



EcoCity CLEVELAND

IDEAS AND TOOLS FOR A SUSTAINABLE BIOREGION

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sustainable future



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organize against sprawl



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Good words

The current division of market share
between the automobile and mass transit
is in no way the product of a free market.
On the contrary, it reflects massive and
sustained government intervention
on behalf of the automobile.

—Paul Weyrich and William Lind,
Conservatives and Mass Transit

Urban transit systems
in most American cities
have become a genuine civil rights issue.

If [these] systems...could be laid out
so as to provide an opportunity
for poor people to get meaningful
employment, then they could begin
to move into
the mainstream of American life.

—Martin Luther King Jr.

TRANSIT FUTURES

What is the future of mass transit in a world obsessed with the private automobile?

The obvious trend in Northeast Ohio is for us to rely more and more on our cars. In many cases, we have no choice. In the past 40 years, we have built sprawling communities where homes, shopping and work places are far apart. It's hard to serve this low-density development with transit. In much of the region, there aren't enough of us in one place to support a bus line or rail line. And, even if we do live near a bus stop, we may not be inclined to walk to it because our streets have been designed to facilitate the high-speed movement of cars and are hostile places for pedestrians.

As so much of our public space has been given over to the automobile, transit has become politically marginalized. Transit service has become equated with social service. Transit riders have been turned into second-class citizens.

But some of us still keep the vision of transit as an essential part of an efficient transportation system and livable communities. We want transit agencies to fight back—improve services, win new riders, become an attractive option for all.

Discussions on the future of transit —its purpose and potential— in Northeast Ohio

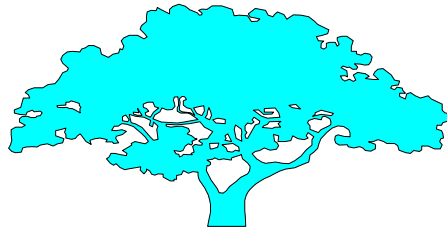
See pages 6-15

The power of place

Alan Thein Durning was a senior researcher at Worldwatch Institute in Washington, DC. He was an internationally recognized commentator on environmental problems and a frequent traveler to environmental hotspots around the globe. But, several years ago on a trip to the Philippines, he was stopped in his tracks by a simple question from a barefoot tribal woman: "What is your homeland like?"

The question forced Durning to realize that he had no place to call home. He had no connections to his Washington neighborhood or to the woods and streams of his region. In truth, he had a career, not a place.

The realization disturbed him. And it helped him understand why, despite all the alarming studies and statistics churned out by Worldwatch and other think tanks, humanity still yawns at global environmental crises like deforestation, hunger, population growth, climate change and the proliferation of toxic materials. The problem is that people don't care enough about the whole Earth. They don't care because they are only motivated to defend the smaller places with which they can identify. Real solutions begin with love of a distinct place.



Durning ultimately quit his jet-setting Washington job and moved to Seattle, his boyhood home. He founded Northwest Environment Watch, a nonprofit organization which explores ways humans can live sustainably in North America's temperate rain forest bioregion. In a wonderful new book, *This Place On Earth*, he writes about his need to come home: "I came here, I suppose, to find out what it means to live responsibly in desperate times. Perhaps I came here in hopes of finding out what *permanence* would look and feel like—and to practice it while we still have the chance. Perhaps I came to confront head-on the pain and paradox of living in an economy that seems to thrive on the death of nature. Maybe I came here in the hope that *place* might be the escape hatch for a fractured society hurtling toward the environmental brink."

Thus, he recommends bioregional imperatives for us all—settle down, get rooted, live like you intend to be in a place forever.

If everyone can learn how to live sustainably in their own places without exploiting other places, maybe there's hope for the world.

Thanks

Thanks to the Nelson Talbott Foundation for a recent grant to support our general operations.

David Beach
Editor

Publication schedule update

To get our publication schedule almost back on track, we have skipped February and March and dated this issue April/May 1997. In a few weeks, subscribers will be getting a special Spring 1997 issue, which will substitute for the regular February and March issues. A June issue also should be out in several weeks. This may be a little confusing, but no issues will be skipped! Subscription expiration dates have been adjusted accordingly.

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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Oberlin explores sustainable futures

"Cities are humanity's crowning achievements, but they are also the sites of some of our worst failures."

With that statement, Oberlin College environmental studies professor David Orr opened a recent symposium on how cities can employ techniques of sustainable development to improve economic stability, environmental quality and community well-being. The symposium attracted leading practitioners to the Oberlin campus and was cosponsored by an interesting partnership—the college and the City of Oberlin, who have been working together on sustainable energy and land use issues.

Michael Kinsley of the Economic Renewal Program at the Rocky Mountain Institute, said one major barrier to thinking sustainably is the belief that prosperity requires growth in size. He distinguished between *expansion* (making things bigger, adding people and buildings, increasing the use of materials and energy) and *development* (making things better, improving jobs and income, using resources more efficiently).

Kinsley described how communities across America are improving their economies without getting bigger. By providing for local needs, supporting existing businesses and building on local skills, they are investing in themselves in many small ways. Instead of being dependent on a risky industrial recruitment strategy, they are becoming more self-sufficient and economically resilient.

A classic example of a small town that plugged some of the leaks in its local economy is Osage, IA. Wes Birdsall, former director of the Osage municipal gas and electric utility, explained how he discovered that nearly all revenues for natural gas flowed out of Iowa to companies in Oklahoma and Texas. By developing low-cost programs to help people caulk and insulate their homes, the Osage utility helped customers save money, kept more money circulating in the local economy, and thus turned energy conservation into a tool for economic development.

"Saving money by helping people help themselves is easier than attracting new industries for economic development," Birdsall said. It also helps existing industries hold down costs and become more competitive.

Symposium participants discussed how Oberlin could adopt such programs. Since

Oberlin operates its own municipal power plant and electric system, it is well positioned to promote energy conservation and renewable energy sources, such as biomass and wind power. Indeed, the city is exploring the possibilities with the College's Environmental Studies Program, the Washington, DC-based Center for Clean Air Policy and the Campaign for an Energy Efficient Ohio. In addition, the local energy group, SEED Ohio, is monitoring wind speeds in Lorain County, and BFI is proposing to generate electricity from the methane gas at its landfill next to Oberlin.

The big one

But even the best economic development and energy programs won't be enough to save American cities if we don't stop urban sprawl, said David Crockett, a former city council member of Chattanooga, TN.

Crockett described how his city changed from being the most polluted city in America in 1970 to a city striving to become the world's first ecological city in the 1990s. However, after talking about Chattanooga's innovative strategies for revitalizing its riverfront, building eco-industrial parks on urban brownfields and developing new housing in low-income neighborhoods, he concluded by saying all that was nice, but the big problem of sprawl remains and threatens to undermine all the good work happening in cities.

"It's like worrying about cosmetic surgery when your wrists are cut," he said. "You'll look good at the funeral, but you're still going to die."

"Sprawl creates a tremendous drain and misuse of resources," he said. "It places a tremendous burden on our children...And it segments our society [by class and race] like the rings of a tree—so that there's no common values or common political will, just fragmented political jurisdictions."

Changing these wasteful land use patterns is perhaps our greatest challenge, Crockett concluded. "It's like trying to get off an Interstate at rush hour. All public policy is pushing one way."

Oberlin's Environmental Studies Program will be increasingly visible in the coming year as it begins construction of a state-of-the-art center for its offices and classrooms. The new building will demonstrate energy and water efficiency, advanced materials and other design strategies that minimize environmental impacts. It will be Northeast Ohio's first "green" building for the 21st century. For more information, call 216-775-8409. □

Gathering of 100 congregations in Berea: "We're asking you to get involved in a public process to *change* things."

100 congregations against sprawl

A significant community organizing force has joined the fight against urban sprawl in Northeast Ohio.

At a "Gathering of 100 Congregations" on April 29 at Berea United Methodist Church, more than 600 church representatives from throughout the region heard the message that sprawling patterns of development are creating an increasingly polarized society of rich and poor.

The gathering was sponsored by WE-CAN! (Westside/Eastside Congregations Acting Now!) and BOLD (Broad-Faith Organizing for Lorain's Development). In the past several years the two groups have worked on safety, school and other social justice issues in Cleveland and Lorain. Now they are realizing that the biggest threat to older cities of the region is an imbalance of public investment and private development, which favors a few communities on the edge of the metropolitan area and undermines the rest.

In response, WE-CAN! and BOLD have begun training leaders in local congregations to address sprawl.

"We're not asking you to get involved in the symptoms of the problem," BOLD's

Sylvia DuVall told the crowd. "We're asking you to get involved in a public process to *change* things."

Myron Orfield, a state legislator from Minnesota, said that 400 churches in the Twin Cities have been involved in a movement for regional equity and the stabilization of older urban areas. The movement has united the cities and inner suburbs and achieved enough political clout to create a regional program of tax-base sharing. Now when a shopping mall or other development is built in a rich outer suburb (often with the aid of new highways and other public subsidies), a portion of the new tax base goes into a regional pool to be shared with needier communities.

"We're creating a regional community where everybody can face the future together and with greater equality of resources," Orfield said. "Regions which have achieved equity are better off."

The alternative, he added, is for the communities at the core of the region to keep fighting among themselves for shrinking tax base, "while our tax dollars help build new communities we aren't welcome in."

In the coming months, the congregations of WE-CAN! and BOLD will study potential regional solutions, such as the Twin Cities model of tax-base sharing or Oregon's urban growth boundaries. They will then select one issue to be the priority of an organizing campaign. Tax-base sharing might be selected, for example, because the majority of communities in Northeast Ohio would probably benefit from such a program.

Next January, they hope to gather more than 2,000 people at a regional issues assembly to commit to action. The founding of a new regional organization could happen soon after that.

WE-CAN and BOLD are part of a national faith-based organizing network initiated by the Gamaliel Foundation of Chicago (see sidebar on the next page). In July, the organizations will host a week-long training session for organizers at Hiram College. For more information, call 216-881-2344. □

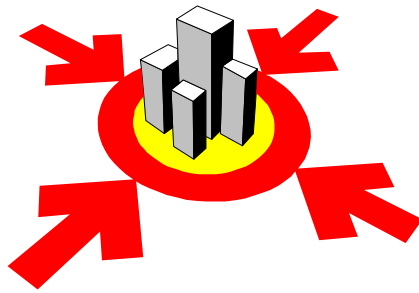
From neighborhood organizing to regional organizing

Our original mission was to support grassroots leaders in their efforts to build and maintain power organizations in their communities. The mission continues, but the network of metropolitan organizations that has emerged has created a new opportunity.

We understand now that decisions that affect people are no longer made in the local neighborhoods, but at much broader levels. Urban political boundaries create a situation where those with means can segregate themselves from the responsibility for contributing equally to the public sectors of American life—from public schools and transportation to health care systems and social services. Privileged groups can, with their political strength, direct public dollars away from central cities and inner-ring suburbs and toward the enhancement of their own communities. They can and do attract massive amounts of private investment away from the urban core.

Regionalization is a strategy to address the vast inequities in housing, education, transportation and all other areas brought about by this economic gerrymandering. It is a strategy to overcome the resulting economic segregation of the urban core and inner-ring suburbs through regional planning, regional development, and regional responsibility for what is, in effect, in the interest of the entire metropolitan area.

—Gamaliel Foundation,
a national network of 40
organizations (including WE-CAN!
and BOLD in Northeast Ohio)
working to rebuild American cities
through community organizing



First Suburbs group sets goals

Mayors and council members from Cleveland's inner-ring suburbs are continuing to discuss how to respond to the forces of outmigration which are undermining their communities. At their May 16 meeting, the First Suburbs Consortium decided to oppose any increase in the state gasoline sales tax until highway policies

are in place giving greatest weight to the maintenance of existing roads in already developed areas.

"The time has long passed when the public should be asked to support highway construction which fosters scattered and disruptive development and accelerates abandonment of established communities," said Ken Montlack, councilmember of Cleveland Heights and chair of the consortium.

The group also announced opposition to the automatic extension of the 1993 Ohio Enterprise Zone program. Lakewood Mayor Madeline Cain said that the current program "promotes the development of Ohio greenlands at the expense of the very same distressed communities that the program originally professed to assist."

Consortium members also established a number of immediate goals:

- Change the project selection process of the Ohio Department of Transportation to emphasize the maintenance and redevelopment of mature communities instead of expanded highways in rural areas. Also work for reauthorization of the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and its provisions for multi-modal transportation systems and local control of decision-making.
- Support efforts to preserve farmland in Ohio and link such efforts to the redevelopment of urban brownfields.
- Support research on funding inequities. Is the urban core getting its fair share of public funds for infrastructure and services?
- Meet with the Northeast Ohio legislative delegation and candidates for governor to express the interests of the First Suburbs.
- Pressure the Federal Housing Administration to address maintenance problems with government-subsidized housing.
- Reach out to other communities within the I-271/I-480 beltway.
- Seek funding for support staff.

Communities regularly participating in the consortium include Cleveland Heights, Shaker Heights, Lakewood, Euclid, South Euclid, Garfield Heights, Maple Heights and Warrensville Heights. For more information, call Cleveland Heights Councilman Ken Montlack at 216-421-5800.

Ohio House sets up urban committee

Here's another sign that concerns about costly urban sprawl and farmland loss are reaching critical mass: the Ohio House has created the Urban Subcommittee of the Local Government and Townships Committee to study problems associated with unmanaged urban expansion. Rep. Amy Salerno (R-23) is the chairwoman.

At its first meeting April 9, the committee heard testimony from Lakewood Mayor Madeline Cain and Cleveland Heights Councilman Kenneth Montlack of the First Suburbs Consortium, as well as from Cleveland State University housing researcher Tom Bier.

Church leaders discuss outmigration

Local religious leaders are joining Cleveland Catholic Bishop Anthony Pilla to raise concerns about sprawl and outmigration. A May 28 meeting hosted by Ohio Episcopal Bishop J. Clark Grew II at Trinity Cathedral attracted top officials from Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and Muslim faiths. One observer called it the most diverse and inclusive meeting of Northeast Ohio religious leaders in recent memory.

The discussion focused on building interfaith partnerships to help rebuild the urban cores of the region.

Keeping the vision

What is the future of mass transit in a world obsessed with the private automobile?

The obvious trend in Northeast Ohio is for us to rely more and more on our cars. In many cases, we have no choice. In the past 40 years, we have built sprawling communities where homes, shopping and work places are far apart. It's hard to serve this low-density development with transit. In much of the region, there aren't enough of us in one place to support a bus line or rail line. And, even if we do live near a bus stop, we may not be inclined to walk to it because our streets have been designed to facilitate the high-speed movement of cars and are hostile places for pedestrians.

As so much of our public space has been given over to the automobile, transit has become politically marginalized. Transit service has become equated with social service. Transit riders have been turned into second-class citizens.

But some of us still keep the vision of transit as an essential part of an efficient transportation system and livable communities. We want transit agencies to fight back—improve services, win new riders, become an attractive option for all.

Some transit advocates even want transit agencies to get into the development game—invest in costly rail lines that have the potential to promote the kind of high-density development patterns that will allow transit to succeed in the future. Others say that capital-intensive rail projects are a dangerous gamble; in the absence of strong controls on land use, rail projects may not be able to shape development patterns and may end up undermining existing services for transit-dependent people.

Transit's purpose and potential

It is an appropriate time to discuss the future of transit in Greater Cleveland, since the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority is in the process of updating its long-range plan. To help frame the discussion, we talked to two local experts, Norman Krumholz, former planning director of the City of Cleveland and currently professor of urban studies at Cleveland State University's College of Urban Affairs, and Joel Freilich, director of strategic planning for RTA. The interviews which follow on pages 6-15 were conducted by EcoCity Cleveland's transportation program coordinator Bradley Flamm.

The two interviews aren't intended to be a debate. But they do offer interesting perspectives on the future of transit—



Transit futures

Serving people who depend on transit: An interview with Norman Krumholz

Norman Krumholz might be called the transit curmudgeon of Northeast Ohio. In speeches, interviews and op-ed pieces, he is perhaps the most outspoken critic of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority.

Yet, when Krumholz was the City of Cleveland's planning director in the '70s, he was one of the architects of RTA, a county-wide transit system formed from various local systems. Through the years he's been a passionate believer in mass transit as an essential public service.

His criticisms focus on RTA's high-profile rail projects, such as the Waterfront Line, which he fears will serve a few tourists and downtown office workers while draining funds from needed bus operations. As a proponent of "equity planning," Krumholz believes the overriding social purpose of the transit agency should be to serve people who have no other transportation options.

In the following interview, he recalls the history of RTA, expounds on the agency's prospects, and laments the lack of a vocal constituency for transit in Greater Cleveland.

■

Q: Before talking about RTA today, tell us about the birth of RTA. How was it

created and why?

A: The Cleveland Transit System (CTS) was in deep trouble, and by the early '70s it became apparent that there would have to be some other kind of solution to having a system that was entirely run out of the farebox. Cleveland's transit system at that time was one of the last—maybe the last—transit system in the country that was run exclusively out of the farebox. And naturally it was having to cut service and raise fares.

It began to look as if there would have to be a more regionalized solution and a different form of funding. So, the powers-that-be convened a study group called the five-county transit study. The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) was the center of the transit study and did much of the staffing, but there were some consultants involved as well. My staff and I represented Carl Stokes, the mayor of Cleveland on that planning committee.

Ultimately my staff and I had a good deal to do with creating the city's position in terms of the establishment of RTA. The questions were: What kind of structure do you create? What kind of service do you provide? And what are the terms for turning over CTS to the new regional transit authority?

We bargained for more and better service for City of Cleveland residents. We bargained for lower fares. We bargained for community responsive transit, [that included things like] point-

to-point rides for senior citizens and disabled people, pre-notification, and dial-a-ride transit.

Our particular interest in the negotiations was improving the mobility of the transit-dependent population. That was very substantial, since about 35 to 40 percent of all Cleveland families lacked access to an automobile. And it seemed to us that they should be the highest priority in terms of transit services. To a large extent, we achieved that in the original negotiations that led to the establishment of the RTA.

But we consistently took positions and wrote and published reports that were critical of the rail lines which the consultants put forth. All the analysis we did suggested that the rail lines were not going to be very cost effective—at least not for the services we wanted to provide to the City of Cleveland and particularly to the transit-dependent population.

Q: What were the specific needs of the transit-dependent population at the time? Was there already discussion then of reverse commuting as a way of enabling city residents to gain access to suburban jobs?

A: We were thinking in terms of reverse commutes. But [primarily] we were thinking about simple mobility in terms of the needs of the transit dependent in the entire metropolitan area. They're entirely dependent upon RTA. They're the people who have fewest choices. And our framework for planning at that time was more choices for those who had few.

Q: What types of service improvements did you want?

A: We were looking for tighter scheduling, so you didn't have to wait as long for a ride. Tighter route spacing, so you didn't have to walk as far to a stop. And community responsive transit, which was bitterly opposed by everybody else

in the negotiations because it was seen as too expensive and unwieldy. But we insisted on it and won out in the final analysis. Now RTA crows about their community responsive transit.

Q: Did you end up on the board of RTA?

A: No. There was never any consideration of that. I would have been interested in serving on the board, but I didn't get on the board of RTA. I guess I made too many enemies in the process of the negotiations. But I was very satisfied with the results. No complaints.

Unfortunately, RTA's interest in rail lines over bus lines began to manifest itself almost immediately. They acquired the Shaker Rapid lines. That was not part of the [original] deal, but it was assumed that there would be a general regionalization of transit services and coordination of fares and routes. Shaker was very happy to give it over since it was about ready to come apart. RTA spent the first \$120 million they got in capital funds on the Shaker Rapid line, which carries only about four percent of all the passengers of RTA. But they're a very vocal and

powerful four percent of the passengers!

Q: What is the reason for the strong interest in rail lines at RTA?

A: I think it has something to do with how those projects are financed. There's a general assumption in the transit industry, held so far as I know by all transit officials,

that the way to run a regional transit authority is with a big rail line. Those are expensive projects. But large amounts of those projects have been paid for with money from the federal government, which is seen as free money.

There's an opportunity [with these projects] to buy a lot of constituency, to raise the size of your agency, to look good, to hire

Since about 35 to 40 percent of all Cleveland families lacked access to an automobile, it seemed to us that they should be the highest priority in terms of transit services.



architects and planners and engineers and do political favors. These are very, very high profile capital projects, which are largely paid for by somebody else. What could be better?!

The fact that, in almost every case, they have not proved to be very cost-effective and have wildly under-served their targeted goals in terms of passenger trips hasn't slowed anybody down at all. The thing that will slow them down—that *has* slowed them down—is the increasing unwillingness of the federal government to fund all the rail proposals that come in from around the country.

An excellent study was done about five years ago that studied the ten most recent rail lines in American cities and found that in every case capital costs and maintenance costs were sharply, sharply under-estimated and ridership were sharply over-estimated. That's what all the analysis that my people were doing at City Hall was saying: "This stuff is nuts!" If you want to provide service for people who are transit-dependent, then you don't want to do it this way. If you want to provide high-quality service for long-distance commuters who really don't need your help, as a public agency, then this is exactly the way to do it. That's simply my critique from the present of the commuter rail proposals about which we're going to be hearing.

Q: So why are some people pushing so hard for commuter rail systems?

A: They're not interested in the transit-dependent. That's from the get-go. I think that's broadly true of most transit operators. They're not interested in the transit-dependent. They're interested in the rider who has other choices, who has two cars in the garage [but] because of the attractiveness or efficiency chooses to ride public transit.

That's very nice. But in terms of serving the public with needs, that's really not a high priority. That's number one. Number two, and most damningly, that's an enormously expensive trip to run. To the extent that you try to serve that choice rider, you get out further and further into low-density areas and you provide a trip that is more heavily subsidized.

There's an off-setting argument, of

course, for the guys out in the suburbs in that they do pay most of the sales tax. [RTA is partially supported by a one-percent county-wide sales tax.] So, there's political pressure and demands from suburban representatives for more service.

The problem is that the RTA system is going to run larger and larger deficits serving fewer and fewer people out in the boondocks as they go further and further out. As a result of that they will cut service in the city where it is essential. You got the worst of all worlds, it seems to me, with that kind of model, which I think is in the cards.

Q: Have you already seen these types of cuts in service?

A: I've seen tailoring and cutting of service in the night-owl periods, which is really very important

to the transit-dependent population working nights as cleaners and that sort of thing. But I haven't systematically [studied this question]. That would be a very useful thing to evaluate: What's happening to the pattern of service delivery? I suspect you'll find, if you look closely, is that RTA is offering as much or more route mileage of service out there and less in here [in the city].

The people in the central city who are heavily transit dependent need public transit more than anybody else. They need a high level of service. As a matter of fact, Cleveland's new Empowerment Zone can't work without some attention by public transit to those needs. The jobs are not developing in the core. The jobs those people can fill are mostly in the suburbs.

There has to be some kind of attention paid to a connection by RTA or some other public agency [to those jobs]. [But] that's a very low priority, it seems, for RTA. And strangely the city, which wants the Empowerment Zone to work, doesn't seem to be pushing RTA to do any of that stuff at all. City officials are quite happy to support RTA doing the Waterfront line, the Red Line extension to Berea, intermodal surface hubs and things like that.

Q: Do you see any of the big projects that RTA is considering now—an intermodal transportation hub somewhere downtown, commuter rail service to the suburbs, Rapid

line extensions—as responding to the needs of the transit-dependent population?

A: Only indirectly. I think there may be some rail lines that go out near some job opportunities so that some unemployed central city residents can access those opportunities. But it won't be nearly the kind of performance you'd get if you were aiming yourselves directly at that objective.

That can best be done, in my judgment, with buses. I'm much more partial to a bus solution using the existing highways and rights-of-way than creating new rail lines which, I'm confident on the basis of our past analyses and the other examples from around the country, will not carry very many passengers at all.

Q: What about the Euclid Corridor Improvement Project in which they're looking to bring some of the Red Line stations closer to population centers and redesigning Euclid Avenue with new bus shelters, transit zones, and other improvements?

A: That's been proposed for at least the last 40 years. It's amazing how projects seem to have a life of their own. You kill them on Friday, and on Monday morning they're breathing fire again!

I'll limit my comments to the Dual Hub corridor, which struck me as being enormously wasteful. For a billion dollars, it would have brought the Red Line straight down Euclid Avenue and converted it to a light rail system to connect downtown to University Circle by trolley. [This would have been] partially in a subway tunnel to Cleveland State University and the rest of the way at grade. The net difference in time from the existing Red Line would have been about five minutes. And it would have been servicing the corridor that already has the best service in the whole RTA system, which covers something like a 120,000 transit seats a day.

Totally absurd, in my humble judgment, but dear to the hearts of not only RTA but also the city's planners. I think the city's planners see something entirely different for RTA. They don't care about transit service. They certainly don't care about the transit-dependent. What they see RTA doing is reconstructing parts of the physical city. I think that the Euclid Corridor [improvements] will be carefully designed to take out all those buildings that are now obsolete, those five- or six-story factories. All of those will have to be bought out, so you'll have an opportunity for major redevelopment, or at least prettification, of the corridor. I think the city planners are

The problem is that the RTA system is going to run larger and larger deficits serving fewer and fewer people out in the boondocks as they go further and further out. As a result of that they will cut service in the city where it



interested in that more than anything else.

That's a means to an end, and I think that that's one of the reasons they supported the Waterfront Line. It helped them rationalize the street system at no cost to the city. If you look at it from that perspective, I think it makes some sense. If you look at public transit as a means to servicing the needs of the people who need more mobility, then that kind of objective is despicable, to say the least.

Q: Recognizing that those interests exist, and that they're powerful interests, is there a strategic way to combine the goal of serving people who need better transit services with the interests of city planners and RTA?

A: Not without a major expansion of the RTA budget, which is not going to happen. I think if RTA went to the voters today to expand their one percent sales tax to two percent or even one and a half percent, they would get creamed. And I think that's the way it's going to be for the foreseeable future. I could be wrong, but that's what I see.

The fight that has to take place is who gets the service. It's not an abstract question. And it's not about prettification. It's about who gets the jobs, who gets the benefits of public transit. Those are issues we don't like to address.

Q: So how do we make those issues the ones that are debated at RTA and at City Hall and at NOACA?

A: The only way is for the political powers to push a more progressive agenda than they have, so that there really is some interest expressed by the mayor and his aides in terms of the kinds of service objectives that I've been talking about. Conceivably that can happen, but so far it has not.

Q: Are there any public officials you see pushing this agenda?

A: No. The only one I see who may share at least part of my objectives is Paul Alsenas [director of the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission]. He seems to be reflecting at least some of the interests that I'm talking about.

Transit unfortunately is not a high priority kind of issue. The agency spends a great deal of money and provides an absolutely essential service. But everybody assumes that it's going to be run in a reasonably professional way. Behind the scenes, the power-brokers make the decisions about who gets the service and where the service goes. But those are inside kinds of deals, and they're heavily

leveraged with the notion as being part of a development package.

I don't think RTA should be part of a development package. But I think RTA sees itself as another agency anxious to encourage development in Cleveland. We've already got a lot of agencies encouraging development of Cleveland, flacking Cleveland, and promoting and hyping Cleveland. I don't think we need a public agency which provides basic mobility services to be in the development game.

Q: Do you see a role for RTA projects in promoting more transit-friendly land use development?

A: They can do that, but RTA doesn't have the power to do the kinds of changes in land use that have to take place. If you were serious about using RTA improvements or a commuter rail line as a means of shaping regional development, which I take it is an objective of the urban sprawl types, you can't do it with just a rail line.

Nobody wants to do the hard things in terms of land use planning and zoning, shaping higher density nodes of employment, housing, commercial activities around the stations and then restricting development in other parts of the metropolitan area. If someone were willing to do that, which is hard, then the commuter rail lines and RTA improvement might play a good, positive role in terms of shaping regional development. As it is, nobody is willing to do the hard things. But no surprise about that!

Q: Is the ongoing RTA Transit 2020 update an opportunity to push a progressive agenda for transit?

A: I don't see the support out there. Creating a specific set of political or functional objectives is not something that one person does, unless that person is a tremendously charismatic, dynamic,

capable chief elected official. Somebody like that might shape the agenda by making the right appointments here and there, by riding close herd on those appointments. With that, there could be a substantial difference made.

But there doesn't seem to be anybody else out there, but me. I don't see anybody speaking out. I just don't see that level of interest being expressed, not only by political figures, but by anybody out there.

Transit is not a high priority issue for anybody, except the people at RTA and the developers and land owners who are going to benefit from certain projects. You can bet your bippy that the guys who own those abandoned industrial buildings on Euclid Avenue are very interested in where the

Euclid Corridor Improvement Project is going to go. And they'll be moving it in the direction of their buildings with great interest.

So there are a few people who have great interest because they've got their own axes to grind. The mass of people don't give it much thought. It's too bad, but that's the way it is.

Q: The people you'd expect to really care about this are the transit-dependent population, the people who really need RTA's services. Do you see any activism from these groups?

A: I don't see any activism over transit issues from people who make up the transit-dependent population. They are essentially poor people, or elderly people, or disabled people to whom public transit is the

lifeblood of mobility. But I don't see any of their organizations or advocates coming to the floor.

Q: What local agencies or organizations would you like to see take an active role in these issues?

A: The County Commissioners should be

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involved. Local leadership of the city should be involved. Advocates for social welfare rights and for poor constituencies, the people who are laboring in the Empowerment Zone. Those people should all be on our side.

Q: Does welfare reform offer an opportunity to address transit issues?

A: It might. Research has been done that shows how many new jobs are going to be produced in this region and where they'll be located, mostly out in the suburbs. There has been research on how many people are likely to be forced off the welfare rolls in the next two or three years as a result of so-called welfare reform. There will be a more and more obvious disjuncture between where most of those people live and where most of those jobs are. That may sharpen the discussion.

Q: Jane Campbell, newly elected Cuyahoga County Commissioner, campaigned last year in part on her expertise in welfare and social issues. Is there

potential through elected officials like her to raise the profile of transit's importance in this area?

A: Interesting possibilities there. Jane Campbell is interested in welfare issues, and family issues. Her husband [Hunter Morrison, the City of Cleveland's director of planning] is interested in using RTA as a means to serve development.

Q: You've got to get both of their ears for an hour or two.

A: I haven't been too effective so far!

Q: Your recent article in the *Free Times* [criticizing the Waterfront Line as a future drain on RTA's budget] elicited a lot of responses, many of which seemed to miss the mark. In particular, one of them accused you of promoting sprawl by advocating against expensive rail projects. But the constituency against sprawl seems to be growing (environmentalists, businesspeople, etc.). Do you think there's

an opportunity to link good transit planning for the future that focuses on people who really need transit services with the constituency opposing sprawl?

A: I think not. I think what's likely to happen is that the anti-sprawl constituency will push, in a sort of mindless way, for rail projects. We've seen the highway lobby in action, and all of us who have seen them in action have respect for their power. There's also a transit lobby, a rail lobby. It doesn't have as much power yet, but its power and authority and support are growing around the country.

I think that loose coalition of environmentalists and greens, suburbanites who don't want their open space gobbled up, and city advocates will come together, but they will produce suburban rail lines. That will be it. And they will assume that by building commuter rail lines into more distant locations, they will have solved the problems.

They will not, in my judgment, go forward and do some of the hard things that

have to be done if you are really interested in controlling sprawl through the use of transportation improvements. Those are the kinds of things we discussed earlier: the zoning, the growth boundaries, the deliberate development of higher densities than we're familiar with in suburban locations. I don't see much interest in any of that.

Our problem is that as a nation we're willing to do the easy things, even if they're enormously wasteful. It's easy to build a rail line. We've had them around here for 150 years. That's the easiest thing in the world to do. We're willing to spend the money—*blow* the money—in behalf of a ground-swell of public opinion that is led to support that kind of investment in the hopes that it will provide a solution.

But it won't provide a solution. Beyond that lie the hard things. We have to actually change the way we live. We might have to make it more expensive for people to drive. Can you imagine that?

The crisis nature of what is being generated is going to produce the easy solutions, reject the more difficult solutions, and then just go away. That's the pattern of urban problems in general. As soon as we realize that they cost a lot of money and that you have to change the way you do business, they become less important as crisis opportunities. You're on to the next crisis.

Q: If you were an elected public official, do you think you could make the arguments for the difficult policies?

A: I'm not sure I could. I tend to be one of these over-the-top kind of guys.

A skillful politician might make some of those arguments and survive. But it would be very difficult to do that. Myron Orfield [a Minnesota State legislator], for example, seems to be one of the more skillful guys in the country in dealing with these kind of issues. And he hasn't really brought off a lot of the things he's been proposing. A lot of it is "when we get to this point" or "we are proposing" or "I'm writing a bill." And he's dealing with Minneapolis and Minnesota. That's a different ballgame than Cleveland and Ohio. If a guy like him, dealing with a much more benign environment in political terms, is only marginally successful, it would take a politician of enormous skill to be able to handle these issues in a way that would bring some success and still allow that politician to get reelected.

Q: It seems that in Northeast Ohio, there just isn't the crisis of horrible traffic congestion to get people to take transportation reform seriously.

A: There are certain benefits to decline! The city has been declining for a long time. The county is now declining. The region is floating on the line.

We had, when we built the Interstate highway system in this region, big expectations of growth. As a result, there's an enormous amount of capacity in the existing system. As a result, we don't have any traffic jams. As a result, we don't have that much inner-city revitalization or yuppification of inner-city neighborhoods. It's just as easy to live in Lakewood or Bratenhal or Shaker Heights and drive downtown in 20 minutes without any difficulty at all, because we don't have any traffic jams. Decline has certain benefits in that context, but it also removes the element of crisis from the whole discussion.

There's [simply] no traffic issue in Cleveland. There may be a lot of side issues in terms of air pollution, consumption of non-renewable resources and things like that. But there's no issue in terms of

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mobility, if you've got a car. Which is one reason why we decided when I was in City Hall to give extra attention to those people who didn't have a car. It still makes sense to me!

Q: Again, with the growing interest in sprawl and the interest that piggybacks on that in better public transit so that people don't have to have a car, do you think there's an opportunity to mesh the issues of sprawl and better transit aimed at the transit-dependent?

A: Think soberly about what RTA is planning. They're planning to extend existing Rapid lines. They're planning to develop commuter rail. Their focus is almost exclusively on rail more and more distant from the core where the need is.

The typical response that I get to my opened pieces, which are hostile to one rail expansion or another, come from people who want to kill RTA. So I get calls and letters from people saying, "You're absolutely right! This is a big boondoggle and we ought to kill RTA and cut off their one-percent sales tax!"

I don't want to do that! That would be suicidal. There wouldn't be anything left to serve the objectives that I want to serve. But that's the simplistic conclusion some people reach from the things I write.

Q: What kind of positive vision of the region's transportation network can we offer as an alternative to business as usual?

A: I think an all-encompassing vision for transportation in the Greater Cleveland area would include the following: Make sure that you maintain the existing Interstate highway system at a high level of quality. Do not expand the existing Interstate highway system. Maintain the existing rail system that we have because we have a major sunk cost in it. Do not expand the rail system. Instead expand the bus system using the existing arterials, rights-of-way and highways that we have. In general, put a lot more emphasis on the needs of the transit-dependent population and jobless populations.

But the other part of the situation is the county politics of the sales tax and the insistence of widening suburban service and the probable impacts of cutting back on service where it's badly needed. So it's not a simple issue.

I wish there were a way to broaden the notion that transit is a very important function here in our region and that it deserves public support. But it doesn't deserve public support if it does silly things like the Waterfront Line and the rail extensions that are being proposed. When it turns away from those to providing more mobility service to people who need mobility services, then it will probably deserve more support than it now gets.

Support for good projects and opposition to stupid projects, and I'll define which is which, as we all do! □

RTA balances old and new demands

Consider the dilemmas of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority.

It has a moral and social obligation to serve the transit-dependent population of the inner city, yet the tax base and political base which sustain and control the agency are increasingly suburban. When it proposes to build commuter rail lines to ease traffic congestion and attract new riders around the region, it gets blamed for promoting sprawl by making life easier for exurban commuters. At a time when federal support is declining, the agency is asked to provide innovative transit programs to enable people to move from welfare to work. When RTA staff members speak up for a larger share of local transportation dollars, they receive little grassroots support, even from transit riders. And while critics harp on the public subsidies for riding the bus, few mention the even greater subsidies for automobiles.

Through it all, RTA staff are trying to figure out how to move the agency into the 21st century (see list of projects on p. 18). In the following interview, Joel Freilich, RTA's director of strategic planning and research, discusses how the transit agency seeks to meet the demands of many markets. The discussion provides insights about how transit agencies are struggling to reinvent themselves to compete in a hostile marketplace dominated by the automobile.

■

Q: Let's begin by talking about RTA's role in the community. Whom does RTA exist to serve?

A: I'd like to start with our current mission statement, which says that we're here to provide high quality, cost-effective transportation to meet the mobility needs of the people of Greater Cleveland. And in so doing, we meet the needs not only of the residents, but of the businesses that require employees and customers to come to their businesses. We meet the needs of community leaders, mayors, etc. throughout the county and really the entire Greater Cleveland community.

That's our mission, and by providing that all kinds of social and environmental benefits accrue to the community. We may be carrying somebody who, in the absence of public transportation, could not have made that trip. And, therefore, could not have gotten to a job and might have been dependent upon public assistance. Or might not have been able to get to a store and, therefore, helped keep that store in business as well as meet their own needs.

About a third of our riders come from zero-car households. Even if you are from a one- or two-car household, you may still be transit-dependent, because there may be more people in the household than there are cars, and you may be too low on the pecking order. Or you may lack the ability to drive.

In addition, we carry people who have a car available but choose to leave their car behind, either at their home or at one of our park-n-ride lots. So what do we gain by carrying them for the community? Not so much mobility, which they already have, but the environmental benefits of clean air and energy savings. We gain congestion benefits by keeping their car off the road, so that everybody else can move more freely and use their travel time more productively or in a more pleasant manner. And either they get some work done, which generates benefits for society, or they relax and compose themselves, which also benefits society.

So providing benefits to the community by providing mobility is our mission. But we have to do a diversity of things to achieve that single objective. There simply is not one size that fits all, because transportation is a varied thing.

People need to move on short trips within their own neighborhood. That's very different from the need to move 25 miles across town to a job. And the movement downtown for entertainment or for work is different from a suburb-to-suburb trip.

For example, we have bus service—our standard fixed-route, pre-determined schedule bus service which serves most of our customers. We deploy those buses in varying ways.

A long time ago, virtually every bus



route went downtown. Now some of our buses continue on through downtown, and some bus routes go around downtown and connect suburbs. We're diversifying the kind of bus service even more. We will have some smaller buses which are very convenient for going down neighborhood streets that cannot accommodate large buses because they're too narrow or because the neighbors don't want large buses going down their street.

We also have bigger, heavier buses for some of our park-n-ride express freeway flier service. We've been very successful with those at our Euclid, Westlake and Strongsville park-n-ride lots where people are taking long bus trips. They want a sturdier, less bumpy ride with softer, high-back seats and reading lights.

We also need Rapid transit service because it's faster. And for some of those longer trips, fast is exactly what you need, especially when you're trying to deal with the downtown area.

We're going to add more. We're very intent on commuter rail service because for some markets, basically the longer-distance traveler, commuter rail has advantages.

We're going to see more in the way of vans and small-vehicle services, particularly as the reverse commute situation becomes more of an issue, where people need to get to a suburban job site but not enough people are going to that one site at one given time to justify fixed-route, fixed-schedule bus service. We may get to user-operated service, such as van-pools. A van-pool is operated by someone who is himself a traveling customer who wants to get to work.

Q: With all these different types of vehicles and in a world of limited resources, how does RTA make decisions about what's most important?

A: We really don't sit down and prioritize commuter rail versus buses, because those are just tools. We have to prioritize which markets, which mobility needs, which groups of people we need to serve. Then we have to pick the tool that serves those markets most effectively and most efficiently.

Q: That raises the question of whether there is a prioritization of types of customers? Does RTA target, for example, transit-dependent riders over riders with choice?

A: A lot of the prioritization has to do with the demand—who's really going to ride or who is already riding and overloading a particular service. There are times when you will see a priority exhibited, even though it's not been expressed.

For example, normally you will cut out your least efficient services in a time of a budget reduction. Fortunately, it's been all the way since late '92 that we had a budget crisis in which we had to look at eliminating service strictly to save money. And what came up on the chopping block was owl service, that late night, after-midnight type of bus service.

Of course, the agency got a lot of public input and held a lot of public hearings. And it's true that those services were expensive to provide and on a per-rider basis were not all that efficient. But through the public input, we heard people saying, "I ride that bus. I ride it to work, and without that bus I don't know how I'd get to work." So the agency, both board and management, quickly came to agreement that service needed to be retained. And since it was our less efficient service and we retained it anyway, that clearly shows that the agency exhibited a preference then for the work trips made by transit-dependent people.

You can see that priority coming up again as RTA is moving to the forefront of the welfare-to-work issue. We think there are a lot of challenges that we face here in Cuyahoga County in terms of people coming off of welfare eligibility. Transportation is by no means the only challenge or the only barrier to those people finding sufficient jobs, but we certainly want to make sure that we do our part.

Q: What will that involve? Do you need to add new bus routes from where the people are to where the jobs are?

A: We need to add transportation service. I deliberately don't say bus routes. We need to add mobility services which may take the form of bus routes, may take the form of commuter rail routes, may take the form of van-pool matching, may take the form of something else. We're open to ideas and your readers who have ideas should send them in! And we're working very closely with the county on this.

Q: Have you identified where those jobs are?

A: We have a good idea about where the growth areas are. The great majority of job locations in the Greater Cleveland area we

do serve. Sometimes the weakest link is after a rider gets off our bus at the property of the employer. Sometimes that means walking across a sea of parking. Or it may involve climbing over a two-foot high snow bank that the employer's snowplow and the city's snowplow have collaborated on building. It's a serious problem.

Q: This raises the issue of designing land use to be transit-friendly—what planners call transit-oriented design or development (TOD). So much urban design, especially in communities on the outskirts of region, is transit-unfriendly, favoring cars over pedestrians. What is RTA's role in encouraging municipalities and county governments to consider transit when they're approving new developments.

A: I'd call it active and advisory. By law it can only be advisory and not mandatory. We can't tell communities how to organize their sidewalks.

Every year our board and top

management negotiate a set of objectives. Among those objectives that have been agreed to by board and management for 1997 is increasing our contacts with the business community and local governments to emphasize what they can do to adopt transit-supportive policies.

In this regard, RTA really has evolved, because some years ago, we were more hands-off. We knew transit-oriented development was important, but we didn't think there was much we could do about it other than fostering it at our own stations.

So providing benefits to the community by providing mobility is our mission. But we have to do a diversity of things to achieve that single objective. There simply is not one size that fits all, because transportation is a varied thing.

Q: How successful do you think you've been in raising this issue's profile?

A: I'll say this, the issue's profile has definitely been significantly raised in the last several years. You have groups that never were heard of before acting in this area. Two years ago you would never have heard of anything called the First Suburbs [the consortium of Cuyahoga County's inner-ring suburbs, which have begun meeting on redevelopment issues]. Two years ago there was no such thing as the Northeast Ohio Regional Alliance [an ad hoc group convening regional meetings on sprawl and outmigration]. Even *EcoCity*



Cleveland wasn't publishing five years ago.

Discussions on reinvestment in urban areas, the Governor's Task Force on Farmland Preservation—a lot of these things two or more years ago were just not there. I think that RTA has played a role, but being that I'm with RTA, I'm probably a biased judge of that! So, let's just say that we are on the team, and the team is winning. And whether we're most valuable player, I rather doubt. But we are taking this issue on, and we are including it in our long-range plans.

Q: Is RTA working with the railroads concerning the sale of Conrail to CSX and Norfolk-Southern?

A: Very much so. We have suggested to the board that this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. We gained the consensus of the board that we should be proceeding very actively to involve ourselves in the process. They want us to negotiate with the railroads so that as they consider the various different ways they might move freight through Greater Cleveland they would give a priority to those choices that also lend themselves to the development of passenger rail service.

Q: Are you looking at this possibility in terms of a reverse commuter?

A: The fact is that most jobs in the Cleveland-Akron area are still in Cuyahoga County. Make no mistake about it. And most entry level jobs in the Cleveland-Akron metropolitan area are still in Cuyahoga County.

What you've been reading lately in the press is that most *newly* created jobs are farther out from Cleveland, and that's an important point that often is misunderstood. Because when you're applying for a job, it doesn't need to be a *newly* created job, it only needs to be what most ordinary people call a job opening. But for those new jobs in the outer parts of Cuyahoga County or in neighboring counties, commuter rail can really help people get from the inner-core areas of Cuyahoga County to them.

You know in the old days when most jobs were factory jobs, every job had to be located on the river so it could dump its effluent into the rivers. Now a lot of jobs are with very small firms in accounting, or software or legal or services and to some degree even in industry.

And a lot of times these are small businesses and the sole proprietor or the partners have already decided that they want to live in a low-density area. That's a given and nobody's going to change their minds about it.

Now, the only decision they have to

make is this: Should I locate my business in the core area of Cuyahoga County, which might make it easier for some of my employees to get to work, or should I locate in a newly built suburban office park?

A lot of them would like to keep their businesses downtown. Some of it's just an old model in their heads that somehow a job ought to be in a busy area that's concentrated. And a home in their minds ought to be on a one-plus acre lot somewhere where there's plenty of grass to mow. That's not my style. I live where there's a little grass to mow as possible! But, given that that's their preference, if there's a commuter rail system, they might locate their offices downtown. In the absence of a good transportation system that meets their needs, they'll just decide to put their business out on some suburban freeway.

I think commuter rail has to be studied very carefully, rather than just assuming *carte-blanche* that commuter rail inhibits sprawl *always* in all instances or that commuter rail causes sprawl *always* and in all instances. My job as director of research would be very easy if all these platitudes were true, that everything was an all-or-nothing situation.

The other thing to realize is that even if commuter rail goes out of Cuyahoga County, an awful lot of trips are taken within the county. Commuter rail lines to Akron and Canton may have five stops in Cuyahoga County, and those will probably be the most heavily traveled nodes. You just know by the laws of density and transit that the highest volume stops are going to be the ones that are right here in Cuyahoga County. I think the issue of sprawl is a good one to raise, but it's not one that should scare us off of considering commuter rail.

Q: Whether commuter rail contributes to or discourages urban sprawl depends upon many other factors that are not in RTA's control. What would have to be done so that commuter rail could contribute to creating denser, more environmentally sustainable communities?

A: The transit system itself can help just by providing a node of transportation. This is a little bit analogous to our transit center concept whereby we will try to serve places like Parmatown Mall, which already have

high concentrations of people and businesses.

By providing a transit center you can say, "Ok, not everything is going to be in the principal hub, which is downtown Cleveland, but let's try to concentrate what isn't in downtown Cleveland around some other nodes." The transit system can definitely help make that happen, but alone, there are limits to what we can do.

Q: Does RTA have a role in saying to municipal leaders, "Look, unless you zone for mixed-uses and higher densities, we're not going to put a transit station here."

Could you hold that stick over their heads?

A: Oh, easily. Because the ridership wouldn't be there. We've always had the mandate from our board to not do anything foolish.

In fact, we're pretty careful. We've only done one rail system expansion in the life of the Regional Transit Authority, and that's the Waterfront Line. We didn't want to depend on: "Well, let's try it, and maybe if we build it, they'll come."

That project was studied very carefully. We did extensive feasibility studies that came up with five or six different alternatives. We did forecasts of costs and ridership for all of them and the one we picked we really felt was sound. Very sound.

We didn't even build it to be dependent upon the Flats entertainment uses that were planned for the waterfront. We deliberately built it on the central business district side of the freeway at E. 9th Street. There was some talk that station would be north of the freeway because it would be great for the Rock Hall and the Science Center. But we didn't want to be totally dependent upon a couple of entertainment buildings that weren't even open yet when we were finalizing our plans.

Q: What are RTA's plans for linking the more environmentally friendly modes of transportation—bikes and buses and the Rapid system?

A: We're not closed to anything, but we're not actively pursuing bikes on our vehicles at this point. It just isn't among the priorities that we're working on right now. Thus far, no one's showed us evidence that it would lead to a significant increase in

I think commuter rail has to be studied very carefully, rather than just assuming carte-blanche that commuter rail inhibits sprawl in all instances or causes sprawl in all instances.



ridership. And there would probably be some people who would be uncomfortable if bicycles were brought into a Rapid transit car.

As far as hooking them on the outside of buses, some agencies have had pretty good luck with that around the country. It's especially used in communities with a lot of students. Also in communities with a lot of good weather, although there are some places with lousy weather where bus racks have been used, too.

Q: Let's go back to the question of transit-dependent versus choice riders. It seems inevitable that there's going to be a geographic tension between the center of RTA's routing system where a higher percentage of people are transit-dependent and the outer areas where there's a much lower percentage of people who need the bus. Do you see this tension? How do you balance it?

A: There's a lot less tension than some people think. Here's an example. I used to live in South Euclid and commuted to RTA by taking the 34 Green Road bus up to the Green Road terminal of the Shaker Rapid, got on the Shaker Rapid, and then came downtown. I used to make that transfer about 7:30 in the morning. While I got off my Green Road bus, there were a whole slew of Cleveland residents getting off the Shaker Rapid and getting on the bus I just got off of to continue a little farther south to jobs in Beachwood and Commerce Park and elsewhere. So while the 34 is providing a suburban service and there we were at the ultimate image of suburbia, the Shaker Heights rapid station, who was using it? A mixture of suburban and urban residents! There's really no conflict. Everywhere we go we serve the transit-dependent. Every bus we run has at least one transit-dependent rider on it. In fact they are often the majority.

Q: What plans do you have for upgrading the bus system in the future? Tell us about the comprehensive operational analysis that you're currently working on.

A: We are just in the concluding phases of this study, getting to the point where we will have completed our five-year transit development plan for our bus system. I'm really very excited about this because it addresses many of these issues in terms of which markets we need to serve and serve better. It calls for a number of principles. One of them is if you've got two not-so-good bus routes that are within walking distance of each other, see if you can erase them off the board, then put in one good bus service that's frequent and easy to

understand either on one of the original streets or a street in between.

Q: Is that likely to be a trade-off between frequency of bus service over proximity of bus stops?

A: Yes, but you'll get frequent, easy to remember service, something that runs every 15 minutes in rush hour and maybe every 20 minutes in non-rush hours. Whereas now you may have the choice of walking one way to a bus that's every 45 minutes or the other way to a bus that's every 50 minutes.

Another principle of the operational analysis has to do with route branches. Sometimes a route has so many different branches that you can't rely on a bus going to the same destination. We want to try to reduce confusion and improve frequency. Fewer routes but with higher quality service to improve convenience.

Still another principle is not to have routes that try to do several different things. Sometimes we have a route that is trying to provide short-distance, neighborhood, get-close-to-your-house type of service, and also give you fast service over a 15-mile trip. Very hard to do both! In fact, it's almost a contradiction in terms.

Instead, let's do one route that provides frequent, fast service with limited stops that gets you that 15 miles. Then, let's have something else, perhaps in a smaller vehicle, to provide that localized service.

Q: Your long-range plan, "Transit 2020," is being updated right now. What's the schedule of presenting the results of the update and soliciting public comment?

A: The way we organize public involvement is a mixture of things. Let me explain what I mean by that. In this case, we start with the broad community, then we go to community leaders, then we go back to the broad community.

One of our first actions was to do a broad-based community survey, to tell the community what's in the existing plan and say to the community, "Is there something in here we should emphasize more? Is there something in here we should de-emphasize? Is there something we should add that we forgot? Is there something we should take out that you don't like? What are your priorities?"

We put that survey out to the community last fall and we got a really good response. Close to 1,500 riders responded, which for statistical purposes is more than adequate. The next step is to share those results in working meetings with representatives of the communities, which we did in April. The planners we met with agreed with the

survey results that we do need to emphasize all the kinds of systems that we have in our long-range plan. That there isn't one size that fits all.

We've also met with mayors and city councils. That's the process we're in still in now which involves doing some more technical analysis. For example, we've got an economic study going. And NOACA is trying to finish an update of their model with our assistance.

And then we'll be ready to go back to the public meetings to say, "We think this is where you sent us, but did we miss something here?" We will do that touching-base in the fall, probably in September. We could do just one meeting, but I think that we'll do two meetings, an east side meeting and a west side meeting. We'll make sure we're still in the right ball park, after which we will take it to our board. And we're looking for adoption in the fall.

And then in three years we'll be going through it again because federal law, unless they change it, says you have to update every three years! So even if something occurs, if we leave something out because nobody thought of it, and you think of it next year, no problem. You won't have to wait very long. □

Mean streets

The following is excerpted from *Mean Streets: Pedestrian Safety and Reform of the Nation's Transportation Law*, a recent report from the Surface Transportation Policy Project and the Environmental Working Group. At a time when Congress is debating transportation priorities, the reports calls for America to begin correcting decades of imbalanced spending policies, in order to save lives, prevent injury, and give local people greater say in making their neighborhoods more livable.

■
Hundreds of millions of dollars are spent every year to make America's roads safer, yet this investment is failing to ensure the safety of all of us who engage in the most basic form of transportation—walking. Millions of Americans walk—to school, to work, to the store, or just around the block for a little bit of exercise. Our findings indicate that from 1986 to 1995, approximately 6,000 pedestrians were killed by automobiles each year, and more than 110,000 were injured.

This carnage is attributable only in part to individual misjudgment—a failure to "look both ways" as children are taught. These deaths and injuries are also the consequences of a transportation system gone badly wrong—a system focused on making the streets safe for cars instead of making communities safe for people. Indeed, people are 1.6 times more likely to get killed by a car while walking than they are to be shot and killed by a stranger with a gun.

In *Mean Streets*, we analyzed the failures of this system, taking a close look at pedestrian fatalities, and spending on our streets, roads and highways—the billions of dollars spent each year that frequently makes the roads less safe for pedestrians. Our analysis of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) data found that:

■ **Thousands of pedestrians are killed each year by automobiles.** Between 1986 and 1995, approximately 6,000 pedestrians died every year in the United States after being hit by cars. This is a significant public health and safety problem—the equivalent of a commercial airline crash with no survivors

every two weeks. And for every pedestrian who is killed by an automobile, almost 20 more are injured—more than 110,000 pedestrians are injured by automobiles each year.

■ **Highway safety money is not being used to protect pedestrians.** Pedestrians account for 14 percent of all motor vehicle-related deaths, yet only one percent of federal highway safety funds are spent on pedestrian safety. The remaining 99 percent is spent on automotive safety measures (such as road widening) that typically remove the obstacles to more rapid traffic flow. The *Highway Capacity Manual*—one of the industry bibles—provides the typical highway engineer's definition of a pedestrian: a traffic "flow interruption." Traffic safety features are

If you don't like the way I'm driving, get off the sidewalk!

—Bumper sticker on a car in Cleveland

Average number of pedestrian deaths in Ohio each year: 167.

Percentage of all traffic fatalities in Ohio that are pedestrians: 11 percent.

Percentage of federal safety funding Ohio spends on dedicated pedestrian projects: Zero percent.

designed primarily to allow drivers to move at higher speeds. This basic tenet of highway engineering often makes roads more dangerous for pedestrians.

■ **Senior citizens are at the highest risk.** Senior citizens (persons age 65 and over) comprise 13 percent of the population, but account for 23 percent of all pedestrian fatalities—meaning that seniors are almost twice as likely to be killed by an automobile as members of the general public. As a group, senior citizens are particularly dependent on safe streets for walking because many of them no longer drive.

■ **Most fatalities occur on neighborhood streets.** More than half of all pedestrian deaths by automobiles occur on neighborhood streets. The problem is not that pedestrians are

walking in the wrong places, but that our local streets are becoming speedways—designed to accommodate more cars passing through, not the people who live, walk, and play in their communities.

Most dangerous cities

The high rate of pedestrian fatalities is a national problem. In some communities however, the problem is worse than most.

The cities with the largest numbers of walkers—New York, for example—will have the most pedestrian fatalities. This does not always mean, however, that cities like New York are the most dangerous places to walk relative to the number of people walking.

The most dangerous metropolitan areas for walkers tend to be newer, sprawling, southern and western communities, where transportation systems are most biased toward the car at the expense of other transportation options. Among large metropolitan areas (those with populations of one million or more) the five most dangerous communities in which to walk are Ft. Lauderdale, Miami, Atlanta, Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, and Dallas.

The safest walking communities are Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, Boston, New York City, and Rochester, NY. In these metropolitan areas, walking activity is high, but there are relatively few fatalities. Our findings indicate that it is 11 times more dangerous to walk in Ft. Lauderdale than it is to walk in Pittsburgh.

The Cleveland metro area—with an average of 36 pedestrian fatalities a year—is two and a half times more dangerous than Pittsburgh, but four and half times safer than Ft. Lauderdale. Cleveland's pedestrian fatality ranking is on a par with Chicago, Washington, DC, Denver and Cincinnati.

Making safer streets

Solutions to make our streets safer for pedestrians are well understood, but too seldom implemented. Indeed, some communities have demonstrated how to reduce pedestrian death and injuries. The key to improving pedestrian safety is to attack the problem at its source, and reduce hazards by improving poorly designed roadways and transportation systems. For years, traffic

engineers have placed the blame on the walker rather than on the motorist or road condition. Instead of blaming pedestrians for being hit by cars, planners and engineers must design communities and roads that are safe for walking.

Communities can take a variety of actions designed to make roads safer, including:

- **Traffic calming**—The installation of speed bumps, traffic circles or other devices in residential neighborhoods that slow cars down and ensure that pedestrians are safe.
- Providing **separate walkways** and other spaces for pedestrians.
- Designing **public spaces to be more pedestrian friendly**—including the installation of sidewalks, handrails for the infirm, bricked crosswalks, and even actions as simple as changing the patterns of the lines on the road [see article on page 18].
- Enhanced **public education on pedestrian safety**, and adequate enforcement of laws designed to protect pedestrians.

These tools are already making the roads safer for pedestrians in some communities. In Seattle, the city's traffic calming program reduced pedestrian accidents by more than 75 percent. In Portland, OR, traffic circles reduced the number of reported accidents by 50 percent.

These examples clearly indicate that America has the means to make our nation's streets safer for pedestrians. We lack only the public demand and political resolve to reduce pedestrian injury and death.

Action in Congress

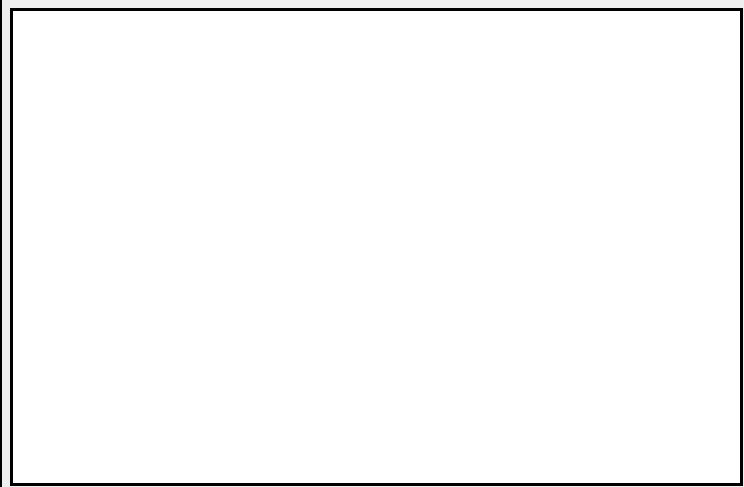
This year, Congress is poised to reauthorize the nation's major transportation law, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). This legislation will provide over \$150 billion for states and communities to spend on their transportation systems—roads, bridges, public transportation, and trails and paths for those who walk and bike. The highway lobby, known as the "road gang" (including road contractors, automobile manufacturers, truckers and even several state Departments of Transportation) is pushing to weaken the legislation, so that money is spent exclusively to build highways.

To make our communities safer for walking and otherwise make America's transportation system more sustainable, however, it's vital that the basic structure of ISTEA be maintained. ISTEA funding for bike and pedestrian projects should be increased as part of ISTEA's Enhancement program. And all ISTEA-funded road projects should be required to plan for the safe accommodation of pedestrians as well as other vulnerable users of the roadway.

It's time for pedestrian safety to be recognized as a national transportation safety priority on par with automobile and railroad safety. □

For more information about walkable streets:

- The *Mean Streets* report can be found on the World Wide Web at www.ewg.org.
- Environmental Working Group, 1718 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20009 (202-667-6982). Nonprofit environmental research organization.
- Surface Transportation Policy Project, 1100 17th St. NW, 10th Floor, Washington, DC 20036 (202-466-2636). National coalition of grassroots and transportation organizations which advocates for balanced transportation policy. Web site covering a range of transportation issues at www.transact.org.
- Campaign to Make America Walkable, 1506 21st St. NW, Suite 210, Washington, DC 20036 (202-463-6622). Project of the Bicycle Federation of America to advocate designing streets and public spaces to foster walking.



Walkable space: Main Street in Kent.

Safe streets in Kent

As an old Western Reserve town on the upper Cuyahoga River, Kent started as a compact, walkable community. It developed a Main Street as an attractive commercial center. Residents living on the intimate residential streets nearby had easy access to everything they needed.

But in recent years, the pedestrian-friendly urban fabric of the city has begun to fray. An ugly, limited access bypass for SR 59 sliced through neighborhoods, and other road "improvements" have speeded up traffic and made streets more dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists.

In an effort to reclaim Kent's walkable character, the Kent Environmental Council's Healthy Transportation Task Force is promoting a "protected neighborhood strategy."

"A protected neighborhood," according to the task force, "is a neighborhood where there is a balance in the use of streets. As the outdoor public rooms of our neighborhoods, streets are more than just places for cars and trucks. They are also places to walk, bicycle, play, socialize and congregate. Well designed streets are our public neighborhood gardens."

"Most transportation decisions, however, are made strictly from the perspective of the automobile," says task force member Rick Hawksley. "Pedestrians are subsidiary. The whole landscape says don't walk."

A lot of small design problems add up to make streets feel threatening—excessive speed limits and street widths, poor sidewalk maintenance, sign poles in the middle of sidewalks, lack of clearly designated crosswalks. Such problems especially restrict the mobility of children, the elderly and people with disabilities.

"If the meekest among us can't get around, what have we done?" Hawksley asks.

After meetings with neighborhood groups and Kent City Council, the task force is recommending that the city conduct a comprehensive plan for pedestrian and bicycle improvements and develop long-term capital funding and maintenance strategies to implement the plan. In addition, the task force recommends that the city take more responsibility for the condition of sidewalks, that state law regarding local speed limits be clarified, and that the city promote alternative uses for streets, such as for block parties or street hockey tournaments.

The ultimate goal is to calm traffic and create a more livable community in Kent—and provide a model for the rest of Northeast Ohio. For more information, call the Kent Environmental Council at 330-673-6534.

RTA projects in the pipeline

The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority is currently working on an ambitious program to complete over a dozen major projects in the City of Cleveland and throughout Cuyahoga County within the next five or six years. The results of RTA's ongoing *Transit 2020* long-range plan update will have an impact on the schedules of some of these projects, but plans for almost all of them are well underway.

The following is a list of the projects that will significantly change the way we move around the region by public transit in the coming years:

Project—year of completion

- Waterfront line (including streets and amenities)—1996.
- Community circulators: Lee-Harvard and St. Clair-Superior—1996.
- Community circulators: Slavic Village and Tremont—1997-98.
- Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA), a comprehensive examination of the RTA bus system culminating in a five-year plan for bus system improvements—1997.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit service—1997.
- Purchase of 110 replacement buses—1997.
- Compressed natural gas fueling facility at Brooklyn Garage—1998.
- North Coast Transportation Center on the Cleveland lakefront (an intermodal transportation hub for light rail, commuter rail and inter-city rail, RTA and inter-city buses, and taxis)—2001.
- Rehabilitation of all Cleveland West Side Red Line Rapid stations:
 - West 25, Airport and West Park—completed.
 - West Blvd./Cudell—1997.
 - Triskett—1999.
 - W. 117th and Puritas—2001.
 - W. 65th and Brookpark—2002.
- Euclid Corridor Improvement Project, including:
 - Euclid Avenue rehabilitation.
 - E. 17th/E. 18th one-way pairing.
 - Superior/St. Clair transit zone.
 - Rehabilitation or relocation of six Cleveland East Side Red Line Rapid stations (E. 55th to be rehabilitated; E. 34th proposed to be rebuilt near E. 14th; E. 79th proposed to be rebuilt near E. 89th; E. 105th proposed to be rebuilt near Stokes Blvd.; University Circle proposed to be rebuilt at Adelbert Rd.; and E. 120th proposed to be rebuilt at Mayfield)—2001.
- Downtown transit center—2000.
- Berea-Cleveland Red Line extension (a major investment study is currently underway)—2003.
- Bus loops and/or park-n-ride lots: E. 129th and St. Clair, E. 131st and Miles, E. 130th & Corlett, Brookpark and Pearl, Ambassador Lanes on Berea Rd., Strongsville, Euclid and Westlake—All open now.
- Regional/Commuter rail projects: Lorain-Westlake-Cleveland, Medina-Strongsville-Cleveland, Canton-Akron-Cleveland, Aurora-Solon-Cleveland, and Ashtabula-Mentor-Cleveland—All to be determined.

RTA's planning staff continue to work on updating the authority's *Transit 2020* plan. Public hearings on a draft version are scheduled for September, with the final report to be released later this fall. Call RTA's Richard Enty for more information at 216-566-5260.



Planning for pedestrians: The city of Boulder, CO, has turned its town center into a wonderful pedestrian mall (top picture) and has installed small traffic circles to slow cars in residential neighborhoods.

Creating great streets

Safety is the most critical element in creating pedestrian-friendly streets. But creating safe streets isn't enough. We also need make streets fun and interesting so that people not only *can* walk, but will *choose* to do so.

Allan Jacobs, former San Francisco city planning director, recently spoke about this in a lecture at Cleveland State University entitled "Great streets." He described a dozen characteristics that great streets share, from the conceptual to the concrete (literally and figuratively).

Great streets normally have:

- A sense of definition of the street as a place.
- A high density of building with many doors and windows directly on the street.
- Building types and designs that complement each other.
- Good and consistent maintenance of sidewalks, street lights, benches, and other features.
- Few driveways and other curb cuts that create obstacles to pedestrians.
- Trees that are appropriate in species and scale and are narrowly spaced to provide shade and block winds.
- A diversity of sights, experiences and pedestrians.
- Street features that are memorable in a positive way.
- Transparency of design so that there are clues to what lies ahead.
- An element of mystery that creates a sense of discovery.
- "Things that make the eyes move:" surfaces and features that catch our attention.
- Accessibility to all.

Clean air safety margins shifted

By Brad Flamm

In mid-April the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA), our regional environmental and transportation planning agency, initiated an administrative process that will increase allowable levels of air pollution from cars and trucks in Northeast Ohio in the coming decade. This bad news followed the good news of May 1996, when eight counties in Northeast Ohio celebrated three years without a violation of federal ground-level ozone standards and were able to graduate from an ozone "non-attainment area" to a "maintenance area."

How did the good news of cleaner air a year ago lead to the bad news of lower reductions in allowable levels of air pollution in the future? The answer lies in an unfortunate mix of pollution reduction policies pursued by several different public agencies responsible for air quality in Northeast Ohio.

When our region attained maintenance area status for ozone in 1996, two important things happened. First, because Northeast Ohio was no longer a non-attainment area, the Ohio EPA was free to implement fewer elements of the federally mandated "enhanced inspection and maintenance program" for cars. The result: our E-check program is not as tough as it could be, and our cars and trucks are polluting more.

The second action triggered by Northeast Ohio's graduation to maintenance area status was the federal government's establishment of "budgets" for tons of air pollutants that could be released into the atmosphere from major categories of pollution sources (see sidebar and charts). Those budgets, however, were determined on the assumption that Northeast Ohio would implement a stricter E-check program.

So today we're in a bind. NOACA had to ask the Ohio EPA to transfer some of the safety margins built into our overall air pollution

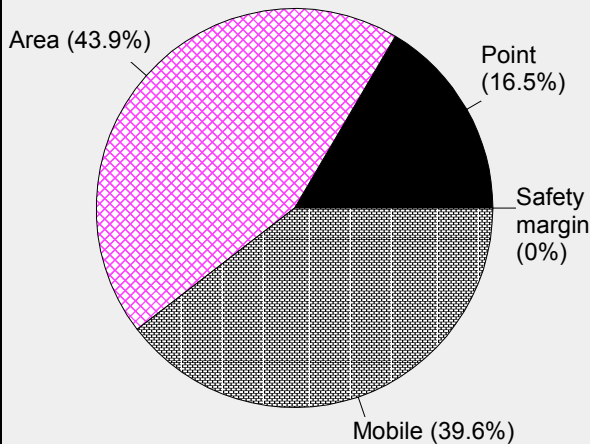
budgets to the "mobile" sources category. Thus, more tons of auto-induced air pollution will be "permissible," while the safety margins for industry and other sources will be reduced to meet federal standards.

This is a strange situation to be in when our cars are actually becoming significantly cleaner over time. So much cleaner, in fact, that despite the relentless increase in the region's number of registered vehicles and distances traveled, the federal emissions budgets could realistically plan for a steady decline in the tonnage of air pollution from cars and trucks over the next ten years—a "pollution control dividend" of sorts, thanks to cleaner automobile emissions technology.

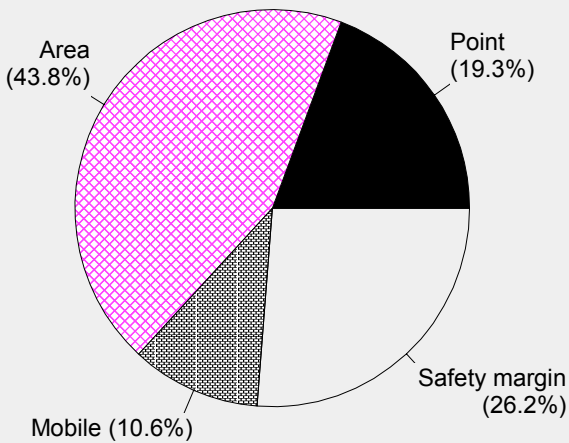
So, while overall levels of hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides (NOx) will still decrease slightly if the Ohio EPA grants NOACA's request, the pollution control dividend will be less than it could be. In the case of NOx emissions, the safety margin will shrink to almost nothing, constraining the region's ability to transfer additional tons of NOx emissions to allow for growth in industrial capacity in the region.

There are two important implications of this proposed safety margin transfer. First, the region's air quality will not be as good as it could be. This is particularly worrisome for those who are the most sensitive to air pollution—the young, the elderly, and asthmatics. Second, our E-check program, currently under attack in the state legislature, may be further weakened by a perception that our cars simply don't need to be as clean as they could be. As there are already a large number of legislators ready to throw out the "baby" of cleaner-running cars with the "bath water" of an imperfectly implemented program, it would be unfortunate to provide any additional ammunition to the foes of cleaner air. □

Northeast Ohio Hydrocarbon sources, 1993



Northeast Ohio Hydrocarbon source budgets, 2006



Ozone sources

Ozone, formed when heat and sunlight mix with hydrocarbon and nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions, is a Jekyll and Hyde gas. Naturally occurring atmospheric ozone, miles high in the sky, shields us from cancer-causing ultraviolet rays. But ozone found at *ground-level* is harmful to human health.

Consequently, the U.S. EPA is mandated to establish regulations for reducing the presence of hydrocarbons and NOx on the ground. EPA has established permissible levels from three different source categories: mobile sources (motor vehicles), point sources (factories and other stationary emitters of air pollution) and area sources (diffuse sources, such as drying paint, lawnmowers and outdoor barbecues).



As public awareness of the high cost of urban sprawl grows, so too does the recognition that our regional transportation system does more than just help us move from one place to another. Decisions about where roads and interchanges go, how buses and trains are routed, and whether or not bicyclists and pedestrians are safe on our streets affect the health of our communities, our economy, and the natural environment.

Transportation policy's dry reputation belies its importance to all of us and contributes to the fairly low profile of our region's transportation and environmental planning organization, the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA). This summer we'll see a great number of transportation planning and construction activities that will have long-lasting impacts on the shape of the region. Some of the more important are described on this and the next page.

I-71 widening study

Planners and elected officials at NOACA are currently considering a \$75 million proposal to widen 16 miles of I-71 in Medina and Cuyahoga counties from four to six lanes. Critics charge that the project is unnecessary and will promote greater urban sprawl in the southern part of the region, while ODOT and other proponents of additional lanes refute both claims. A first step towards resolving that long-standing debate may have been taken when the members of a "scoping committee" agreed to bring land use analysis of the I-71 corridor into a larger Major Investment Study (MIS) of the proposal. This analysis will lengthen the time needed to complete the MIS by at least several months. But it will provide details that NOACA's Governing Board members must have to make an informed decision on the proposal. Similar analysis was not done for the I-90 widening project that was approved by NOACA's Governing Board in December 1996.

In addition to addressing questions about likely land use impacts, ODOT has agreed to consider another potential problem that widening I-71 could create. To date, the study has been limited to the I-71 corridor between US 42 in Middleburg Heights and SR 18 in Medina county. This limited geographic scope sidesteps the question of the already bad congestion just north of the study area—at the junction of I-480 and I-71. Yet widening I-71 south of I-480 will only bring more traffic to that bottleneck.

Medina County Commissioner Sara Pavlovic believes that credible land use analysis is precisely what elected officials need to explain growth and development options to constituents. The most useful result of the expanded study will be a clear explanation of how much additional growth—and thus, how much additional traffic—current zoning patterns in the I-71 corridor permit. The costs of such growth, in terms of future infrastructure investments (roads as well as sewers, electrical lines and other services), can then be compared to the costs of expected growth and traffic under alternative, more restrictive zoning patterns.

The committee working on the MIS will meet again in June. Call John Motl at ODOT District 12 (216-581-2333) for more information.

I-90 widening

Construction is scheduled to begin in early June to widen 14 miles of I-90 in Lorain and Cuyahoga counties. The project will cost an estimated \$46 million and will include repaving the existing lanes and rehabilitating several bridges.

In February, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) gave the project its blessing when it granted a "categorical exclusion," thus allowing it to proceed without additional environmental assessment. The FHWA argues that because all the new construction will occur in the median between the existing lanes the project will not significantly affect the environment. This demonstrates that the federal agency accepted the argument that secondary environmental impacts caused by increased traffic on the wider highway (i.e. the urban sprawl that will be exacerbated as access to eastern Lorain County is improved) do not need to be studied.

Medina Transportation Improvement District

Early this year Medina County entered into an agreement with ODOT to create a Transportation Improvement District (TID) for the purpose of constructing or reconstructing five interchanges and seven highways segments. The agreement commits ODOT and the Medina TID to split the financing of these projects evenly, and current estimates put the total projected cost at over \$116 million. Actual costs could be considerably higher, depending upon the actual dates of construction, which have not been set. Once funding is assured (possibly through increases in the county sales tax or vehicle registration fees), the TID will implement its program in three phases. The first phase will see the widening of SR 18 from Windfall Road to the Summit County line (\$11 million). Phase II includes three projects to build a bypass around the city of Medina (\$30 million). And phase III involves four interchange construction and

reconstruction projects and four highway widening projects (\$75.6 million). For more information, contact the Medina County offices at 330-225-7100 or the Medina County Engineer, David Miller, at 330-723-9555.

NOACA's Long-Range Transportation Plan

NOACA recently began the process of updating its Long-Range Transportation Plan. The LRTP sets transportation planning priorities and targets in Northeast Ohio for the next 20 years and so sets the context for future debates and discussions.

Cleveland Councilman Charles Patton heads the NOACA committee overseeing the LRTP update. A key component of the work is soliciting public participation in the process, and NOACA has turned to a team of consultants to help do this. William Silverman & Company (former consultants to Blue Cross/Blue Shield) and Cleveland State University's Leadership Development & Training Program will organize 13 focus group sessions and a multi-media campaign to encourage widespread participation. Preparatory work begins in June, with focus group sessions occurring in July and August. The revised LRTP will be completed by November. For more information, contact Steve Jones at NOACA (216-241-2414).

ISTEA reauthorization

Congressional deliberations began in February on reauthorization of ISTEA, the groundbreaking 1991 federal legislation that significantly changed the way transportation planning is done in the U.S. The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act has emphasized environmentally sound principles, given a stronger voice to citizens and local decision-makers at the regional level, and provided flexible funding in metropolitan areas. A coalition of highway interests is working to return federal transportation funding to its former focus on highways only. Congressional representatives, senators, governors and state transportation agencies have been staking out offensive and defensive positions.

A half dozen main proposals are

on the table. Those which would retain ISTEA's essential structure and programs—including the Clinton administration's NEXTEA plan and "ISTEA Works"—seem to have the strongest support at the moment. But the allocation of funds—how the national gas tax monies are shared among the country's "donor" and "donee" states—remains a contentious issue. And intense debate continues to swirl around the future of ISTEA's environmental funds, the Enhancement and Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ) programs. A proposal with the backing of the influential chairman of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, Rep. Bud Shuster (R-PA), would make 50% of CMAQ and enhancements funds "flexible." In Ohio and other states this would likely lead to the transfer of those funds to new highway construction.

The current federal legislation expires in September, putting pressure on House and Senate transportation committees to complete deliberations soon. The Surface Transportation Policy Project (STPP) in Washington D.C. provides excellent weekly updates on the ISTEA reauthorization battle and other national transportation policy issues in their weekly e-mail and fax bulletin, "Transfer." Contact them at 202-446-2636 or check out their Web sites at www.transact.org and www.istea.org.

ODOT's budget crunch

ODOT Director Jerry Wray announced in January that only 25 of over 150 proposed highway construction projects can be built before funds for major new highway projects are exhausted. Without additional revenue, ODOT will be unable to construct any new projects after 2002, leaving in limbo 133 projects from its "Major New Capacity Program."

ODOT operations and preservation activities to maintain the existing system of over 20,000 miles of highways currently use over \$1.3 billion of the agency's \$1.6 billion budget. By 2002 those costs will rise to over \$1.5 billion, consuming all revenues projected to be available. Major new construction projects will continue until 2002 in large part because of the sale of Issue 2 bonds (\$120 million annually from 1995 to 1998). But the cost of servicing the debt this creates is huge. Already ODOT's debt to revenue ratio is 22%

and it will soon rise to over 25%, according to William Davis, ODOT's assistant director for business management.

The announcement of ODOT's budget crunch led to frantic calls for a state gas tax hike to pay for more highway capacity projects. But the State Supreme Court's ruling on school funding and the fact that new construction won't actually end until 2001 pushed the issue off of the state legislature's radar screen. At the moment, it looks as if the matter won't be raised again for at least several months. But a coalition of highway interests is working to ensure that it doesn't die altogether. Call the public information office at ODOT's central office in Columbus for more information (614- 466-7170).

Six lanes wide from Cleveland to Columbus?

ODOT's central office in Columbus is planning a series of public meetings to discuss long-standing plans to widen I-71 between Columbus and Cleveland from four to six lanes. The meetings will be held in communities along I-71, but no dates have yet been set.

Increasing traffic along the corridor and more conflicts between trucks and cars are cited as reasons for widening the Interstate. Budget constraints have pushed nine separate projects involved, totaling over \$210 million (which could fund a rather nice, high-speed passenger rail for the state and remove some of the traffic congestion from I-71), to ODOT's second tier of funding for new capacity projects. This means that for the time being they're in a nebulous state: not completely off ODOT's agenda, but without certain funding at any time in the future.

—Brad Flamm

Congestion in the eye of the beholder

It's odd that places where highways are planned for widening in Northeast Ohio are *not* the places suffering the worst traffic congestion.

Consider two prominent examples. A relatively uncongested section of I-90 in Lorain County is being widened, even though the real I-90 bottlenecks are in Cuyahoga County. And the Ohio Department of Transportation wants to widen I-71 in Medina County, even though the new lanes will exacerbate the much worse congestion to the north at the I-71/I-480 bottleneck.

Why is this happening? It may have more to do with the way Northeast Ohio is split between different ODOT districts than with rational transportation planning. These two projects were initiated by ODOT District 3, which covers Lorain, Medina, Wayne, Ashland, Richland, Crawford, Huron and Erie counties. When District 3 planners look at their mostly rural territory, the I-90 and I-71 projects pop out as priorities.

Never mind that, relatively speaking, urban areas of ODOT District 12 (Cuyahoga, Geauga and Lake counties) have more serious problems.

New NOACA officers

At its January 1997 meeting, the Governing Board of the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency elected the following new officers:

- President: Neil Hofstetter, Geauga County commissioner.
- Vice president: David Anderson, Willoughby mayor.
- Assistant vice president: Charles Patton, Cleveland councilman.
- Secretary: Sara Pavlovicz, Medina County commissioner.
- Assistant secretary: Robert Downey, Cleveland Heights city manager.
- Treasurer: Edward Rybka, Cleveland councilman.
- Assistant treasurer: Timothy Hagan, Cuyahoga County commissioner.
- Assistant treasurer: Kenneth Carney, Lorain County engineer.

The election was hotly contested, as local elected officials are understanding more and more how regional transportation decisions at NOACA affect their communities. City of Cleveland representatives felt snubbed because Cleveland Councilman Charles Patton had been in line to become president but was bypassed by Hofstetter.

NOACA's 1996 president, Lorain County Commissioner Betty Blair, sought a second term but was not renominated. It seems that ambitious board members in line behind her did not want to wait another year before moving up.

Important NOACA committee appointments include Lorain County Engineer Ken Carney as chair of the Transportation Advisory Committee and Cleveland Councilman Charles Patton as chair of the Long Range Plan Update Committee.

Litigation updates

■ **Hudson growth cap:** The rapidly growing Summit County community of Hudson recently won a big victory in the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals, as judges lifted an injunction from a lower court and allowed the city to enforce its cap on the number of residential building permits issued annually. In addition, homebuilders' claims that the growth cap is unreasonable are proving not to be true; the 126 construction permits issued last year were less than the limit.

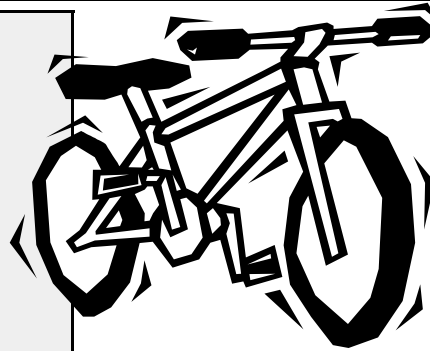
■ **Water antidegradation:** According to the Clean Water Act, our nation's waters are allowed to be degraded only when necessary for an important economic and social purpose, and only after public notice and hearings. The Ohio General Assembly, however, snuck a provision into its 1993-94 budget bill which weakened the state's antidegradation provision—allowing virtually automatic approval of pollution discharge up to 80 percent of a river's assimilative capacity (the odd notion that a river can handle a certain amount of insult without showing harm). In March 1997, a team of environmental groups and sporting groups led by Rivers Unlimited and the Ohio Sierra Club prevailed in a legal challenge to the new antidegradation rule. The final result now depends on negotiations between the plaintiffs and Ohio EPA. The case marks the first time that Ohio environmental groups have teamed up with members of the hunting and fishing community in a joint legal effort.

■ **Chardon superstore zoning:** Wal-Mart is still not coming to Chardon. In February, the Ohio Supreme Court refused to hear a developer's appeal of the village's restrictions on large retail stores. Chardon residents believe a Wal-Mart will destroy Chardon's small town character and create traffic problems.

■ **Wayne Forest clearcuts:** Congratulations to the Ohio Chapter of the Sierra Club who recently prevailed in a five-year lawsuit to stop the U.S. Forest Service's plans for clearcutting in the Wayne National Forest. The U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals unanimously accepted the club's arguments that clearcut logging would violate the Forest Service's duty to manage the Wayne in southern Ohio for the benefit of all users, not just for timber companies.

■ **Pesticide notification:** The Ohio Supreme Court recently refused to hear an appeal by the City of Fairview Park regarding its pesticide notification ordinance. The city had prosecuted Barefoot Grass for not notifying neighbors before spraying lawn chemicals. But an appellate court overturned the conviction on the grounds that the Fairview law conflicted with the state pesticide law. For more information on reforming pesticide notification laws, Call Kim Hill of the Northeast Ohio Sierra Club at 216-382-1853.

■ **Environmental audit privilege:** The major environmental groups in Ohio are petitioning U.S. EPA to take over enforcement of federal clean air and hazardous waste regulations from Ohio EPA. They say that, in some cases, Ohio EPA will be unable to enforce environmental regulations because Ohio's new Environmental Audit Privilege Law gives polluters immunity from prosecution. The audit privilege law is intended to provide incentives for companies to voluntarily correct illegal practices.



Bikes on buses

Bike racks on buses are catching on in Dayton. By next year the Miami Valley Regional Transit Authority plans to have racks mounted on the fronts of 100 buses to make it easy for cyclists to extend their trips by transit.

"We've had a very positive reaction," a staff member of the transit authority told us recently. "The racks are easy to use, and local bike advocacy groups are helping to educate the public about their operation."

In the Cleveland area, bike advocates have been unsuccessful in their attempts to persuade the transit authority to put racks on buses (or even allow bikes on the Rapid during off-peak hours). So far, officials of the Greater Cleveland RTA are not convinced that there is enough demand to justify the racks.

Critical mass of bikes

Local bike activists are organizing "Critical Mass" bike rides to promote bicycling and alternative transportation in Greater Cleveland. The group rides will take place at 5:30 p.m. on the last working Friday of the month through fall. Meet at Cleveland Public Square. For more information, call Stephen Manka at 216-721-0992.

Crain's talks sense

Crain's Cleveland Business, usually a growth-at-any-cost newspaper, recently joined the chorus questioning the expansion of highways in rural areas of Ohio. "We aren't anti-

development," *Crain's* editorial said, "However, we do believe officials in the state development and transportation departments must consider the impact of development in traditionally rural areas not only upon urban centers that often are hurt by an exodus of people and jobs to exurbia, but also upon Ohio's farm economy...[T]he state is plenty busy rebuilding existing roads. It doesn't need to add a ton more to its load."

Laketrans park-n-ride stalled

Laketrans' plans to build a park-and-ride facility at SR 2 and SR 306 in Mentor are being delayed because Mentor won't grant a conditional use permit. Mentor officials liked the plan but changed their minds after hearing objections by residents near the site.

Science Center parking garage

Last September, the Ohio Department of Transportation gave up its attempt to lend clean air funds for a parking garage at the Great Lakes Science Center in Cleveland. ODOT withdrew its application for Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ) funds after federal highway officials said the garage would promote more auto use rather than prevent air pollution. Now the state is helping to finance the garage with other sources of funding.

Members of the Northeast Ohio Sierra Club Urban Sprawl Committee and other local transportation activists worked hard to stop this potential misuse of clean air funding. Instead of a new parking garage on the lakefront, committee members favor a pedestrian bridge over the Shoreway to an existing parking garage next to Cleveland City Hall.

Special-interest interchanges

With the region's Interstate highway network essentially complete, the most controversial road projects of the near future will be lane additions and new interchanges.

Interchanges will be especially problematic because they can be bought by special interests and political manipulation. The latest outrageous example is a new I-480 interchange being pushed by Independence Mayor Gregory Kurtz. Located just a quarter mile west of the I-480/I-77 cloverleaf, the \$20 million interchange would promote even more development along Rockside Road. The project would include an access road running north to Granger Road, which is near land owned by the mayor's family. (The Kurtz site includes an ugly construction debris landfill which has trashed the banks of the Cuyahoga River.)

To get his interchange, Kurtz completely bypassed the transportation planning process that sets priorities for the region. Instead, he went straight to Congressman Steven LaTourette, who sits on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and lobbied for special federal funding. Kurtz even hired LaTourette's former campaign director to do the lobbying, according to a recent article in the *Plain Dealer*.

If the deal goes through, it will be another sorry triumph of politics over rational planning.

Harvard Road interchange

Thanks to a deal worked out between the state, the cities of Cleveland and Beachwood, and the Jacobs development group, funding questions have been resolved for a

new I-271 interchange to serve the Chagrin Highlands site at Harvard Road. Residents of communities east of the interchange, however, are still fighting the project, as it will dump more traffic into residential areas.

Reinventing ODOT

"ODOT's standard answer to increased traffic is to widen roads. The sprawl spreads with each new interchange built to accommodate developers who find greater profits in virgin land than in investing in our urban centers and older suburbs.

"This cancer will continue to grow unless we revise ODOT's mission statement. It currently reads in part: 'Our mission is to ...foster economic growth and personal travel.' It might as well read, 'Our mission is to promote urban sprawl.'"

—Letter to *The Plain Dealer* from a Moreland Hills resident opposing the interchange at I-271 and Harvard Rd.

Transportation reform

Ohio has suffered from the lack of a strong, citizen's reform program for transportation. Rampant road building has both promoted and followed sprawling land uses—to the neglect of environmentally-friendlier modes of transportation.

But a new Ohio Transportation Coalition has begun to unite all the groups in the state—such as environmentalists, transit and rail advocates, bicyclists, urban planners, advocates for people with disabilities, community development organizations—who have an interest in a different kind of transportation system. The coalition is being organized with help from the Ohio Chapter of the Sierra Club, EcoCity Cleveland and the Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers.

According to the Sierra Club's Margaret Koran, "We need to develop common goals and strategies so we can act together for a more rational, balanced transportation system in Ohio."

For more information, call EcoCity Cleveland's transportation program at 216-371-1640 or the Ohio Sierra Club at 614-461-0734.

Pressure points

▪ **Don't CuyaHOGa Gauga:** Anti-sprawl activists in Gauga County are becoming better organized. A forum organized by the Sierra Club Urban Sprawl Committee last fall attracted over 100 people to Bainbridge Town Hall, and members of Concerned Citizens of Bainbridge and Concerned Citizens of Chardon (who are both fighting zoning changes) are getting acquainted. And a new group, the Gauga Environmental Forum, is forming to promote environmental issues. For more information, call Lee Batdorff at 216-321-9152.

▪ **More U.S. 422 impacts:** The U.S. 422 highway extension through Gauga County is opening up new land for development, just as the state intended. Here's a quote from a recent *Plain Dealer* real estate story touting \$50,000 lots of the Harmony Glen development in Newbury Township: "This is one of the first sites in Gauga County that Forest City Land Group has developed recently. The company notes that with the extension of U.S. 422, the area is now easily accessible to downtown Cleveland, approximately 25 miles away."

▪ **Recycling urban land:** A state lobbying priority of the Greater Cleveland Growth Association is a \$30 million low-interest loan fund designed to help Cleveland and other cities buy land for redevelopment. Unless urban land is assembled and cleaned up for redevelopment, businesses will keep moving out to new sites in the suburbs.

▪ **Tax-break costs:** Critics have long argued that tax abatements and other incentives are give-aways that reward businesses for doing what they would probably do anyway. Now the Urban Center at Cleveland State University has landed a \$500,000 state grant to evaluate the effectiveness of such subsidies.

▪ **Lorain County erosion costs:** Seventh Generation, the Lorain County environmental group is using a grant from the Great Lakes Commission to study the costs and benefits of erosion control methods at home construction sites. Run-off from construction sites can pollute local streams. Seventh Generation is also teaming up with Lorain County 2020 to convene public meetings on growth issues in the county. Call 216-322-4187 to get involved.

▪ **Ohio still losing wetlands:** Despite a national "no net loss" policy, Ohio continued to lose wetlands to agricultural drainage and urban sprawl between 1990 and 1995, according to a study by the National Audubon Society. Ohio has already lost more than 90 percent of its valuable wetland ecosystems. For more information, call the Audubon Society at 614-224-3303 or Friends of Wetlands at 216-324-7522.

▪ **Farewell to a barn:** Hiram Twp. residents are lamenting the loss of a landmark barn along SR 82 just west of Garrettsville. The barn was recently burned by Hiram firefighters to make way for a new house. According to the Garrettsville *Weekly Villager* the barn was another "victim to the lure of exurbia."



1000 Friends of Ohio?

Is it time for Ohio to have a statewide land use organization to promote responsible growth management? A number of activists from around the state discussed the question during the "Ohio Growth and the Future" conference held March 25-26 in Columbus.

A citizens' land use advocacy organization could be modeled on successful "1000 Friends" groups in Oregon, Minnesota, Florida and other states—groups which have united environmental, conservation, farm, and sustainable development interests.

Ohio activists are proceeding toward the formation of such a statewide group. Organizing meetings took place May 6 and June 7, and participants hope to agree on a mission and goals in the coming weeks. For more information, call EcoCity Cleveland at 216-932-3007 or Tim DeWitt at 614-882-9122.

What reforms might a 1000 Friends group advocate? One idea from the 1000 Friends of Minnesota is *community-based land use planning within a statewide framework*. This means:

1. The state does not become involved in planning but provides broad, statewide goals or guidelines.
 2. There's not one statewide plan, but a patchwork of plans that are local yet integrated.
 3. All planning and zoning are done on the local level by within state guidelines.
 4. Citizens are directly involved in defining statewide guidelines and in all phases of the local planning process.
 5. Land use is made to be sustainable over the long term, not just for short-term profits.
 6. Plans include the full cost accounting of development.
 7. The plans promote true sustainability by combining the goals of social justice, environmental health and economic equity.
 8. All plans are coordinated with neighboring jurisdictions.
 9. All jurisdictions and state agencies do planning and fiscal decision-making that involves broad citizen participation, is consistent with statewide goals, and is truly comprehensive (i.e., includes school districts, future costs, etc.).
 10. Planning is holistic and proactive—not reactive.
- In addition, the following elements are critical to a successful statewide land use

Outrage of the month

Building next to streams: These new homes along the Chagrin River in Bentleyville are perched right on the riverbank—in an ecologically sensitive area and in a dangerous floodplain. All communities should enact setback ordinances to keep buildings safely away from critical water resources.

Send us your pictures of environmental outrages for future issues!

Solon bows to students

As we reported last year, students from University School's Chagrin Watershed Institute blew the whistle on the City of Solon's callous channelization plans for Boulder Creek. The flood control project would have straightened and armored the stream channel, destroyed trees and threatened brook trout downstream in the Cleveland Metroparks Sulfur Springs area.

Recently, the city agreed to follow the students' recommendations and use bioengineering—the use of natural pools and meanders, planted vegetation, logs and rocks—to stabilize stream banks, slow water flow and curb erosion. It's a case of informed students teaching professional engineers new tricks about ecological realities.

planning act:

- The statewide goals and local planning must be *mandated*.
- The statewide goals and local plans must be *enforced* by an interagency or the establishment of a new state agency.
- The goals and plans must be *monitored* by an outside public interest group.
- Implementation of the statewide goals must include broad *citizen involvement* in local community visioning and planning.
- Strong leadership from the governor.

Columbus revitalization

People concerned about the quality of urban life want to put new ideas about city development and revitalization on the civic agenda in Columbus. They have formed a consortium called Growing Inward: Rebuilding the Center City. For more information, call the Columbus Urban Growth Corporation at 614-280-0899.

Land trusts organize

PLACE, the land trust based in Portage County, is working with a grant from The George Gund Foundation to promote the development of the Northeast Ohio Land Trust Coalition. PLACE will be publishing a quarterly newsletter for the dozen or so land trusts in the region, and it will create an educational display about land conservation options for land trusts to use at public events.

For more information, call Chris Craycroft at 330-673-9404 or Rick Hawksley at 330-673-8631.

Top polluters

Here are the top ten polluters in the seven-county region, based on total toxic releases to the environment for 1995:

- LTV Steel, Cleveland
- Ford Motor Casting, Brook Park
- Chemical Solvents, Cleveland
- Ford Ohio Assembly, Avon Lake
- Ford Lorain Assembly, Lorain
- UC Industries, Tallmadge
- Morgan Adhesives, Stow
- Rexam Performance Products, Cleveland

- GE Chemical Products, Cleveland
- Uniroyal Chemical, Painesville

Source: Ohio EPA Toxic Release Inventory, 1995

Pollution data on-line

Getting information on local polluters is easier than ever, thanks to the Earth Day Coalition's new site on the World Wide Web. The site lets you click on your zip code or town to get a list of all the polluters in your area listed in the EPA's Toxic Release Inventory. If you then click on a particular polluter, you can then access the firm's name, address, phone number, contact person, chemicals emitted, amounts emitted and where the chemicals go. For Cuyahoga County, maps show the location of polluting facilities by zip code. The information can be found at <http://call/rmrc.net/~earthday/tri>.

Great Lakes toxics

Ohio EPA is finalizing water standards it developed under the Great Lakes Initiative. The new standards are intended to protect Lake Erie from the accumulation of toxic chemicals. One controversial provision would limit cancer risks to less than one incidence of cancer per 100,000 people, rather than the more protective one-in-a-million risk favored by environmental groups.

For more information and a copy of the proposed rules, call Ohio EPA at 614-644-2154. For other comments, call Rivers Unlimited at 216-657-2055 or Lake Erie Alliance at 716-745-1257.

Pollution prevention in neighborhoods

The local Earth Day Coalition is working with the Environmental Defense Fund and the Environmental Careers Organization to develop a pilot pollution prevention project in several Cleveland neighborhoods. The project will help neighborhood residents create healthier, more sustainable communities. Call 216-281-6468 for

more information.

The Environmental Defense Fund and its Pollution Prevention Alliance have released an *Environmental Sustainability Kit*, which provides ideas and strategies for creating sustainable communities using pollution prevention and multi-stakeholder processes. For more information, call EDF at 608-259-0268, or check out its Web site at www.edf.org.

Preventing lead poisoning

The Cuyahoga County Board of Health is seeking federal funds to expand programs for lead poisoning prevention and lead hazard abatement in the county. Lead poisoning is the most important pediatric disease in Cuyahoga County today. It has been linked to reduced intelligence, low attention span, reading and learning disabilities, and behavioral problems.

Nearly one in five children tested in the county have elevated blood lead levels. Over 90 percent of the county's housing stock in older suburbs is likely to contain lead-based paint.

The City of Cleveland has operated childhood lead poisoning prevention programs for a number of years.

Urban gardening addendum

In attempting to summarize a lot of information in a small space, the article on urban gardening in our September/October 1996 issue omitted a couple of gardening resources in the Cleveland area—the City of Cleveland's Summer Sprout program, which provides gardening materials to community gardeners, and the Cleveland Botanical Garden, which has developed an urban garden at the Dunham Tavern Museum.

In addition, OSU Extension agent Dennis Rinehart reports that concerns about lead-contaminated garden soil may be exaggerated. The Extension's testing of local vacant lots in recent years has not turned up high lead levels. And the incorporation of organic matter into the soil, the addition of rock phosphate to precipitate lead from soil, and the adjustment of soil pH for proper plant growth will go a long way toward minimizing lead uptake by plants. The bigger concern is the direct ingestion of contaminated soil by children.



Waste is a terrible thing to mind

The siting of a radioactive waste storage facility in Ohio is proving more difficult than anticipated. Governor George Voinovich recently signed a law allowing the controversial selection of potential sites to be pushed back six months to March 1999—conveniently after the November 1998 election in which Voinovich plans to run for the U.S. Senate.

The delay may have been influenced by the scores of communities across Ohio which have passed resolutions opposing the waste dump.

Contractor pulls out

The process also has been delayed by the surprising loss of the site screening contractor. URS Greiner Inc. recently walked away from a million-dollar contract over concerns about liability. The company was concerned that it could have been sued by communities identified as possible dump sites.

"Low-level" radioactive waste consists of a wide range of contaminated materials—practically everything but the "high-level" fuel rods from nuclear reactors, which are supposed to be entombed in a special federal facility in the Nevada desert (also having siting problems). Despite its name, low-level radioactive waste can be dangerous and can require safe storage for hundreds of years. Most of the low-level waste will come from nuclear power plants, and opponents of the Ohio facility fear the state's taxpayers will get stuck with the long-term liability for utilities' radioactive messes. A small proportion of the waste will come from medical facilities, research labs and other sources.

Under the terms of the Midwest Compact agreement, which Ohio entered into with Indiana, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota and Missouri, our state is supposed to store more than 2 million cubic feet of radioactive waste from member states collected during a 20-year time period. Then it would be another state's turn to accept radioactive waste for 20 years. Michigan was originally part of the Compact but was kicked out after failing to site a waste facility.

For information on the siting process, call the Ohio Low-Level Radioactive Waste Facility Development Authority at 1-800-540-LLRW or see the Web site www.state.ohio.us/ollrwfda/. For copies of resolutions opposing the facility, call the Earth Day Coalition at 216-281-6468.

Local award winners

■ **Terri Swearingen** of East Liverpool is one of the 1997 winners of the Goldman Environmental Prize, the world's premier award for grassroots environmentalists. She won the prize, which includes an award of \$75,000, for her dogged attempts to shut down the nation's largest toxic waste incinerator.

■ Shaker Heights resident **Jean Eakin** won the Ohio Alliance for the Environment 1996 Award for Distinguished Service in the Field of Environmental Education. For many years, Eakin has helped people appreciate the natural wonders around the Shaker Lakes, and she was one of the activists who prevented a freeway from destroying the lakes back in the '60s. She also has worked to reintroduce bluebirds to Northeast Ohio. Holden Arboretum recently named her Volunteer of the Year, in recognition for her three decades of work with the bluebird program at the arboretum.

■ **The Sisters of St. Dominic**, who run the Crown Point Ecology Learning Center in Bath, were named Bath Citizens of the Year by the local Grange. The Sisters' 130-acre historic farm is the site of a variety of workshops and seminars on simple living, ecological awareness, environmental issues and Earth-centered celebrations. While much of Bath is developed into housing subdivisions, the Sisters are trying to make people more aware of the importance of preserving sustainable ecosystems. This year, they are starting a program to grow organic vegetables for the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank.

■ Rivers Unlimited honored several local river advocates at its annual dinner last October. **Doug Hill** of Lorain County was named "Home River Advocate" for his efforts to get the Black River considered for inclusion in the state's scenic river system. Also nominated for the award were **Susan Ferritto** (Tinkers Creek), and **Steve Morris** (Chagrin River). In addition, National Park Service employee **Paul Labovitz** was named the outstanding public servant for river protection. And *Plain Dealer* writer **T.C. Brown** was recognized for excellence in media coverage of environmental issues.

■ The **Geauga Park District** recently received two awards from the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association. The park district's Beartown Lakes Reservation was heralded as the best new facility in Ohio in the \$500,000 to \$1 million division. And the restoration of Silver Creek in the new West Woods Reservation won the top award in the natural resources division. The Silver Creek project involved the removal of a dam and restoring the creek to its natural course.

■ The Canton-based **American Free Tree Program** recently won a national award for environmental sustainability given by Renew America. In Cuyahoga County, the American Free Tree Program has worked with the Northern Ohio Windstar Connection to distribute nearly 400,000 trees.

■ The **Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District** recently received awards from the Association of Metropolitan Sewerage Agencies for meeting water quality permit limits at each of its three treatment plants. For the first time, the Westerly plant next to Edgewater Park met all limits. The sewer district's 1995 annual report, which describes the transformation of Greater Cleveland waterways during the past 200 years, also won an award.

■ Congratulations to the **Metro Parks Serving Summit County** on the park district's 75th Anniversary.



Transitions

There have been numerous staff changes at Ohio environmental organizations in recent months:

■ **Kevin Snape** has moved from Case Western Reserve University's Center for the Environment to become executive director of the Clean Air Conservancy (formerly INHALE). He replaced **Dan Jaffe**, who went back to practicing law.

Meanwhile, the Center for the Environment has hired **David Cornicelli**, who formerly worked with the City of Oberlin's department of economic development.

■ **Lisa Hong** recently replaced **Bridgette Mariea** as manager of the Ohio Environmental Council's Campaign for an Energy Efficient Ohio.

■ **George Espy** is the new executive director of Seventh Generation, the umbrella group for environmental and beautification programs in Lorain County. He replaced **Christie Vargo**.

■ After doing a great job expanding river conservation programs in Ohio, **Todd Amb**s recently left Rivers Unlimited. He has been replaced by **Jeff Skelding**, former state program coordinator of the Ohio Chapter of the Sierra Club. The Sierra Club has hired **Marc Conte** to replace Skelding.

■ **Deb Yandala** replaced **Geri Unger** as director of the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center.

■ **Terry Yonker** has replaced **Shirley Tomasello** as the executive director of the Lake Erie Alliance. LEA's headquarters have moved from Cleveland to the Buffalo area.

■ *The Plain Dealer* recently lost its excellent transportation reporter, **Ken Zapinski**, who has moved to

a newspaper job in Pittsburgh. Last year, the *PD's* regional issues reporter, **Andy Benson**, left to head up the New Ohio Institute. The paper seems to have trouble keeping reporters with an interest in urban sprawl. While *The Columbus Dispatch* did an impressive series on the costs and benefits of sprawl last September, the *PD* still gives us inadequate and fragmented coverage.

■ Finally, the Center for Environmental Science, Technology and Policy at Cleveland State University is hoping to hire a director in the next few months. CSU has been trying for over a year to recruit a nationally recognized individual to the new position.

New face at ODOT-12

Transportation activists who want the state's transportation investments to help rebuild older communities rather than promote sprawl have high hopes for the new deputy director of Ohio Department of Transportation District 12. He is David Coyle, until recently the public works director for the City of Lakewood and formerly director of parks and recreation for the City of Cleveland.

ODOT District 12 maintains more than 1,800 miles of interstate highways and state roads in Cuyahoga, Lake and Geauga counties.

Stuck on I-90

It's interesting that Manco, the Avon-based duct-tape and adhesives company, hired a new director of media relations with a background in transportation issues—Mike Conway, formerly of RTA. Manco has promoted the widening I-90 in Lorain County, and it wants a new interchange at Lear-Nagle Road.

June 22

Summer solstice storytelling concert, 2 p.m. at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, 2600 South Park Blvd. in Shaker Heights. \$7. Call 216-321-5935 to register.

June 24

Monthly meeting of the **Urban Sprawl Committee** of the Northeast Ohio Sierra Club, 7 p.m. at the Lakewood Public Library, 15425 Detroit Ave. For more information, call 216-521-2434.

June 25

Monthly meeting of the Northeast Ohio **Sierra Club**, 7:30 p.m. at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, 2600 South Park Blvd., Shaker Heights.

June 26

Program on **corporate reform** and democracy sponsored by Women Speak Out for Peace and Justice, 7:30 p.m. at the Friends Meeting House, 10916 Magnolia Dr. in University Circle.

June 27

Inter-Community Coalition meeting on regional development and sprawl issues. Call 216-237-4541 for more information.

June 28

Hike along **Buttermilk Falls** Creek in the Cleveland Metroparks North Chagrin Reservation. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the North Chagrin Nature Center.

June 28

Forum on the **prison industry** and effects on the African-American family, 9 a.m. at Olivet Institutional Baptist Church, 8712 Quincy Ave. in Cleveland.

June 28

Hike to learn the **benefits of wetlands**, 10 a.m. at the Ira Trailhead in the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area.

June 28-29

Tour du Corridor bike ride along the Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor from

the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area to Massillon. Call 216-348-1825 for registration details.

June 29

River hike up the **Vermilion River**, 1 p.m. at the Lorain Metro Parks Vermilion River Reservation. Register at 800-LCM-PARK.

June 30-July 3

Ecology for Educators workshop at the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center. Call 330-672-3100 for registration information.

July 6

Meadowlark Music Festival featuring traditional music from Geauga County musicians, 2 p.m. at the Geauga Park District's Swine Creek Reservation, 16004 Hayes Rd.

July 9

Annual meeting of the **Cleveland Restoration Society**, 5:30 p.m. at the Cleveland Public Library Stokes Wing Auditorium. Call 216-621-1498 for registration information.

July 10

Meeting about **Black River water quality** projects sponsored by Friends of the Black River, 7 p.m. at Lorain Metro Parks Carlisle Visitor's Center on Diagonal Road. Call 216-322-4187 for more information.

July 11

Program on 19th century **stone cutting** at local quarries, 7 p.m. at the Boston Store of the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area.

July 12

Hike to observe **nesting birds** of woods and fields, 7:30 a.m., Hale Farm parking lot, Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area.

July 13

Butterfly count by the Ohio Lepidopterists Society, noon at the Geauga Park District's Swine Creek Reservation, 16004 Hayes Rd.

July 21-22

Childrens' environmental literature workshop for teachers at the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center. Call 216-657-2796 to register.

July 21-25

Teachers' workshop in **K-12 environmental science** at the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center. Call 216-657-2796 to register.

July 23

15th anniversary celebration of the **Cleveland Neighborhood Development Corporation**, 6:30 p.m. at the Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art, 8501 Euclid Ave. Call 268-3130 for details.

July 24-27

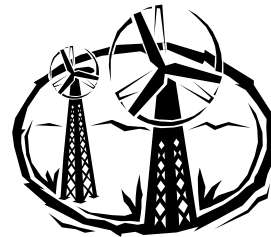
Managing Growth conference in Portland, OR, about the practice and transferability of Oregon's pioneering system of land use planning and urban growth boundaries. For registration information, call 503-223-8633.

July 29

Public meeting on new **wetlands water quality standards** proposed by Ohio EPA, 7 p.m. at Ocasek Government Center, 161 S. High St., Akron. For more information, call 614-644-2001 or see the Web site at <http://chagrin.epa.ohio.gov>.

July 31

Program on **electric utility restructuring** in Ohio sponsored by Women Speak Out for Peace and Justice, 7:30 p.m. at the Friends Meeting House, 10916 Magnolia Dr. in University Circle.



Board meetings of regional agencies

Here are the regular, monthly meeting times of agencies that are shaping our region. Call to confirm times and locations.

- **Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority**, 101 Erieside Ave. Cleveland, 241-8004. Friday of first full week at 10 a.m.
- **Cleveland Metroparks**, 4101 Fulton Parkway, Cleveland, 351-6300. Second and fourth Thursdays at 9 a.m.
- **Cuyahoga County Planning Commission**, 323 Lakeside Ave. West, Cleveland, 443-3700. Second Tuesday at 2 p.m.
- **Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA)**, State Office Building, 615 Superior Ave. NW, Cleveland, 566-5100. First and third Tuesdays at 9 a.m.
- **Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA)**, 668 Euclid Ave., Cleveland, 241-2414. Board meeting second Friday at 9:30 a.m. Transportation Advisory Committee third Thursday at 10 a.m.
- **Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District**, 3826 Euclid Ave., Cleveland, 881-6600. First and third Thursdays at 12:30 p.m.

Wealth in real estate

Total market value per household, 1995

Prepared by the Housing Policy Research Program, Levin College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University

"Indispensable reading for those who want to know what's really going on in the region or what the headlines may be a decade from now."

—David Orr, Oberlin College Environmental Studies Program

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