and overcrowding, where city fathers have put a premium on green space, culture and having an accessible city center. That is why you'll find Portland, Ore. as the No. 1 choice for 2000 and Sarasota as our best small city.”

Top 10 environmental cities

Cities that combine special natural amenities and a commitment to protecting environmental quality made the list of top 10 environmental cities selected by the Environmental News Network. The list includes Austin, TX; Burlington, VT; Charlotte, NC; Chattanooga, TN; Madison, WI; Portland, ME; Portland, OR; San Francisco, CA; San Diego, CA; and Seattle, WA. For more information, see www.enn.com/features/2000/09/09112000/Topten_30455.asp.

April 9, ongoing
First of nine Monday evening meetings to discuss **Choices for Sustainable Living**, 7:30 p.m. at Shaker Lakes Nature Center. Free course, \$16 for discussion guide. For registration or more information call 216-321-5935.

April 16
Ohio State University **Environmental Policy** Conference in Columbus. For registration information, call 614-688-0234.

April 17
Annual meeting for **Green Energy Ohio** (formerly SEED Ohio), 6 p.m. at the Great Lakes Brewing Company Tasting Room, entrance on south side of Carroll Ave. (between W. 25th and W. 28th). For more information, call 440-526-9941 or geo@greenenergyohio.org.

April 19
Nature walk at Hach-Otis State Nature Preserve at 9 a.m. and North Chagrin Metropark at noon, led by the Blackbrook Audubon Society. Call 440-257-7611 to register or see www.blackbrookaudubon.org.

April 19-20
Sacred Landmarks Forum at Cleveland State University. Call 216-875-9979 for more information.

April 20
Internationally-recognized ecological designer **William McDonough** will speak at the City Club of Cleveland, noon at 850 Euclid Ave. For reservations, call 216-621-0082.

April 20
Fair Housing Awards Luncheon, noon at the University Club, 3813 Euclid Ave. For reservations, call The Cuyahoga Plan fair housing group at 216-621-4525.

April 21
Day-long field trip to **Sheldon's Marsh** and Dupont Marsh hosted by Black River Audubon. Meet at Sheldon's Marsh, Rt. 2 west of Huron at 8 a.m.

April 21
Walking tours of the **Tremont** neighborhood led by Ohio Canal Corridor. Meet at Lincoln

Park Gazebo (off W. 14th Street) at 9 a.m. Call 216-348-1825 for reservations.

April 21
March for Parks to benefit the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and its Junior Ranger program, 9 a.m. at Ritchie Ledges in the Virginia Kendall Area off Truxell Road. For more information, call 330-657-2909.



April 21
Annual **Earth Day Celebration** at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information, call 216-321-5935.

April 21
Organic gardening workshop about bed preparation, seed sowing and transplanting, 10 a.m. at the Crown Point Ecology Center. Call 330-668-8992 for registration information.

April 22-24
Planet Awakening workshops on faith, health, population and environment for leaders in the spirituality movement. Held in Lakeside, OH (near Toledo) by the Population & Habitat program of the National Audubon Society. See www.audubonpopulation.org.

April 23
Green Building Coalition workshop on integrating green design into residential building, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., at the Urban Design Collaborative, 820 Prospect Ave. in downtown Cleveland. For registration information, see www.clevelandgbc.org or call 216-623-0033.

April 23
Slide presentation on **butterfly gardening**, 7:30 p.m. at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes. For more information, call 216-321-5935.

April 25
Streamside management workshop for preventing erosion and improving water quality, 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo. For registration information, call the Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District at 216-524-6580.

April 25
Annual meeting and banquet of the **Oberlin Historical and Improvement Organization**, 6 p.m. at the Oberlin Inn. For reservation information, call 440-774-1700.

April 28
Buying Into Cleveland Home Show, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Cleveland Convention Center. For more information, call the Living In Cleveland Center at 216-781-5422 or the City's Department of Community Development at 216-664-2869.

April 28
Design charrette to consider the future of the

Lee Road commercial corridor in Cleveland Heights, 1-4 p.m. at the Church of the Savior, 2537 Lee Rd. Sponsored by FutureHeights, a citizen-based volunteer group. Free and open to the public. Designs and ideas from the workshop will be presented at a public open house, 1-4 p.m., Sunday, April 29 at the CH-UH Main Library, 2345 Lee Rd.

April 28
Workshop on teaching about world economics, diversity, geography and education in the **global neighborhood**, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Cuyahoga Community College East Campus. Hosted by Global Issues Resource Center. For more information, call 216-987-2133.

May 1
Program by **Jim Bissell** of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History on natural areas, native plants, and alien invaders, 7 p.m. at the Lorain County Metro Parks Carlisle Visitor Center. Hosted by Black River Audubon.

May 3
Streamside management workshop for preventing erosion and improving water quality, 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Silver Springs Park Lodge in Stow. For registration information, call the Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District at 216-524-6580.

May 5
Walking tour through **Cleveland's industrial Flats**, including the historic site of John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company. Meet at Washington Park at 9 a.m. Call 216-348-1825 for reservations.

May 6
Open Hostel Day at Stanford House Hostel in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

May 8
Green Building Coalition speaker series featuring John Knott, managing director of Dewees Island and developer of affordable urban housing, 5:30 p.m. in the Stokes Wing Auditorium of the Cleveland Public Library downtown.

May 12
Annual **RiverSweep cleanup** of the Cuyahoga River Valley, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., organized by Ohio Canal Corridor. Five locations in Cleveland. Call 216-348-1825 to volunteer.

May 12
RiverDay 2001, featuring more than 30 events throughout the Cuyahoga River watershed. For details, see www.cuyahogariver.org.

May 14-17
National conference on **nonpoint source water pollution** in Chicago. For more information, call 847-835-6837.

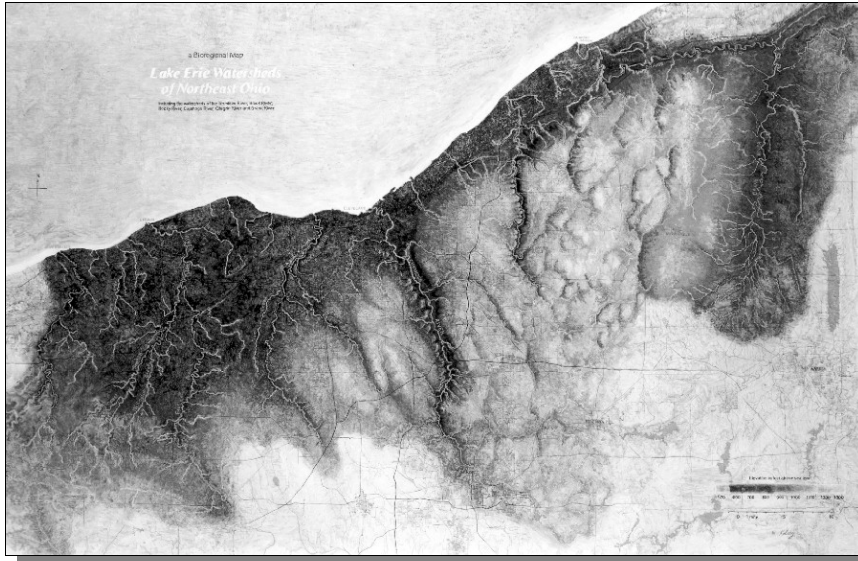
EarthFest 2001

Ohio's largest environmental education event, EarthFest 2001, is April 22 at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call 216-281-6468 or see www.earthdaycoalition.org.





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Dike 14

In the next few years this 88-acre wedge of land jutting into Lake Erie at the foot of Martin Luther King Boulevard will become a new park. It was constructed by the Army Corps of Engineers as a disposal facility — called Dike 14 — for dredge spoils from the Cuyahoga River. Now it is nearly full, and a process has begun to turn the land over to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for inclusion in the Cleveland Lakefront State Park.

There is an active debate over what kind of park this should be — whether a manicured park and sculpture garden, site for active recreation, or a natural area. Environmental groups believe that, with the proper ecological restoration, the site could be one of the best migratory bird habitats on the Great Lakes. They are pushing for a public planning process to design the new park.



Satellite image showing Dike 14, Gordon Park, and the Shoreway with the MLK interchange.

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—David Orr, Oberlin College Environmental Studies Program

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