



EcoCity CLEVELAND

IDEAS AND TOOLS FOR A SUSTAINABLE BIOREGION

\$4

Double Issue

Vol. 5, Numbers 6/7 Winter 1997-98

Editor/writer: David Beach

Inside

Sprawl activism updates



A bigger landscape
for local parks



Straw bale house



Bioregional calendar and more



Good words

If enough people had spoken for the river,
we might have saved it.

If enough people had believed that our scarred
country was worth defending, we might have
dug in our heels and fought.

Our attachments to the land were all private.
We had no shared lore, no literature,
no art to root us there, to give us courage
to help us stand our ground.

The only maps we had were those issued by the
state, showing a maze of numbered lines
stretched over emptiness.

The Ohio landscape never showed up on
postcards or posters,
never unfurled like tapestry in films,
rarely filled even a paragraph in books.
There were no mountains in that place,
no waterfalls, no rocky gorges, no vistas.

It was a country of low hills, cut over woods,
scoured fields, villages that had lost their
purpose, roads that had lost their way.

—Scott Russell Sanders,

Writing from the Center

(describing his childhood along the
Mahoning River in Northeast Ohio)

ROAD RAGE

On the road: Section of I-71 to be widened south of Cleveland.

I-71 widening decision pushes the region to the political brink

Can Northeast Ohio say no to the urban sprawl
that is undermining our cities and paving over our countryside?

A major test will come in the next few weeks,
as local officials decide whether to widen I-71.

The issue has become as controversial and emotion-laden
as the 1996 decision to widen I-90 in Lorain County.

See pages 10-15

Common cause with the home builders

In a recent *Plain Dealer* article, "Home Builders head sees seniors' cluster housing needs," the president of the Greater Cleveland Home Builders Association lamented the zoning restrictions that prevent construction of higher-density housing. As the director of an environmental organization fighting urban sprawl, I found myself agreeing with him.

The households of the future—dominated by seniors, singles and single parents—will not be well served by huge, suburban homes that are accessible only by car. These households will have a higher quality of life in communities offering a variety of housing types within walking distance of shopping, workplaces, parks and transit.

Unfortunately, it is virtually impossible to build dense, mixed-use communities today in Northeast Ohio. The zoning of most suburbs requires the separation of land uses and acre-size lots for houses.

This accelerates the wasteful consumption of land and the loss of farmland and open space.

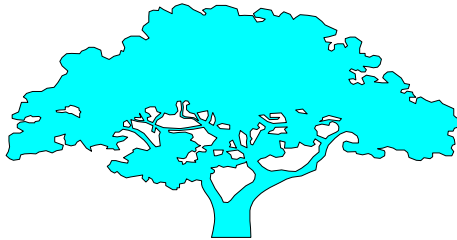
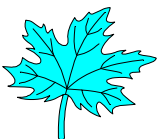
It's no secret why communities adopt large-lot zoning. In Ohio, it's one of the only methods available to limit population growth and the demands of new households for schools and other costly services. For many suburbs, it's also a way to maintain class and racial barriers. In addition, communities have become leery of unimaginative cluster housing proposals that too often end up as dreary masses of condos and apartments—the slums of the future.

To build attractive, livable communities that will meet our future needs, we will have to imagine what a more sustainable pattern of settlement could be like in the region. In particular, we need to:

- Create a regional (multi-county) land use plan that maps out where increased development is desirable and where open space should be protected.
- Change zoning to require mixed uses and a variety of housing types in the town centers of every community.
- Focus public infrastructure investments, financial incentives and streamlined permitting procedures to support the redevelopment of older urban areas where density already exists. Ultimately, the key to compact development is to continually reinvent our cities and towns so that they offer competitive housing options.

This is a pro-development vision that will produce communities on a human scale rather than sprawling suburbs on an automotive scale. And it could keep builders busy and profitable for years to come.

—David Beach
Editor



Mission

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

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A bigger landscape for local parks?

Northeast Ohio recently lost a dedicated conservationist, as John O'Meara left his position of director of the Geauga Park District and moved to take the directorship of the Columbus-area metroparks system. In recent years, the Geauga Park District moved aggressively to protect ecologically significant lands in the county. In the article below, O'Meara argues that much larger efforts are needed to preserve the region's natural resources for future generations.

By John O'Meara

Historically, Ohio was the nation's leader in creating large, conservation-based park systems. Cleveland Metroparks' Emerald Necklace was the envy of every large city in the country and set the standard for protecting large natural areas near urban areas for the enjoyment of residents as well as for conservation of natural resources. Although Ohio's park districts are still doing a great job of providing parks throughout the state, we have allowed ourselves to be eclipsed by other park systems near other large metropolitan areas.

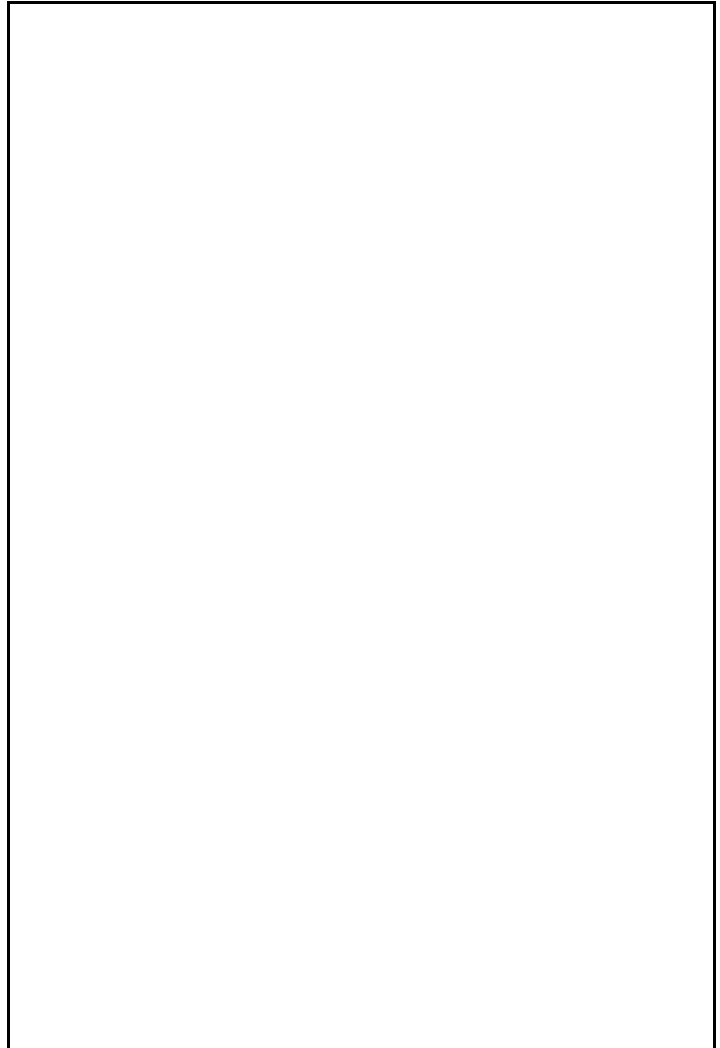
As a new century approaches, Ohioans have the opportunity to implement strategic steps to strengthen their park systems in order to better manage our natural resources and provide better service to the people of the state. Natural features and biological resources do not recognize political boundaries. Far too often we manage our park systems constrained by a framework of established county boundaries. If we look at our natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities from a regional perspective, we would design our park systems more efficiently, spending tax dollars more wisely while being

more effective at preserving the native plants and animals of the state.

A few of the largest park districts in the state have established parks outside of their home county. Columbus and Franklin County Metropolitan Park District in particular continues to look towards preserving the best natural areas in its region. But those park districts which have gone beyond their home county have done so without the financial support from the people who most directly benefit from the proximity of those parks.

Ohio's park districts have the political strength and citizen support to grow into regional systems which look beyond county boundaries. One practical strategy would be the creation of overlay districts involving several counties. Established park districts within the region could retain their autonomy for projects funded entirely by their own resources, but a new funding source could be developed for projects which link parks across county boundaries or which preserve the highest quality natural areas in the region. Less populated counties often have the best remaining natural areas but don't have the tax base to pay for large conservation projects. Certainly the entire region benefits when we succeed in protecting the best available natural areas in that region.

In a series of county-by-county elections in the last few years, park districts in Northeast Ohio passed levies with the support of more than two-thirds of the voters in the region. Many of those levies were for increased millage. That base of support could be mobilized to establish a multi-county overlay park system (North Coast Regional Parks? Western Reserve Regional



Ledges at Cleveland Metroparks' Hinckley Reservation: Where are the regional parks of the future?

Parks?) funded by new millage or other appropriate sources. A board representing all the affected counties could be established to allocate the funds following guidelines that ensure that these funds are used for the most important projects in the region. With a concerted effort, similar levels of support for parks can probably be generated around all the large cities of the state.

Ohioans are thinking more about regional problems, with growing awareness of issues such as urban sprawl and farmland preservation. This increased awareness in

conjunction with the strong support for parks throughout the state provides the framework for Ohio's park districts to grow to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Can we afford not to?

□

This article was originally written for the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association newsletter.

What is sprawl?

Some people are uncomfortable with the term, "urban sprawl," because it has negative connotations. But it is an appropriate description for a land use process that entails:

- The geographic spread of urban areas.
- The expansion of infrastructure (roads, sewer and water lines).
- Development that takes an auto-oriented form (destinations separated by long distances, density too low for cost-effective mass transit, and pedestrian unfriendly public spaces).

What we want

We are working to ensure that people in the region have:

- Access to nature
- Clean air and water
- The ability to get from here to there easily
- Safe and stable neighborhoods
- Resources for future generations
- A strong regional economy

This list comes from Metro, the regional government in the area of Portland, OR. But it's a good list for any region. (For more information about the best regional planning in the nation, check out Metro's Web site at www.metro-region.org.)

Unmanaged growth affects all

It is becoming more and more apparent that there is an issue that does connect all of us—unmanaged growth. Unmanaged growth reacts like dominoes in a line, one tipping over the next one. Unmanaged growth results in the loss of farmland and open space, the construction of ubiquitous strip malls, the checkerboarding of the landscape with subdivisions, the spiraling of infrastructure costs, and the decline of cities—all in a domino-like effect.

—from the summary report of Community Forum on Smart Growth in Lorain County, October 15, 1997

Making sprawl an issue: Demonstrators outside the City Club of Cleveland last December called on gubernatorial candidates to revitalize cities and save farmland.

Sprawl activism update

The issue of urban sprawl keeps gaining currency in Northeast Ohio and around the state. The Plain Dealer editorial page may still place "urban sprawl" in quotes, as if it's an unproven phenomenon, but citizens and organizations throughout the region are realizing that it is extremely costly for Ohio to develop land at a rate five times faster than population growth.

Here is a summary of local sprawl activism in recent months. Most of the initiatives are being supported by local foundations, which should be congratulated for recognizing that unbalanced development is undermining the health of communities throughout the region.

EcoCity Cleveland also has worked hard to support many of these initiatives, either through direct participation of our staff or by providing information and technical assistance. Our popular reader on urban sprawl, Moving to Corn Fields, continues to be a key educational piece. And, in the coming year, our Citizens' Bioregional Plan for Northeast Ohio (described in our last issue) will provide a positive vision for how we can develop in more sustainable ways.

All this "urban sprawl stuff" is becoming a broad and complex movement for regional action. We are proud to be playing a role.

During the last four months of 1997, Greater Cleveland's public television and radio stations teamed up to co-produce "Your Land...My Land," a special series of programs on the changing landscape of Northeast Ohio. WVIZ Channel 25 produced two, hour-long documentaries, and the news department of WCPN-FM 90.3 produced 10 radio reports on land use and development topics. The stations also collaborated on interactive, audience call-in shows and printed a free resource guide.

It's noteworthy—and encouraging—that the most extensive collaborative project in the history of our public TV and radio stations dealt with the emerging issue of urban sprawl.

First Suburbs

During the past year, mayors and council members of the inner-ring suburbs of Cleveland have continued to meet and refine their common identity as the First Suburbs Consortium. As *Business Week* said last June in an article that featured a photo of Euclid Mayor Paul Oyaski, "It's the arrival of 'metropolitics.'" Across the nation, cities and their bedroom communities argue that they can't slow their downward slide if cheaper land, lower taxes, and government subsidized services in exurbia suck away middle-class families and businesses. So city and suburban officials—backed by downtown business executives, environmentalists, farmers, and church leaders—are looking to flex their muscles collectively."

As a group, First Suburbs has supported farmland preservation and opposed highway projects, such as the widening of I-71, that

Your Land...My Land

have the potential to promote more urban sprawl. The consortium also is exploring ways to change state programs to make it easier to redevelop mature urban areas.

To get the needs of older suburbs on the state agenda, the consortium will sponsor a "Forum for the Future of Ohio's Mature Suburbs" on April 24 in Shaker Heights. The event will allow officials from metropolitan areas throughout the state to identify what the mature suburbs of Ohio have in common and then define an action agenda for the coming year.

For more information, call Keith Benjamin at Cleveland Heights City Hall, 216-291-2854.

Catholic Diocese

Cleveland Catholic Bishop Anthony Pilla deserves a lot of credit for making sprawl—the unbalanced development between declining communities and growing communities—an issue in Northeast Ohio. His "Church in the City" initiative, begun in 1993, has made sprawl a moral and social justice issue and has involved church members throughout the region. The diocesan action plan for "Church in the City" includes:

- Ongoing education, prayer and leadership training focusing on transcending racial and economic divisions.
- Developing parish-parish partnerships with mutually supportive relationships.
- Redevelopment projects related to housing, job training and economic development in older urban areas.
- Advocacy around public policy issues.
- Development of an ongoing implementation committee and matching grant programs.

To celebrate the 5th anniversary of "Church in the City" (as well as the 150th anniversary of the diocese), the diocese is planning a major symposium for April 20. The event will review accomplishments and reaffirm the diocese's commitment to "Church in the City" goals. In the coming year, the diocese also will convene a series of regional planning forums to engage civic leaders in further reflection on the critical economic,

environmental, pastoral and social issues facing our region as we approach the new millennium.

For more information, call the diocese at 216-696-6525, ext. 220, or check out the Web site www.citc.org/.

Faith-based organizing

In addition to the work of the Catholic Diocese, a growing network of church congregations in Northeast Ohio is developing a political strategy to address the economic and social inequities created by urban sprawl. The network includes the groups United WE-CAN!, which now represents 80 congregations in Cleveland and the older suburbs of Cuyahoga County; BOLD in the Lorain area; and SCCOPE in the Akron area. Their grassroots organizing capability was recently bolstered by a \$200,000 grant from The George Gund Foundation.

The groups seek to:

- Forge a coalition between the cities and suburbs that are experiencing declining tax base.
- Create alliances with rural communities that are being overwhelmed by rapid growth.
- Establish partnerships with business leaders who realize that continued economic disparities will eventually push the region into decline.
- Seek out collaboration with elected officials to explore effective policy initiatives.
- Align with environmental, labor and other constituencies who are committed to farmland, wetland and open space preservation and establishing a livable wage for all workers.

One possible organizing goal could be the creation of a regional system to share growth in tax base, which would reduce disparities between the wealthiest and poorest communities and allow the entire metropolitan area to benefit from growth. Such a system has proven successful in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota. Other goals under consideration include urban growth boundaries, affordable housing and the development of transportation alternatives such as commuter rail. At an upcoming June 2 Regional Issues Assembly the groups will

Lorain County smart growth

A Smart Growth Forum last October 15 encouraged dialogue on the impacts of unmanaged growth in Lorain County. Major sponsors included the Lorain County Community Alliance, Lorain County Chamber of Commerce, Lorain County 2020, Oberlin College, and the Public Service Institute of Lorain County Community College.

Among the challenges facing the county:

- Easy highway access along I-90 and SR 10 is funnelling a wave of development to eastern Lorain County, as homebuyers move out from Cuyahoga County.
- Almost the entire county is zoned residential, so every farm could be developed in 50 years and the county could have double its current population.
- The county needs to plan now if it wants to preserve any of its rural character and manage the costs associated with residential development.

"I worry about the economic future of farming in Lorain County," said forum panelist Jim McConnell, a farmer and clerk of Pittsfield Township. "Farmland pays its way, but houses don't...We need a county plan, and that will take leadership and the education of citizens."

According to Lorain County 2020's Fran Bostwick, one of the forum organizers, the goal of the event was to see if there is common ground for a smart growth agenda for Lorain County. "I've been pleased to see that people like the 'smart growth' terminology," she said recently. "We're finding a common language. And that's a start."

Since the forum, representatives of the sponsoring groups have continued to meet and work on two major tasks—public education and the development of a comprehensive land use plan for the county (one that involves citizens in the planning process). On the latter task, they are working with the Lorain County Department of Community Development, which has been given the task of developing a land use plan by the county commissioners.

A related activity involves the Lorain County Community Alliance, the new council of governments for the county, which is inventorying land uses. That group has the benefit of a new planning tool developed by the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA)—a consolidated zoning map of the entire county that allows planners to understand the development potential of every city and township.

For more information, contact the Lorain County Committee for Smart Growth at 440-366-2020 or Seventh Generation at 440-322-4187. Seventh Generation has organized an Urban Sprawl Education Task Force, which meets on the third Wednesday of each month.

make one issue the focus of a regional organizing campaign.

In conjunction with Cleveland State University, the groups are also sponsoring a series of educational seminars on the effects of urban sprawl and policy initiatives that could begin to reverse the tide. The next seminar will be at 7 p.m. March 31 at Fairlawn West United Church of Christ in Akron (from I-77, take SR 18 east for three miles). Future seminars will be April 21 in Elyria and May 12 in Cleveland. For more information, call 216-881-2344.

Interfaith Suburban Action Coalition (ISAC)

ISAC is another church-based organizing group starting to address issues of sprawl and equity. It sponsored an educational forum on urban sprawl last November at Euclid City Hall. For more information call 216-261-6210.

Northeast Ohio Regional Alliance (NORA)

NORA is a network of individuals and organizations who are engaged in regional issues, such as land use and transportation. NORA's main role has been to convene neutral forums where people can learn about regional issues and develop new forms of cooperation across county lines. In recent months, the group has sponsored forums on the impacts of new air quality regulations and proposed state legislation to preserve farmland. It also has sponsored special discussions with City Club speakers James Howard Kunstler and Myron Orfield.

Staff assistance to the NORA steering committee is being provided by the Citizens League, 216-241-5340.

League of Women Voters study

The Cuyahoga County League of Women Voters is conducting a study on the effects of transportation policy on outmigration (i. e., how new highways and other transportation investments make it easier for people to move farther out from the urban core). Such a study could be an important first step towards the League forming an official position on the issue of urban sprawl in the region.

For more information, call Carol Gibson at 216-932-8733.

Sierra Club

Lee Batdorff of the Northeast Ohio Sierra Club Urban Sprawl Committee has created a slide show, "Urban Sprawl is at Your Expense," and is making presentations to help community groups appreciate the many costs of sprawling land use and the decline of older urban areas. For more information, call 216-321-9152.



The Urban Sprawl Committee is also working with EcoCity Cleveland to organize a series of educational events with Ohio political leaders. The first event on February 24 featured Ohio Treasurer Ken Blackwell speaking

on farmland preservation and urban reinvestment. Events are being organized with gubernatorial candidates Bruce Douglas, Lee Fisher and Bob Taft. For more information, call 216-932-3007 or 216-521-2434.

The Portage Trail Group of the Sierra Club recently selected urban sprawl as its focus issue for 1998-99. A committee is now drafting a campaign plan with input from members around the state. For more information, call 330-922-8067.

The Midwest office of the Sierra Club has produced an informative summary of suburban sprawl issues and activism in the Midwest. Copies of the 24-page tabloid, *Suburban Sprawl Costs Us All in the Midwest*, can be obtained from the Sierra Club Foundation, 214 N. Henry St., Suite 203, Madison, WI 53703 (608-257-4994).

University research

Led by the Cleveland State University College of Urban Affairs, the state's urban universities are documenting the extent of sprawl around Ohio's metropolitan areas. They are mapping where housing starts are occurring, where tax base is shifting, and where economic and social disparities are growing between urban cores and new suburbs. Such educational tools are essential for helping citizens understand what is happening to their regions.

For more information, call 216-687-2211.

Conservation development

If the countryside must be developed in some places, at least the development projects can be sensitively designed to preserve as much of the scenic and ecological features of the rural landscape as

possible.

That is the idea being promoted by the Countryside Program of the Western Reserve Resource Conservation and Development Council. The program provides workshops and design assistance to help local officials—mostly township trustees and zoning officials—understand alternatives to conventional, cookie-cutter subdivisions. The program also is developing model regulations for open space zoning and environmental review of projects.

The Western Reserve RC&D is a nine-county organization affiliated with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service. It also administers the Grand River Protection Project, which secures conservation easements to protect land along the river. For more information, call 440-350-2034. For information about the Countryside Program, call 216-691-1665.

Citizens League Research Institute

The CLRI has followed up its "Rating the Region" report with an eight-county survey of regional attitudes. In a previous survey in 1996, the institute found that 81 percent of Cuyahoga County residents believed that "cooperative efforts among local governments and other organizations to solve problems together" should be a way of solving problems in Greater Cleveland.

Call 216-241-5340 for more information.

Business leadership

Local business groups continue to have a mixed record on regional issues. On the positive side, corporate groups like Cleveland Tomorrow have promoted the redevelopment of the region's urban core—both Cleveland's downtown and neighborhoods (although many social justice activists question the use of public funds to build tourist attractions and stadiums for wealthy sports teams). In addition, Build Up Greater Cleveland, the infrastructure group of the Growth Association, has played a positive role in advocating state transportation investments that promote the redevelopment of existing urban areas.

On the negative side, many corporate leaders still fail to appreciate the regional costs of sprawl development that undermines existing urban areas and burdens the region with higher overall infrastructure costs. They want economic development, and it doesn't seem to matter

where the development occurs, as long as it's somewhere in Northeast Ohio. Thus, we see calls for a new airport to be built out in the corn fields—an airport that could shift the region's center of gravity in disastrous ways.

Real estate organizations

Local real estate professionals are starting to question the sprawling development patterns of Northeast Ohio. Last October, Commercial Real Estate Women Inc. of Cleveland and Greater Cleveland Real Estate Organizations Inc. organized a continuing education seminar called "Urban Sprawl: Issues, Techniques and Opportunities." Over 100 people heard presentations about the present costs of sprawl, as well as the opportunities and challenges of redevelopment in the urban core of the region.

For more information, call the Cleveland Area Board of Realtors at 216-901-0130.

Inter-Community Coalition

Grassroots activists who are fighting development projects from around the region have been meeting monthly to share information and support each other's efforts. For more information about this Inter-Community Coalition, call 216-237-4541.

Cincinnati organizes

Concern about regional issues such as urban sprawl is growing in the Cincinnati area with the help of Citizens for Civic Renewal (CCR). For the past year, the group has been sponsoring monthly forums, and it has task forces working on transportation, sustainable land use, education, and capital improvement priorities. A major challenge for regionalism in the Cincinnati area is the political fragmentation of the tri-state region.

Former Ohio Governor John Gilligan is one of CCR's co-chairs. For more information, call 513-381-1034.

Federal government

The vast federal bureaucracy is gradually awaking to its impact on metropolitan regions—recognizing that many federal policies and programs undermine older urban areas and promote sprawl. The local

office of U.S. EPA, for example, has participated in a study of how EPA regulations and programs may unintentionally discourage the redevelopment of urban land.

Much of the federal discussion has been spearheaded by the President's Council on Sustainable Development (PCSD), which was appointed as an advisory group after the United Nations' Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Locally, the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission has worked to bring the PCSD's message of sustainability to audiences in Northeast Ohio.

Last July, about 60 civic leaders from the area participated in a Metropolitan Initiative Forum, an opportunity to discuss with PCSD officials how the federal government could encourage more effective regional cooperation. The forum was one of about a dozen sessions held in cities across the country and was organized by the Chicago-based Center for Neighborhood Technology. Local hosts were the Greater Cleveland Growth Association and the Citizens League.

"We're trying to identify federal programs that are helpful to sustainable development and programs that impact sprawl," said PCSD director Marty Spitzer.

"The federal government typically accounts for about 15 percent of a regional economy, and tweaking that can have a big impact."

For more information, call the Center for Neighborhood Technology at 773-278-4800 or see the Web site www.cnt.org. □



Why regionalism?

Why is regionalism becoming such an important issue now? Because the nature of our economic and social problems is rapidly becoming regional. Fifty years ago major problems such as pollution, transportation systems, and poverty could be addressed by one central city or county, but today the dispersion of our nation's population means these and other problems migrate across city, county, and sometimes state boundaries. Faced with these increasingly complex problems, citizens of Greater Cleveland and other metropolitan areas are discovering that coordinated regional solutions are in many cases the only solutions.

Policymakers are not the only people who realize regional problems call for regional solutions. Greater Cleveland residents also recognize the importance of thinking regionally. For example, in the 1996 Citizens League Research Institute Survey of Community Attitudes, residents were asked how they want decisions to be made by their local government leaders. Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of Cuyahoga County residents said that decisions should be based on "what is best for the entire Greater Cleveland area," as opposed to the remaining 22 percent who wanted decisions base on "what is best for their city."

—Citizens League Research Institute

Our divided region

The city limits of Cleveland, Akron, Lorain and their older suburbs, might as well be the borders between Mexico and the U.S. On one side there is a collapsed and devastated economy; on the other side there is an expanding economy. On one side people are trying to escape; on the other side people are trying to keep them out. On one side there are people of color; on the other side there are not. On one side the land is contaminated; on the other side is virgin woodland and farmland. On one side there are well-paying jobs, on the other there are not. On one side people have cars; on the other side they do not, nor is there adequate public transportation to the jobs on the other side.

—from "The Call to Regional Action,"
United WE-CAN! and Bold banquet,
October 23, 1997

Cartoon by John Backderf

Land use at the ballot box

Growth management issues are increasingly becoming a driving force in local politics. Throughout the region, citizens are concerned about how their communities are developing.

The November 1997 election featured many local races and ballot issues related to land use in various ways. Here are some of the results.

■
Avon: Jack Kilroy, director the Grassroots Leadership Development Program of Lorain County, won a council seat in Avon. Kilroy will bring a different perception of the costs and benefits of growth to the table as Avon City Council debates the intense growth pressures bearing down on the Lorain County community. On another issue, voters rejected a levy for street repairs, even though the city's streets are crumbling.

Chagrin Falls: The preservation of open space and small-town character was a big winner in Chagrin Falls. Candidates in favor of working with the Chagrin River Land Conservancy to buy 20 acres along the river and prevent a new housing development captured city council seats. Conservation-minded incumbent Republicans William Doyle and William Tomko won despite being opposed by their party.

Chardon: For the second time, voters rejected a Wal-mart developer's bid to rezone 23 acres on Water Street for a large retail store. The developer now has gone to

the Ohio Supreme Court to overturn Chardon's ordinance that limits stores at that site to less than 10 employees and less than 10,000 square feet.

Hudson: Voters approved a \$7.35 million bond issue to buy 460 acres of park land and open space. The measure was sold as an investment in future quality of life and fiscal sustainability. By purchasing residentially-zoned land, the local park district will reduce the acreage available for development in Hudson—and reduce future costs to the city and schools. More recently, Hudson voters approved the expenditure of \$3.5 million to buy 18 acres near the historic center of town to prevent the building of a shopping center.

Lakewood: Even though she is a Republican in a heavily Democratic city, Pam Smith got the highest number of votes in Lakewood Council races. She has spoken out strongly against urban sprawl and for reinvestment in older communities.

Macedonia: Growth-management advocate Peggy Spraggins captured the highest number of votes for council seats in this rapidly developing community in northern Summit County. "We need better planning," she says. "It makes no sense to have additional growth if the traffic is so bad you can't get anywhere and if the schools are so overcrowded that our children can't get a good education."

Mahoning and Trumbull counties:

The expansion of the Youngstown-Warren Regional Airport suffered a setback when voters in Mahoning and Trumbull counties rejected a property tax hike by a wide margin. The tax would have financed road and other infrastructure improvements needed to turn the airport into a major cargo port for Northeast Ohio. Opponents have argued that the cargo port would require continual taxpayer subsidies and would bring sprawling development to a rural area.

Portage County:

Residents of Portage County still have not been persuaded to buy park land now before development pressures make land too costly. A one-mill levy to support the fledgling county park district garnered just 40 percent of the vote.

Twinsburg: Susan Ferritto, a founder of the Tinkers Creek Land Conservancy and stalwart opponent of habitat destruction in the Twinsburg area, won a seat on Twinsburg City Council by beating a two-term incumbent. Her platform opposed additional annexing of surrounding Twinsburg Township and zoning variances to increase population density. □

Lee Batdorff of the Sierra Club's Urban Sprawl Committee contributed to this article.

"It makes no sense to have additional growth if the traffic is so bad you can't get

Medina County rejects road tax

Pro-sprawl forces in Medina County suffered an embarrassing defeat last November as voters rejected a tax increase for new road construction. By an overwhelming 70-30 margin, voters rejected the proposed quarter-cent county sales tax to fund a new Transportation Improvement District (TID).

The county TID, which is an initiative of real estate and development interests, would have raised \$100 million over the next 20 years to fund a number of highway and interchange projects, such as the widening of SR 18 and a bypass around the city of Medina. The new road capacity would open up thousands of acres of open spaces and farmland to sprawling growth.

Reasons given for the defeat included concerns about the pace of growth in the county, an anti-tax mood among voters (although renewal levies for anti-drug programs and libraries passed), and the fact that County Commissioner Sara Pavlovicz broke ranks with other commissioners and opposed the tax hike.

Now it will be interesting to see if Medina County residents want more park land instead of more roads. A quarter-cent sales tax for park land acquisition will be on the May ballot. The measure would generate about \$3 million annually for the Medina County Park District.

Sprawl bankrollers

The failed campaign for a sales tax to fund road expansion in Medina County was led by "Citizens for Responsible Planning," a front group for real estate and development interests. The group spent about \$50,000 (a large sum for a Medina County ballot issue) to persuade voters to subsidize more growth. Here is a partial list of donors to the campaign:

Medina County Economic Development, \$6,000

Greenhaven Development, \$5,000

Medina Chamber of Commerce, \$5,000

Gerspacher (real estate), \$1,000

Haddad, \$1,000

Medina Hospital, \$1,000

Plasticote, \$1,000

Robert Miller, \$1,000

Medina Supply Co., \$1,000

K & M Construction, \$1,000

Mack Industries, \$1,000

Signal Bank, \$1,000

Ohio Edison, \$1,000

Brookdale Mobile Home Park, \$1,000

Medina Home Builders, \$1,000

Ken Cleveland, \$1,000

Ruhlin, \$1,000

Simmons, \$1,000

A.I. Root Co., \$1,500

Ohio Machinery, \$1,500

Owens Corning, \$1,000

Norris Auto Mall, \$1,000

Hausted, Inc., \$1,000

Indelser Building Co., \$1,000

Source: Hinckley Township Trustees

Crain's says: Ohio needs smart growth

Greater Cleveland's business weekly, Crain's Cleveland Business, has written some insightful stories on growth management in recent months. Below is an editorial from January 12, 1998.

To widen or not to widen? That is the recurring question transportation planners and economic development officials face as the outward push of suburbia into what once was "the country" increases the clamor for adding third lanes to outlying stretches of interstate highway. An answer to the question is found in the governor's State of the State address last year.

"... Let us work together to meet one of the most pressing challenges of our time—suburban sprawl," the governor stated. "We must take action today to protect our cities and our rural areas for tomorrow. That is what our Smart Growth/Neighborhood Conservation policy is all about."

If the Smart Growth policy and the admonition against sprawl sound foreign even to Gov. Voinovich, it's because they didn't emanate from Columbus. The remarks instead are those of Maryland Gov. Parris Glendening, and they illustrate how the threats posed by urban sprawl are not unique to Northeast Ohio.

Even thieves of football teams are not without their redeeming qualities, and Gov. Glendening's virtue is his concern with what he calls the "inefficient and costly pattern of development" created by 50 years of government policies that have supported sprawl. The loss of thousands of acres of farmland and forests is only one of the governor's laments. He also notes that as residents and employers in urban areas flee to the suburbs and beyond, "they leave behind boarded-up storefronts, the jobless poor, higher welfare caseloads and increased crime."

To address the sprawl issue, Maryland's legislature last year passed Gov. Glendening's Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation initiative. In part, the initiative seeks to target the investment of state money for roads and highways in "priority funding areas," or so-called smart growth areas. The idea is to encourage investment in areas where development already is occurring, rather than to foster growth that leads to additional sprawl, the loss of fields and farms and the decline of existing neighborhoods.

Maryland's efforts to contain sprawl exceed those of most states, but we're not sure they go far enough. The state gives local jurisdictions the latitude to decide which areas will qualify as priority funding areas, so long as they meet guidelines related to availability of water and sewer service and minimum residential density levels. These prerequisites wouldn't appear to restrict the widening of existing sections of highways where sprawl is encroaching on virgin land but hasn't emerged full blown.

Unless Ohio puts the brakes on widening highways, more outmigration will occur, which will lead to a push for wider highways even farther into exurbia. This circle must be broken not only to preserve our agricultural heritage, but our cities as well.

Road to Medina County: The proposal to widen I-71 has become another flashpoint in the region's debate over urban sprawl.

Road rage

Region debates the widening of I-71

Can Northeast Ohio say no to the urban sprawl that is undermining our cities and paving over our countryside?

A major test will come in the next few weeks, as local officials decide whether to widen I-71. The issue has become as controversial and emotion-laden as the 1996 decision to widen I-90 in Lorain County. And it's threatening to tear apart the region's five-county transportation planning organization, the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA).

"I've never seen the level of divisiveness as we've had on this issue," NOACA president David Anderson said at the agency's February board meeting. "We're starting to unravel, and we can't allow that to happen. We need to find some middle ground."

Anderson appointed a special conference committee to seek a compromise before a scheduled vote in April on whether to approve the project. But it's uncertain if a compromise is possible.

At issue is a proposal by ODOT to add a third lane in each direction to I-71 between US 42 in southwestern Cuyahoga County and SR 18 in Medina County. If the 37-

member board of NOACA votes not to widen the 16.5-mile section of highway for \$76 million, the state will spend \$69 million anyway to rehabilitate the existing four-lane facility. (ODOT actually wants to widen all of I-71 between Cleveland and Columbus, but that's another story.)

Pro-widening blitz

Proponents of the widening project—mainly development interests in Medina County and the cities of Brunswick and Strongsville—have argued the following: I-71 is a key transportation link. Traffic congestion on I-71 is unbearable now and will worsen as Medina County continues to grow in population. Medina County residents need access to employment centers and services in Cuyahoga County. State funding for the new lanes is available now, so what's the problem?

"Widening the highway will benefit the entire region," they have said. "We just want to be able to get to jobs and Indians games in Cleveland."

To campaign for the new lanes, the pro-widening forces have generated hundreds of letters, resolutions, fact sheets and phone

calls. It's been an all-out political blitz.

The traffic reality

Meanwhile, officials in Cuyahoga County have systematically questioned the need to widen I-71. Bolstered by good data from the NOACA staff, they have made the following points:

- **Congestion?** By urban standards, most of the 16.5-mile stretch proposed for widening does *not* have unacceptable levels of congestion. South of SR 82 in Strongsville the congestion is moderate, and south of SR 303 it's not bad at all and is not projected to be bad in the next 20 years.

- **Short-term fix?** On the segment currently experiencing unacceptable congestion—between US 42 and SR 82—adding lanes will only fix the problem for a few years. Adding capacity to highways is never a long-term cure for congestion because new lanes simply promote more driving and dependency on cars.

- **Fixing the wrong problem?** The most serious bottlenecks on I-71, such as the I-71/I-480 split by Hopkins Airport or the Metro curve area closer to downtown, are not addressed by the widening proposal. It

makes no sense to add lanes that will funnel even more traffic into existing choke points. If we are going to spend scarce transportation dollars to address highway congestion in the region, we should attack the worst problems first.

■ **Alternatives?** In the long run, the best way to reduce traffic congestion is to provide more transportation choices, but the alternatives to widening I-71 haven't been studied yet. For more than a year, ODOT has been promising to conduct a study of how high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes could reduce traffic congestion in the region by making car-pooling and buses a more convenient option for commuters. In addition, NOACA is beginning to study the potential for commuter rail service in the region, including along the I-71 corridor between Cleveland and Medina. It's prudent to evaluate such options before rushing to widen the highway.

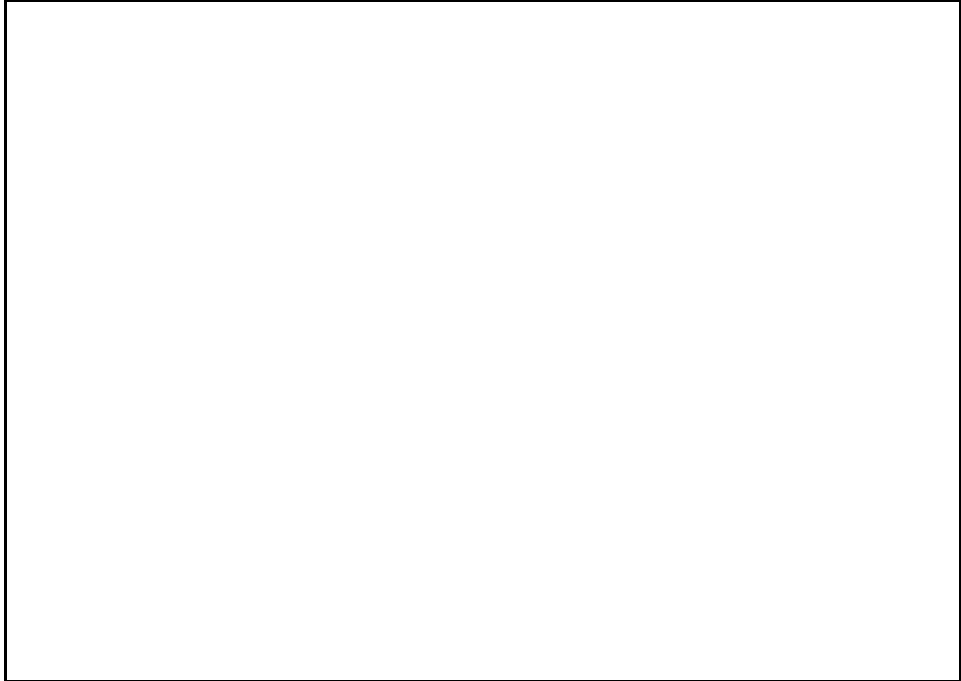
Sprawl impacts

The questioning of the I-71 widening has been led by Cuyahoga County commissioners and representatives from the City of Cleveland and inner-ring suburbs. In addition to raising the factual points listed above about the real transportation needs in the I-71 corridor, they have expressed deep concerns that widening highways promotes urban sprawl—the development of new areas of the region at the expense of mature areas.

Indeed, sprawl is the underlying issue in the whole debate. As Cleveland Mayor Michael White wrote in a recent letter to NOACA officials, "The social and fiscal impacts to the region of accelerated out-migration of population and businesses have not been seriously addressed... Curiously, continued out-migration is treated as a given for the next 20 years and the widening project is justified by ODOT by the very out-migration the project will induce." [Also see positions of the First Suburbs Consortium and the Federation for Community Planning on pages 14-15.]

The widening of I-71 would likely exacerbate sprawl in at least three ways. First, it would temporarily reduce some congestion and make it easier for people to live farther out in the country. Second, it would send a powerful signal that the state is willing to invest in expanded development south of Greater Cleveland. And, third, it would make it easier to add interchanges along I-71. Of these, the last is probably most important. New interchanges open up new land for development and can promote quantum leaps of sprawl.

Although the widening proponents don't often admit it in public, new interchanges



Bottleneck: Although the I-71/I-480 split is acknowledged to be a serious cause of traffic congestion, it wasn't included in studies of the I-71 widening.

are what they really care about. Strongsville and Medina County officials have already made a deal to pay for an interchange at Boston Road. And Medina County development interests have plans for additional interchanges and improvements that would provide better access to rural industrial parks.

Scare tactics?

Two of the Medina County commissioners, Patricia Geissman and Stephen Hambley, have hitched their careers to the I-71 widening and a pro-growth agenda for the county. In recent months they have lashed out at those who have questioned the project and who would deny Medina County its "fair share" of the region's transportation funds. Last September, they passed a petulant resolution that said "I-71 is being used as a 'scapegoat' for the new in vogue theory on preventing urban decay." And they have gone so far as to investigate the possibility of removing Medina County from NOACA and joining the Akron-area transportation planning agency.

The other Medina County commissioner, Sara Pavlovicz, has openly criticized her colleagues for spreading misinformation about the project. "Scare tactics are being used," she said at a recent NOACA meeting. "It's not appropriate."

It's possible, too, that Geissman and Hambley have misjudged the mood of Medina County voters, ignoring their own opinion surveys showing that 79 percent of Medina County residents feel that the

county is growing too fast. Last November, county voters overwhelmingly rejected a sales tax increase championed by Geissman and Hambley that would have generated millions of dollars for road construction [see story on page 9]. Maybe people in Medina County are growing weary of growth pressures and want to preserve what's left of their rural heritage.

Hard to say no

From a political perspective, it is interesting that the debate over I-71 has gone as far as it has. Medina County only has 150,000 people. That's less than one-third the population of Cleveland, or about the same as the combined populations of Lakewood, Euclid and Cleveland Heights.

How can a Medina County agenda come close to prevailing? Here are some reasons—reasons which tell a lot about how transportation decisions are made in Northeast Ohio:

■ **Paybacks.** In the past, Medina County officials have voted for road projects in other counties, such as the widening of I-90 in Lorain County, so now they can call in those chits. In general, NOACA representatives are loathe to vote down someone else's pet project, even if the project is not in the interest of the region as a whole.

■ **Cuyahoga County divisions.** The outer suburbs of Cuyahoga County often have more in common with adjacent counties than with the City of Cleveland and inner-ring suburbs. One of the strongest

supporters of widening I-71 is Strongsville, a booming city with a new shopping mall. Veteran Strongsville mayor Walter Ehrnfelt has close personal ties to many other suburban mayors in Cuyahoga County, which makes it difficult for them to vote against the widening.

■ **Balkanization.** Elected officials are reluctant to take a strong regional perspective and make decisions for other jurisdictions. There's a tendency to say, "If Medina County thinks it needs more lanes, who am I to say differently?"

■ **Anti-growth stigma.** Medina County is undeniably growing (though it is an open question how much of that growth comes at the expense of other parts of the region), and no politician wants to be seen as obstructing growth.

■ **Sense of entitlement.** For many years, communities were led to believe that they could grow endlessly and that roads would always be expanded to deal with their traffic messes. Indeed, that is seen as the job of public agencies like ODOT and NOACA.

■ **ODOT inflexibility.** We are often forced to accept highways

whether we want them or not because that's where the money is (thanks largely to the state gas tax, which can only be spent on roads). The inflexibility prevents creative planning to meet our real needs. And the fact that the Greater Cleveland area is split between two ODOT districts makes it hard to set regional priorities.

■ **Lack of a regional plan.** It's impossible to plan transportation in a comprehensive manner without a regional land use plan. Transportation and development must be coordinated. Land use must be compact to reduce the need for new transportation (after all, transportation is only needed when destinations are inconveniently located), and transportation improvements must reinforce land use plans.

■ **Poverty of vision.** After a generation of building the Interstate Highway System and promoting the

use of automobiles, it's hard to imagine how to do things differently—hard to imagine that our communities could be better if we had more transportation choices. It's a lot easier to keep adding lanes to highways.

Regional choices

It's possible that a "compromise" on I-71 will be reached. Perhaps NOACA members will agree to a partial widening—perhaps on the most congested section of I-71 from US 42 to SR 82—and find a way to incorporate transportation alternatives, such as an HOV lane and commuter rail.

But such a compromise will not give the development interests of Medina County what they want. In this case, there may be no common ground. The interests of land speculators who want to turn cornfields into subdivisions and industrial parks may be fundamentally opposed to the interests of those who want to redevelop older urban areas.

Proponents of regionalism often paint it as a warm and fuzzy process of getting everyone to agree on a common vision. But, after all the consensus-building, difficult choices must still be made. The real test of regionalism may be the ability to say no. □

"Curiously, continued out-migration is treated as a given for the next 20 years, and the widening project is justified by ODOT by the very out-migration the project will

Commercial sprawl: Auto-oriented retail developments, like this new strip mall in Sheffield, are popping up at I-90 interchanges in Lorain County.

Interchange plans follow I-90 widening

If you doubt the real motivation for widening highways is the potential to add closely-spaced interchanges, just look at what's happening in Avon. ODOT is now widening I-90 in eastern Lorain County, and, as soon as the project began, developers began unveiling proposals for a new interchange at Lear-Nagle Road. They're even offering to pay for it because of the development opportunities it would create.

"There's a big, big job to be done to plan the right size interchange...My feeling is double-lane ramps," developer Robert Stark told *The Plain Dealer* in December.

Stark's company is teaming up with the Richard E. Jacobs Group on a proposed 1,000-acre retail, office and industrial complex at Lear-Nagle Road. Just west along I-90, First Interstate Development plans an 80-acre shopping center development at SR 83.

The developers are telling Avon residents that "development is coming, whether they like it or not." And city officials are struggling to cope.

Last year, the city imposed a 90-day moratorium on new housing construction to give time to deal with problems associated with rapid development, including flooding and the deterioration of rural roads. In recent months, citizens have circulated petitions to place a charter amendment on the May ballot to require that all land use changes involving commercial rezoning, superstores and shopping centers be approved by the voters.



I-71 widening: The real issues

■ **I-71 does not need to be widened between US Route 42 and State Route 18:** Adding lanes to I-71 between US 42 in Middleburg Heights and SR 18 in Medina County is an unnecessary expenditure of scarce tax dollars. Objective analysis by NOACA, our regional transportation and environmental planning agency, shows that the widening is simply not urgent compared to much more problematic traffic congestion problems with our regional highway network. Most of the 16 miles of the interstate that ODOT would like to see widened do not have sufficient traffic to justify the addition of lanes. And half of those 16 miles won't have sufficient traffic to warrant widening 20 years from now. Even in the most congested three miles of I-71 slated for widening—between SR 82 and US 42 where level of service would improve from an "E/F" to a "D"—additional lanes would be a temporary fix, with "E/F" conditions returning within three to five years.

■ **Widening I-71 will exacerbate existing traffic congestion:** One of the worst and most dangerous bottlenecks in the NOACA region is just north of the proposed widening at the I-71 / I-480 split. Widening I-71 between US 42 and SR 18 will only increase the number of vehicles approaching this choke point, aggravating driving conditions for daily commuters to Cleveland. By increasing capacity where it is not needed, widening I-71 would exacerbate a real problem that frustrates commuters day in and day out.

Continued on the next page

■ **Adding lanes to I-71 is really about**

Stop the outmigration!

Groups argue against the widening of I-71

Resolution of the First Suburbs Consortium

The following resolution opposing the widening of I-71 was adopted unanimously by members of the First Suburbs Consortium on January 29, 1998. The consortium is composed of elected officials from the inner-ring suburbs of Cleveland. Member cities include Cleveland Heights, Euclid, Lakewood, Shaker Heights, Garfield Heights, Maple Heights, and South Euclid.

WHEREAS, objective study and analysis by the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) shows the proposed widening of I-71 is not justified nor warranted for the entire 16-mile section, especially in light of other high priority needs for our region's transportation system that are not being addressed; and

WHEREAS, for the identified section of I-71 between U.S. Route 42 and Ohio Route 82 where current levels of service could be improved to a slight degree, such study and analysis by NOACA further notes that the propose widening of I-71 would only be a temporary fix for three years to five years before new traffic promoted by such a widening would return this section to its current levels of service; and

WHEREAS, the objective study and analysis by NOACA further notes that the proposed widening of I-71 would only serve to exacerbate the real traffic bottleneck problem located just north of the proposed widening at the I-71/I-480 interchange by adding new traffic capacity that would directly feed into this bottleneck; and

WHEREAS, the required Major Investment Study (MIS), in its current form, fails to adequately explore, consider and discuss transportation alternatives, including the alternative of commuter rail service, which a NOACA committee is only now beginning to study, as of this date, for independent purposes unrelated to the proposed widening of I-71; and

WHEREAS, our region is already characterized by substantial underinvestment in existing public facilities and infrastructure as a result of past inequitable public investment that promotes new at the expense of existing; and

WHEREAS, Ohio Department of Transportation forecasts show that public funds for transportation generally are becoming and will become increasingly scarce and, therefore, must be prudently managed, especially in light of the critical need to maintain existing roads and bridges in our region; and

WHEREAS, public funds spent to service ex-urban development in its many forms, coupled with the erosion of urban infrastructure investment in urban areas, jeopardizes the overall economic capacity and performance of the Greater Cleveland region; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED...

Section 1. That this Consortium hereby opposes the proposed widening of I-71 since objective analysis by NOACA has shown, with the exception of needed repair and replacement of existing lanes, that this project is not necessary and will only serve to worsen the traffic bottleneck problem at the I-71/I-480 interchange.

Section 2. That this Consortium hereby opposes the proposed widening of I-71 because alternate means of reducing traffic congestion have not been adequately explored in this project's MIS and the impacts of such a proposed highway widening on development and use of urban and rural land in the Cleveland region have not been thoroughly reviewed... □

For more information about the First Suburbs Consortium, call 216-291-2854.

Letter from the Federation for Community Planning

The Federation for Community Planning is an organization that deals with health and human service issues, not transportation planning. But it recently weighed in on the I-71 widening issue by sending the following letter to Cuyahoga County Commissioners and board members of the Northeast Ohio Area-wide Coordinating Agency. It's a sign that social service providers are becoming increasingly aware that sprawl and outmigration are contributing to concentrations of poverty and distress in the core of the region, while undermining the tax base needed to finance social services.

[T]he Federation for Community Planning has concerns about the outmigration of population, jobs and tax base from Cuyahoga County. Our concern is due to the impacts on the county's ability to deliver health and human services effectively to an increasing proportion of the regions' needy populations. It is for these reasons we want to address the widening of I-71, an issue soon to come before the NOACA Governing Board.

The Federation for Community Planning is a nonprofit organization with an 85-year history of marshaling community resources to meet the health and human services needs of at-risk populations. During the past year, our Affordable Housing and Regional Dynamics Committee has compiled regional census and demographic data that documents the impacts of outmigration on such social issues. In category after category, we found that an undue proportion of the region's at-risk populations has been left behind in older neighborhoods, while the tax base has been weakened by outmigration.

Yet, for decades, federal and state government have invested in

infrastructure projects that make it easier for jobs, tax base and people of means to move to outlying areas. No doubt some of your colleagues on the NOACA Board believe that new outlying development represents overall economic growth. In truth, since the total population of the region as a whole has not increased measurably, *most of this development represents instead the relocation of resources*—subsidized by tax revenues drawn from the entire region.

In March of 1993, the Federation adopted a position statement on outmigration, which states, in part: "Government policies and practices (federal, state and local) that encourage the outward movement of population should be reviewed by Cuyahoga County officials in conjunction with officials from other counties within the region... Major public investments (mass transit, roads, sewers, water, etc.)... should be analyzed... with respect to potential impact on movement, and *should be challenged if such investment promotes further outmigration.*"

"Since the total population of the region as a whole has not increased measurably, most of this development represents instead the relocation of resources—subsidized by tax revenues drawn from

It is clear to us that widening I-71 would encourage further outmigration, as evidenced by its promotion as a way to ease congestion and facilitate longer commutes. Beyond this, we are concerned that this project would make possible additional interchanges, which would likely foster development of industrial parks in Medina County—drawing still more jobs and tax base from Cuyahoga

County. In the absence of NOACA actions of comparable scale to support redevelopment of existing Cleveland and inner-ring suburban industrial areas, we cannot sanction such public investment in relocating jobs to new industrial parks.

□

For more information about the Federation for Community Planning, call 216-781-2944.

interchanges and sprawling development:

Proponents of the widening exaggerate actual traffic conditions on I-71, but downplay the critical role a wider highway plays in promoting sprawling growth in Medina County. Without the third lane, the construction of a new interchange at Boston Road and the redesign of three existing interchanges (at SR 303, I-271 and SR 18) to increase capacity would probably not be possible. Widening I-71 as far south as SR 18 also makes the widening of I-71 all the way to Columbus more likely, which would permit the construction of another new interchange at SR 162 in Montville Township, possibly as part of a Medina City bypass. This increased access to open space and farmland in the northern and central part of Medina County would spur more land speculation and urban sprawl, just as we have seen in Lorain County in recent months as the widening of I-90 has progressed.

■ A cleaner environment requires innovative alternatives to our auto-dependent transportation system:

If we want to improve traffic flow, reduce air and water pollution, protect our existing investments in infrastructure, encourage the use of public transit, and increase the mobility of all Northeast Ohioans—all principles that NOACA supports—we have to give Northeast Ohioans more transportation choices, not less. Adding new lanes to I-71 works against all of these principles and makes it more unlikely that we will ever achieve them. A significant reduction in traffic congestion on I-71 and on other roads in the region cannot be achieved without reducing our dependence on single-occupancy vehicles (SOVs). A better rail and bus system, incentives to carpool and use public transit, improvements in safety and convenience for pedestrians and cyclists, and more compact land use that locates jobs, services and shopping opportunities closer to residences are the solutions that will reduce reliance on SOVs.

ODOT has committed itself to reconstructing the existing lanes of I-71 and adding a wider shoulder if NOACA's Governing Board votes against adding lanes. This is the appropriate action for NOACA to take because it will improve the safety of the existing roadway, permit ODOT to maintain two lanes of traffic during future maintenance operations, avoid higher-than-necessary maintenance expenditures in the future, and conserve million of dollars today that simply need not be spent.

—EcoCity Cleveland

Local facilities reduce risks of chemical accidents

Neighbors of the City of Solon Waste Water Treatment Plant and Ohio Aluminum Industries in Garfield Heights are safer from accidental exposure to toxic chemicals due to risk reduction measures taken by the management of these two facilities. At a recent seminar on emergency planning for chemical accidents, the Cuyahoga County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), presented its Risk Reduction Recognition Awards to these two facilities.

Ohio Aluminum Industries worked with its chemical supplier and with the Garfield Heights Fire Department to determine the root cause of sulfur dioxide leaks at their plant. They came up with an inherently safer redesign that eliminated the use of heating to move the sulfur dioxide through the process and substituted a nitrogen-fed system.

The Solon Waste Water Treatment Plant dramatically improved the safety of its operation by eliminating the use of chlorine and sulfur dioxide for waste water disinfection. After pilot testing to insure effectiveness, they substituted an ultraviolet light disinfection system. Not only is the new system safer, but it is also cost-effective because of lowered safety and compliance costs.

"These two facilities are terrific models of the risk reduction process," according to Stuart Greenberg, a member of the LEPC's management committee and director of Environmental Health Watch, a nonprofit organization that addresses chemical hazards in the workplace and community. "They analyzed their chemical hazards, assessed the off-site consequences of a credible accident, and noted the problems of effective emergency response. Then they did the hard work to see if there were feasible

safer alternatives to the current system and implemented the desired changes. The result is significantly improved safety for their employees and the neighboring community. And, there are cost savings, as well, in safety equipment and training, regulatory compliance and liability insurance."

Previous winners of the risk reduction awards were the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District and the Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA). The sewer district eliminated the use of over 1,000 tons of chlorine a year (18 55-ton railroad tank cars) at its three waste water treatment plants by substituting much safer hypochlorite for disinfection of effluent. Hazards analysis by the LEPC had revealed that a worst-case accident involving a chlorine tank car could

have exposed people more than ten miles downwind to dangerous concentrations of chlorine gas.

The LEPC's analysis of ALCOA's 13,000-gallon tank of hydrofluoric acid indicated that toxic concentrations could extend ten miles in a catastrophic accident. When made aware of the risks to employees and the community, ALCOA formed a

multi-disciplinary team to review their processes and possible alternatives. Operational changes recommended by the team led to the complete elimination of on-site storage of hydrofluoric acid and nitric acid, eliminating the possibility of an accident that could have a devastating impact on the community. The process changes also resulted in substantial pollution prevention—45-percent reduction in chemical use and 90-percent reduction in off-site disposal of hazardous waste. □



Cleaner cleaning

You know the tart smell of clothes fresh from the dry cleaners? The smell comes from perchloroethylene (PCE), a chlorinated solvent which "dry" cleaners use instead of water-based cleaning agents. Although PCE is widely used, it is a serious threat to human health and the environment. In 1993, the dry cleaning industry in the eight Great Lakes states released some 40 million pounds of PCE into the Great Lakes ecosystem.

Fortunately, new methods of "wet" cleaning are being developed to clean clothes without toxic solvents. A local business technology resource center, CAMP Inc., is setting up a wet cleaning instructional facility at Cuyahoga Community College. The facility, which is funded by a grant from the Lake Erie Protection Fund, will help small dry cleaning companies learn the advantages of water-based cleaning. For more information about the project and CAMP's other organochlorine reduction efforts, call 216-543-7303.

CAMP is also working with the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District to help small manufacturers save money by reducing solid waste through improved recycling. Manufacturers produce about 60 percent of the county's solid waste.

Sustainable development manual

Build Up Greater Cleveland, the infrastructure program of the Greater Cleveland Growth Association, has printed a best practices manual to guide local governments to sustainable development. Through case studies from the private and public sectors, the manual discusses the importance of linking development practices with the long-term viability of human settlements.

"Civic leaders are beginning to see the connections between social equity, unemployment, and crime; or those between environmental integrity, pollution, and the long-term health of citizens," the manual says. "The connections have always been present, but it has only been in recent decades that management practices have reflected their policy implications."

For more information, call 216-621-7220.

House made of straw

If we were serious about sustainability, we would construct our buildings out of abundant, renewable, recyclable, and locally-available natural materials—like straw and clay. And we would make them as energy-efficient as possible. In fact, we might make them like Mark Hoberecht's "Hut."

This two-story cottage in Columbia Station is made of straw bales coated with a clay-sand-straw plaster. Wood timber framing came from dead standing trees on the property or was recycled from an old barn. The curved roof is made of living sod.

The 14-inch walls provide an R-40 insulation rating, and the cottage is heated with a small, wood-burning stove. Photovoltaic panels provide electricity from sunlight.

Straw bale construction is an old technique that is making a comeback in the United States. Straw bale walls are economical and durable. And they are more fire-resistant than conventional walls made of drywall and wood studs. Moreover, they can be made into organic, curving shapes to create rooms that are a joy to be in.

Hoberecht is a NASA engineer who has studied sustainable systems and has attended Natural Building Colloquia in the western U. S. He offers consulting services on natural construction techniques. For more information, call 440-236-3344.

Is it really organic?

Organic food advocates have sought national labeling standards that would give consumers a clear message about what is truly organic. After years of work, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has drafted such rules, but few people in the organic food community are happy about them.

The proposed national organic certification standards could allow inclusion of genetically engineered organisms in organic foods, the use of radiation to kill pathogens, and the use of municipal sewage sludge as fertilizer.

Such provisions are desired by big agribusinesses, which are seeking a share of the organic food market. According to the *New York Times*, consumers are spending \$3.5 billion a year on organic food, and the amount is growing with increasing concerns about pesticides and other chemicals in food.

The USDA has extended the public comment period on the proposed rules until April 30.

For more information, call the Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association, 614-294-FOOD.



Local food and community farms

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a way for city folks to invest in a local farm and receive a share of the harvest during the growing season. CSA programs in Northeast Ohio include Silver Creek Farm near Hiram (330-569-3487) and the Oberlin Sustainable Agriculture Project (216-775-0405).

Another way to support local farms is to seek out a distributor who deals with growers in the area. One who

makes weekly deliveries to Cleveland from Amish farms in Holmes County is Joe "Zucchini" Orbek. Some of the seasonal produce is certified organic. Call 330-377-4301 for details.

Another local program of interest is the Foodbank Initiative of the Crown Point Ecology Learning Center in Bath Twp. This summer, the center is cultivating a one-acre organic garden and sending the harvest to the Akron/Canton Regional Foodbank to feed the hungry. Future plans call for bringing 10-20 acres into production. Area church, civic and business groups will be asked to become "shareholders" in the project by making a donation to cover operating costs. The goal is to feed the hungry, educate the public about organic farming and healthy food, and restore the earth in the process. For more information, call 330-666-9200.

Sierra Club debates immigration

Northeast Ohio Sierra Club member Alan Kuper has ignited a ferocious debate in the club over immigration policy. Kuper and other population activists in the club have forced a membership ballot issue on whether the club should advocate a reduction in immigration levels as part of a comprehensive population policy leading to an end to U.S. population growth. They view human population growth as the greatest threat to the ecological health of the earth, see Americans as having the greatest impact on nature because of disproportionately high levels of consumption, and believe the only way to get U.S. population down to sustainable levels is to reduce the biggest source of U.S. population growth, which is immigration.

Opponents of immigration controls—including organizations like Zero Population Growth—argue that shutting the doors to the U.S.

will do nothing to relieve world population growth or the root causes of immigration pressure. Instead, they advocate that the U.S. bolster its foreign aid for population, environmental, social, education and sustainable development programs. They say that of the people who emigrate to the U.S., the majority would have stayed in their home countries had there been economic opportunities or democratic institutions.

Other Sierra Club members oppose the ballot measure simply because the immigration issue is so divisive and could make it harder for the largely white, middle-class club to build bridges to communities of color. When the club's president, Adam Werbach spoke at the Cleveland City Club recently, he spent much of his time arguing against the measure.

Lorain County natural history

Former Oberlin College biology professor Thomas Fairchild Sherman has written an eloquent book, *A Place on the Glacial Till*, about the natural history of Lorain County. The book was published last year by Oxford University Press.

Ecological economics on video

It's been said that our growth economy "treats the earth as if it were a business in liquidation." The alternative is ecological economics that respects the natural capital of the earth's ecosystems and guides us to a sustainable human society.

A local film production company, Griesinger Films, has created four videos featuring the world's leading thinkers on



ecological economics and sustainability. All four videos are available as a package deal for \$100. Call 440-423-1601 for more information.

More signs of global warming?

Everyone's remarking what a mild winter we've had in Northeast Ohio this year. But there are indications that it's a long-term trend.

Cleveland Metroparks chief naturalist Robert Hinkle writes in a recent Metroparks' newsletter: "Snow carnivals once popular at Rocky River Nature Center in the 1970s and '80s ended in 1984 for lack of snow and cold weather. Cross-country ski concessions have dwindled in Cleveland Metroparks from three to none in a decade."

Summit deals with hazmats

The Summit/Akron Solid Waste Management Authority has been developing innovative services to help small generators of hazardous materials who have difficulty finding convenient and affordable disposal sites. The authority has established Ohio's first permanent household hazardous waste recycling center for Summit County residents. And now the authority is seeking to open a chemical/hazardous waste recycling center for small businesses. Call 330-374-0383 for more information.



Clean Water Act anniversary

Environmental activists recently celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Clean Water Act. In 1972, public outrage over pollution of Lake Erie, the Cuyahoga River and other waterbodies across the nation led Congress to pass the act. The ambitious goal was to restore the "physical, chemical, and biological integrity" of our waters.

As a result, billions of dollars have been invested to reduce pollution from industry and municipal wastewater treatment plants. Lake Erie has made a dramatic comeback. And fine restaurants line the river banks of the Cuyahoga River in downtown Cleveland.

Despite these successes, much work remains. Less than half of Ohio's rivers and streams meet clean water standards. Ohio is 11th in the nation for toxic releases into surface waters and 4th for toxic releases into public sewage systems. Valuable wetlands and wildlife habitat are still being lost every day. And polluted runoff from urban areas and farm fields is still a huge problem.

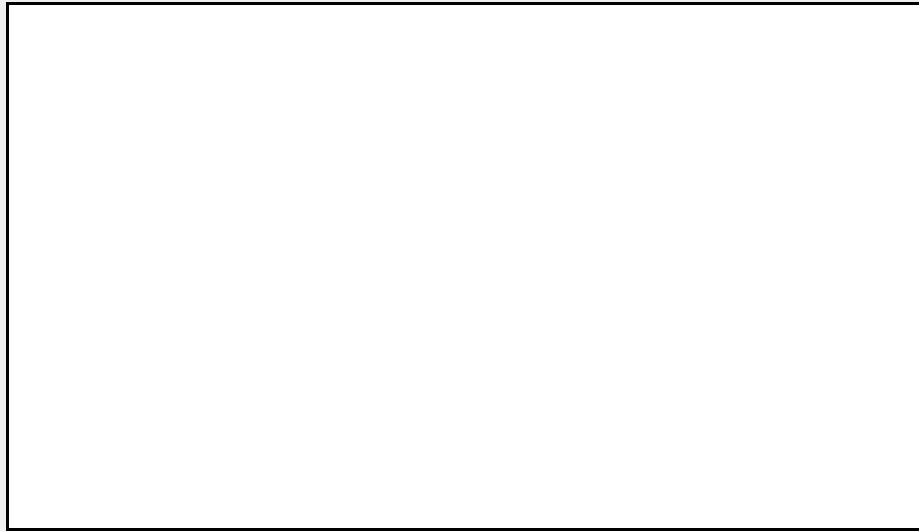
We all need to keep working hard to make our waters fishable, swimmable and drinkable.

Ideas needed for Cuyahoga River cleanup

After ten years of work, the Cuyahoga River Remedial Action Plan (RAP) is seeking to reinvigorate its efforts to restore the river. The RAP's coordinating committee is beginning a strategic planning process to set priorities for the coming years. Input from local environmental groups is needed to help set restoration goals.

The RAP is part of a binational effort to clean up the 43 worst toxic hotspots around the Great Lakes. The program was initiated by the International Joint Commission, an agency established by U.S./Canadian treaty. The Cuyahoga is one of four Remedial Action Plans under way in Ohio. The others focus on the Maumee, Black and Ashtabula rivers.

At their best, RAPs are part of a noble, binational effort to restore the ecological integrity of the Great Lakes by focusing concentrated attention on the worst sources of pollution. RAPs also have promoted a comprehensive, watershed approach to cleanups and have brought together a diverse group of stakeholders to develop new partnerships. On the other hand, the diversity of participants (in the Cuyahoga's



Outrage of the month

Bridges for sprawl: Lake County has plans to replace this modest Vrooman Road bridge over the Grand River with an \$8.2 million, high-level bridge over the river valley (similar to the ugly bridge over the Grand at SR 528). A high-level bridge would make it easier for cars and trucks to cross the river, and it could make it possible to extend water lines into rural areas of Leroy Twp. The deep Grand River gorge has been a natural barrier to development in Lake County, but the extension of utility lines south of the river would promote development around the I-90/Vrooman Road interchange.

case, from the Sierra Club to major industries and sewer districts) has meant that RAPs have been a slow, deliberative process in which only the most uncontroversial initiatives move forward—a process which has frustrated many environmental activists around the Great Lakes Basin.

Between 1988 and 1993, the Cuyahoga RAP assembled a voluminous assessment of water quality and habitat problems in the watershed. Since then, the group has coordinated a number of technical studies, streambank restoration projects and public education programs (such as storm drain stenciling projects by groups of volunteers).

What should be the cleanup and restoration priorities for the next few years? What is our vision for the river? How can we mobilize public attention and resources to address difficult-to-correct water quality problems such as urban runoff and combined sewer overflows?

To submit your suggestions about what the RAP should be doing, contact the Sierra Club's Cuyahoga RAP representative, David Beach, at 216-932-3007, or RAP planner Kay Carlson at 216-241-2414.

Ohio backtracks on

audit privilege secrecy

Environmental groups appear to be winning their battle to overturn Ohio's new Environmental Audit Privileges and Immunities law. The law was intended to give companies legal cover from prosecution if they voluntarily disclosed environmental violations.

Last November, the U.S. EPA agreed with critics of the Ohio law, saying "audit privileges make it more difficult to enforce the nation's environmental laws by making it easier to shield evidence of wrongdoing."

Ohio EPA now is negotiating with the feds—and environmental groups such as the Ohio Environmental Council and Rivers Unlimited—over changes in the law.

Watersheds on the Web

The Ohio EPA Division of Surface Water has a great Web site (<http://chagrin.epa.ohio.gov/watershed>) with information and maps of watersheds in Ohio. You can use it to find out what river basin you live in, data on major pollution sources, as well as the sources of other water quality impairments.

Portage County trail

Another piece has been secured in a planned 20-mile, hike-bike trail through Portage County. Conrail has announced that it will be giving a 2-mile section of the abandoned Freedom Secondary line to the Portage County Park District. The section runs between Towner's Woods Park and Wall Street in Ravenna.

To help the Friends of the Towner's Woods Rail-Trail develop the trail, call 330-673-9404.

State transportation appointments

Brecksville Mayor Jerry Hruby, the Greater Cleveland Growth Association's David Goss and former Youngstown Mayor Patrick Ungaro have been named to ODOT's Transportation Review Advisory Committee. The TRAC will help determine which new transportation projects will be built in the coming years and will review ODOT's project ranking system.

Better pavement

Northeast Ohio's expertise in high-tech composite materials may lead to longer-lasting roads in the region. The Growth Association's infrastructure group, Build Up Greater Cleveland, is working to transfer this new technology from the laboratory to the field. The first pilot project involves rehabilitating parts of the Prospect Road Bridge in Berea. For details, call 216-621-7220.

Green building

One of the best, independent sources for environmentally-friendly building information is now available on a handy CD-ROM. The journal, *Environment Building News*, has collected five years of

issues on a CD-ROM *E Build Library*. Cost is \$95. Call 802-257-7300 to order.

Job openings

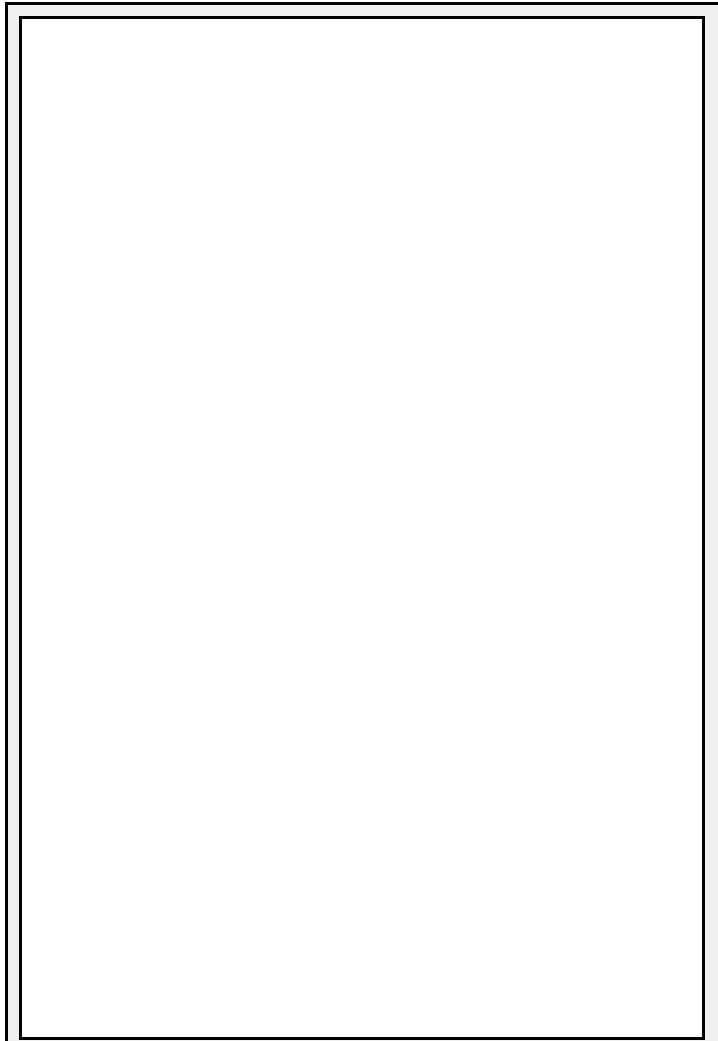
■ **Sierra Club:** The Ohio Chapter of the Sierra Club is seeking a transportation policy analyst and activist to promote sustainable transportation systems in Ohio and foster public involvement in transportation decision-making. The position has funding until the end of 1998. Send cover letter and resume to Hiring Committee, Ohio Sierra Club, 145 N. High St., Suite 409, Columbus, OH 43215.

■ **PLACE:** The Portage County land trust PLACE is seeking a part-time executive director skilled in nonprofit management and land conservation methods. Send resume and cover letter to PLACE, PO Box 3286, Kent, OH 44240. For more information, call 330-673-9404 or 330-673-8631.

■ **Environmental Law and Policy Center:** ELPC, the largest environmental advocacy organization based in the Midwest, is seeking an experienced director of development to manage fundraising operations. Send resume, cover letter and references to Marc Hilton, Campbell & Co., One East Wacker Dr., Suite 2525, Chicago, IL 60601.

■ **Crown Point Ecology Learning Center:** This nonprofit center in Bath Twp. is seeking an organic gardener/teacher to help plan programs and work with children's and community gardens. Send resume and references to Donna Bessken, Crown Point Ecology Learning Center, PO Box 484, Bath, OH 44210.

■ **Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education**



John Perera

You couldn't miss John Perera. He was the guy in the gas mask and hazmat suit at all the demonstrations and public meetings. He was the one with "Muckraker and Gadfly, Inc." on his business cards. He was the Quaker with car license plates that read "FRIEND." He was the "John from Edgewater" who always asked the tough questions on National Public Radio call-in shows. And, with his crippling asthma, he was the canary in the coal mine, always pestering air quality officials for better monitoring, better information on the pollutants in our air. "No one knows because no one looks," was John's refrain. Whether the issue was pollution, public access to the Cleveland lakefront or social justice in Central America, John was always speaking out.

He died January 17, 1998, at his home in Cleveland. We will miss his activist spirit.

Peace, friend.

Center: Seeking field instructors/teaching interns for resident environmental education program. Write or call for application at the CVEEC, 3675 Oak Hill Rd.,

Peninsula, OH 44264 (330-657-2796).

Pressure points

Medina sewer expansion

A major development decision with regional implications—how much to expand the Medina County wastewater treatment plant in Liverpool Township—rests with a few township trustees and the Medina County sanitary engineer. The plant is now at 90-percent capacity, but water quality conditions in its receiving stream, the West Branch of the Rocky River, would probably permit it to be doubled in size. That would allow the rapid growth of the city of Medina, Brunswick and nearby rural areas to continue for many years.

Medina vo-ag cuts

Another sign of growth pressures in Medina County was the recent decision of the Cloverleaf school board to drop its support of a vocational agriculture program. Officials cited declining enrollment in the program and the need to use classroom space for growing numbers of non-farm students. The county is adding about 1,000 new houses a year, mostly on farmland.

Growth feeds growth

Moody's bond rating service recently upgraded the rating given to bonds sold by the City of Medina, saying that "the city's economy will continue to expand given its proximity to the cities of Cleveland and Akron, and the availability of developable land."

Driving feeds driving

Even though Ohio is a big emitter of greenhouse gases and should reduce the burning of fossil fuels, ODOT depends on increasing gasoline consumption and the resulting gas taxes to finance the construction of new roads.

Incinerator worries about sprawl

Representatives of Ross Incineration Services, the region's only commercial hazardous waste incinerator, showed up at a recent meeting on farmland preservation. The company, which has operated for years in relative obscurity out in the farm fields of Lorain County, is worried that new housing subdivisions in the area will bring cries to shut down the incinerator.



Chardon bypass

State Rep. Diane Grendell has been stirring up calls for a SR 44 bypass to route truck traffic out of the historic town square of Chardon. Other towns in the region—notably Medina—face similar problems. The trick is to provide an alternative for trucks without building a bypass that will open up vast areas of farmland for development.

Harvard Road interchange

The construction of a new interchange on I-271 at Harvard Road will require the filling of 1.39 acres of wetlands and the channelization of 1,065 linear feet of tributaries of Tinkers Creek, according to a recent permit application ODOT filed with Ohio EPA. The Chagrin Highlands area around the proposed interchange is a sensitive headwaters area for Tinkers Creek, Mill Creek and tributaries of the Chagrin River. Poorly planned development could destroy water resources, as well as bring traffic congestion to formerly rural areas east of I-271.

Bainbridge planning

Faced with development

pressures moving down the U.S. 422 corridor, the Bainbridge Twp. Zoning Commission is appointing a citizens advisory committee to examine zoning and other growth-related issues.

Twinsburg seeks slow growth

Twinsburg City Council is studying how to slow down the rapid population growth which is imposing escalating costs for the city and schools. One possibility is an annual cap on housing starts, a growth management strategy being employed in neighboring Hudson.

Lorain County airport

A proposal to expand the Lorain County Airport in rural New Russia Twp. is raising concerns about taxpayer subsidies and sprawl. Economic development officials want longer runways to serve the cargo needs of local businesses, but others question the the viability of the plan.

The costs downstream

Development in Beachwood and the construction of high-speed lanes in the median of I-271 are partially responsible for flooding in South Euclid, according to a recent study. The headwaters of Euclid Creek were paved over with little consideration of stormwater impacts, much less a concern for water quality.

Mentor traffic

The Center Street Area Preservation Society is still fighting ODOT's plans to build a new I-90 interchange at SR 615. Residents argue that the interchange and widening of 615 (Center Street) will promote more sprawling development and destroy the historic character, as well as the quiet

and safety, of an old section of Mentor.

Woodmere traffic

Woodmere Village Council has rescinded permission which would have allowed ODOT to widen Chagrin Blvd. to five lanes east of I-271. Instead, the village is studying how to create a more pedestrian-friendly streetscape. "Why should we sacrifice our village to make it easier for someone to get somewhere else?" said council president Carolyn Patrick in a *PD* article.

Rural traffic burden

Traffic on the two-lane portion of U.S. 422 in rural Troy Twp. has more than doubled since the road to the west was turned into a freeway in 1992. Truck traffic has also increased. Six traffic fatalities have occurred on that portion of the road in the past two years.

Cars like sprawl

Increase in miles driven by Americans in past 12 years: 40 percent, according to the 1995 National Personal Transportation Survey.



Cars break budgets

Cost of owning and operating the average car: \$6,500 a year, according to the AAA.

New lanes cause more traffic congestion

A new study finds that within five years of adding capacity to urban highways, 60-90 percent of the new capacity is filled up with trips that would not have otherwise occurred.

EARTHfest '98

The Earth Day Coalition of Northeast Ohio will host EARTHfest '98 on April 19 at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo. This annual Earth Day celebration is the largest environmental education event in the state. The zoo will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission will be \$3 for adults and \$2 for children.

To help raise money for the Earth Day Coalition, you can join the walk or bike tour to the EARTHfest. Step-off is at 9 a.m. from Cleveland Public Square.

Call 216-281-6468 for more information.

Earth as teacher

Common Ground, a retreat and conferencing center in Lorain County, is sponsoring a series of events entitled "Leadership and Work in the Next Millennium: Earth as Teacher." The series is grounded in the belief that building a sustainable future is a cooperative task that involves learning from natural systems. Events include:

- March 26—A dialogue with **Barbara Shipka**, author of *Leadership in a Challenging World: A Sacred Journey*, 8:30 a.m. at the Spitzer Conferencing Center of Lorain County Community College.

- April 21—Music to celebrate the Earth with the **Paul Winter Consort**, 8 p.m. at Oberlin College's Finney Chapel.

- May 6—Presentation on natural systems and the organization of human endeavors by **Margaret Wheatley**, author of *Leadership and the New Science*, 8 a.m. at the Elyria Holiday Inn.

- May 18—Discussion of new forms of community organization by **Naomi Tutu**, daughter of South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu and director of the African

Gender Institute in Cape Town, 7:30 p.m. at the Spitzer Conferencing Center of Lorain County Community College.

For ticket information, call Common Ground at 440-365-5222, ext. 7377.

Year of Doan Brook

To commemorate the 200th anniversary of Nathaniel Doan's settling at Doan's Corners (now E. 105th and Euclid Avenue), the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes is sponsoring a year-long celebration of the Doan Brook watershed. The brook is an eight-mile stream that runs through the Heights and the Shaker Lakes, disappears into a culvert under University Circle, and reappears as a walled stream through Rockefeller Park. Over the years it has changed from a wilderness stream feeding into a pristine Lake Erie to an urban stream with significant problems of flood control and water quality.

"Year of the Brook" events will highlight the brook's problems and possibilities:

- April 18—Day-long Earth celebration featuring activities, hikes and entertainment for the whole family.

- April 21-May 12—Four-week, Tuesday evening course on understanding and protecting the urban watershed of Doan Brook.

- May 2—Breakfast with the birds, 7:30-11:30 a.m., a discussion of Doan Brook as migratory flyway.

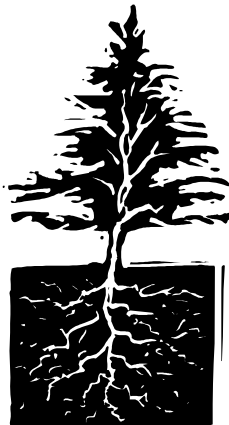
- Summer and Fall—Watershed walks, historical reenactments, and volunteer projects.

All events are at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, 2600 South Park Blvd.

in Shaker Heights. Call 216-321-5935 for more information and to register.

Native plant classes

Holden Arboretum in Kirtland will offer classes in March and April on the identification of native herbaceous perennials and the flora of Northeast Ohio. Call 440-946-4400 for registration information.



Environmental issues series

The Global Issues Resource Center and Continuing and Professional Education of Cuyahoga Community College are presenting a series of four briefings on current environmental issues, including global ecosystems, air pollution, environmental justice, and managing Lake Erie's coast. Sessions are April 27 and May 4, 11, and 18 at Tri-C's Eastern and Western campuses. Call 216-987-2224 for registration information.

River Run summer camp

The River Run Arts-Earth Studies Summer Camp at the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center will be offered in three sessions between July 12 and August 8. The camp for middle school students promotes appreciation of music, the arts and ecology. For registration information, call 800-642-3297.

Rebuilding community in the age of sprawl

Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and co-author of *Changing Places: Rebuilding Community in the Age of Sprawl*, will speak at the City Club of Cleveland, 850 Euclid Ave., at noon, March 27. The National Trust, the largest nonprofit preservation organization in the country, has declared urban sprawl to be one of the greatest threats to historic sites in America, and it has led the fight for sustainable forms of development that respect our cities, towns and landscapes.

Luncheon reservations are \$17.50. For more information, call 216-621-1498.

■
 "[Richard Moe and Carter Wilkie, authors of *Changing Places*,] treat unplanned development as the result of specific policies that can be challenged and changed: subsidies for the housing and automobile industries; single-use suburban zoning; tax codes that turn buildings into wasting assets after 31 and a half years; slash-and-burn urban redevelopment projects geared to cars, not people; mortgage lending that rewards racial segregation and architectural conformity. Those policies have reflected the prejudices and interests of powerful economic groups, not some impersonal process. Sprawl is not a necessary corollary of growth—though developers have exploited ordinary citizens' sense of fatalism. "That land is going to be developed no matter what" has long been a refrain in zoning disputes. Nor is sprawl an inevitable by-product of market forces or expression of consumer preference for 7-Elevens over corner groceries."

—*New York Times Book Review*, December 28, 1997

March 27 and 28

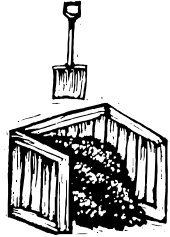
Workshops on new programs and strategies for **protecting Ohio's drinking water**, sponsored by state and national environmental groups. March 27 in Columbus and March 28 near Toledo. For registration information, call 517-337-3133.

March 28

Wiggle worms workshop to explore worms and composting for parents and preschoolers, 11 a.m. at the Lake Erie Nature and Science Center. Call 216-871-2900 to register.

March 28

Backyard composting workshop, 1 p.m. at the Cleveland Botanical Garden. Call 216-721-1600 to register.



March 28

Hike to observe **woodcock courtship dances**, 6:30 p.m. at the Geauga Park District's Whitlam Woods, 12500 Pearl Rd. in Hambden Twp. Call 440-286-9504.

March 31

Spring peeper hike to hear the sounds of spring, 6 p.m. at Carlisle Reservation Duck Pond area of Lorain County Metro Parks. Call 800-LCM-PARK.

March 31

Regional issues seminar on policies to promote smart growth, 7 p.m. at Fairlawn West United Church of Christ in Akron (on SR 18 three miles east of I-77). Sponsored by Cleveland State University and Faith-Based Organizing in Northeast Ohio. Call 216-881-2344 for details.

April 3-4

Lake Erie Wing Watch Weekend highlighting the excellent birding in Lake Erie's Western Basin. **Peter Dunne**, director of the famous Cape May Bird Observatory, will speak at 8 p.m. April 3. Programs and exhibits all day on April 4. All events at the Lorain County Community College Spitzer Conference Center. Sponsored by Lorain County Metro Parks, Black River Audubon Society and the Lorain County Visitor's Bureau (440-245-5282).

April 4

Hike to observe **heron rookery** in the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, 8 a.m. at the Station Road Bridge Trailhead off Riverview Road.

April 4

Dedication celebration of the recently expanded and remodelled **Lake Erie Nature and Science Center**, 1 p.m. at the center, 28728 Wolf Rd. in Bay Village. Call 440-871-2900.

April 4

Program on the history of the **Portage Lakes** as water supply for the Ohio & Erie Canal, 2 p.m. at the Boston Store of the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area on Boston Road.

April 5

Slide show to remember the **Interurban Railway** by members of the Cleveland & Eastern Interurban Historical Society, 2 p.m. at the Geauga Park District's Great Blue Heron Lodge, 10110 Cedar Rd. in Munson Twp.

April 5-7

Ohio Greenways Conference at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Columbus, a major event to promote Ohio's rivers and trail systems. Call 330-657-2055 for registration information.

April 7

Brown bag lunch discussion about the stewardship of **Forest Hill Park**, noon at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, 2600 South Park Blvd. Call 216-321-5935.

April 12

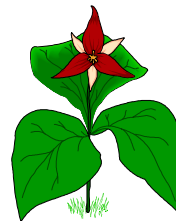
Bike tour to view **Cuyahoga Valley water resources** and learn how to protect the watershed, 1:30 p.m. at Boston Store on Boston Road.

April 12

Hike to view early **spring wildflowers**, 2 p.m. at Vermilion River Reservation Carriage Barn of Lorain County Metro Parks. Call 800-LCM-PARK.

April 16

Environmental Discussion Table at the City Club of Cleveland, featuring Jon Jensen of The George Gund Foundation. Noon at the City Club, 850 Euclid Ave. Call 621-0082 for reservations.

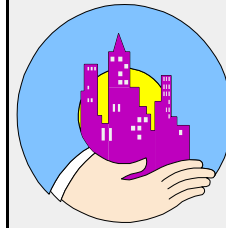


April 16

Wildlife photography demonstration by Jim Roetzel, 7 p.m. at the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area Happy Days Visitor Center on SR 303. Sponsored by the Cuyahoga Valley Photographic Society.

April 21

Regional issues seminar on strategic organizing opportunities to promote smart



April 20
Church in the City Symposium
sponsored by the Cleveland Catholic Diocese to reflect on the past five years of Bishop

Anthony Pilla's initiative for balanced development in the region. Call 696-6525, ext. 264, for registration information.

April 24

Forum for the Future of Ohio's Mature Suburbs, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Shaker Heights Community Building on Lee Road. Sponsored by the First Suburbs Consortium, 216-291-2854.

growth, 7 p.m. in Elyria. Sponsored by Cleveland State University and Faith-Based Organizing in Northeast Ohio. Call 216-881-2344 for details.

April 22

As part of Akron University Press' series on **technology and the environment**, Dale Porter will speak about his book *The Thames Embankment*, 7 p.m. at Hower House, 60 Fir Hill in Akron. Call 330-972-5342.

April 22

Seminar on the **status of Lake Erie** with Ohio Sea Grant's David Kelch, 7 p.m. at the Lake Erie Nature and Science Center, 28728 Wolf Rd. in Bay Village. Call 440-871-2900 to register.

April 22

Monthly public program of the **Northeast Ohio Sierra Club**, 7:30 p.m. at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, 2600 South Park Blvd. in Shaker Heights. Call 216-843-7272 for more information.

April 23-24

Workshop on **land conservation techniques** and tax advantages sponsored by Headwaters Landtrust.

April 24

Richard Hill, a nationally known expert on Native American culture, will speak on the **environmental ethic** of the Iroquois, 8 p.m. at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. For tickets, call 216-231-4600.

Farming on the edge

A recent study by the American Farmland Trust found that the United States is squandering its best quality and often irreplaceable farmland at the rate of almost 50 acres an hour. And the major cause of farmland loss is suburban sprawl.

The study, "Farming on the Edge," identified 20 regions as America's most threatened agricultural areas. Ranked seventh was the Till Plain region of Ohio. The dark shading on the map at right shows the areas of high quality Ohio farmland most at risk from development pressures.

By urbanizing some of its best farmland, the U.S. is limiting future options to deal with social, economic, food security and environmental problems.

Source: American Farmland Trust

"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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