

# MOVING TO CORN FIELDS



A READER ON URBAN SPRAWL  
AND THE REGIONAL FUTURE OF NORTHEAST OHIO



SPECIAL PUBLICATION

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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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### **About this publication**

This special publication collects the best articles on urban sprawl and outmigration from issues of the *EcoCity Cleveland Journal* between April 1993 and December 1995. Unless otherwise noted, all articles and photographs are by the journal's editor, David Beach. Many thanks to the other contributors for allowing their work to be reprinted.

Editing and desktop publishing by David Beach of EcoCity Cleveland.

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## PREFACE: THE VIEWS FROM TWO COUNTIES

*By Timothy F. Hagan  
Cuyahoga County Commissioner*

In its short existence, the *EcoCity Cleveland Journal* has established itself as both an important voice in the shaping of policy in the Cleveland area and as a national model for urban environmental publications.

Tackling issues ranging from brownfields to sustainable development, *EcoCity Cleveland* has consistently challenged us to address the issues central to our relationship with the environment we inhabit and share.

In *Moving to Corn Fields*, a collection of the journal's best articles on urban sprawl and outmigration, *EcoCity* addresses one of the most pressing issues facing this and every urban region: our ability to control, manage, and direct our growth in ways that minimize the destruction of the area's natural resources.

While others trumpet the evolution of "edge cities," non-urban centers of commerce and productivity, *EcoCity* urges us to examine the other side of the coin: that cookie-cutter zoning and a lack of vision and planning has led to the destruction of valuable and irreplaceable environmental landscapes and urban neighborhoods.

Over the last three decades, we have struggled as a region with the problem of rebuilding our urban core as its population has been cut in half. Unless we accept *EcoCity's* challenge to address the issues arising from the migration of hundreds of thousands of residents into our once rural areas, we will inevitably find the Greater Cleveland area transformed from an environmentally diverse region into little more than a glorified strip mall.

In order for this not to happen, I encourage you to read this book.

*By Sara L. Pavlovicz  
Medina County Commissioner*

The articles presented in this collection from past editions of *EcoCity Cleveland* serve as an important milemarker on the road to common understanding of what it is that we are all up against. I hope you will find the articles to be a useful source of dialogue in the coming months as we work together on issues associated with urban sprawl and greenfield preservation.

The recent residential growth in Medina County has created costly demands for greater public services. We are seeking new ways to deal with this growth in a manner which will preserve the rural landscape while balancing economic needs. There is a need for all citizens and elected officials to learn to balance the forces bearing on growth.

We are all neighbors—urban, suburban, and rural together in the seven-county region. As neighbors, we need to be able to bring our human, economic development and environmental concerns, along with our pride of place, into a positive balance. This is not anti-development, but a recognition of the long-term importance of preserving significant natural amenities and communities.

We are challenged to educate the public to the problems of urban sprawl. As public officials, we need to accept this challenge. We need to scrutinize the land use patterns in the region. We need to examine existing and planned infrastructure, recognizing that infrastructure drives development. We need to be asking the right questions and sending the correct message to our constituencies if we are to become active players in building a sustainable future for our region.

After reading this collection, please tuck it away to use as a tool in creating sustainable communities for Northeast Ohio.



## INTRODUCTION

### Thinking as a region

A remarkable convergence of thought is occurring in Northeast Ohio—a growing understanding that our future depends on acting regionally. It's an understanding that many of our most serious environmental, social and economic problems are regional in scope. It's a recognition that our region's sprawling development patterns destroy communities and are not sustainable. And it includes a concern that—with our fragmented, hodge-podge of local governments—we have little ability to act regionally at present.

This convergence involves not only the "usual suspects," such as environmentalists, urban planners and transit advocates, but also a growing number of elected officials, religious leaders and members of the business community. Even people who once cheered "growth" at any cost are starting to question the long-term implications of investing public infrastructure dollars in new suburbs at the expense of older urban areas. They are recognizing that everyone in the region depends on a healthy urban core.

During the past three years, the *EcoCity Cleveland Journal* has covered the urban sprawl debates in Northeast Ohio, and we are proud to have played a role in heightening awareness about regional issues. In this publication we collect some of our best articles in one convenient package. We hope this will be a stimulating and useful tool—please read it, ponder it, and pass it on to friends and colleagues.

We may not all agree on the diagnoses or cures presented in these pages, but we can all recognize our regional problems and enter the debate with open minds. The discussion about acting regionally has happened before in our history. Yet, in many ways, it is just beginning. We are groping toward regionalism, struggling to discover new forms of cooperation in a political atmosphere hostile to the idea of metro government. Maybe today we can finally come to grips with the regional forces shaping our future.

Thanks to The George Gund Foundation for the funding which made this publication possible. Thanks also to the Gund and the Nord Family foundations, individual donors and our subscribers for the operating support which makes it possible to keep publishing our award-winning journal. The journal is a community effort, with countless readers contributing ideas, comments, and stories. With all this help, *EcoCity Cleveland* has become an important voice for sustainability in our bioregion.

—David Beach  
Editor, *EcoCity Cleveland Journal*  
January 1996

### A goal for the region

Change development patterns in Northeast Ohio to revitalize existing urban areas and preserve the countryside, thus creating a region which is more environmentally sustainable, economically healthier and less stratified by race and class.

### Five steps for our regional future

- **Develop regional consciousness.** Foster greater identification with the region, a willingness to act for the long-term future of the entire region.
- **Understand the costs of urban sprawl.** Promote understanding of the impacts of current development patterns. Who wins? Who loses?
- **Keep score.** Develop the capacity to track in an organized way all the decisions which now promote sprawling development patterns. Publicize who/what is responsible.
- **Create inspirational alternatives.** Show how alternative development patterns are possible and can create a healthier region for most people.
- **Organize for political change.** Organize winning coalitions and campaigns for more compact development, livable cities and preservation of the countryside.



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# PART 1: THE HISTORY AND COSTS OF SPRAWL

## Moving up and out

### The 100-year exodus from Cleveland

*The following story is excerpted from a 1993 paper by Tom Bier and Ivan Maric of the Housing Policy Research Program at Cleveland State University's Levin College of Urban Affairs. It traces the history and consequences of outmigration in the Cleveland area. And it concludes that only new forms of regional cooperation can stem the tide.*

#### Early exodus

Outmigration—the migration of households from the central city to the fringes of the metropolitan area—has been occurring in Greater Cleveland for many years. It began around 1900 when residents of Cleveland's famed Millionaires' Row along Euclid Avenue began to move, reluctantly, from their mansions when city officials failed to protect the residential character of their district.

The wealthy moved to locations such as Bratenahl, Hunting Valley and Euclid Heights, the area at the top of Cedar Hill now known as Cleveland Heights. "The Heights" became a major area for relocation. The outer limits of migration at that time were, for the most part, just beyond the Cleveland city limits.

The Van Sweringen brothers recognized the need for a new special community for affluent Cleveland residents who were being displaced. They created Shaker Heights and advertised it as follows:

*From even the finest sections of Cleveland, old families have been forced away because undesirable buildings, features, neighbors, could not be kept out.*

*But not in Shaker Heights.*

*Protective restrictions operate for 78 years to come. We created it—we sell it. The Van Sweringen Company.*

Many high-quality homes were built in Shaker Heights and Cleveland Heights during the 1920s, and outmigration grew to substantial numbers. But in 1929, the stock market collapse brought development and movement to a standstill. The Van

Sweringens lost their fortunes and soon died.

The latter years of the 1930s saw some improvement in economic conditions, but outmigration was still dampened. Nonetheless, the U.S. Census of 1940 revealed a startling finding: during the 1930s, the city of Cleveland lost 2.4 percent of its population—the largest loss of any major city in the country.

Cleveland's loss prompted a special study to assess the situation, identify causes and formulate corrective actions. The 1941 report of that study concluded: "...there is a basic trend of migration which for the past decade [1930-1940] has been from the older established sections to the relatively underdeveloped communities on the periphery of the metropolitan area [mainly the Heights communities].

"A major portion of the population of Cleveland which has the highest standards of living and the most

desirable characteristics from a civic viewpoint is leaving corporate Cleveland.

"From a dollars and cents standpoint, the population trends outlined above have reached significant proportions. If they are permitted to continue without hindrance, the whole structure of the central city is jeopardized...

"The basic cause of this condition is due to a loss of population accompanied by a migration of commercial and residential investment. If these underlying forces continue to gather momentum and if projected into the future, they will threaten the entire structure of the [city of Cleveland]."

Eight months after the release of the report, World War II broke out. Homebuilding and movement virtually ceased. When the war ended, thousands of servicemen and women returned and filled every available home and apartment. In the late 1940s, there was

hardly a vacancy anywhere. The pressure for more housing was intense—to the extent that whatever should have been considered as a result of the 1941 report never had a chance.

Rapid housing development during the 1950s in suburbs such as Parma, Euclid and Maple Heights resulted in outmigration that made, numerically speaking, the 1920s seem like a Sunday stroll.

***Outmigration is the dominant pattern of movement in the region, as it has been for many years, and it is the fundamental cause of urban decline. In order to prevent deepening decline of the city of Cleveland, decline of a growing number of suburbs, and eventually decline of the county itself, a balanced pattern of movement—in as well as out—must be promoted.***

Middle-class and blue-collar households by the tens of thousands swamped the roads out that were first taken by Cleveland's wealthy 40-50 years earlier.

Outmigration has continued since. The rate of movement has ebbed and flowed with economic conditions, the opening of freeways (the latest being U.S. 422 in Geauga County) and with outward "pushes" stemming from city riots, growth in crime and dissatisfactions with city schools (decline forces movement). But the basic pattern has not changed. For most people, moving "up" has meant, and means, moving further out.

### Migratory chain-reaction

There have been, however, important changes within the pattern:

- Movement no longer is just from Cleveland to suburbs; many moves are from suburb to more distant suburb. Most movers from Cleveland are occupying suburban housing being sold or rented by suburbanites moving further out.

- The outer edges of movement have extended beyond Cuyahoga County to places in adjacent counties such as Avon, Medina, Aurora, Chardon and Concord.

- Movers from Cleveland now include households with very modest incomes—following middle-class movers, who followed the wealthy.

As was anticipated in the 1941 report, outmigration has had staggering negative impact on the city of Cleveland because of the loss of upper- and middle-income residents. It also has affected developing communities with changes that result from growth (such as traffic and the need for new schools). Now it is affecting older, inner suburbs as they lose residents with stronger incomes to more distant communities.

### Suburbs don't grow by accident

Because Cuyahoga County home prices generally increase with

distance from downtown Cleveland, and since most sellers move into more expensive homes, there is little choice for sellers to move up and move inward—irrespective of any other considerations, such as concern for crime, quality of schools, availability of city services.

In order for people to move up and *in*, Cleveland and its inner suburbs must offer housing and community amenities that are attractive to people who can afford to live further out. With some exceptions, such offerings are limited. But that is not necessarily the fault of Cleveland and its inner suburbs because they have been unwittingly undermined by federal and state government.

The existing pattern of prices is much the result of the decades-long unwillingness of federal and state government to use its power and influence to maintain, or rebuild, housing in developed communities for middle-income people. Instead, government has used its power and influence to support the development of new suburbs through the provision of roads, highways, sewers, water, utilities, the tax code—and thereby support outmigration.

Government's action may have been nothing more than what most voters preferred. But if over the past 90 years, serious efforts had been given to maintaining or redeveloping middle-class housing, the pattern of prices in Cuyahoga County today would be very different, and home sellers would have options to moving out.

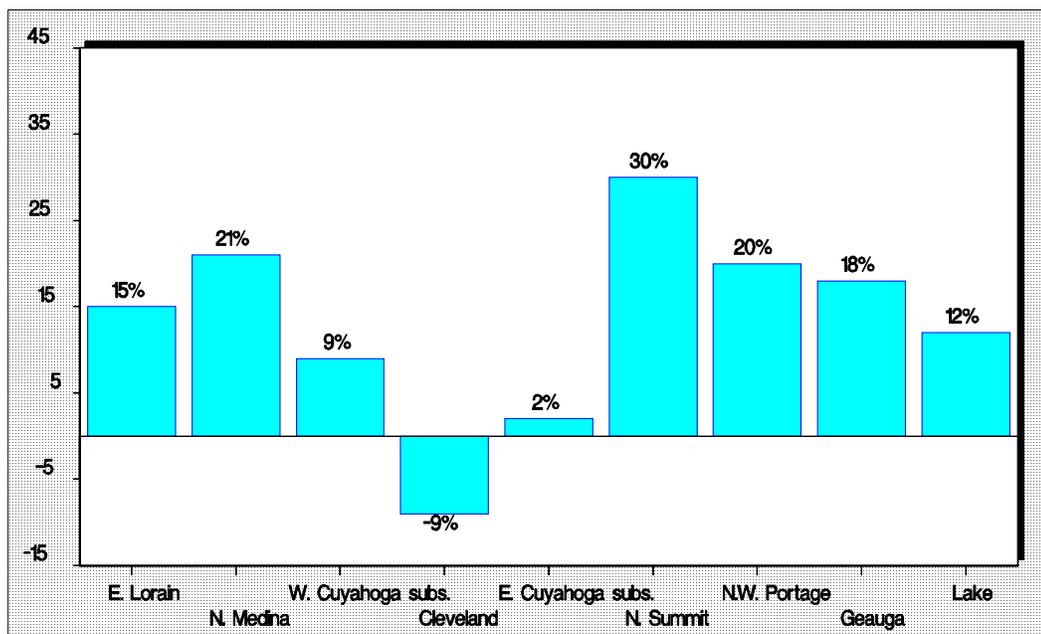
Most voters may still want to move further out, want government to support them, and want government to do nothing in the way of serious support for immigration. But the public and elected officials should be clear about the consequences.

### Beyond Cleveland.... spreading decline

Outmigration is the fundamental shaper of the city of Cleveland, its suburbs, the region. Outmigration that is unbalanced with

## Percent change in households, 1980-1990

Showing growth at the edges of the metropolitan area, contraction at the core



### Household change

E. Lorain	2,700
N. Medina	4,300
N. Summit	5,800
N.W. Portage	2,000
Gauga	4,000
Lake	8,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,200</b>
	+17%
<b>Cuyahoga</b>	
Suburbs	18,300
Cleveland	-18,500
<b>Net</b>	<b>-200</b>
	n/c

(Source: Housing Policy Research Program, CSU)

immigration will result in (1) deepening decline of the city of Cleveland, (2) suburban decline that becomes as serious as Cleveland's and (3) Cuyahoga County decline.

The wake of decline and urban pathologies that spread behind outmigration will not stop at the city-suburban line. The admonition given in 1941 is as appropriate now as it was then: "If these underlying forces continue to gather momentum and if projected into the future, they will threaten the entire structure of the [city of Cleveland]."

Fifty years later, the same forces threaten the entire structure of many suburbs, and Cuyahoga County as a whole. The present risk is that over the next 20-30 years, Cuyahoga County will follow the city of Cleveland into distressed fiscal condition, which would in turn further jeopardize the economic condition of the multi-county Cleveland region. That could happen if suburban decline were to become serious enough.

The initial vulnerable suburbs are those with the lowest priced housing located next to or near the city of Cleveland—suburbs such as Parma, Maple Heights and Euclid from which residents are moving to North Royalton, Macedonia and Mentor, respectively.

### No one escapes

Units of government are not the only entities affected, however. Impacts are widespread:

- **Centrally located arts organizations**—the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Cleveland Orchestra, Museum of Natural History, the Playhouse Square Foundation—are less likely to receive patronage and support as people live farther away.
- **Religious facilities**, places of worship and schools, located in Cleveland lose participation and face closure.
- **Hospital administrators** struggle with shrinking usage of facilities in Cleveland—while at the same time financing construction and expansion of new facilities out where movers are

going.

▪ **The Regional Transit Authority** contracts as potential riders sprawl further and further out, beyond the capability of public transit to serve. (At the same time, government widens interstate highways—I-271, I-90, I-71—and relieves congestion that could cause more drivers to use RTA.)

In one way or another, governments' promotion of outmigration over immigration affects every aspect of metropolitan life. Again, outmigration is the fundamental shaper of the city of Cleveland, its suburbs, the region. [Editor: To the above list must be added the environmental costs of sprawl—destruction of natural areas and the air pollution and fossil fuel waste from dependence on the automobile.]

### Regional cooperation

But the government policies and practices that give primary support to moving outward can be changed. It is a matter of political and public will. What future is preferred? If the choice is change, then federal, state and local policies and practices must be examined with respect to their influence on the direction of movement, and then altered to give as much support to moving in as is given to moving out.

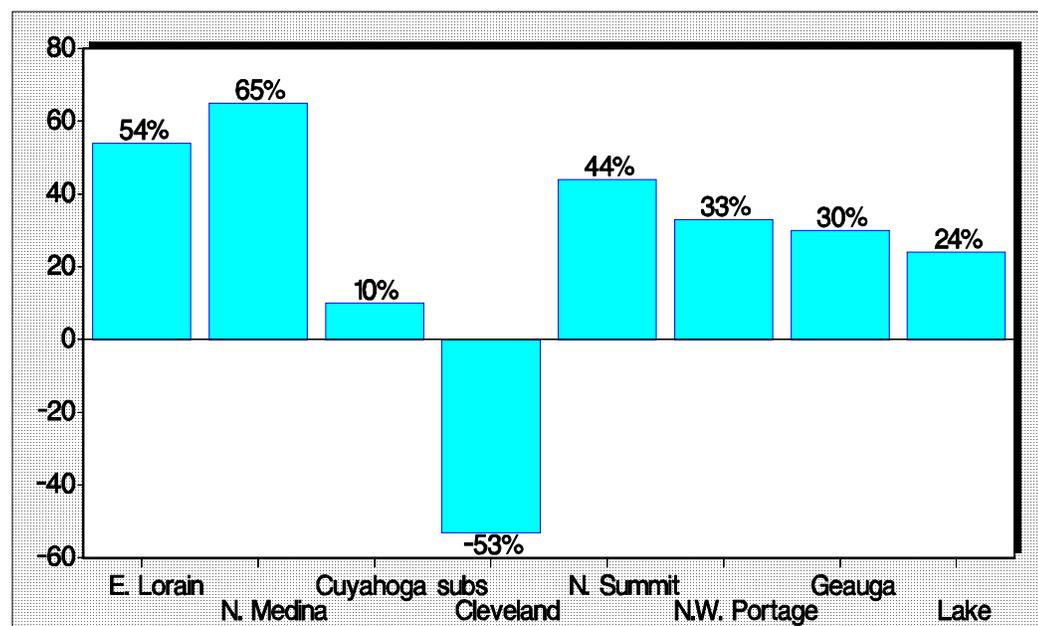
Changing the pattern of outmigration requires city-suburban and multi-county regional cooperation. Outmigration is a regional phenomenon although it emanates from Cuyahoga County. (A similar pattern is likely to exist in Summit County with outmigration from the city of Akron.) Changing state and federal policies and practices will require a unified regional voice—and then a voice linked with other regions in Ohio such as Dayton and Toledo, and possibly regions outside of Ohio.

In regions such as ours, the central city, suburbs and surrounding counties will prosper or decline together. To secure our economic well-being in the 21st Century we must have effective,

## Percent change in households, 1990-2010

### Projected growth if trends continue

(assumes total households constant, construction at 75% of 1990)



### Household change

E. Lorain	11,000
N. Medina	16,000
N. Summit	11,000
N.W. Portage	4,000
Geauga	8,000
Lake	19,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>69,000</b>
	+36%
<b>Cuyahoga</b>	
Suburbs	36,000
Cleveland	-105,000
<b>Net</b>	<b>-69,000</b>
	-12%

(Source: Housing Policy Research Program, CSU)

# Surrounded by suburbs

*As Greater Cleveland struggles to define itself as a region, we are hearing calls for greater cooperation on economic development, land use, transportation planning, and other issues that transcend city and county lines. As the following selection describes, such calls for metropolitan government or governance are nothing new. In the past, they were defeated for political reasons, good and bad.*

*As you read this selection by Akron University history professor James F. Richardson, consider the prospects for future metropolitan initiatives. And consider the fact that many of the most successful cities in the United States today are those that are able to create regional forms of governance.*

Before 1930 Cleveland was able to annex small areas from time to time and in the process expand its land area considerably. The largest and best organized suburbs, Lakewood and East Cleveland, successfully resisted annexation as did the newer suburbs on the Heights. From 1915 on, elite groups such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Citizens League lobbied for consolidation of the city and its surrounding suburbs. The methods advocated changed somewhat over the next decade. The Chamber of Commerce organized a Committee on Annexation in 1916. In 1924 it changed the name to Committee on Cooperative Metropolitan Government, and the title gives away the plot. During the committee's early stages it argued for annexation, believing that it was only a matter of time before the suburbs joined the city. Such consolidation would mean more efficient services at lower cost and enable all residents of the metropolitan area to vote on matters of common concern and not be blocked by artificial boundaries. The rationale often took an elitist turn. It was Cleveland's best people who were leading the migration to the Heights; left behind were recent immigrants, less able and more susceptible to the blandishments of favor-doing ward politicians.

As the members of the Chamber of Commerce left the city, they switched their support from annexation to some sort of borough system, which would allow suburbanites to participate in area-wide decisions while maintaining control over their own local affairs. The publication of the Citizens League took the position that only suburban officeholders and other self-interested or

misguided people blocked moves toward metropolitan government; suburban voters favored it if only the politicians would let them act. The Chamber minutes are more realistic or candid in acknowledging that suburbanites would never support any plan that did not provide for local control over land use, phrased as keeping businesses out of their residential districts, and school independence. "Good schools" was a suburban battle cry of the 1920s.

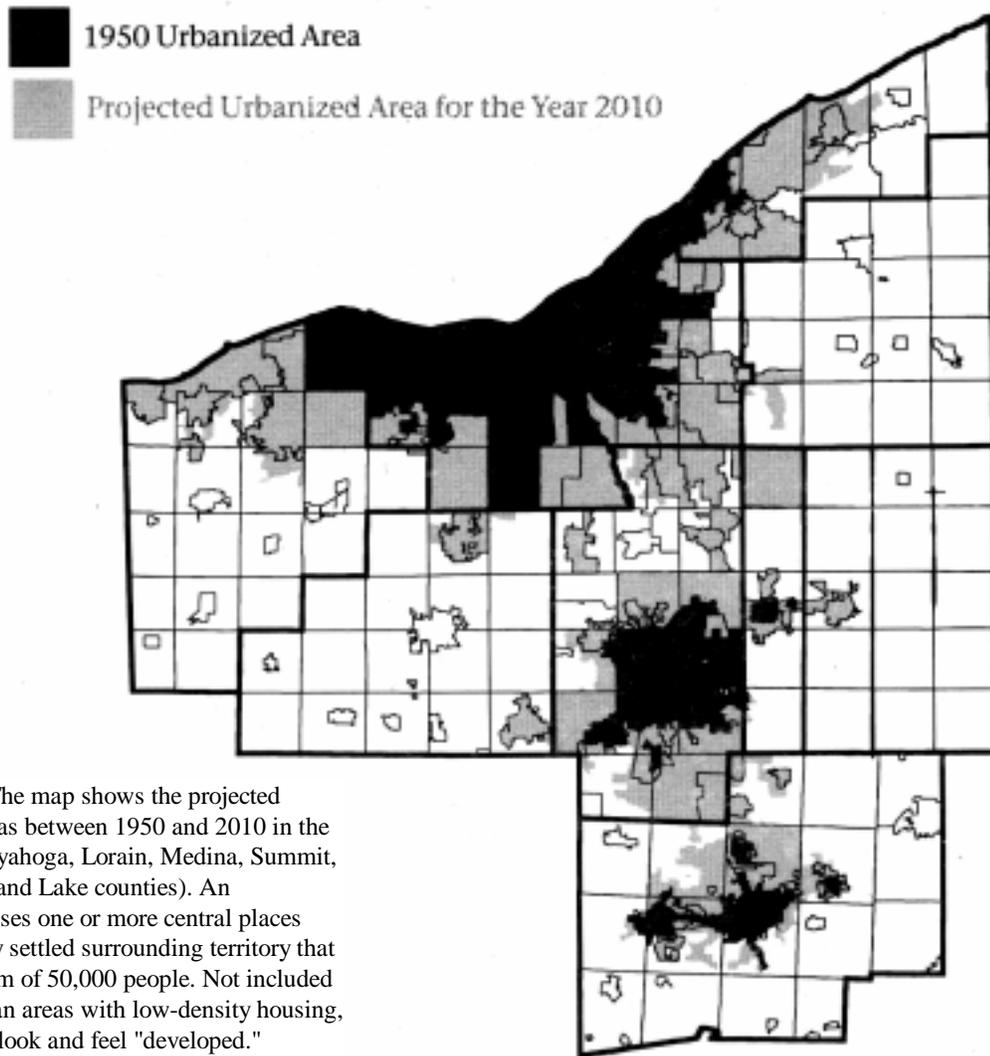
As so often happened in American urban history, economic depression promoted changes in governmental structure. In 1933 the legislature and the voters amended the Ohio Constitution to make possible the adoption of charters by counties. However, no such charter ever became effective for Cuyahoga County.

The failure of large scale annexation and consolidation from 1916 to 1930 indicated the increasing dichotomy between the central city and the suburbs. Affluent suburbs found it easier to finance their own services, especially since they could tie into Cleveland's water and sewer facilities, and there was an obvious disparity between the social class composition of the central city and the better-off suburbs.

The removal of the elite and much of the middle class from the city during the teens and twenties had considerable negative impact upon the city. Cleveland was losing good taxpayers and good talent. Groups such as the Chamber of Commerce exhibited a narrower range of civic interests after 1920 than before. For example, the Chamber had a housing committee which studied slum conditions and drafted legislation to assure higher minimum standards; this committee ceased functioning in 1920. Leaders of the Chamber looked upon the city less as a community in whose total well-being they had a strong interest than as a place to make money. And city officials such as members of Council had an understandable aversion to advice or admonitions coming from civic leaders who lived in Shaker Heights. The extent of the talent drain is indicated by the fact that when Cleveland abandoned its experiment with the city manager form and went back to an elected mayor in 1931, all three leading candidates had to move back into the city to establish a legal residence. □

*Excerpted from, "The City in Twentieth-Century Ohio: Crisis in Stability and Services," an article by James F. Richardson*

# Sprawl of urbanized areas in Northeast Ohio



Our sprawling region: The map shows the projected growth of urbanized areas between 1950 and 2010 in the eight-county region (Cuyahoga, Lorain, Medina, Summit, Stark, Portage, Geauga and Lake counties). An "urbanized area" comprises one or more central places and the adjacent densely settled surrounding territory that together have a minimum of 50,000 people. Not included are surrounding suburban areas with low-density housing, even though such areas look and feel "developed."

Prepared for the Akron Regional Infrastructure Alliance, Build Up Greater Cleveland, and the Stark County Infrastructure Committee by the Center for Urban Studies, University of Akron.

## Northeast Ohio's weakening metropolitan core

- Between 1960 to 1990, the City of Cleveland lost 70,000 households. If current trends continue, the city could lose another 30,000 households in the 1990s.

- Between 1979 and 1991, Cleveland residential real estate lost \$1.5 billion (25%) of its value in dollars adjusted for inflation. Cuyahoga County lost \$2.9 billion (8%).

- Between 1979 and 1989, average household income in Cleveland declined 13% and declined 5% in inner suburbs. Meanwhile, average income grew 5% in outer suburbs.

(Sources: CSU Housing Policy Research Program, Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, U.S. Census)

Cities are not disposable.

Whenever and wherever societies have flourished and prospered rather than stagnated and decayed, creative and workable cities have been at the core of the phenomenon; they have pulled their weight and more. It is the same still. Decaying cities, declining economies, and mounting social troubles travel together.

—Jane Jacobs

from *Futures By Design: The Practice of Ecological Planning*

# Sprawl without growth

## The land use tragedy of Northeast Ohio

Here is one simple fact that tells a lot about the disturbing direction we're headed as a region: Between 1980 and 2010 the five-county region is expected to lose three percent of its population while occupying 30 percent *more* residential land.

Thus, we have sprawl without growth. We have a relatively stable population (and employment) base in the region, yet we are spreading out over more and more of the landscape. It's a zero-sum game in which the perceived "growth" of some parts of the region often comes at the expense of older communities. And it's a game that consumes more land and requires expanded infrastructure—more roads and bridges, sewer and water lines, schools and public buildings—that we and our children will have to build and maintain at great cost.

The accompanying tables tell the story of our sprawling development patterns. The data come from the U.S. Census and the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, the transportation planning agency for Cuyahoga, Lorain, Medina, Geauga and Lake counties. (NOACA does not cover Summit and Portage counties, so data from that part of the region are not included here.)

Table 1 shows how population has shifted from Cuyahoga County to surrounding counties. In 1970, for example, Cuyahoga County contained 74 percent of the region's population. By the year 1990, Cuyahoga County's share dropped to 67 percent. Meanwhile, the other counties (Gauga, Lake, Lorain and Medina) are all gaining population. These trends are projected to continue during the next decade.

As Cuyahoga County empties out, its population density (measured in people per residential acre) is decreasing, as shown in Table 2. That makes sense. But a counter-intuitive phenomenon is expected to occur in the other counties. They will add population *and* decrease in overall housing density. That's partly because most of their new housing construction is in low density suburban subdivisions—big homes on large lots.

### If we were compact

Does this residential sprawl have to happen? Well, we might ask how compact could we comfortably be if development took a different form. Imagine, for example, that the entire region was built to the population density of a well-planned community like Shaker Heights, or about 4,900 people per square mile. At that density, the region's 2.1 million people could fit into 429 square miles. Cuyahoga County has 458 square miles, so all the people in the five-county area could live within its boundaries. We would need additional land for commercial and industrial uses, but we could

**Table 1: County population change, 1970-90**

	1970 Population	% of region	1990 Population	% of region	Change 1970-90	% Change
<b>Cuyahoga</b>	1,720,835	74	1,412,140	67	-308,695	-18
<b>Geauga</b>	60,977	3	81,129	4	18,695	29
<b>Lake</b>	197,200	8	215,499	10	18,299	9
<b>Lorain</b>	256,843	11	271,126	13	14,283	6
<b>Medina</b>	82,717	4	122,354	6	39,637	48
<b>Region</b>	2,320,572	-	2,102,248	-	-218,324	-9



**Residential shell game: People buying new homes in rural areas of the region often move out from Cuyahoga County.**

**Table 2: Residential densities** (population per residential acre)

	1980	1990	2010
<b>Cuyahoga</b>	15.4	13.7	11.3
<b>Geauga</b>	3.2	2.8	2.7
<b>Lake</b>	9.1	9.2	8.2
<b>Lorain</b>	9.6	9.3	7.9
<b>Medina</b>	6.4	7.4	5.3
<b>Region</b>	12.2	10.5	8.9

certainly satisfy all reasonable needs with far less land than we are paving over now.

Indeed, the ideal form for our metropolitan area would have development clustered around the city of Cleveland (and Akron) and inner suburbs, with other development focused on compact satellite cities and villages in the outlying counties (e.g., Lorain, Elyria, Oberlin, Medina City, Hudson, Chagrin Falls, Chardon, Painesville). We could house and employ our population very well, while maintaining most of our land as farms, woods and natural areas.

If development could be more compact, we could all drive less because we would be located closer to the places we want to be. Higher densities would make public transit work better. We would create less air pollution and burn less gasoline. Our streams would be cleaner. We would save money on infrastructure. The emphasis would be on maintaining and reviving our existing urban areas. In the long run, our communities would be more livable.

### Throw-away communities

But we are doing the opposite. Instead of focusing development on the core of the region, we are emptying it.

Table 3 at right shows the big losers of population since the region's population peak in 1970. They include the central city of Cleveland and surrounding inner suburbs. In effect, these communities are being discarded so that "growth" can occur out on the metropolitan fringe.

This outmigration includes income as well as population. Table 4 shows how total payroll dollars have declined in Cleveland and the inner suburbs, while increasing in the outer suburbs and outlying counties (except for Lorain County, which was hit particularly hard by manufacturing losses). This shift in wealth leads to a greater concentration of poverty in the core. These communities are burdened with higher social service costs at the same time they are losing income and tax base. Eventually, their social and economic problems could undermine the fiscal health of Cuyahoga County as a whole.

At present, there is nothing in place capable of changing these trends in Northeast Ohio. There are no programs, no organizations, no clear strategies at the regional level—nothing strong enough to break the dynamic of sprawl and outmigration.

There is, however, a growing recognition of the problem and an intense discussion about how to respond. For instance, these issues were the main topic of a "Livable Communities" conference November 18, 1995, in Cleveland sponsored by the Ohio Sierra Club. The conference brought together a diverse group of environmentalists, elected officials, planners, and university researchers, transit officials and other interested citizens.

Even the business community is realizing that business as usual is neither affordable nor sustainable. After a presentation on population

**Table 3: Losses in the core of the region**

	1970 Population	1994 Population	Loss	% Loss
<b>Cleveland</b>	750,879	492,901	257,978	34
<b>Brook Park</b>	30,774	22,026	8,748	28
<b>Euclid</b>	71,552	53,251	18,301	26
<b>Garfield Heights</b>	41,417	30,870	10,547	25
<b>Maple Heights</b>	34,093	26,171	7,922	23
<b>Parma Heights</b>	27,192	21,117	6,075	22
<b>South Euclid</b>	29,579	23,364	6,215	21
<b>Lakewood</b>	70,173	57,063	13,110	19
<b>Fairview Park</b>	21,699	17,526	4,173	19
<b>Bedford</b>	17,552	14,598	2,954	17
<b>Warrensville Hts.</b>	18,925	15,739	3,186	17
<b>Berea</b>	22,465	18,795	3,670	16
<b>Shaker Heights</b>	36,306	30,548	5,758	16
<b>University Heights</b>	17,055	14,257	2,798	16
<b>Cleveland Heights</b>	60,767	51,477	9,290	15
<b>East Cleveland</b>	39,600	33,918	5,682	14
<b>Parma</b>	100,216	85,792	14,424	14

**Table 4: Shifting payrolls** (aggregate payroll in millions of dollars)

	1972 Payroll (inflated to 1987 dollars)	1987 Payroll	Gain/loss in real income
<b>Cuyahoga County</b>	\$11,089	\$9,546	-\$1,543
<b>Cleveland</b>	5,908	4,025	-1,883
<b>Inner suburbs</b>	2,688	2,099	-589
<b>Outer suburbs</b>	1,340	2,296	956
<b>Outlying counties</b>	2,709	2,839	130
<b>Geauga</b>	144	270	126
<b>Lake</b>	891	1,040	149
<b>Lorain</b>	1,428	1,196	-232
<b>Medina</b>	246	333	87
<b>Region</b>	13,798	12,385	-1,413

trends at a recent NOACA meeting, Dave Goss from the Greater Cleveland Growth Association stood up and called for an alternative future for the region. "I'd like to challenge NOACA and others to think about where we *want* to be 20 years from now," Goss said. "We have to challenge these trend analyses, not just accept them like we have in the past."

For its part, NOACA is trying to set priorities so that our transportation investments reinforce more of the compact land uses that we want (see story on p. 34).

Ultimately, everyone in the region will have to come together as a region and come to grips with our "sprawl without growth" dilemma. We have to recognize the dangerous, zero-sum game that we have been playing. For in the long run, this game is wasteful and destructive—environmentally, socially and economically. It's time to change.

And we can change. We can choose a different path of development. For example, the rapidly growing metropolitan region of Portland, Oregon, plans to absorb 700,000 new residents with hardly any increase in its urbanized area.

To accomplish this, the Portland metro area will promote higher-density development downtown and in satellite urban centers, with an emphasis on development clustered near light rail transit stations. And it will greatly increase the regional proportion of residential development in the central city.

The choice is ours. We can continue to let our cities bleed over the countryside, or we can promote compact development patterns that will make our communities healthier and more sustainable. □

*"Forecasts of regional employment and population show virtually no growth over the next 20 years. Forecasts of land use, absent policy changes that would encourage alternative development, show continuation of the sprawl patterns, thus suggesting increasing demands on the transportation system."*  
—NOACA Long

# Edge cities



## Expanding the outer limits of the metropolitan area

### What are the limits of the Cleveland metropolitan area?

One way to tell is to measure 30-minute commuting distances from major employment centers. Local highway planners have done that, and their maps show an eerie blob spreading into rural areas beyond the Cuyahoga County line. Thus, vast expanses of Lorain, Medina, Summit, Portage, Geauga and Lake counties are now ripe for suburban sprawl.

"Thirty minutes is about the maximum amount of time most people want to drive to work," says Howard Maier, executive director of the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA). "In the post-war years before interstate highways, that meant intensive development was largely limited to the inner-ring of suburbs

around downtown Cleveland." (See maps on page 13.)

With the highways, however, the easy commuting range extended to outer-ring suburbs—Westlake, Brecksville, Solon. More recently, the sprawl of suburban commuters has spilled into surrounding counties. Formerly rural communities such as Avon and Brunswick are being suburbanized.

But the potential for sprawl doesn't stop there.

Nowadays people don't commute just to Cleveland's central business district, Maier says. Increasingly, they commute to new office and retail centers—such as Interstate 77/Rockside Road, Interstate 271/Chagrin Boulevard or Great Northern—employment centers which have sprouted on what used

to be the fringe of the metropolitan area.

One such commuter is Richard Cornish, construction manager for Biskind Development, the major developer of Great Northern. He lives in Wellington Township in southwestern Lorain County. From his home deep in farm country he can drive to work at the Great Northern Corporate Center in North Olmsted in about 35 minutes.

"I hit one stoplight on Rt. 58 and then not another one until I get off I-480 at Great Northern Boulevard," he says. "The Rt. 10 extension and I-480 have really opened up western Lorain County for commuting."

Places like Great Northern—often dubbed "edge cities" by planners—are an increasingly significant part of the regional economy. According to a 1991 survey by the Victor S. Voinovich commercial real estate firm, the west and southwest suburbs of Cuyahoga County alone now have more than 7 million square feet of leasable office space in large, multi-tenant buildings. That's nearly 40 percent of the space available in downtown Cleveland.

"If you consider these edge cities as

places of employment and figure that people are willing to commute about 30 minutes to them, then what happens to the region?" NOACA's Maier asks. "It burgeons—expands to areas that people always thought were rural."



**Growing on the edge: The view from Rockside.**

"The planning implications are immense," he adds. "Rural townships are going to be part of the metropolitan area in ways they never anticipated. They will need to have plans in place to control how they want to develop. Do they want to stay rural? Or do they want to become a suburb?"

Edge cities not only make it possible

for suburbia to chew up more woods and farmland. They also promote greater dependence on the automobile—more commuting across suburbs, more congestion on suburban and rural roads, more energy consumption and pollution, and a more dispersed population that cannot be served by mass transit.

"Increased commuting from suburb to suburb is one of the big stories of the 1990 census," says Robert Layton, manager of NOACA's regional economics group. "Travel patterns in the region have changed dramatically in just the past ten years. The commute into downtown is still the largest, but things are changing."

It's important to realize that edge cities don't grow by accident. The glassy office buildings and shopping malls would not exist without heavily subsidized highways and other public infrastructure. The proposed Figgie mega-development, for example, is waiting for the state to complete new bridges and interchanges along I-271.

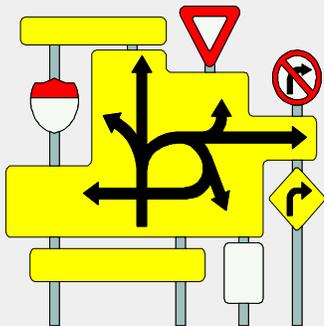
These projects are sold to us with the usual promises of jobs and growth. But, by promoting inefficient sprawl development

## What are edge cities?

Credit for popularizing the name "edge city" and for describing the phenomenon goes to the 1991 book *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* by Joel Garreau. According to the book's preface:

We Americans are going through the most radical change in a century in how we build our world, and most of us don't even know it. From coast to coast, every metropolis that is growing is doing so by sprouting strange new kinds of places: Edge Cities... Most of us now spend our entire lives in and around these Edge Cities, yet we barely recognize them for what they are. That's because they look nothing like the old downtowns; they meet none of our preconceptions

of what constitutes a city. Our new Edge Cities are tied together not by locomotives and subways, but by freeways, jetways and jogging paths. Their characteristic monument is not a horse-mounted hero in the square, but an atrium shielding trees perpetually in leaf at the cores of our



corporate headquarters, fitness centers, and shopping plazas...The wonder is that these places, these curious new urban cores, were villages or corn stubble just 30 years ago.

### The definition

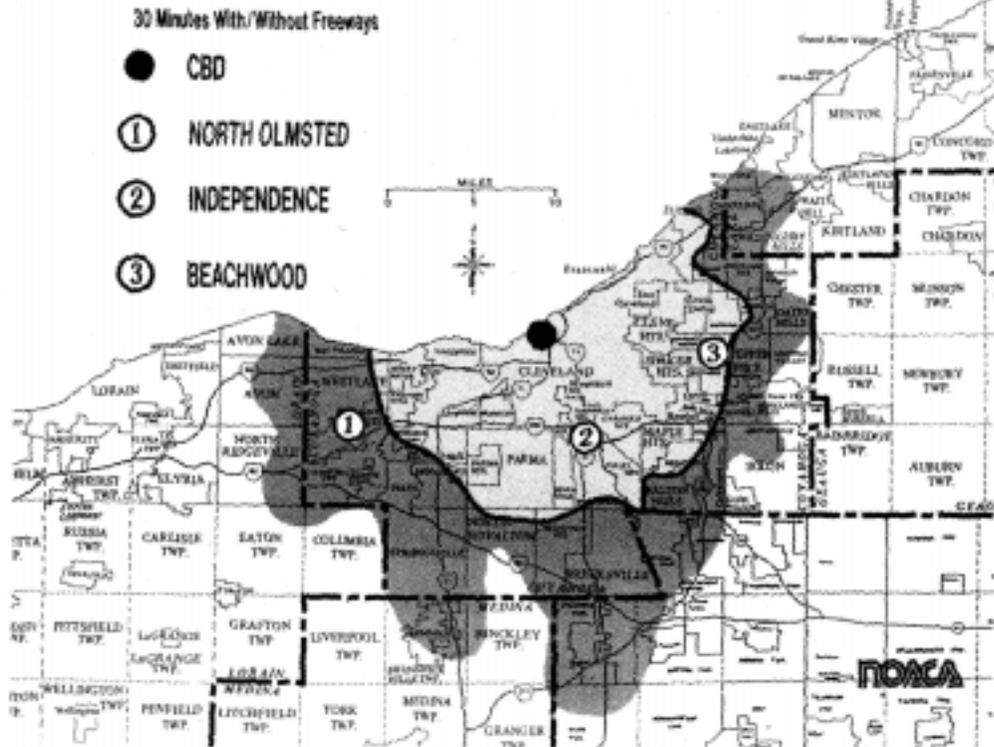
Garreau defines an edge city as any place that:

- Has 5 million feet or more of leasable office space—the workplace of the Information Age.
- Has 600,000 square feet or more of leasable retail space.
- Has a population that increases at 9 a.m. on workdays—marking the location as primarily a work center, not a residential suburb.
- Is perceived by the population as one place—a destination for jobs, shopping or entertainment.
- Was nothing like "city" as recently as 30 years ago.

### Greater Cleveland edge cities

What are the edge cities around Cleveland? Garreau's book lists the I-271 and Chagrin Boulevard area as a full-blown edge city. The I-77 and Rockside Road area is listed as an emerging edge city. In addition, one should add the Great Northern area.

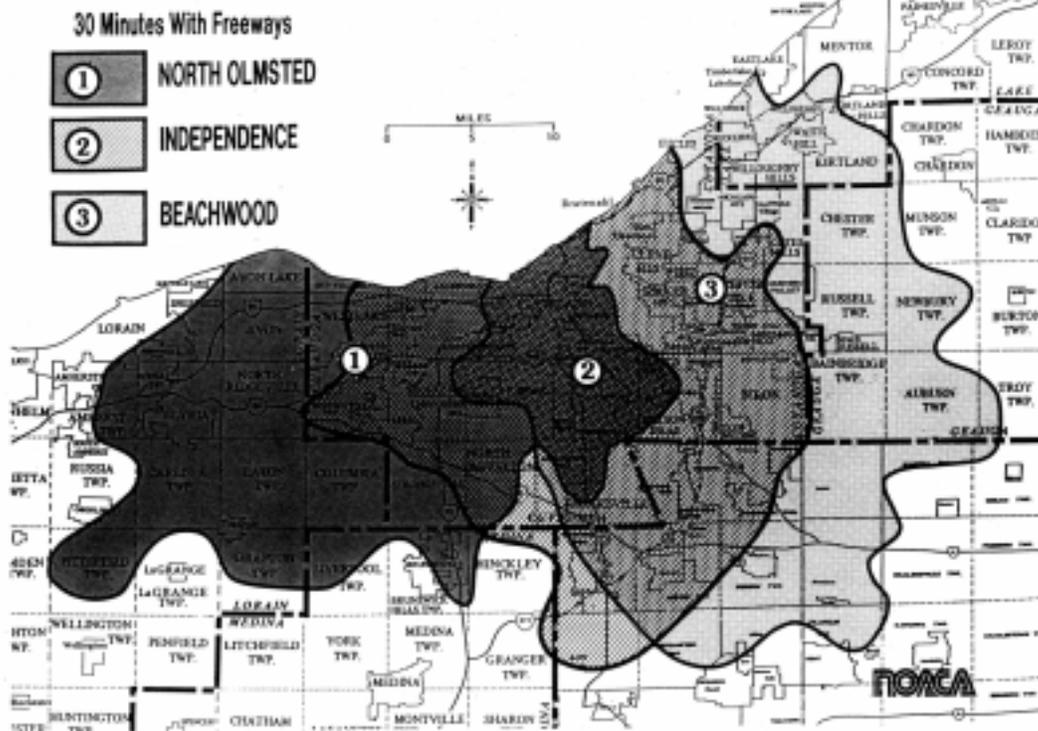
## 30 MINUTE ACCESSIBILITY FROM DOWNTOWN CLEVELAND



## How edge cities expand the metropolitan area

Above: Light shading shows the 30-minute commuting range from downtown Cleveland before freeways; darker shading shows how freeways expanded the commuting range. Below: Greatly expanded commuting ranges from the area's three edge cities—North Olmsted (Great Northern), Independence (I-77 and Rockside), and Beachwood (I-271 and Chagrin). Source: NOACA

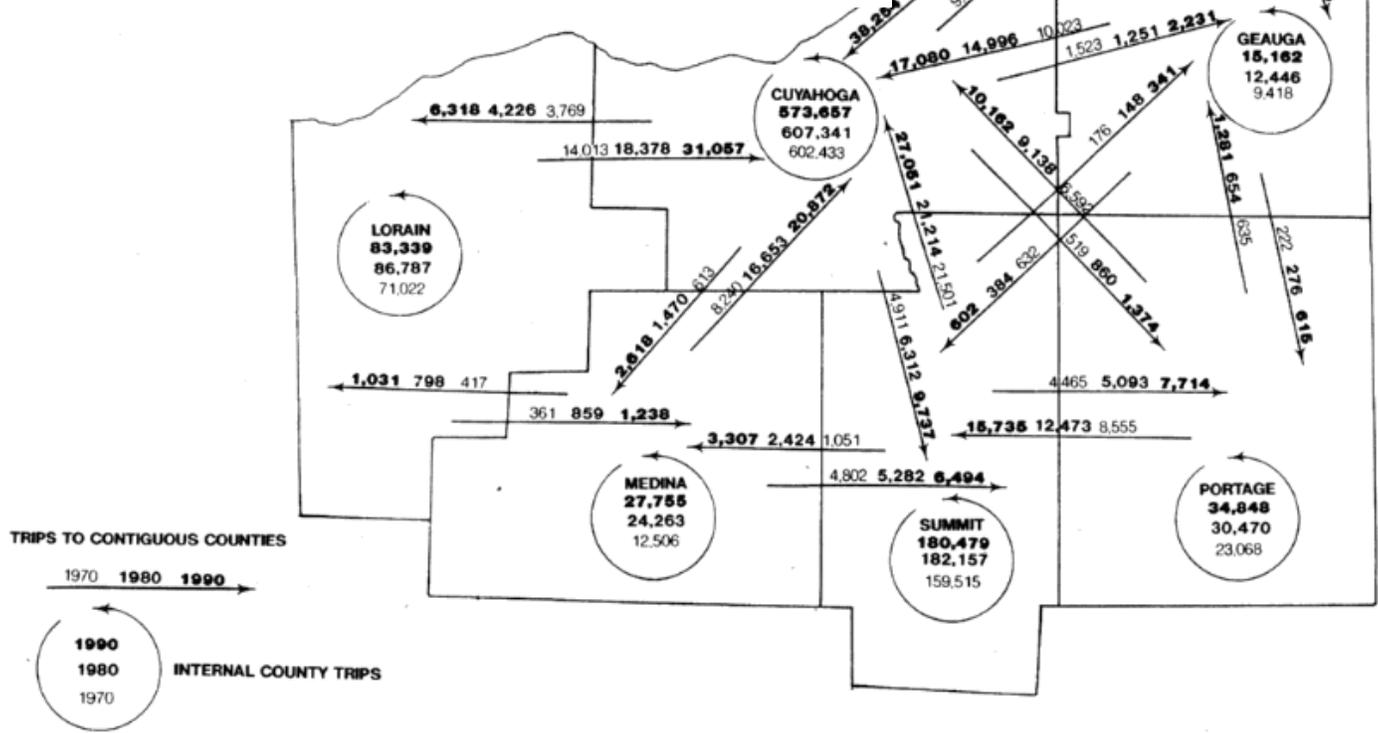
## 30 MINUTE ACCESSIBILITY FROM EDGE CITIES



# Cross-county commuting

This map illustrates how urban sprawl has changed commuting patterns in Northeast Ohio. Numbers in circled arrows represent daily work trips within one county for the years 1990 (boldest number), 1980 and 1970. Numbers along the straight arrows are work trips to neighboring counties during the same years.

For example, daily work trips *within* Cuyahoga County decreased from 602,433 in 1970 to 573,657 in 1990. Meanwhile, trips *into* Cuyahoga County from Lorain County increased from 14,013 to 31,057. The impact: as population and jobs disperse throughout the region, it becomes harder to provide efficient transportation systems.



Source: U.S. Census data, analysis by the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, 1993

# No growth, but more transportation

The population of Northeast Ohio reached a peak of 2.3 million people in 1970. Population loss due to outmigration over the past 20 years has reduced the total to 2.1 million. Despite the loss, more land is used today for residential purposes as the regional population seeks lower density living patterns...The region's businesses have also sought lower densities, some to profit from new plants in new locations and others simply by following population movements.

As people and businesses make those moves other changes occur. Potential tax revenues ebb and flow from community to community as jobs and people enter or exit. Demands on the region's highway system increase as new living patterns emphasize private rather than public transportation.

Forecasts of regional employment and population show virtually no growth over the next 20 years. Forecasts of land use,

absent policy changes that would encourage alternative development, show continuation of the sprawl patterns, thus suggesting increasing demands on the transportation system.

One aspect of the overall reduction in density is the localized nature of growth. As population spreads across the region, the central areas become less densely populated and outlying jurisdictions become denser. This fact means that, from the point of view of officials in the outlying area, their part of the region is growing. This localized growth creates demand for transportation infrastructure, particularly wider arterials and additional freeway interchanges.

—Long Range Plan Update:  
The Year 2010 Transportation System,  
Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, 1995

I went back to Ohio,  
but my pretty countryside  
had been paved  
down the middle  
by a government  
that had no pride.

The farms of Ohio  
had been replaced by  
shopping malls.

And Muzak filled the air  
from Seneca  
to Cuyahoga Falls.

-- "My City was Gone"  
from The Pretenders'  
*Learning to Crawl* album

■

We end, I think, at what  
might be called the standard  
paradox of the twentieth  
century: our tools are better  
than we are, and grow  
better faster than we do.

They suffice to crack the  
atom, to command the tides.

But they do not suffice for  
the oldest task in human  
history: to live on a piece of  
land without spoiling it.

-- Aldo Leopold  
*Engineering and  
Conservation*, 1938

# Moving to corn fields



## Cleveland isn't the only Ohio city suffering from outmigration

A terrible sucking sound can be heard throughout Ohio, and it's not just Ross Perot's sound of jobs moving to Mexico. It's the sound of people abandoning the state's major cities.

For the most part, these people aren't going far. Many of them are just moving out from the central city to the suburbs.

In previous issues we've covered the destructive outmigration from Cleveland, which could lose an additional 18% of its population in the 1990s. Now researchers from seven Ohio urban universities are documenting similar trends in the state's other metropolitan areas. The city of Youngstown, for example, could lose 27% of its population in the 1990s. Dayton could lose 21%, Akron 15%, Toledo 10%

and Cincinnati 3%.

Such predictions of decline are not welcomed by civic boosters. But the losses will happen unless there are dramatic changes in metropolitan housing markets and the location of public investments.

At the annual meeting of the Ohio Planning Conference in 1993, Thomas Bier of Cleveland State University's College of Urban Affairs outlined the problem facing most of Ohio's big cities. Outmigration is fueled when more new homes are built in the suburbs of a metropolitan area than there are new households to occupy them. The surplus of housing means that less desirable houses are abandoned—usually the older, lower-priced housing in the city.

# Tale of seven cities

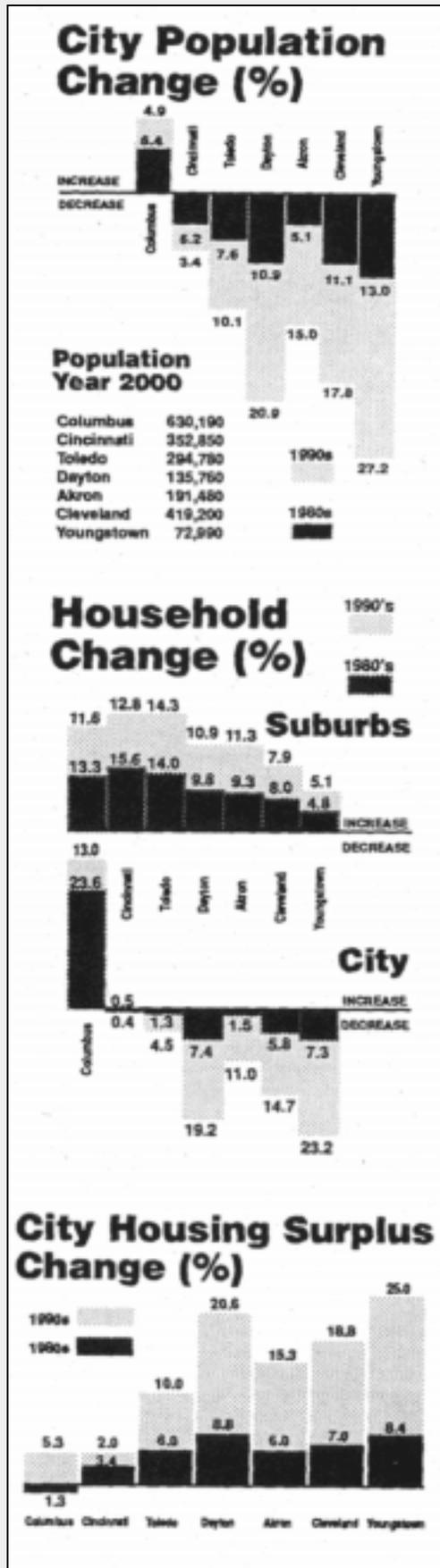
## In the 1980s...

- Columbus grew in the 1980s because areawide construction and household growth were in balance, and 59.1% of all new housing was built in the city.
- Cincinnati's population decline was small, even though construction in the city was a low 5.6% of the area, because areawide construction and growth were nearly in balance.
- Population decline in Toledo and Akron was reduced by the amount of construction in the city. Toledo had 22.9% of its area total; Akron had 19.1%.
- Youngstown, Dayton and Cleveland had the greatest losses because little housing was built in each city and areawide construction exceeded household growth by a wide margin.

## In the 1990s...

- Household growth will decline in the 1990s—thus new housing could exceed growth by wider margins and exacerbate outmigration.
- Columbus and Cincinnati are projected to continue past trends. Other cities could have increased population loses as suburban growth continues. Losses in Youngstown (-27.2%), Dayton (-20.9%) and Cleveland (-17.8%) could be most severe.
- By the year 2000, the population of the city of Columbus could be 630,000 and Cleveland 419,000.
- Surplus housing could increase in Youngstown, Dayton and Cleveland: 20-25% of all housing occupied in 1980 could be abandoned by 2000. Major surpluses also could occur in Akron (15%) and Toledo (10%).

Source: "Suburbanization of Ohio Metropolitan Areas, 1980-2000," Ohio Housing Research Network



"This means that the population left in the central city is the population of the metropolitan area that does not fit into the suburbs," Bier says.

In the case of Greater Cleveland, he adds, "In another 40 years, if we keep sprawling the way we are, we will empty the city of Cleveland, and all the inner suburbs will be in decline as residents with stronger incomes move farther out. Then the county will be in trouble. And if the county is in fiscal straits,

*Cities that can't build new housing are trapped in inescapable*

the entire region is likely to be worse off."

(Columbus is an exception to this pattern because it has been able to keep annexing land. As a result, much new housing in its metro area is still being built within

the city limits. In other words, Columbus is sprawling like mad, but the sprawl is largely in the city.)

According to Bier and his colleagues, suburbanization in Ohio has reached the point where it requires immediate, serious attention from all levels of government. In addition to working on the urban problems that push people out of the cities (crime, schools, racism, etc.), new housing must be built in the central cities to balance suburban construction.

"Central cities need to capture at least 20% of the new housing market...Cities that can't build new housing are trapped in inescapable decline," Bier says.

To accomplish this, local governments in each metropolitan area need to jointly plan where new housing ought to be built in the coming decades. Then they need to develop a strategy for turning the plan into reality. It has to be a regional effort.

In addition, the state and federal governments must rethink their role in the shaping of metropolitan regions. They must realize how they currently support suburbanization (through road improvements, mortgage assistance, school funding and other programs). And they must decide how to support more housing development in the central cities.

"Government policy is a massive force favoring edge development," Bier adds. "Currently, there's little balance in government support of edge development and redevelopment in the core."

He estimates that the city of Cleveland needs to gain about 2,000 new homes every

year for the foreseeable future. And some of it has to be higher-priced housing, so people are able to move in toward the core when they move up to a better home.

The city of Cleveland and its neighborhood-based housing organizations are working hard to close the housing gap. The nonprofit Cleveland Housing Network rehabbed 1,000 abandoned homes since 1981 and hopes to double that number in the next few years. Another 1,144 units of new housing were built in the city between 1990 and 1993, and several major housing developments, such as Mill Creek and Church Square, are breaking ground. Cleveland Mayor Michael White even dreams about 10,000 new units downtown by the year 2000.

The question will be whether such efforts generate the numbers needed to stem the tide of outmigration and urban decline. Can the land be assembled quickly enough? Can the buried foundations be cleared away? Can possible environmental contamination be cleaned up? Can the financing be found (especially when local governments have been stretched thin by Gateway and other downtown developments)?

Other major cities in Ohio face similar challenges. By identifying the outmigration trends around the state, researchers like Bier hope to raise awareness and develop a statewide constituency for action.

Indeed, this is an issue for everyone—for residents of the central



## Death (of cities) and taxes

*Government promotes outmigration and suburban sprawl in many ways—most obviously through the construction of new roads, sewers and other infrastructure that makes development possible on the edge of metropolitan areas.*

*A less obvious promoter of sprawl is the federal tax code. A recent study by the Ohio Housing Research Network, a collaborative effort of researchers at seven urban universities, documents how a capital gain provision prompts homesellers to move out from central city. The study, "The IRS Homeseller Capital Gain Provision: Contributor to Urban Decline," comes to the following conclusion.*

Section 1034 of the IRS Code specifies that homesellers can defer tax liability on capital gain realized during ownership by purchasing another home priced at least equal to the one sold.

This report contains the results of a study of movement of homesellers in Ohio's seven major urban areas in which the cities of Akron, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo, and Youngstown are located. The objective was to determine if the capital gain provision is related to less movement in toward the city center than otherwise might be expected. Results are:

- The capital gain provision had the effect of reducing the options for sellers to move inward by 38 percent.
- 80.5 percent of all sellers (city and suburban) complied with the capital gain provision—that is, they bought a home of greater or equal value.
- Of the 80.5 percent who complied, 15.8 percent moved inward toward the city center to purchase their next home (84.2 percent moved farther out).
- Of the 19.5 percent who did not comply, 36.1 percent moved inward toward the center—2.3 times greater than those who did comply.

By requiring homesellers to purchase a home priced at least equal to the one sold in order to shelter their capital gain, Section 1034 obstructs movement to lower priced homes (and rental units), and it penalizes people who are forced to make such a move. In urban areas [such as Greater Cleveland] where the geographic pattern of home values is one of increasing value with distance from the center, the provision encourages movement out and away from the center, and discourages movement toward it, which exacerbates urban decline.

Section 1034 should be changed to remove the tax penalty against sellers who move down in price.

*For more information about the study on homeseller capital gain, contact Thomas Bier, Housing Policy Research Program, College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University, Cleveland, OH 44115, (216/687-2211).*

## Why worry about suburban sprawl?



- It's economically and environmentally wasteful to abandon existing urban areas and build new infrastructure in the country. Our society—and our planet—cannot sustain current rates of growth.

- Sprawling development destroys valuable farm land, open space, natural areas and streams.

- Sprawl moves homes, work places and shopping farther apart, so we all have to drive more, burn more fossil fuel, create more air pollution, and waste more time in traffic. Children lose freedom when parents have to drive them everywhere. Low-density development makes mass transit impractical.

- Sprawl exacerbates economic and racial segregation, thus contributing to the dangerous polarization of our society. Suburbanites delude themselves if they think they can escape the social consequences by moving farther out.

- Sprawl unfairly burdens the central city and county with social service costs.

- Decline from loss of population and tax base does not stop in the central cities.

It keeps on spreading, ultimately weakening entire regions.

- If we lose central cities, with their public spaces and historic neighborhoods, we begin to lose our sense of place and identity. We lose opportunities to interact with others.

The present tax system sends the wrong message to virtually everyone.

It encourages waste, discourages conservation, and rewards consumption.

It taxes what we want to encourage— jobs, creativity, payrolls, and real income —and ignores the things we want to discourage— degradation, pollution, and depletion.

—Paul Hawken

*The Ecology of Commerce*



Every citistate that cares a whit about its environment and social future should move to establish an urban growth boundary, beyond which neither jobs nor new housing developments are allowed to go.

Where citistates lack the legal authority, they should go to state legislatures and get it...

The time is more ripe than ever for an alliance of interests, environmentalists opposing development at the urban periphery joining with inner-city minorities to keep more job-producing firms within reach in established urban areas and away from distant greenfield sites unserved by mass transit.

—Neal Peirce

*Citistates:*

*How Urban American Can Prosper in a Competitive World*

# In the zone



## How enterprise zones have promoted urban sprawl in Northeast Ohio

*A charitable person would put the saga of Ohio's enterprise zone program in the realm of unfortunate, unintended consequences. Others would say the results should have been predicted all along. But whether the results were intended or not, it's clear that enterprise zones—special areas in which tax incentives promote economic development—have been little help for economically depressed cities but a boon for prosperous suburbs.*

*Until now, however, no one ever bothered to go beyond anecdotal evidence and tally up just where the jobs went. In the following story, local free-lance writer William Henderson carefully compares the performance of urban and suburban zones in Northeast Ohio.*

*The lesson of his story is this: it matters where economic development takes place. At*

*the state level, development officials don't see much difference between a job in Solon and job in Cleveland. But there is a difference. If development strategies abandon our cities, unemployed people, and existing infrastructure, the entire region will be weakened in the long run. It's a matter of regional sustainability and social justice.*



*By William Henderson*

Recently, a slightly reformed version of an existing Ohio law went into effect—a law that, in Northeast Ohio, has had the exact opposite effect of its intended purpose.

The new law is the third renewal and revision of Ohio's "Urban jobs and enterprise zones" legislation. And in its brief history, it provides us with several hard-to-swallow lessons about business, government and the possible fate of our urban centers.

## A product of the '80s

Initially enacted in 1982, the original legislation was, like many new laws, a product of the times. During the early '80s, Ohio was in the grips of a recession. Statewide unemployment hovered at 12 percent, and manufacturing centers such as Cleveland, Warren, and Toledo were hemorrhaging jobs. At the same time, the newly elected Reagan administration was dramatically cutting aid to central cities in an effort to reduce the federal deficit and finance new defense spending.

Faced with a deepening recession and dwindling financial resources, legislators in Columbus mobilized to pass legislation that could create jobs in areas of serious economic decline without committing additional state funds. According to literature produced by the Ohio Department of Development in 1982, "Enterprise zones may be defined as depressed areas in which governments provide special tax incentives and perhaps other incentives in order to promote job creation and economic development."

The special tax incentives were abatements of city and county property taxes that local legislatures could grant to businesses that located or created jobs in distressed areas. Although experts debate how much tax breaks influence corporate location decisions, enterprise zones did give local governments another economic development tool. Eligibility for the zones was based primarily on levels of unemployment, poverty, population decline, and abandoned structures.

When the original enterprise zone law expired at the end of 1987 there had been only modest statewide activity, with 128 total abatements. Most depressed cities found it difficult to give tax breaks to businesses when most of the abated taxes had to be foregone by local schools. When abatements were granted, they were often



**Come out to Solon: The enterprise zone in Solon has helped to attract more than 2,400 jobs to a suburb of just 18,548 people.**

for investments in facilities already in enterprise zones and were meant to ensure a company's long-term presence.

A prominent example of this was the first phase of LTV Steel's renovations in Cleveland. According to state records, LTV received a 10-year, 100-percent abatement on \$37 million worth of capital improvements. In the process, only six jobs were created, but 943 were *retained*.

### Diluted intent

When the enterprise zone legislation was renewed at end of 1987, rural and suburban lawmakers successfully diluted the distress criteria in order to qualify their own

communities. Having "vacant or undeveloped land" now became equally as important as being on the federal list of "impacted cities." By 1989, any county with a population of less than 300,000 also qualified as a "rural enterprise zone" by suffering no hardship other than having undeveloped land. Under this criteria, all but seven of Ohio's 88 counties qualified.

Not surprisingly, enterprise zone activity surged dramatically. Today there are more than 200 enterprise zones in the state. In Northeast Ohio, growing and affluent communities such as Solon, Highland Heights, Twinsburg, and Avon Lake deftly qualified as enterprise zones and competed head-to-head for an industrial tax base with cities like Cleveland and Lorain. With improved access provided by recently constructed freeways and an abundance of "greenfield" building sites, the outlying suburbs were the predictable winners. And very quickly, enterprise zone activity began to mirror the business patterns of Greater Cleveland in general: companies were moving out of Cleveland and its inner-ring suburbs to the "edge cities" of outer Cuyahoga and bordering counties.

## Enterprise zones



Enterprise Zones are designated areas of land in which businesses can receive tax incentives in the form of tax exemptions on eligible new investments. Enterprise Zones are not part of the traditional zoning program—which limits the use of land—instead they allow local officials to negotiate with businesses to encourage new business investment in the zone.

Enterprise Zones serve as an additional economic development tool for communities attempting to retain and expand their economic base. Because of the far reaching effects of tax incentives, the Enterprise Zone should be used as a tool of the last resort. A community should attempt to satisfy the business's needs through other assistance programs prior to considering tax incentives. In all cases, Enterprise Zone Agreements should be negotiated cautiously.

Source: Ohio Department of Development



## Western Reserve Zone

Of the suburban enterprise zones, probably the most vigorous in Northeast Ohio was the Western Reserve Zone. Located along I-480 in northern Summit County, this zone encompasses several communities, including Twinsburg, Twinsburg Township, Macedonia, and Hudson Township. According to demographers, this area is one of the most prosperous in the Cleveland-Akron metropolitan area. Yet, by carefully packaging its census tracts to exclude new developments, the Western Reserve Zone managed to qualify much of its undeveloped portions as "distressed."

According to Summit County documents, by early 1994 the Western Reserve Zone had made 92 agreements; of these, 32 were made with businesses relocating from Cleveland or Cuyahoga County. Although its population base was relatively small—only 5,789 residents—total new employment within the Western Reserve Zone exceeded 5,200 jobs. During the same period, the *five* enterprise zones in the city of Cleveland generated only 27 total agreements and 1,037 new jobs.

With growing evidence of intra-regional movement to high-growth areas, a committee of Summit County officials was formed to study the issue. Their 1991 report concluded that "... drastic changes need to be made ... in the enterprise zone program or that it needs to be entirely revoked. As long as the program exists in its present form, however, Summit County must continue to participate in it. Although there is a public policy loss to Ohio when abatement is used in intercounty (intra-state) competition for businesses, there is a gain for Summit County when it is successful in such competition."

## Where the jobs went

When the enterprise zone law was set to expire at the end of 1992, a large coalition in the General Assembly attempted to reform it. In order to better study its effects, the law was renewed for the year 1993. Supporters including Governor George Voinovich and the Ohio Department of

Development (ODOD) vigorously defended the law as a necessary tool to compete with neighboring states such as Indiana and Kentucky.

Yet, in spite of their position, the Ohio Department of Development never documented how many of the 1400-plus enterprise zone agreements attracted out-of-state businesses.

Moreover, due to the poor reporting requirements of the old law, the Ohio Department of Development had no data on the extent or pattern of intra-state movement.

The last ODOD report on enterprise zones was actually done in early 1992. At that time, enterprise zones were credited with generating \$13 billion dollars worth of investment and over 43,000 new jobs.

Although the ODOD calculated these figures on a statewide basis, they never totalled them by regions or zones.

Using the statewide listing of enterprise zone agreements that accompanied the 1992 report, this writer separated out the data for the Cleveland-Akron area and discovered some startling trends:

- The number of new jobs attributed to enterprise zones has been significantly overstated. In 1989, for example, a Maple Heights company moved to Aurora, receiving a 10-year, 90 percent abatement. Yet, according to state records, all of the 650 relocated employees were counted as jobs *created*. This pattern is repeated with companies that moved from Cuyahoga Heights to Solon, Beachwood to Hudson Township, Cleveland to Twinsburg, and many others.

- The state's listing of jobs "retained" also masked intra-regional movement. A Valley View company that *retained* 312 employees actually moved them from Cleveland. Similar accounting was found with companies moving from Elyria to North Ridgeville, Painesville to Mentor, and Bedford to Solon, among others.

***By 1989, any county with a population of less than 300,000 also qualified as a "rural enterprise zone" by suffering no hardship other than having***

- Although enterprise zones were intended to favor areas of declining population, the employment gains have generally been in high growth areas. Mentor's population increased 29 percent from 1970 to 1990 while it gained 1,222 enterprise zone jobs. During the same time period, Solon gained 2,446 jobs (37 percent of the total in Cuyahoga County) while experiencing a 60-percent jump in population. Likewise, Avon Lake grew by 24 percent and gained 1,300 new jobs.

- The oldest enterprise zone in Northeast Ohio, and arguably the poorest, is Cleveland's zone #1 covering the Central, Hough, and Fairfax neighborhoods. Through the end of 1991, it had garnered no enterprise zone investment and created no jobs.

## Draining the central cities

To date, Ohio's enterprise zone law has been a drain on the city of Cleveland. Although the city has managed to gain some new investment and jobs through the program, it has seen a much larger number of jobs and capital leave for suburban zones.

Moreover, when a large number of jobs are relocated to edge cities along the area's freeways, traffic patterns are dramatically changed and commuters have less incentive to live in Cleveland or its inner-ring suburbs. Census data already confirm this trend.

To the extent that Ohio enterprise

***To the extent that Ohio enterprise zones provide incentives to employers to leave central cities, they are actually subsidizing urban***

zones provide incentives to employers to leave central cities, they are actually subsidizing urban sprawl. By spreading out the employment base and making regional transit more impractical and inefficient, the state is also increasing the need for more roads while the existing infrastructure deteriorates. The swath of urban decay is also widened as older cities

and inner suburbs are unable to maintain services and schools due to eroding tax bases.

As a tool for state competition, enterprise zones have been a blunt instrument. Only a handful of Northeast Ohio's enterprise zones have attracted out-

of-state employers. In the meantime, affluent communities have too often benefited at the expense of those that are actually "distressed."

## Reforms with loopholes

The latest version of Ohio's enterprise zone law, passed in 1994, represents a compromise between supporters of the old law and its critics. Limits on abatements will drop from 100 to 75 percent. Abatements for retail stores will be sharply curtailed. Local school boards will also be granted some revenue from new income taxes and will be guaranteed input in the abatement decision process.

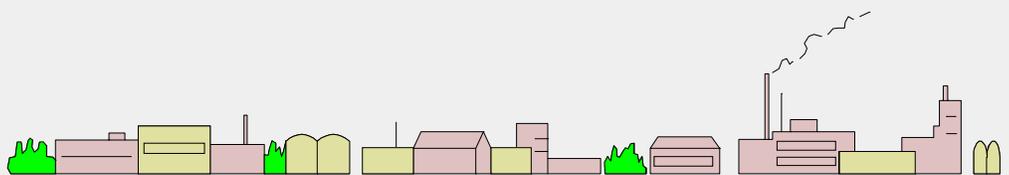
Nevertheless, the state's distress guidelines remain lenient and subject to gerrymandering. Areas that don't qualify as "distressed" can still qualify under a new type of limited enterprise zone that has no criteria at all. Under the new rules, a Cleveland company that has outgrown its facility can relocate to a limited enterprise zone by petitioning the director of the ODOD. Yet, room for expansion is one of the most common reasons why companies move to "greenfields." Once again, cities like Cleveland are being placed at a competitive disadvantage.

Ultimately, this siphoning of jobs and investment will weaken the region as a whole. Although many of us live in towns and suburbs, we all depend on the region's urban centers to sustain our quality of life. And we cannot escape the social and economic problems left behind in the cities by outmigration to the suburbs.

For everyone's benefit, then, our public policies must work *with* cities like Cleveland and Akron, not at their expense. □

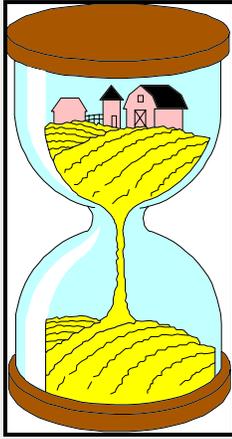
# Ohio enterprise zone highlights

- 1981:** Ohio is in the grips of a recession, and the Reagan administration is slashing aid to cities. Legislators in Columbus mobilize to pass legislation that could create jobs in depressed urban centers without committing additional state funds.
- 1982:** The Ohio Department of Development produces literature describing the new enterprise zones as "...depressed areas in which governments provide special tax incentives...to promote job creation and economic development." Eligibility is based on levels of unemployment, poverty, population decline, and abandoned structures.
- 1987:** In a revised law, legislators add "vacant and undeveloped land" as an acceptable distress criteria. Counties with fewer than 150,000 residents also become eligible as "rural enterprise zones." Many greenfields now qualify for abatements.
- 1989:** The definition of "rural enterprise zones" is changed to include to counties of 300,000 persons or less; all but seven of Ohio's 88 counties are now eligible as *rural zones*. Enterprise zone activity explodes with investment patterns sharply resembling the outflow of jobs and capital from central cities. The data to verify this trend are conspicuously absent.
- 1991:** Despite substantial evidence that Macedonia, Twinsburg, and Hudson Township have all become large magnets for enterprise zone activity, the Summit County Enterprise Zone Committee is sharply critical of intra-regional movement. Their report concludes that "...drastic changes need to be made by the Ohio Legislature in the enterprise zone program or it should be revoked entirely."
- 1992:** The ODOD produces the *1991 Ohio Enterprise Zone Program Report*, which is mandated by state law. The report is confined to glowing aggregate numbers, however, and none of the data are separated by region or zone. The report fails to document how many out-of-state companies the zones have attracted, overstates the number of new jobs created, masks job movements within regions. Despite its limited usefulness, the 1991 Program Report is the last piece of data the ODOD will produce before a "computer switch-over" effectively cripples its database.
- 1992:** Ohio's enterprise zone law is scheduled to expire at the end of the year. The ODOD, Governor Voinovich, and several state legislators openly fret that Ohio will soon become uncompetitive with other states. Pertinent data is still unavailable and the law is renewed for one year to permit further study.
- 1993 THROUGH THE WINTER OF 1994:** When confronted with the idea that enterprise zones should again be restricted to depressed urban areas, ODOD Director Don Jakeway utters his most memorable—and regrettable—quote: "You're assuming [companies] will go into Cleveland, Akron. It's a wrong assumption. It won't happen." In early January the law is extended for six more months.
- MARCH 1994:** Rep. Dan Troy thinks he has the votes to pass a bona fide reform measure in the House. The Governor and ODOD continue their lobbying blitz, and several House members from prosperous districts are afraid they will lose their enterprise zones. Sensitive to their concerns, Speaker of the House Vern Riffe halts a floor vote until a less aggressive reform package can be hammered out. A compromise measure passes on March 31.
- MAY 1994:** Summit County releases comprehensive data on its enterprise zones. The Western Reserve Zone, covering Hudson, Macedonia and Twinsburg, has added 5,239 new jobs since its inception, or 88 percent of the total county gain. Of the 92 agreements in the Western Reserve Zone, 32 are given to companies from Cleveland or Cuyahoga County. During the same period, Cleveland's *five* enterprise zones generate only 27 agreements and 1,037 new jobs.
- JUNE 1994:** ODOD is inundated with abatement requests prior to the sunset of the old law. Professor Ned Hill of the College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University releases a report on the new enterprise zone law. Although he concedes that small steps were taken to rein in intrastate competition, "...a good-sized factory can be driven through a prominent loophole."



## Farms on the edge

According to U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates, more than 2 million acres of productive farmland are being permanently converted to nonagricultural uses each year, much of



it the result of sprawling, poorly planned growth patterns on the urban edge.

The ultimate cost of this displacement could be significant. Urban-edge farmland now generates 56 percent of gross U.S. agricultural sales...Measured on a dollar per acre basis, farmland in urban-influenced counties is more than two and a half times as productive as other U.S. farmland.

Urban sprawl is wasteful, expensive and unnecessary. If it is allowed to go unchecked, the nation will lost some of its best and most productive agricultural capacity. We will increasingly come to rely on foreign countries for fruits, vegetables and other commodities, which will weaken the one industry where we still have a clear advantage. Agriculture will be forced onto marginal land that requires more fertilizers, pesticides and irrigation and is more expensive to farm. And scenic countryside and precious wildlife habitat will be lost...

All levels of government must work together to prevent the onslaught of urban sprawl...States should adopt policies to protect strategic farmland and strengthen their right-to-farm laws. Local governments must provide zones for the long-term protection of strategic agriculture and develop growth management programs that avoid sprawl and minimize farm annexations. State and local governments without farmland protection programs should establish them and direct development to areas where it can be more efficiently served by existing infrastructure.

—Excerpted from a column  
by Ralph Grossi,  
president of the American Farmland Trust

# Balancing the books with farmland and open space

Farmland protection in Northeast Ohio more than pays its way.

That's the finding of a study undertaken in Lake County's Madison Village and Madison Township by the American Farmland Trust, a nonprofit conservation organization, and the Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD).

The "cost of community services" study compared the costs of providing services and tax revenues from residential, commercial and industrial, and farm, forest and open space land uses. It found that Madison communities spend an average of \$1.54 on public services, including education, police and fire protection and utilities, for every dollar raised by the residential sector. In contrast, farmland, forest areas and open space cost just 34 cents for each dollar generated. Commercial and industrial uses also generate a net benefit.

As suburbia sprawls eastward through Lake County, the rural Madison area being forced to plan for growth. There's a danger that its valuable agricultural lands—lands with sandy soils, lake-effect weather for long growing seasons, and abundant water supplies—will become covered with housing subdivisions.

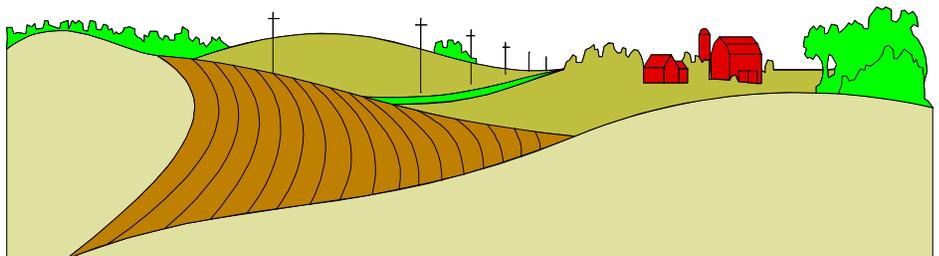
"It is our hope that local officials will realize that the preservation of agricultural land can be an important component in providing economic stability to communities," says Charles Grantham, chair of the Lake County SWCD board of

supervisors.

The study, which is the first of its kind done in the Midwest, concludes:

While proponents of unplanned growth often present farmland and other undeveloped lands as awaiting a "highest and best use," generally considered residential development, the cost of community services findings show the positive tax benefits of maintaining these lands in their current use. The costs of providing new residents with services such as education, police and fire protection, road maintenance and ultimately public sewer and water, must be evaluated along with the gross contribution to the tax base. By examining these relationships in the present, this study suggests the costs of new residential development would have to be offset further because they are already straining local resources. And while existing commercial and industrial land uses are providing far more in revenues than they demand in services, unplanned growth in these areas may not solve the fiscal imbalance. If new commercial and industrial development does not meet the needs of local residents, and does not reflect local skills, values and resources, it is likely to be followed by increased demand for new housing, traffic congestion, pollution and other factors that typically accompany urbanization. □

Copies of the Madison study are available from the Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District, 125 East Erie St., Painesville, OH 44077, (216) 350-2730.



# Sprawling development costs all of us a bundle

*Although sprawling development patterns are destructive and wasteful in countless ways, they are heavily subsidized. This article by Kevin Kasowski, formerly of the National Growth Management Leadership Project, explains these economic incentives which promote sprawl. Some of the economic concepts are technical. But it's worth the effort to understand them—and to imagine how they might be changed.*

**How much does sprawl cost?** A recent study by the Center for Urban Studies at Rutgers University says sprawl is costing us a bundle.

The Rutgers study pegged capital costs attributable to sprawl development patterns in New Jersey at \$1.3 billion over 20 years for roads, water, sewer and school facilities. Additional operating and maintenance costs of \$400 million annually were also linked to sprawl development. Capitalized at current borrowing rates, these annual operation and maintenance costs translate into an additional \$7-8 billion price tag for sprawl over 20 years. The study was conducted by a team of 20 researchers and economists at the request of the New Jersey Legislature to evaluate economic impacts of the newly adopted state plan which advocates more compact patterns of development.

The Rutgers study suggests that if 500,000 new residents arrive in New Jersey in the next two decades, each homeowner will pay \$12,000- \$15,000 more for a house because of sprawl development than they would if development patterns were more compact. This supports earlier research on significant sprawl-related costs. In fact, some estimates are even higher.

In a 1989 monograph for the Urban Land Institute, James Frank, associate professor of urban and regional planning at Florida State University, estimated a \$48,000-per-house sprawl "premium" for providing services to a three-unit-per-acre development located 10 miles from central facilities and employment centers. The same costs for a home in a 12-unit-per-acre development located closer to facilities, with an equal mix of townhouses, garden apartments and single family homes, would be 50 percent lower.

Development costs vary with lot sizes, distance to central facilities, proximity to existing development, community demographics, existing service capacity and the requirements of local codes and standards. Yet numerous studies dating back to 1955 all point toward a similar conclusion: sprawl is a significant burden on both homebuyers and taxpayers.

## Who pays for growth?

While "on-site" development costs (sidewalks, sewer laterals) are passed on to buyers by developers as part of the price of a home, sprawl-related costs that are "off-site" (trunk sewers, water mains,

schools, fire stations, treatment plants, widening roads) are another story. While some governments are now charging impact fees to developers for hooking up to this community infrastructure, it is frequently the case that the full costs of off-site infrastructure go unpaid. As a result, everybody pays—indirectly.

"We haven't kept pace," says Jim Nicholas, professor of urban planning and an economist at the University of Florida. "Our roads, for example, are financed with fixed-base assessments. That doesn't keep up with inflation, let alone with growth. Every time we grow, every time the inflation clock clicks, we get a bigger and bigger gap."

Nicholas notes, for instance, that the average combined federal-state gasoline tax today is 29 cents. If this tax had been held constant for inflation over the years, it would now be 90 cents per gallon. The obvious result of this subsidy is heavy reliance on single-occupant vehicle commuting, which clogs roads and creates traffic tangles of frustrating proportions. "When you subsidize commuting, is it any wonder that people do it?" asks Nicholas.

He says that the faster growing states—California and Florida, for example—were the first to be drawn into the dilemma of how to pay for growth. In fact, the tax revolts that began with Proposition 13 in California, and continue to this day, are an indirect acknowledgment that current patterns and rates of development are simply not sustainable. As federal subsidies for interstate highways, sewer works and other public infrastructure that made sprawl possible disappeared over the past two decades (without any apparent cut in federal taxes), the public was simply not willing to see those costs shifted to state and local government budgets. As a result, government's ability to cope with growth pressures is often paralyzed. "We have now effectively neutralized government's ability to raise money." says Nicholas.



*Sprawling development is a burden on both homebuyers and taxpayers.*

## A question of fairness

To add to the complexity of the issue, the costs of sprawl are not distributed evenly. When new developments are built far from water or sewer treatment plants or schools, it creates higher incremental or "marginal" costs for adding new sewer system capacity or operating school buses. By contrast, the marginal cost of new development closer to existing services or facilities is lower.

However, because costs currently are evenly distributed among all users by average-cost pricing, those who live farther away pay proportionately less. As a result, some users subsidize other users.

FSU's Frank says the result is "an enormous price subsidy." He estimates that the true marginal costs of providing sewer service to a new home can range from \$2,738 to \$26,263—far higher than most existing impact fees. And since newer homes tend to be most affordable to higher-income individuals, this inequity often

translates into a subsidy of the rich by the poor, Frank notes.

"There is a tremendous equity issue here," says Nicholas.

"What we've evolved is capitalism for the poor and socialism for the rich. So many problems we have today can be related to that."

One visible impact of this subsidy is sprawl. Why? As with subsidies for the automobile, subsidies for sprawl simply encourage more development in costly-to-serve locations, because developers are allowed to pass off some of their costs to the general public.

A less visible impact of sprawl subsidies is the ongoing fiscal distress of many growing communities. Frank believes that charging average-cost pricing "systematically underfunds" public services. Actual marginal costs are often higher than assessed costs, creating an ever-widening fiscal deficit for local and state governments.

## Recapturing the costs of sprawl

What can be done to fully account for the costs of development and eliminate inequities in the current system? With taxpayers already pushed to the limit, and many governments facing huge deficits, is there hope of changing course?

Communities increasingly are charging impact fees for schools, roads and sewers. These fees can be as high as \$50,000 on a single-family home in some parts of country; in other places, impact fees are nonexistent. The average impact fee for a single-family home is \$10,000, but is growing at a rate of 20 percent per year.

Like bills for water and sewer services, most impact fees are assessed on an average-cost basis. The impact fees on new homes located 10 miles from a treatment plant tend to be the same as those levied on homes two miles away, even though the actual costs of providing services to the former may be much higher.

To address this equity issue, some jurisdictions, such as Tallahassee, Florida, and DuPage County, Illinois, have begun to move toward geographically variable fees, a variation of marginal-cost pricing. Other jurisdictions in Florida and California are selling "pre-paid subscriptions" to landowners and developers who plan on hooking into public service systems within the next 20 years.

Many local governments now have the analytical capacity to create more sophisticated marginal pricing systems. Yet acceptance of marginal cost pricing by local governments has been slow. The problem? "Politicians don't like to charge some voters one rate and others a different one," notes Frank. In addition, average-cost pricing has been used because it's simpler and easier to defend in court, *appearing* to be fair—even if it really isn't.

Nicholas believes that the shift toward marginal cost pricing can happen only if impact fees are already an accepted reality in a given jurisdiction and a good history of case law exists regarding their constitutionality and methodology. Frank suggests that one way to build support for a more equitable pricing system may be to build coalitions of people in low-cost locations who are willing to complain that sewer rates are far too high because high-cost locations are not being charged for full cost. The difficulty with building coalitions, however, is that a clear geographic break may not actually exist in terms of land ownership patterns.

## Melding markets and law

The larger question, according to Nicholas, is whether full cost/marginal cost pricing would really influence development at all. He notes that a \$7,500 surcharge is a minor portion of the cost of \$200,000-\$400,000 homes.

"If the issue is trying to affect development patterns, don't hook your cart to this horse [full-cost pricing]," warns Nicholas. "It is certainly a component of a solution. But would sprawl go away if development picked up all these costs? I think the answer is no."

Nicholas observes that "law sets the parameters of the marketplace. If we don't like the results of the marketplace, then we need to go back to those laws and either restructure them or somehow modify them to get the results we want." One strategy he recommends is tailoring planning incentives to reduce road impact fees if a developer agrees to promote vanpooling or mass transit, as is done in Montgomery County, Maryland. Similar incentives could be created to encourage compact development, affordable housing and other desirable outcomes.

## Least-cost development

Another intriguing way to use market and regulatory strategies together to contain sprawl—particularly in an era of tight money—may be the idea of "least-cost" development. The electric power industry is now using the least-cost principle as a way of investing in conservation instead of new plant capacity. Since conservation can free up supply by lowering demand, it can be an equally cost-effective way of generating "new" power.

In the Northwest, utilities are now permitted to include the cost of providing conservation tools (low-energy bulbs, insulation) to consumers in their rate bases, much as the cost of new power plants have been included. The result is a new source of funding for investments in energy-efficient infrastructure.

Can the same concept be applied to create more efficient, compact and conservation-minded development patterns? Henry Richmond, former executive director of 1000 Friends of Oregon, which has promoted innovative growth-management strategies in that state, thinks it might.

As the recent Rutgers study in New Jersey indicates, the cost of building in more compact development patterns is much lower than our current "business as usual" approach of allowing inefficient sprawl. Can we allocate those cost savings from fewer miles of roads and water and sewer lines to the rate bases of various public service providers (school, road and sewer districts) and use that money as a way to fund new investments in transit, housing and efficient development patterns?

"The idea of least-cost planning has been a tremendous positive step for the utility industry," Richmond says, "It only makes sense that we should now examine how the least-cost principle could also be applied to planning for land uses and new development." □

*The National Growth Management Leadership Project, a network of conservation and planning organizations around the nation, was started at 1000 Friends of Oregon. For more information, contact the project at 534 SW Third Ave., #716, Portland, OR 97204, (503)228-9462.*

*Subsidies for sprawl simply encourage more development in costly-to-serve locations, because developers are allowed to pass off some of their costs to the general public.*

# The "growth" treadmill

Researchers at Amory Lovins' Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) are known for dreaming up innovative ways to save money by saving energy. But they also are thinking about how communities can develop and prosper in sustainable ways. The following article from the Spring 1995 Rocky Mountain Institute Newsletter explains how local policies that promote "growth" often end up encouraging sprawl, strained services and higher taxes.

"The hurrier I go," said Alice in Wonderland, "the behinder I get." Communities around the country are feeling a little like Alice these days, as they discover that the growth that was supposed to solve their economic problems is only bringing bigger, more expensive ones.

On this side of the looking-glass, when projections go that far wrong, it's time to re-examine the assumptions. One of the most cherished assumptions in community planning is that growth generates more money in taxes than it demands in new services. But is that assumption valid?

RMI senior researcher Michael Kinsley takes on that question in a new paper, "Paying for Growth, Prospering from Development." Its thesis: local governments, by failing to take into account all the costs of expansion, skew the market and unwittingly encourage "socialized growth"—something that is in the interest of neither "conservative" growth advocates nor "liberal" growth opponents.

One of RMI's guiding principles is that markets can be wonderfully efficient at allocating resources, but only when prices reflect true costs. The Institute has long urged governments and utilities to remove distorting (and often unintended) subsidies that, for example, make nuclear power look cheaper than cleaner competitors. In his latest paper, Kinsley applies the same reasoning to land-use policies, arguing that faulty price signals in many areas have led to sprawl, strained services, higher property taxes, and a declining standard of living.

In recent years, several studies have indicated that residential growth usually results in net losses to public coffers, while commercial and industrial expansion may provide net gains but often does not. So why do communities keep rolling out the red carpet for growth?

Kinsley identifies four types of communities that feel, rightly or wrongly, that they need to grow. "Hungry" towns want growth to save themselves from a stagnant or declining economy. "Rusty" towns seek growth to upgrade old, deteriorating infrastructure or substandard services. "Debtor" towns rely on the revenue from growth to pay for existing infrastructure and services. And booming "Booster" towns believe that further growth will keep them riding a wave of prosperity.

Not all growth is bad, Kinsley notes; slow growth is manageable. In many cases, growth can genuinely improve Hungry and Rusty towns, but many are so desperate that they'll take anything. If they're not careful, their quality of life—often their primary salable product—will decline, and with it their hopes of attracting clean business, retirees or tourists.

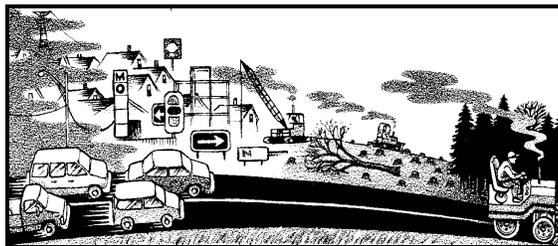
Debtor and Booster towns, especially, can easily become caught in a vicious growth cycle. Revenues from new growth often aren't enough to offset the costs of higher demand for schools, police, fire protection, roads and sewers. Moreover, local governments rarely budget for replacing capital improvements until the replacements are needed, on the assumption that they will be covered by new revenues (read growth). The result is that the infrastructure demanded by growth must

be paid for by a new round of growth that, in turn, will also fail to pay for itself, but on an even larger scale.

Meanwhile, governments usually spread the cost of new infrastructure evenly among all taxpayers, rather than charging it to those who created the cost. This raises taxes for longtime residents, most of whom experience little or no benefit from the growth. Because they don't understand the economics of growth, they, too, begin to call for more growth, thinking it will relieve their tax burden. The community is now growing just to stay in place, and even a slight slowdown can cause serious fiscal crisis.

Ironically, Kinsley notes, growth subsidies are highest where local government allows or encourages the sprawl of urban expansion into rural areas. The costs of providing services to rural residential subdivisions are disproportionately high, while taxes on rural subdivisions are disproportionately low. Rural expansion appears cheaper than it will, over time, turn out to be, which in turn encourages more people to move to rural areas and demand urban services.

Many communities attempt to correct the price signal by assessing "impact fees," which are intended to make growth pay its way. In theory these fees should work, but the fear of being sued by developers restrains officials from asking for much. And since impact fees usually don't cover future replacement costs, they can actually lull governments into the same old trap of relying on fees from future projects to finance the upkeep of existing ones.



Kinsley is careful to distinguish between growth and development. Growth, he says, is an increase in quantity; development implies an increase in quality. Comparing communities to human beings, he notes that physical growth after maturity is known as cancer, yet development—learning new skills, discovering new interests and enterprises—can and should continue throughout life.

It's indeed true that growth creates jobs in a community. But Kinsley notes that sustainable development puts people to work, too—without requiring the expansion of services that leads to higher taxes, and without degrading quality of life.

Kinsley—who, incidentally, served as a county commissioner in Pitkin County (Aspen), Colorado, for ten years—advocates transforming the hidden subsidies of "socialized growth" into a system of explicit charges and subsidies more in keeping with a community's long-term goals. For example, if the removal of growth subsidies pushed prices beyond the reach of young families, then the community can take the subsidy it would have previously given to a developer and use it to build subsidized housing for young families. Such a policy would not expand the role of government, Kinsley argues, but would rather make governments more accountable by clearly identifying what is and isn't being paid for.

"Paying for Growth, Prospering from Development" is an attempt to bring reason to the looking-glass logic of contemporary land-use policy. If it convinces local officials of the need to put a fair price on growth, Kinsley says, it will have done its job. Compared to that, designing the legal and technical means to do so should be relatively easy.

Article reprinted with permission from the Spring 1995 Rocky Mountain Institute Newsletter. For more information contact the Institute at 1739 Snowmass Creek Rd., Snowmass, CO 81654, (970/927-3851).

Illustration/John Luoma, Natural Resources Council of Maine

# The Chagrin

## Sprawl threatens a scenic river

The Chagrin is the blue-blooded river of Northeast Ohio. It has the good fortune to be located in a scenic valley just 15 miles east of downtown Cleveland—a perfect spot for the country estates of Cleveland's wealthiest families. As a result, the river has been protected the old fashioned way. Rich people bought the surrounding land and kept it undeveloped.

Forty-nine miles of the Chagrin have been declared a state scenic river characterized by exceptional aquatic habitat and surrounding forest land.

Because it flows down from the snowbelt highlands, it takes on some of the steep, rocky traits of a mountain stream in western Pennsylvania. It is one of the only streams in Northeast Ohio to be classified in some areas as a "coldwater habitat," a stream able to support coldwater species such as trout. Other portions of the river and tributaries are "exceptional warm water habitats."

But today things are changing in the Chagrin Valley. Although some estates still survive and although the Cleveland Metroparks and private land trusts hold extensive stretches of the Chagrin, subdivisions are sprawling around the river and its tributary streams. Thus, one of the highest quality streams in the region is now being threatened.

Population in the Chagrin watershed increased 6.4 percent between 1980 and 1990, according to a study by the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency. The construction of homes, roads and businesses increases the rate and amount of water flowing into the river during rains. The increased flow and heavier sediment loads stress aquatic organisms in the river and increase the threat of flooding. In addition, the removal of the cooling forest canopy elevates water temperatures. Cool water species like the trout cannot tolerate the changes.

In 1990 and 1991, the Ohio EPA

conducted an intensive water quality and biological survey of the Chagrin. Here are some of the worrisome findings:

- The East Branch's coldwater habitat status is seriously threatened by increasing suburban land uses in the watershed.
- Elevated bacteria levels from untreated sewage are present in the East Branch near unsewered areas of Kirtland.
- Bank stabilization and channel modifications along the East Branch are beginning to impair aquatic life.
- Industrial discharges

from the Ivex plant in Chagrin Falls have degraded habitat in the river's mainstem.

- Fish and macroinvertebrate (e.g., crayfish, insects) communities in the Aurora Branch are impacted downstream from the McFarland Creek wastewater treatment plant and the Aurora Central wastewater treatment plant.

The insults to the river are getting more flagrant, as homeowners seek to build closer and closer to the stream. Several years ago, for example, a Chagrin Falls resident, David Miller, built a deck over the river (right over the water). Then, to protect the deck, he built two "deflector groins" upstream. The 30-foot long, stone groins stick out at right angles from the river bank and divert the flow of water. Luckily, the Army Corps of Engineers found out that Miller did not obtain a dredge and fill permit before constructing the groins. So the Corps made him apply for one after the fact. As part of the review process, the Ohio EPA refused to grant a water quality certification for the permit. (Agency staff members were concerned that the groins could cause deposition of sediment above the groins and increased scouring below. If people were allowed to install such structures wherever they wanted, the cumulative effects could alter the nature of the river.) Miller was finally ordered to remove most of the groins.

But rivers in developing areas like the

Chagrin must endure many other insults that are not reversed. In some respects, the high-quality streams suffer most because they have the most to lose. Small changes in the watershed have big water quality impacts.

"Streams like the Chagrin are fragile because they're so good," says Andy Vidra, an environmental planner at NOACA. "We're going to see a lot of changes out there."

He adds that he is especially concerned about small tributary streams in developing areas. "The tributaries are the first to go because one subdivision can affect them... And when you mess up the headwaters it's felt all the way downstream, as far as the fish communities are concerned." □

### For more information

- *Chagrin River Water Quality Update*, a report by the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA), 241-2414.
- *Biological and Water Quality Study of the Chagrin River Basin* (December, 1991), by the Ohio EPA Division of Water Quality Planning and Assessment, 425-9171.

## Building down to the river

The Chagrin River is not the only high-quality stream now threatened by sprawling development in Northeast Ohio. Others include:

- East Branch of the Rocky River south of Berea—development in Strongsville and North Royalton.
- West Branch of the Rocky River and Plum Creek tributary—development in Strongsville and northern Medina County.
- French Creek tributary to the Black River—development in Avon.
- Tinkers Creek—development in Solon and Twinsburg.
- Upper Cuyahoga River—impact of new SR-422 highway through southern Geauga County.
- Grand River tributaries in Lake County (Kellogg Creek, Big Creek, Paine Creek)—development in Mentor, Concord Twp. and Leroy Twp.

*"Streams like the Chagrin are fragile because they're so good. We're going to see a lot of changes out*

# Invasion of the sprawl-marts

By Jordan Yin

"Cleveland's retail outlets are decentralizing" was the conclusion of the *Real Property Inventory of Metropolitan Cleveland*, a study published in 1942. Today, retailing continues to sprawl ever farther in Northeast Ohio, consuming land and adding to the built environment at a scale disproportionate to the area's slow growth in population and income.

The latest retailing boom—generally taking place outside of Cuyahoga County's I-271/480 beltway—added 940,000 square feet of shopping center retail space in 1994. That brought the region's total to 48 million square feet, with another million expected to be built in 1995.

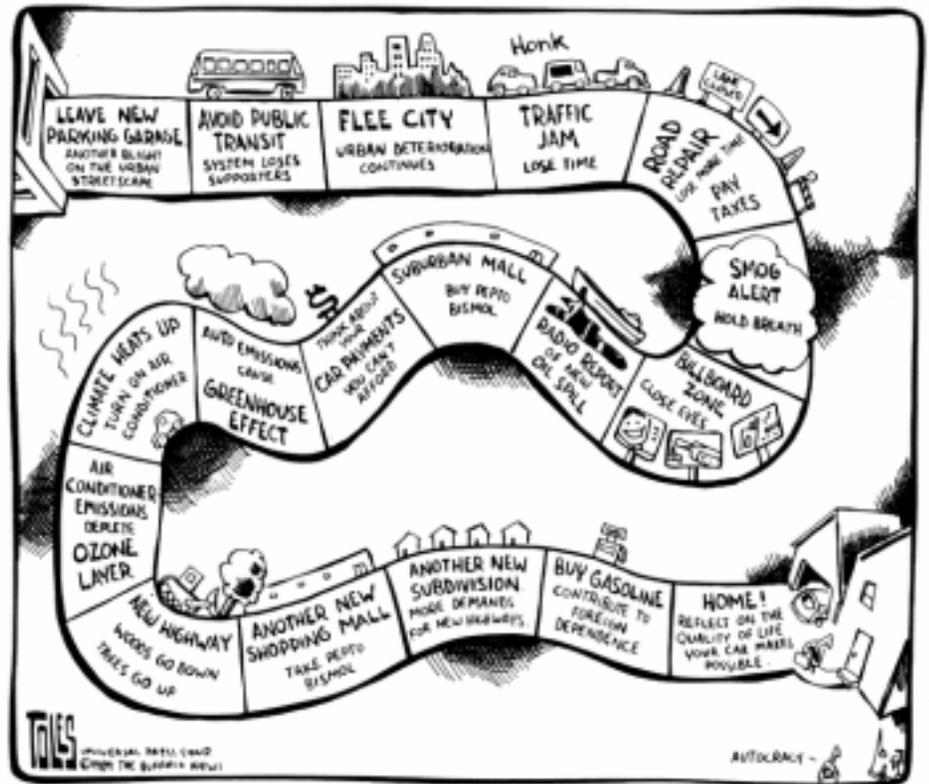
## Big box invasion

Retail sprawl in the 1990s saw the invasion of the "category killers" (like Best Buy, Circuit City and Borders bookstores) and the "sprawl-mart" superstores into Northeast Ohio. Wal-Mart stores led the superstore invasion in 1992 by opening eight stores in Northeast Ohio, and by 1993 two more mega-chains, Meijers and Target, were each looking for up to a dozen sites for their 120,000- to 240,000-square-foot superstores.

The rapid rise of the sprawl-marts was facilitated by weak suburban and rural zoning, as well as by a number of suburban and exurban authorities looking to add to their property and sales tax bases. Additionally, large-scale retail real estate development was aided by low interest rates and a surge in Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) activity.

REITs are private development companies that generally do not pay federal corporate income taxes due to their "trust" status. For example, one local REIT, Developers Diversified Realty Corp. of Moreland Hills, built a Wal-Mart in Macedonia, a Target in Stow and many other retail suburban retail projects under their tax-favored REIT status—yet another hidden subsidy for sprawl.

This latest round of retailing was mostly



Tom Toles/Buffalo News

unexpected and pointed to the region's lack of metro-level planning. For example, the city of Cleveland's *Civic Vision 2000* comprehensive plan published in 1987 presumed that "the increasing saturation of the suburban retail market is creating a renewed interest in central city locations on the part of major retailers." When the sprawl-marts arrived, however, neither Target nor Wal-Mart located in the city.

## The costs of retail sprawl

The primary attraction of more, bigger retailing is the potential for more revenue for towns and

savings for shoppers. But the economic and environmental consequences have generally outweighed the benefits.

Large-scale retail generates a number of environmental concerns, including the consumption of open land, the addition of

more impermeable asphalt leading to increased water pollution and soil erosion, and the concentration of auto traffic leading to increased air pollution and fuel consumption.

In economic and fiscal terms, a number of reviews indicate that superstores are a costly proposition. A recent "full-cost accounting" study by Vermont's Environmental Board found that a 120,000-square-foot superstore could be expected to generate \$3 in public costs for every \$1 in public benefit, as well as cause net job losses for the community. Fundamentally, when income and population are not growing, new superstores have the effect of squeezing out existing, smaller businesses.

While the development of new superstores in the region has slowed, secondary sprawl of more retail and housing will occur near the sprawl-marts. Where the superstores have followed small population shifts—as did Macedonia's Wal-Mart—the increased availability of services will encourage even greater sprawl in coming years, driving up public costs for schools,

*When income and population are not growing, new superstores have the effect of squeezing out existing, smaller businesses.*

roads and other services. It is these areas that will need to be especially careful in managing (and limiting) their future growth.

## Fighting sprawl-marts and winning

Communities across Northeast Ohio hardly took the superstore invasion lying down. Concerned residents from Westlake to Tallmadge to Chardon turned out to battle the sprawl-marts. In Broadview Heights, residents voted down a rezoning for a 230,000-square-foot Meijers store. The Meijers chain later scrapped its Cleveland area expansion plans entirely.

Residents of Cleveland Heights and South Euclid successfully protested a massive, 800,000-square-foot sprawl-mart strip mall development that would have hurt the aging Severance Center mall and destroyed a 170-acre green space. Through protests, petitions, public forums, legal challenges and by helping cities to adopt sensible development polices citizens can prevent destructive development.

## The best offense is a good defense

The best way to fight retail sprawl is to prepare for it by making sure that your town is prepared for long-range planning, critical areas protection, transportation planning, historic preservation and targeted economic development. Land-use regulations and comprehensive plans should reflect a reasonable opportunity for growth that balances economic and environmental needs.

Organizations such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation have a wide variety of resources available to communities and citizens interested in preserving historic places. A key priority of many communities is to preserve their open spaces free from development. The Trust for Public Land recently helped the community of Billerica, MA, put together a plan for public acquisition and permanent conservation of an open space that was threatened by superstore development. Lastly, targeted economic development efforts can aid in the re-use of existing buildings and encourage the

renovation of aging, inner-ring suburban shopping centers.

While town-by-town solutions are essential, regional and state level initiatives could also play a crucial role in stemming the tide of retail sprawl. The invasion of six Wal-Mart stores into rural Lancaster County, PA, led the county to adopt an urban growth boundary to contain future development to appropriate areas. A state growth management act,

*"There's more to life than cheap underwear." —Slogan of Wal-Mart opponents*

like Vermont's Act 250, would help communities understand the true costs of sprawl and force cooperation between usually competitive suburbs. A state-level historic

preservation act (often called a "little 106" after the federal act) would help communities better preserve their heritage areas.

The sprawl-mart invasion has taken Northeast Ohio by storm, and its full consequences—new demands for public services, abandonment of older stores and malls, more housing development and increased auto use—won't be seen for several years. Citizens have proven themselves successful in fending off some unwanted destructive developments and must continue to be vigilant in their efforts. In the long run, however, a sustainable future lies in regional cooperation and new tools that can encourage balanced development. □

*Jordan Yin helped lead the fight against a proposed superstore development at the Oakwood Country Club site in Cleveland Heights and South Euclid. He is now a graduate student at Cornell University.*

## Resources

▪ *How Superstore Sprawl Can Harm Communities and What Citizens Can Do About It* by Constance Beaumont of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1994. Available by calling 202/673-4000.

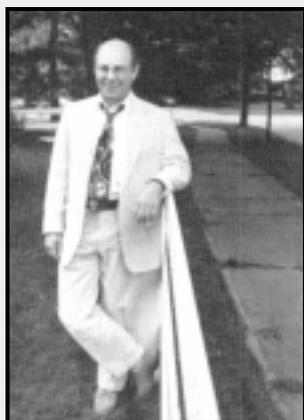
▪ *Saving the Neighborhood: You can fight developers and win* by Peggy Robin, Woodbine House Books, 1990.

▪ *Sprawl-Busters ALERT* newsletter, featuring news on superstore battles across the country. The Conservation Law Foundation, 62 Summer St., Boston, MA 02110, (617/350-0990).

## Is your town prepared for growth?

Here are some important questions to ask about your community's ability to manage growth and retain its character. The questions come from a "Project PREPARE Report Card" created by the Northeast Regional Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Philip B. Herr & Associates.

- Do controls in village centers allow real compactness, through permitting lots and setbacks as small, densities as high, and roads as compact, winding and steep as those already existing in well-liked areas?
- Do the combination of public parking provisions and zoning parking requirements allow compact business development by waiving onsite parking in village centers, perhaps using impact fees?
- Do subdivision regulations avoid mandating uniform development in all contexts by having standards which vary for different locations, such as village, farmlands, and woodlands?
- Does the town lead the way through centrally locating such public development as town offices, housing for the elderly, post offices, and recreational facilities, and removing from central areas inappropriate public uses, such as public works yards?
- In outlying areas, does the town strictly limit the extent of business zoning along highways and impose strict egress and buffering controls to preserve rural views?
- Do town regulations effectively encourage or require affordable housing support as part of new town developments, resulting in such housing in more than a single development?
- Is there architectural design control, whether within historic districts or otherwise?
- Are there scenic roads controls, strict billboard controls, and on-premise sign controls which go beyond numerical rules (e.g., size limitations) to deal with design quality?
- Has the town adopted cluster zoning or similar controls and made it possible for the town to decide when and where clustering must be used?
- Has the town more than once appropriated funds for property or property rights acquisition to protect natural or cultural resources?
- Has the community created mechanisms (such as community development corporations) to do selective economic development?



James Howard Kunstler

*I believe that the ugliness we see is the mere surface expression of a whole range of deeper problems; problems that go to the issue of our national character. The highway strip is not just a sequence of eyesores. The pattern it represents is also economically catastrophic, environmentally calamitous, socially devastating, and spiritually*

## The geography of nowhere

*The following remarks are excerpted from a speech, "A Crisis in Landscape and Townscape," by James Howard Kunstler, critic of urban sprawl and author of the acclaimed book, The Geography of Nowhere. Kunstler spoke at Cleveland State University in June 1994. EcoCity Cleveland co-sponsored his visit.*

Walt Disney had America's number. Walt Disney was so optimistic about the way things were going in post-war America that his attitudes about the past and the future were equally sentimental. It was possible for him to believe that an organization like his own, operating freely in a free country, could only bring wonderful benefits to a free people. So, the underlying message of Disney's Main Street USA was that a big corporation could make a better Main Street than a bunch of rubes in a real small town. And Walt was right!

Through the post-war decades, Americans happily allowed their towns to be dismantled and destroyed. They'd flock to Disneyland and walk down Main Street and think, gee, it feels good here. Then they'd go back home and tear down half the old buildings downtown, so they could have more parking lots, and they'd throw a parade to celebrate the new K-Mart opening—even when it put ten local merchants out of business—and they'd turn Elm Street into a six-lane expressway, and outlaw corner grocery stores in the residential neighborhoods because they caused "traffic problems," and they'd build all the new schools three miles out of town so the kids couldn't walk or bike there—they'd do every fool thing possible to destroy good existing relationships between things in their towns,

and put their local economies at the mercy of distant corporations whose officers didn't care whether these towns lived or died. And then, when vacation time rolled around, they'd flock to Disneyland to feel good about America.

I just wrote a book called *The Geography of Nowhere*, about the mess we have made out of our everyday environment here in America. The public discussion of this issue has been nearly non-existent. We apparently don't understand, for instance, that there's a connection between our economic predicament and the physical arrangement of life in this country. Yet I believe when you scratch just below the surface, Americans keenly sense that something *is* wrong with the places where we live and work and go about our daily business. We hear this unhappiness expressed in phrases like "the loss of community" or "no sense of place."

We drive up and down the gruesome tragic suburban boulevards of commerce, and we wince at the fantastic, awesome, overwhelming, stupefying ugliness of absolutely everything in sight—the fry pits, the Big Box stores, the office units, the lube-joints, the carpet warehouses, the parking lagoons, the jive-plastic townhouse clusters, the uproar of signs, the highway itself clogged with cars—as though the whole thing had been designed by some diabolical force bent on making human beings miserable. And naturally, this experience can make you feel kind of glum about the nature and *future* of our civilization.

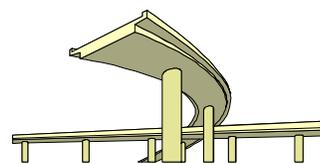
Some—though certainly not all—of these terrible things were designed by architects, and many of the other common features of our everyday environments were

designed by their brethren in related design fields like landscaping and traffic engineering, and administered by creatures called planners. What's out there is not out there by accident. We created Nowhere by a definite set of rules, and if we're going to fix this mess, and take ourselves from nowhere to someplace, we'll have to re-examine and change these rules.

So, we drive around and look at all this cartoon architecture and other junk we've scattered across the landscape and our response is, in some form or other, "YUK." I believe that the ugliness we see is the mere surface expression of a whole range of deeper problems; problems that go to the issue of our national character. The highway strip is not just a sequence of eyesores. The pattern it represents is also economically catastrophic, environmentally calamitous, socially devastating, and spiritually degrading. And all this is what we sense when we look at it and go "YUK."

We built a nation of scary places and became a nation of scary people.

In our manner of building since the end of World War II, we have managed to fill our land with things that are unworthy of our affection, and these add up to thousands of places that are not worth caring about. In the process of filling our landscape with these loveless and unlovable structures, we have thrown our civic life into the garbage can. And as a final consequence of all this, we are putting ourselves out of business as a civilization. □





# No more business as usual?

**The region's \$4.7 billion transportation plan seeks to break our sprawling highway habits  
But will it make a difference?**

*This article, originally published in the October 1993 issue of EcoCity Cleveland, describes the struggles of local planners to consider sprawl when making transportation improvements.*

Progressive Insurance has a traffic problem. The company is building a new corporate headquarters in the eastern suburbs of Cuyahoga County, and soon hundreds of additional commuters will be clogging the highway interchange at I-271 and Wilson Mills Road.

In the past, transportation planners would have rushed to alleviate the anticipated congestion—adding lanes to Wilson Mills Road, installing new traffic signals, modifying the freeway ramps. If a major employer or developer created a traffic bottleneck, it was up to the taxpayers to fix the problem with more concrete.

*The planning paradigm is changing from growth and expansion of infrastructure to maintenance and greater efficiency. It's changing from single-minded highway planning to a consideration of how various transportation modes affect land*

However, an interesting thing happened last month at the board meeting of the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA). An emergency resolution was introduced calling for NOACA to conduct a traffic study of the Wilson Mills Road area. The resolution's sponsors—the surrounding communities of Highland Heights and Mayfield Village, the Ohio Department of Transportation and Cuyahoga County Engineer—wanted the study in a hurry so road work can be completed before Progressive's headquarters opens in 1995.

But the resolution didn't slip through unchallenged.

"Why is this an emergency?" asked Cleveland planning director Hunter Morrison.

Perhaps recalling how Progressive had once planned to build its headquarters in downtown Cleveland rather than on the fringe of the metropolitan area, Morrison wondered why the resolution had not gone through NOACA's transportation advisory committee where it could have been analyzed in detail. He and other board members questioned how the Progressive project could be linked to public transit and what would

be the impacts on the entire I-271 corridor.

As a result of concerns like these, Progressive will get its traffic study, but it will be different from the studies NOACA has done in the past. Instead of just studying how to expand the roads, it will first study how to reduce the number of cars using the roads, especially during rush hours.

For example, planners will work with local transit authorities to improve public transit service to the area. And they will work with Progressive and other employers to

provide incentives for employees to leave their cars at home. Progressive has already started talking with NOACA's Rideshare program about organizing car and van pools for employees.

It will be difficult for such "transportation demand management" measures to succeed in the case of an office building on the edge of suburban sprawl with workers living all over the region. Car pools can only go so far to compensate for fundamentally bad, low-density land use. But at least traffic reduction is on the agenda now. It's a positive sign.

## The plan

Positive signs can also be found in NOACA's recently updated Long Range Transportation Plan. The plan provides the framework for how Cuyahoga, Lorain, Medina, Geauga and Lake counties will spend \$4.7 billion of transportation funds by the year 2010. Perhaps no other single plan will have more influence on the future development of our region.

The plan is noteworthy because it does not call for major new highway projects beyond those already in the planning pipeline (although those projects are substantial). Thus, it assumes that the regional highway system is essentially complete.

The plan allocates about three-fourths of its spending to maintain and improve the efficiency of our existing transportation system. This includes highway and bridge repairs, bus replacement, high-tech equipment to monitor traffic flow ("smart highways"), traffic signal improvements and park-and-ride lots. It also calls for initiatives to reduce demand on the system through rideshare programs, staggered work hours, employer-subsidized transit passes, a regional policy to reduce free parking in the suburbs, and increased telecommuting from homes.

Just as significant, the plan attempts to set new policies for adding transportation capacity. The committee writing the plan debated three possible policies for new transportation investments:

**1) Business as usual.** Support present development and infrastructure patterns by investing in highway capacity at suburban locations where congestion exists today and where it is forecasted to be in the future. Put more bus lines out on the metropolitan fringe to support suburb-to-suburb movement. Create new opportunities for development with new highway interchanges and new highway corridors.

According to a draft of the plan, this "no

intervention" policy would give state and local governments, developers and businesses a welcomed sense of continuity. But it would promote more sprawl, more outmigration of population and tax base from the core of the region (Cleveland and Cuyahoga County), and probably greater air pollution.

**2) Focus on a compact core.** Encourage compact land development and infill of abandoned urban space, while discouraging sprawl and low-density development. Invest in transit radiating from the central city

Taking into account the threat of sanctions for continued air pollution violations, put little or no investment into any transportation infrastructure capacity. Transfer large amounts (\$75-100 million a year) from state and federal highway accounts to transit systems. Devise an intensive multi-county transit network and increase subsidies for rideshare alternatives. Encourage developers to build new subdivisions and office parks around transit services.

This option would require major policy



Tom Toles/Bufalo News

(realigning RTA's Red Line with a downtown subway and developing commuter rail lines to bring workers into the central business district). Widen freeway bottlenecks coming into downtown and use the new capacity for high occupancy vehicles during rush hours.

This policy would represent "a major change in the way state and local governments consider infrastructure," says the draft plan. "It is not at all compatible with present development trends and forecasts." But, combined with other policies, it could strengthen the core of the region while reducing development pressure on surrounding rural areas.

**3) Radical shift to public transit.**

changes at the federal and state levels, and possibly a change in state law for transfer of state gas tax revenues to public transit. Even with greater support, however, it's not certain that transit can wean many people from their cars, given all the other public subsidies for the automobile—low gas taxes, free parking, etc.

## A new day?

At its October [1993] meeting, the NOACA board is expected to adopt the second policy described above, with the addition of some of the weaker transit recommendations from policy three.

This could "change the relationship of

public officials with private developers and with the state," says the draft plan. "With the proposed policy in hand, local officials may request developers to make residential and commercial buildings accessible by transit. Local officials may ask state transportation planners to bring emphasis to the oldest parts of the urban freeway system instead of to the rural parts. Local officials would show a preference for transit and high occupancy vehicles over single occupancy vehicles."

The prospect of such a policy is prompting talk about "a new day" for transportation planning in Northeast Ohio.

"What we're trying to do is so different and so significant that we don't even realize it yet," says NOACA executive director Howard Maier.

The planning paradigm is changing from growth and expansion of infrastructure to maintenance and greater efficiency. It's changing from single-minded highway planning to a consideration of complex transportation systems—the interaction of all modes of transportation (car, train, boat, airplane, bicycle) with land use. It starts to recognize that compact land use—putting people and places close together—reduces the need for transportation in the first place.

## Enforcing a new paradigm

Setting a new policy and enforcing it are different matters, however. The draft Long Range Plan is full of limp recommendations like "encourage compact land development" and "try to encourage developers to build more transit-oriented subdivisions." There are no specific strategies for making these things happen, no goals for measuring progress.

"There's no way to link up the policy recommendations with the land-use decisions of local municipalities," said Cuyahoga County Planning Commission director Paul Alsenas at a recent meeting. "You need specific prescriptions on how to do it. You can't do it by encouraging and hoping that enlightenment will somehow happen."

Could regional agencies like NOACA start denying transportation funds to municipalities if they don't conform to certain land-use guidelines? Perhaps. But don't look for it to happen soon. And don't look for it to happen without the backing of a state land-use law.

Indeed, Cuyahoga County officials are still smarting over last year's debate about a proposal to widen I-71 in Medina County and I-90 in Lorain County. They rightly questioned the projects on the grounds that

additional highway lanes could promote sprawl and weaken the entire region, including Medina and Lorain counties. But they backed down after Lorain County officials played political hardball and threatened to stop funding for transportation projects serving Gateway.

*"We haven't had the political will to confront these issues in an honest way," said Cuyahoga County Commissioner Timothy Hagan, who chaired the NOACA committee drafting the Long Range Plan.*

"We haven't had the political will to confront these issues in an honest way," said Cuyahoga County Commissioner Timothy Hagan, who chaired the NOACA committee drafting the Long Range Plan.

Ultimately, it will take courageous political leadership and strong public support to manage regional transportation and development in a more rational, ecological way. If we

don't do it, we will keep running into problems like Progressive Insurance—companies that create impossible situations with their edge city development and then expect the rest of society to bail them out.

"We're behind the curve on all these things," Hagan acknowledged. "That's why we need changes in the Long Range Plan and why we need more debate on sprawl issues. Many of the things we approved perfunctorily before will have to be viewed through a different prism." □

## Resources

- Build Up Greater Cleveland, Greater Cleveland Growth Association, 50 Public Square, Suite 200, Cleveland, OH 44113, (621-7220).
- Cleveland Area Bicycling Association (CABA), PO Box 94226, Cleveland, OH 44101, (522-2944).
- Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, 443-3700.
- EcoCity Cleveland, 2841 Scarborough Rd., Cleveland Heights, OH 44118, (932-3007).
- Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA), 668 Euclid Ave., Cleveland, OH 44114 (241-2414).
- Ohio Department of Transportation District 12, 581-1200.
- Regional Environmental Priorities Project at Case Western Reserve University, 368-2988.
- Sierra Club Urban Sprawl Committee, 521-2434 or 575-7551.
- Surface Transportation Policy Project, 1400 Sixteenth St. NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036, (202/939-3470).

## Transportation talk

**MPO:** The federal government requires that urban areas over 50,000 population have a metropolitan planning organization, or MPO, to conduct comprehensive transportation planning and act as a clearinghouse for federal funds. Ideally, MPOs are supposed to be forums for debate, so varied municipalities and jurisdictions can come together and set regional priorities.

**NOACA:** The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency is the MPO serving Cuyahoga, Lorain, Medina, Geauga and Lake counties. Summit and Portage counties are covered by a different MPO called the Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study, or AMATS.

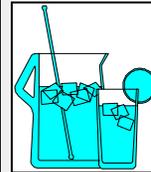
**LRP:** Every 10 years, NOACA updates the region's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRP). The plan forecasts transportation needs for the next 20 years and explains how the region intends to meet those needs. The plan takes into account population changes, employment trends, traffic volume, social and environmental conditions and many other factors. To develop the plan, NOACA works closely with the agencies responsible for actually implementing projects—the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), county engineers, transit agencies, local municipalities, etc.

**TIP:** There's also a short-term transportation plan known as the TIP, or Transportation Improvement Plan. This is the specific list of projects set to go forward in the coming four years. NOACA updates it annually. If your community's road widening project, bridge repair or bikeway isn't on the TIP, it isn't eligible for federal funding.

**TAC:** The NOACA committee responsible for considering changes to the LRP and the TIP is the Transportation Advisory Committee, or the TAC. This is where the action is.

**SIP:** NOACA also prepares a State Implementation Plan, or SIP, which describes how the region will meet EPA air quality standards. Reducing vehicle emissions is a major part of the SIP.

**ISTEA:** The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, dubbed "Ice Tea," gives local communities



greater flexibility in spending federal transportation dollars by allowing less money to go for highway construction. It emphasizes efficient use of existing facilities, mass transit and the coordination of different modes of transportation. It also requires that transportation plans "conform" with the Clean Air Act.

# Getting the transportation we want

Something revolutionary has been happening at the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency. During late 1995 and early 1996, a task force has been quietly working to develop a scoring system to rank transportation projects proposed in the five-county region.

To give you a sense for just how revolutionary this is, consider how things worked in the past. A new development would bring traffic congestion to a particular road. In response, local officials would demand that their county engineer or the state widen the road, add a highway interchange, or at least improve the traffic signals.

The implementing agency would then go through the formality of getting the desired project listed on NOACA's Transportation Improvement Program (the TIP) so that it would be eligible for federal funding. It didn't matter if there wasn't enough money to build the project right away. The project got listed with the expectation that, sooner or later, it would happen. And the order in which projects happened often had less to do with the regional benefit of the particular project than its readiness (e.g., how quickly the engineering work could be completed), the availability of local matching funds or local politics.

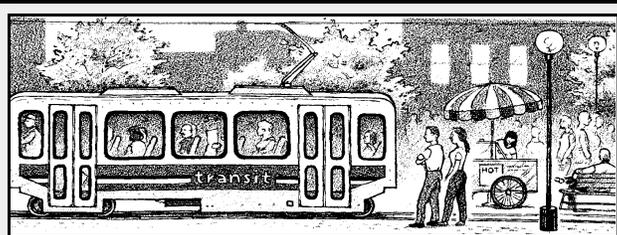
Most projects did get built eventually. It was NOACA's job to expedite the process, not ask a lot of questions that would slow down growth. So few people asked whether it made sense for the region to be promoting more automobile use or whether we ought to be expanding roads to subsidize development in rural areas.

But the transportation planning climate has changed in the past four years since the passage of the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act and new budget constraints at the state and federal

levels. Now the federally-mandated goal of transportation no longer is simply to move more cars faster, but also to improve accessibility, quality of life, air quality and energy efficiency with a mix of various transportation modes. Planners at NOACA are supposed to balance these factors and are now "fiscally constrained," meaning that the TIP has to be a short list of projects that the region can really afford, rather than a long wish list.

All this means that NOACA has to make tough choices like never before. A couple of years ago, it started developing a framework for choosing by adopting an excellent list of general planning principles. (Principle 10, for instance, says, "It is the intent of the NOACA Board to encourage efficient, compact land use development that facilitates mobility, saves infrastructure costs, preserves environmentally-sensitive and agricultural lands, and enhances the economic viability of existing communities within the region.")

Now the agency is developing specific criteria so that it can evaluate how proposed transportation projects live up to the principles. In early drafts, the criteria include technical factors—whether a project will preserve the existing system (based on condition of pavement, bridges or bus



## The right stuff

Which transportation improvements should get top priority in our region? The Northeast Ohio Regional Environmental Priorities Project, a program at Case Western Reserve University which has called suburban sprawl one of the region's greatest environmental threats, says we should favor transportation projects that will:

- Preserve open space.
- Minimize public health threats from air pollution.
- Minimize duplication of infrastructure.
- Preserve or enhance a sense of neighborhood and community.
- Use multimodal strategies to reduce automobile use (i.e., maximize use of pedestrian, mass transit and bicycle-friendly options).
- Do not substantially contribute to further erosion of the tax base of any existing urbanized community in the region.
- Reduce the need for travel by promoting compact, mixed-use development.

The key thing to remember is that the need for costly transportation is a sign that places are inconveniently located; the less transportation the better. We should focus on taking care of places, rather than increasing the mobility

fleets); whether it will improve the efficiency of the system (reduce congestion, reduce air pollution, reduce transfer times between travel modes), reduce peak demand (e.g., rush hour traffic) and so on.

But the most interesting criteria proposed are for projects that would add capacity to the transportation system, such as new or expanded highways. They include questions such as: Was the problem defined in such a way that there could be a multi-modal solution? (For instance, is the question how to move more cars faster past a certain point or how to create the most efficient mix of driving, walking, biking and transit?) Or, does the project enhance the quality of life for adjacent property or does it degrade quality of life in terms of visual aesthetics, noise, accessibility?

There will also be scoring of land use impacts:

- Is the land near the project open space

## Driven to death?

As we sprawl in Northeast Ohio, we move places farther apart, and that forces us to drive more. According to the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA), the annual number of miles driven in the five-county region increased by two thirds from 1970 to 1990. That figure could increase another 15 percent in the next two decades. Moreover, by the year 2010 the number of motor vehicles in the region will exceed the number of *people*.

Presently, the residents of the region make nearly 8 million trips on the average weekday, and 91 percent of those trips are made in motorized vehicles (as opposed to walking and biking). Nearly all of these motorized trips are made in automobiles, as a driver or passenger. Only three percent of the motorized trips are by public transportation.

or developed?

- What percentage of undeveloped land is wetland, forest, farmland?
- Does potential development result in a tax base shift from existing urban areas?
- Are the necessary infrastructure and utilities already in place for the anticipated development?
- Is the proposed development transit-oriented and/or walkable?
- Does the municipality have a fair housing ordinance and a range of housing prices?

Such criteria are meant to favor projects in existing urban areas. Extra points also may be given to projects in communities with higher population densities.

If successful, NOACA's new criteria will force transportation planners to systematically evaluate whether each proposed project meets the agency's goals. The right questions will be built into the system.

That will be a great leap forward for NOACA. But it still won't solve the problem of

sponsorship. NOACA is not a sponsoring or implementing agency. It only approves projects. NOACA may devise criteria that will favor high-density, transit-friendly developments in the city, but if the only projects proposed are ones promoting low-density suburban sprawl, that's what will get built.

NOACA officials hope the new scoring system will send a clear signal about what projects are desirable, so that project sponsors (county engineers, local communities, ODOT) will start planning projects that will meet the goals of the region.

In the next several years, we'll see if it works. And we'll see what happens when projects start being rejected. What will happen, for example, when a suburban mayor is told the road to his or her new office park scored low and does not merit funding? We'll see then if NOACA will be able to take the political heat. □

*For more information about NOACA's TIP Prioritization Task Force, call Ron Eckner or John Hosek at 241-2414.*

## Repercussions

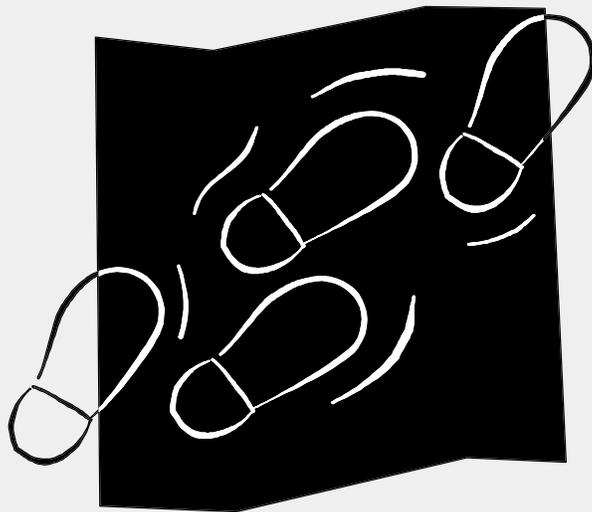
A friend in Oberlin has been thinking about new interchanges on the Ohio Turnpike. One is planned at Ohio 58, the country road to Oberlin. My friend worries about increased traffic through the center of town. Eventually, traffic engineers might try to widen the road, then put in a by-pass. A peaceful and historic college town could be transformed by a highway interchange six miles away.

She wonders how she could have influenced the decision of the Turnpike Commission. Such decisions seem to occur in some unreachable place; everything is planned and greased by the time you find out about it. Even staffed citizens groups or environmental organizations find it hard to participate in complex processes like transportation planning. Who has the resources? Who has the staying-power?

Perhaps worse, the decision-makers themselves often don't understand the implications of their actions. In Lorain County, for instance, there is virtually no county-wide planning capacity—no one figuring out how all the roads and new developments will mesh in the future. As a result, things happen haphazardly in response to short-term needs.

Even a metropolitan planning agency like the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency is hard-pressed to understand how the bioregion works. It is just now starting to acquire the computerized, geographical mapping tools it needs to display land use trends.

But NOACA covers just part of our region. Summit and Portage counties belong to a separate metropolitan planning agency. So critical data stop at the county lines.



## Being there

*Instead of thinking of going places, think in terms of being places. That is, think in terms of establishing desirable places close to one another. Transportation is what you have to do to get to places inconveniently located: the less the better. For an occasional adventure, transportation is great and the world needs people not only going to foreign places but learning about them in depth and with sympathy. However, when it comes to travel to keep a vital urban lifestyle together, the less that is necessary the healthier your life and your environment.*

—Richard Register  
EcoCity Berkeley

*The key to integrating our thinking about transportation and land use is to focus on access rather than mobility. Mobility means going faster and farther. Access means getting to more places conveniently. With access, the focus is on places. Mobility focuses on paths, often to the neglect or even the destruction of places.*

—Joel Woodhull

# Ecological transportation

by Michael Schafer and Stephen Wheeler

When planners and politicians discuss transportation they often focus on congestion and reduce the situation to a simple problem of demand exceeding supply. Too often they simplify the solution as well by assuming that the answer is to increase supply—to build more roads and freeway lanes.

Likewise, many policy-makers these days are focusing on high technology innovations such as "smart cars" and "smart highways" as ways to increase the capacity of existing roads. Yet these approaches do little to address the complex, interconnected problems of air quality, congestion, parking blight, suburban sprawl, ecosystem destruction and social fragmentation which have resulted from our current transportation policies.

The ecological approach to transportation, in contrast, looks at the demand side of the equation rather than supply. By reducing demand—actually lowering "vehicles miles travelled"—we can begin to solve our current transportation dilemma and improve our quality of life without building new roads.

Since any attempt to reduce demand must consider the relationship between transportation and land use, this ecological approach necessitates a restructuring of our cities and towns in ways that will significantly reduce dependence on the automobile. In short, to solve current transportation problems we must look at how we plan and build cities.

## The problem

Prior to the advent of the automobile, most American cities were compact and walkable. This design can still be seen in the central areas of cities such as Boston, Philadelphia, San Francisco and many others. In the early twentieth century, streetcar lines extended the physical size of many of these cities, but the pattern was still walkable, with development closely following the rail lines.

Seventy years ago it would have been difficult to anticipate the impact of the automobile on the environment and society. Urban residents could not have imagined living in a neighborhood in which basic services were not available within a convenient walking distance. Transit linked nearly every community with the central city. People walked, neighbors conversed, communities thrived, and streets were safer.

However, since then our cities have been redesigned and rebuilt to accommodate the automobile. In many urban areas, homes were razed, businesses displaced, and neighborhoods destroyed to build freeways. Streetcar companies went bankrupt in a single generation. Automobile interests made sure that the streetcars disappeared; more than 100 electric trolley systems were bought up and scrapped starting in the 1930s by National City Lines, a company owned by General Motors, Standard Oil, Phillips Petroleum, Firestone Tire and Rubber, Mack Truck and others.

In recent decades, the automobile has become a necessity for almost every trip we make. The physical size of our cities has exploded far beyond what might have been required by population growth, as suburban sprawl has become the dominant development pattern. Housing, jobs, shopping, and recreation have become dispersed into a physical form that is clearly unsustainable.

## The solution

It is difficult to envision what our cities can become in the next century. We are not trained or encouraged to look so far ahead. But we must. We must again redesign and rebuild our cities—this time to accommodate people and ecosystems rather than the automobile.

Most European cities as well as older American cities (which many Americans love to visit) are compact and walkable. They were designed around the pedestrian, and demonstrate "access by proximity." Despite growing automobile ownership, many of these European cities are now moving aggressively towards giving even greater priority to pedestrians, bicycles and public transit. The Netherlands has constructed more than 9,000 miles of bicycle paths in recent years, and cars are being progressively banned from central Amsterdam. "Traffic calming" measures have been adopted in many German cities since the early 1980s. Florence, Naples, Bologna, Genoa and Rome have all implemented partial or total automobile bans in downtown areas. And by the year 2000, Bordeaux, France, plans to reserve half its streets for bikes and pedestrians.

Elsewhere in the world, in cities such as Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Hong Kong, Singapore, Brisbane, Melbourne, and Curitiba, Brazil, innovative programs have been developed to reduce automobile use. These initiatives point the way toward less automobile-dependent, more sustainable cities of the future.

Transportation in the ecological city will most likely be based on several simple principles: access by proximity, an inversion of the current transportation hierarchy and demand reduction.

## Access by proximity

When almost everything a person needs is nearby, within a comfortable walking distance, he or she doesn't need transportation. So naturally, any attempt to reduce transportation needs and automobile dependency should start with "access by proximity."

The ecological city is likely to feature relatively dense, mixed-use neighborhood centers. These compact "urban villages" will contain all the critical components of a community: shops, homes, workplaces, parks, civic centers, and recreation—all within walking or bicycling distance of one another. Surrounding these urban villages will be large areas of natural and agricultural lands. Transportation between urban villages can be provided by light rail or high-speed heavy rail. But most needs of daily life will be relatively close at hand for residents.

A number of steps can begin creating "access by proximity"

*Transportation in the ecological city will most likely be based on several simple principles: access by proximity, an inversion of the current transportation hierarchy and demand*

within current cities. Mixed-use, higher-density zoning is particularly important, especially around transit stops, downtown areas, and neighborhood centers. "First source" hiring policies, which give preference to local residents, help as well. Planners can employ specific tools to increase density, such as "density bonuses" in which parking requirements or other planning standards are reduced for appropriately sited developments that provide large numbers of housing units. The results of such zoning can be seen around rail stations in Toronto and near some stations of the Washington, DC, Metro system.

Studies have shown that automobile use decreases directly with housing density. In San Francisco, with an average of 32 housing units per acre, annual automobile use averages 5,000 miles per capita. Compare this with suburban Danville/San Ramon, CA, which has four housing units per acre and annual auto use of 10,000 miles per capita. The environmental impacts and implications are obvious—we must return to urban densities if we want to reduce automobile use. Not the high densities of Manhattan or Tokyo, but a more modest European-style density allowing for walkable neighborhoods. To make density attractive and livable, we must take additional steps to create ample parks, garden areas, greenways and community facilities, as well as actions to promote diversity, social justice and safety.

## **Inversion of the transportation hierarchy**

For the past five decades the automobile has been far and away the main focus of transportation planners and public officials. Next has come public transit. A distant third has been the bicycle. Pedestrians have hardly warranted mentioning.

This hierarchy of priorities should be reversed, with the heaviest emphasis placed on helping pedestrians, who, along with bicyclists, represent the most energy-efficient forms of transportation. Adopting traffic calming measures and more compact, mixed-use land use policies are both ways to foster pedestrian transportation.

Bicycle planning also should be placed at the top of the priority list. Currently in the United States less than five percent of the population rides a bike to work, even though millions of Americans live close enough to their jobs to be able to do so. Americans keep their bikes in the garage for good reasons—automobile-dominated streets are unfriendly, unsafe places for cyclists. But this situation can be changed, if governments are willing to plan for the bicycle instead of the automobile. Over a recent 10 year period, the Netherlands spent \$250 million on bicycle lanes, while even progressive U.S. cities like Berkeley, San Francisco and Oakland

spent little or nothing. No wonder more of the Dutch ride bikes.

Public transit needs attention as well, particularly transit that serves existing central cities and communities of color. Priority should be placed on rebuilding and modernizing the old streetcar lines scrapped by General Motors. In contrast, far-flung commuter rail systems like the San Francisco Bay Area's proposed BART extensions—which open vast amounts of rural land to suburban sprawl development—should be actively discouraged.

The automobile should be given lowest priority in the new hierarchy, and all existing automobile subsidies (which the World Resources Institute estimates at \$300-400 billion a year) should be ended immediately. New freeway and arterial development should be dropped from transportation planning, in line with the philosophy of the Alliance for a Paving Moratorium. Currently, state departments of transportation often try to justify new freeway construction as necessary to accommodate High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes. However, HOVs should be given existing freeway lanes, rather than being used as an excuse to widen the roads and increase capacity.

## **Demand reduction**

In the end, ecological transportation planning seeks to solve the transportation crisis not through technology or capacity increases, but by reducing the need for transportation in the first place. "Access by proximity" helps do this. Reversing current transportation priorities helps do this. And many market-based mechanisms can help as well.

The concept is similar to energy conservation. In the 1970s electric utilities began to realize that [energy conservation was more cost-effective and ecologically responsible than building new power plants]. Now "demand-side management" is one of the hottest concepts in the energy planning field.

The situation is similar with the field of transportation planning in the 1990s. Instead of building more and more roads, the challenge is to "conserve" traffic demand. This will entail not just tweaking the current system through regulations and market incentives, but rethinking the basic patterns of urban development that have held sway for the past 50 years.

To solve our transportation problems we need nothing short of a new vision of pedestrian-oriented cities, with cleaner air, safe and friendly streets, more land for parks, agriculture and housing, more money for real necessities, and a healthier population. □

*Reprinted with permission from the Summer 1993 issue of The Urban Ecologist, the newsletter of Urban Ecology, 405 14th St., Suite 701, Oakland, CA 94612, (510)251-6330. Urban Ecology is one of the world's leading ecology organizations. Memberships are \$35.*



**Ecological transportation planning seeks to solve the transportation crisis not through technology or capacity increases, but by reducing the need for transportation in the first place.**

## Open houses in the wrong places?



*In the short run, some members of the real estate industry profit from suburban sprawl. But the Cleveland Area Board of Realtors (CABOR) has begun to appreciate how, in the long run, sprawl undermines the economic strength of the region. In October 1991, CABOR issued a forward-thinking "Policy of Regional Planning for Growth and Redevelopment," excerpts from which are reprinted below.*

...CABOR calls upon local government officials to work with planning professionals, members of the real estate and business communities and other community leaders to coordinate planning among the municipalities of the seven-county Cleveland Metropolitan area, which constitutes one economic market.

CABOR believes that economic development can still be achieved, even though significant regional population growth is unlikely, according to current demographic projections. CABOR also recognizes that many factors, including tax-supported infrastructure growth and other government incentives, have contributed to the outmigration of population and employment from Cleveland and its inner-ring suburbs.

CABOR, in the interests of long-term economic development and the health of the local real estate market, supports community and regional planning efforts which:

- Emphasize urban redevelopment and new urban residential and commercial construction.
- Avoid expensive exurban (beyond suburban) duplication of the infrastructure.
- Strengthen rather than deplete the tax base.
- Preserve certain green space, farm land and natural habitat.
- Enhance community and neighborhood identity and character.
- Support the property values of the region.
- Maximize regional assets and the quality of life throughout the area.

CABOR strongly recommends that all government spending and incentives which encourage outmigration be approached with great caution. The long-term, regional effects of infrastructure proposals for highways, water and sewer, mass transit and other services on the placement of new housing development, employment and commerce should, likewise, be carefully analyzed before implementation...

CABOR urges county and local government officials to actively pursue a process for mutually agreed upon new housing targets with particular emphasis on new housing in all price ranges within the urban centers of the seven-county Cleveland area.

# ZONED FOR YOUR PROTECTION?

## The failure of zoning in the age of suburbia

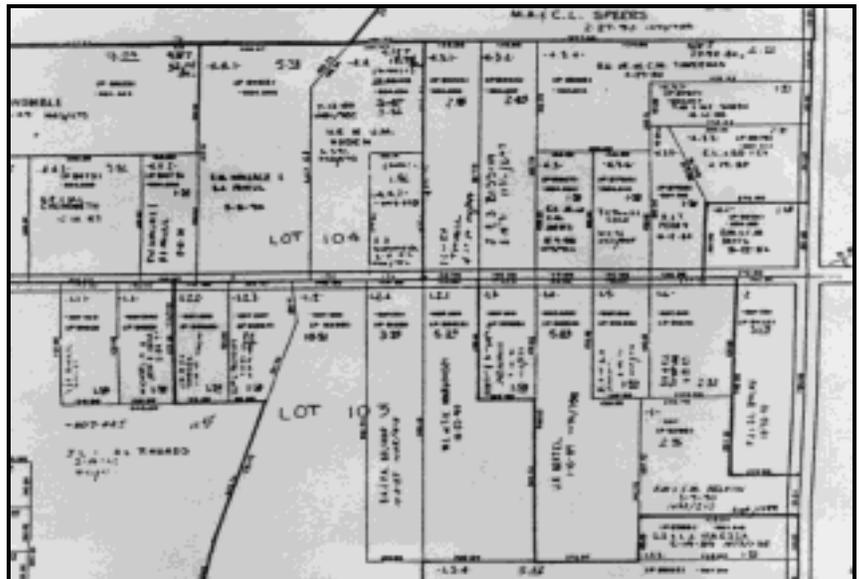
At the rural edges of Greater Cleveland there is a growing sense that things are out of control.

The feeling comes from the quickening pace of development—development with scale and impact far beyond anything rural communities have experienced before. As a result, residents feel they are losing what makes their communities special. They feel that their expectations for the future have been violated. And they feel that all this growth—the subdivisions, superstores, industrial parks, and the new highways and sewer lines which make it all possible—is unnecessary and unsustainable.

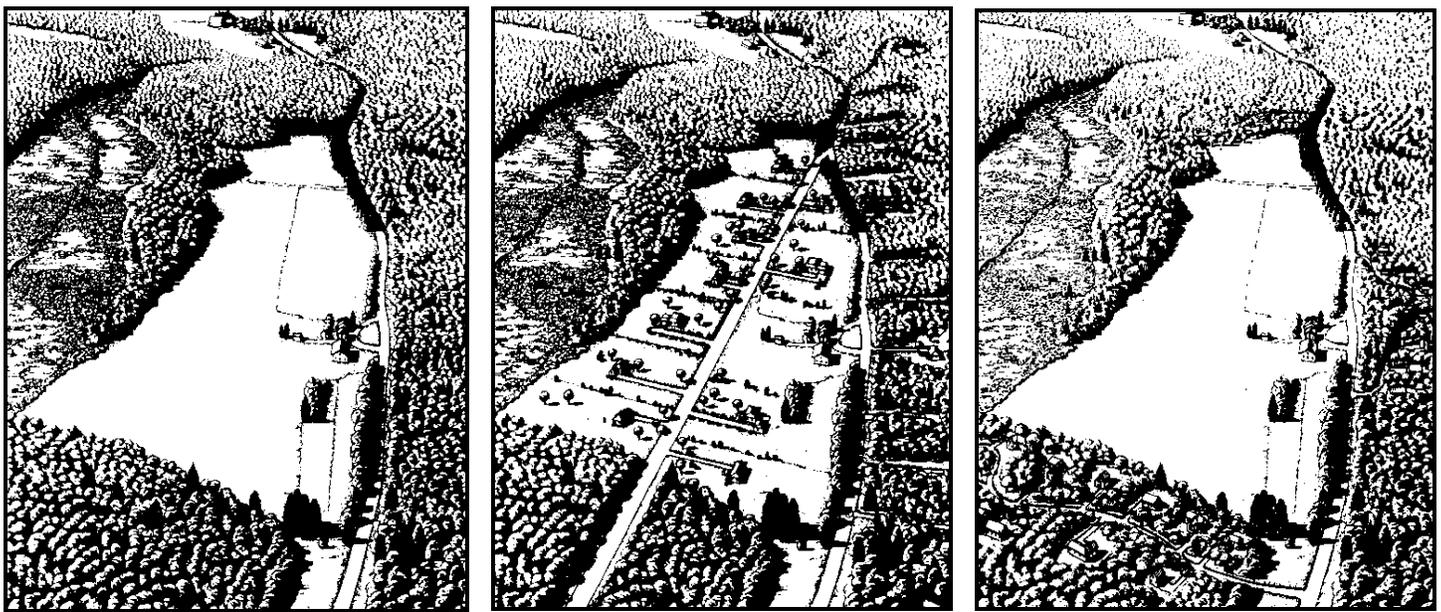
In many respects, it's a tragedy of the commons. When many individual people seek a life in the country (and the state subsidizes their moves with public infrastructure investments), they collectively end up destroying the rural character they seek. Thus, the challenge for many communities in the region is how to enact public policies which can guide individual choices so the commons

are enhanced for everyone, now and in the future.

The problem is that communities often lack the tools to create the futures they want. For example, they often rely on outmoded zoning schemes designed to separate various land uses. As urban planner Jonathan Barnett writes in his book, *The Fractured Metropolis*, "These regulations were invented to fit relatively small increments of new development into towns and cities that were already well established. It was not anticipated that lot-by-lot zoning and subdivision would become the sole development control for hundreds or even thousands of acres, as has now become routine. The requirements are blind to the idiosyncrasies of terrain and orientation, the beauties of the natural landscape, the perils of erosion and ecological disturbance. They say nothing about variety, balance, or the necessary ingredients of a community. At a small scale, within established towns or suburbs, these deficiencies were not severe; but conventional zoning and



Respecting the landscape?: Haphazard lot subdivisions in Portage County.



**Development scenarios: Rural site (left) with farm fields, woods and wetland; conventional development (center) consumes all the open land with homes on large lots, slices up property with a new road, and adds driveways to old road; creative open space development (right) tucks same number of new homes unobtrusively in the woods, requires only two curb cuts off existing road, and preserves the rural character of the landscape.**

Illustrations from *Dealing with Change in the Connecticut River Valley*, Center for Rural Massachusetts

subdivision are disastrously inadequate when used to create whole new residential areas."

More often than not, conventional zoning is a prescription for the very kind of suburban sprawl that people don't want. Everything gets developed.

To limit the damage, many communities seek to increase minimum lot sizes—to an acre or more—in an effort to spread out development and try to retain some semblance of rural character. While this technique does lower housing density, it also increases land consumption and makes housing unaffordable for most people. It creates "suburbia with a wide lens," a place with lots too large to mow, too small to farm, and too fragmented to provide a meaningful sense of open space.

### Sensitive development

What's the alternative? How can development respect the land and the character of the community?

In the past few years a number of local land conservation groups—Lake Metroparks, local land trusts, soil and water conservation districts—have sponsored forums on creative development methods. In a talk last November in Hiram sponsored by Headwaters Landtrust, the guru of sensitive rural development, Randall Arendt, extolled the virtues of clustering homes to preserve open space.

"Change is inevitable. Development will occur," he said. "The question is: on what terms?...Will we have the bland homogenization of the countryside—a land consumptive process where everything is converted to house lots and streets?"

In most cases, developers just give us what is required, Arendt said. "The regulations mandate a one-size-fits-all approach. They are too inflexible to allow anything creative. Zoning

has supplanted planning."

Instead of planning subdivisions on a checkerboard grid, Arendt recommended "open-space zoning," a technique that permits new homes to be clustered together and nestled less obtrusively into the landscape. When subdividing land into building lots, he said, one should first identify what is important to preserve—wetlands, woodlots, productive farmland, scenic vistas, etc. Second, one should figure out how to orient houses to maximize the homeowners' enjoyment of the preserved landscape. And lastly, one should plan the lots and streets. This is the opposite of the typical order of events. It can achieve the same overall density of housing, but it can protect the important environmental and cultural features of the landscape.

"Developers should want to do this," Arendt added. "They end up with a better product that sells faster and for premium prices."

### Advantages of clustering

Locally, there are several successful examples of clustering to preserve open space. The Hawksmoor development in Bainbridge Township and the Woods at Wulamo near Wooster are both leaving more than 40% of their total acreage as undeveloped open space.

The techniques seem like a win-win proposition for all involved—for developers, new homeowners and current rural residents. According to *Common Groundwork*, a land preservation guidebook published by the local Institute for Environmental Education, cluster development "strikes a balance between preservation and growth. New development pays for the protection of open space, not the local government, since the cost of preserving

open space is included in the selling price of each housing unit. In addition, the technique often makes a subdivision more profitable. By clustering homes together, the developer has to spend less money on costly infrastructure

Americans initially moved to the suburbs for privacy, mobility, security and home ownership. What we now have is isolation, congestion, rising crime, pollution and overwhelming costs—costs that ultimately must be paid by taxpayers, businesses and the environment. This sprawling pattern of growth at the edges now produces conditions which frustrate rather than enhance daily life.

—Peter Calthorpe

improvements such as roads and sewers. By preserving open space, the developer makes the subdivision more attractive to prospective buyers, who realize that many of the natural features that attracted them to the community will remain protected."

## Limitations to cluster development

But open space zoning techniques have drawbacks. As Jonathan Barnett notes: "Clustering buildings does not correct the underlying defects of commercial strips or extensive tracts of large lot zoning. The looser regulations possible within planned unit development apply only to large tracts of unbuilt land. Developers are encouraged to look for properties at the fringe of communities, which both accelerates urban sprawl and—by making it easier to build elsewhere—allows developers to skip more difficult infill sites that ought to be developed first.

"Planned unit development also encourages the creation of isolated districts with separate street systems, which fragment communities socially and cause more traffic congestion than in traditionally planned towns and suburbs with more alternate routes," he says.

Perhaps the biggest concern about flexible zoning methods, Barnett adds, is the "tendency to reduce all regulation to a negotiated deal between the developer and the planning authorities...As metropolitan areas have grown to include small towns and unincorporated parts of counties, local authorities are often outgunned by the developer's planning and legal team."

Many local elected officials are leery about open space zoning for other reasons, as well. There's still a misconception that people moving to the country want acres of land all their own, instead of shared natural areas.

There also are the problems of water and sewer. According to *Common Groundwork*: "The clustering of dwelling units may prevent adequate recharge of well water and may cause overuse of the septic system for the soil conditions under which the original density was calculated. In a number of cases, the Ohio EPA has subsequently required the connection of public water supplies and/or the installation of sewage lines to a waste treatment facility. These costs have been paid by the community, in some situations, not by the developer or homeowners entirely. Once water and sewage facilities are nearby, further high density development in the community may follow."

And, finally, prejudices about race and class hinder the acceptance of cluster zoning methods. Many suburbanites fear higher density development of any type (even if

surrounding open space makes the development density-neutral as a whole) because they worry that smaller lots will bring lower-cost homes and new residents with lower incomes than prevail in the rest of the community.

## Comprehensive planning

Proponents of cluster development recognize these limitations. They argue correctly, however, that if development on rural land is inevitable, clustering offers one of the best ways to way to minimize adverse impacts. As such, it ought to be accepted more widely throughout Northeast Ohio.

To really protect our countryside and our cities from urban sprawl, though, we must have much more than open space zoning. We need comprehensive planning with a whole package of tools to manage the scale, impact and location of growth. And we need to act at the regional level because sprawl is a regional phenomenon.

Specifically, here are some of the hard things we need to do in order to stop the chaotic, wasteful development of rural land in Northeast Ohio:

- Change state land use laws to require better planning and to coordinate planning between communities.
- Create a regional vision for where growth should and should not occur.
- Establish urban growth boundaries around cities—boundaries which set limits to the extension of urban services.
- Increase resources for planning in rural counties and townships. For example, we need better planning tools to help people appreciate the long-term implications of current trends and policies. A community changes incrementally over many years. Often citizens do not wake up to the horror of a destroyed landscape until it's too late. (The exception may be the battles against superstores like Wal-Marts, where a large-scale change threatens to happen all at once and enables citizens to have a clear idea of the consequences.)
- Strengthen agricultural zoning to protect family farms.
- Require natural buffers along waterways and rural roads.
- Promote the "transfer of development rights" to reduce development in areas where land ought to be protected and increase the density of development where growth is appropriate.
- End tax abatements for development in the country, and provide incentives to encourage redevelopment of existing urban areas. Sometimes the incentives to work in the city can take the form of political pressure. The city of Cleveland, for example, has used the Community Reinvestment Act to

pressure local banks to boost lending in the city. As a result, the banks have pledged to lend more than a billion dollars in Cleveland.

"We have renegotiated the civic contract of banks with the community, and that is changing the reward structure for people doing housing," says Cleveland planning director Hunter Morrison. "The system is set up to build a new subdivision out in Medina. Everybody knows what to do—the banks, appraisers, builders, and so on. It's a slam dunk. Developing in the city is seen as riskier, harder. So you have to change the way business is done."

- Elect people to local and state offices who are willing to change the allocation public subsidies and infrastructure investments that promote sprawl.

This is a politically daunting list in a state with a strong home-rule tradition like Ohio. And it's tough to talk about land-use controls at a time when any regulation for the common good is labelled a "taking" of private rights.

But we need to do these things. Otherwise, many more of us will wake up someday and be horrified at what "progress" has wrought.



## Open space zoning resources

- *Common Groundwork: A Practical Guide to Protecting Rural and Urban Land* by the Institute for Environmental Education, 18554 Haskins Rd., Chagrin Falls, OH 44023, (543-7303).
- *Designing Open Space Subdivisions* by Randall Arendt. Copies available for \$25 from the National Lands Trust, 1031 Palmers Mill Rd., Media, PA 19063, (610) 353-5587.
- *The Experience of Place* by Tony Hiss, Vintage Books, 1990.
- *The Fractured Metropolis: Improving the New City, Restoring the Old City, Reshaping the Region* by Jonathan Barnett, Harper Collins, 1995.
- *Futures by Design: The Practice of Ecological Planning* edited by Doug Aberley, New Society Publishers, 1994.
- Land trusts, county planning commissions, and soil and water conservation districts in your community.
- *The Next American Metropolis: Ecology, Community, and the American Dream* by Peter Calthorpe, Princeton Architectural Press, 1993.
- *Rural by Design: Maintaining Small Town Character* by Randall Arendt, Planners Press of the American Planning Association, 1994.
- *Saving Place*, a book on land protection strategies available for \$17 from the Northeast Regional Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 7 Faneuil Hall Marketplace, Boston, MA 02109, (617) 523-0885.

# New county visions

## Lorain County seeks coordination

It's been no secret that weak political leadership and a lack of planning resources have hampered the development of Lorain County in the past decade. The county has missed opportunities, and the development that has occurred wasn't always well planned.

To improve cooperation and planning among communities in the county, a task force of civic and business representatives has been laying the groundwork for a new council of governments. Called the Lorain County Community Alliance, the organization will address issues such as land use planning, transportation, and efficient service delivery by local governments. The Alliance may, for example, recommend that certain government services be regionalized, or it may provide technical assistance to help smaller units of government provide services more effectively. A key issue will be how to absorb new residents and subdivisions spilling into Lorain County from western Cuyahoga County—how to develop sensibly while maintaining the county's rural character and environmental quality.

Organizers of the Alliance are now seeking resolutions of endorsement from each of the county's political jurisdictions. One challenge is to overcome rural township concerns that a centralized planning body might usurp local control over land use.

"A council of governments can't supersede local ordinances or zoning," reassures David Cornicelli of the Lorain County Chamber of Commerce. "We want to create a forum for dialogue and to build a consensus on a vision for the county."

For more information, call the Chamber at 323-9424 or Lorain County 2020 at 366-2020 or 246-4589.

## Medina County ponders growth

Today, Medina County is mostly rural and has about 135,000 residents. But the county has a double-digit growth rate and, given current zoning, could some day have a population of half a million people (many of them migrants from Cuyahoga County).

Many current residents are becoming alarmed at the prospect of 365,000 more

people and an additional 250,000 cars on the roads. Groups such as Leadership Medina County have sponsored community forums to set new directions for the county's future, and the County Planning Commission is developing a strategic growth plan.

In addition, the Ohio State University Extension has begun organizing "growth discussion groups" throughout the county. A minimum of 10 groups in each township will meet two to three times to work through a

booklet which poses development choices. The goal is to promote "civic literacy," according to the OSU Extension's Joe Daubenmire.

"The process is designed to create a community dialogue that discovers deeply held conflicting values concerning the various growth choices which we face," Daubenmire says. "We want to involve, educate and engage as many citizens as possible in doing the thoughtful choice

work necessary to adequately inform our local elected officials and appointed government leaders."

For more information, call 725-4911.

One limitation of both these Lorain and Medina county initiatives is that they are confined to single counties when many of the forces they seek to address are regional (such as the regional housing market which encompasses at least seven counties). It's hoped that as counties better define their own needs and vision, they will be in a better position to participate in larger, regional discussions. At some point, this needs to happen.

One tool that might facilitate regional planning is a "zoning potential" study underway at the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency. NOACA staff are collecting zoning maps from every jurisdiction in the five-county area, analyzing how much development is allowed by current zoning, and projecting what is likely to happen to the developing edge of the region. The zoning maps are being digitized to allow various development scenarios to be played out by a geographic information system. Thus, it will be simple to see what rural townships will look like when they build out to their maximum potential. □



# Growth?

The estimated change is just one-half percent, and it's still too earlier to tell if the trend is real. But already people are gloating over the recent news of population growth in Northeast Ohio.

"More people, more promise," crowed *The Plain Dealer* in an editorial. "The figures offer encouraging evidence that this area's long population drain has bottomed out."

The figures from the Population Reference Bureau estimate that between April 1990 and July 1991 the Cleveland-Akron metropolitan area gained more than 18,000 people. And it's understandable that the *PD* should gloat. The more readers it has, the more it can charge for ads. Big retailers will be happy, too. So will utilities like Centerior, which need a growing population and economy to get rid of excess nuclear power. Everyone in the region will be able to feel like a winner instead of a rust belt loser.

But will unquestioned growth in population and consumption necessarily improve our quality of life? Will it make Northeast Ohio a better place for our grandchildren?

The book, *Beyond the Limits*, talks about how a truly sustainable society would be more interested in qualitative development than physical expansion. "Before this society would decide on any specific growth proposal, it would ask what the growth is for, and who would benefit, and what it would cost, and how long it would last, and whether it could be accommodated by the sources and [pollution] sinks of the planet. A sustainable society would apply its values and its best knowledge of the earth's limits to choose only those kinds of growth that would actually serve social goals and enhance sustainability. And when any physical growth had accomplished its purposes, it would be brought to a stop."

# Garage-sale planning in Ohio

*In the 1920s, Ohio was a national leader in urban planning. But no more. Today, Ohio lags far behind other states.*

*The following speech by Stuart Meck, a past president of the American Planning Association and the former planning director of Oxford, Ohio, discusses why the state has fallen behind and why efforts to reform land use planning have failed. The speech was presented at a conference on Growth and Redevelopment Issues and Strategies for the '90s, which was sponsored by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission and the Cleveland Area Board of Realtors in 1991.*

By Stuart Meck

It is not without some measure of irony that I speak to you today. I fall into that somewhat grumpy, heterogeneous mass of individuals called "former Clevelanders." Some 20 years ago, as a young graduate in city planning from Ohio State University, I left the Cleveland area frustrated, unable to find the kind of job that would enable me to practice the type of planning that I was trained to do and which I believed needed to be done.

Northeast Ohio's communities, it seemed to me, were clearly unreceptive, even hostile, to addressing long-range issues affecting their growth and development through the planning process. The fact that you are holding this conference today (and sitting here listening to me) is a measure of how much things have changed.

## Ohio: An early leader in planning

Ohio, in the 1920s, was perhaps America's leader in city planning. In the Cincinnati area, we had Alfred Bettman, a brilliant attorney, the city's law director, and later the chair of its planning commission. Bettman was the principal draftsman of the Standard City Planning and Zoning Enabling Acts, published and promulgated by the U.S. Department of Commerce. These model acts

created the American system of planning and land use control and still, some 65 years later, you can find their basic structure embedded in the planning enabling legislation of most states.

The 1926 U.S. Supreme Court case, *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co.*, which established the constitutionality of zoning, came from Ohio. The case was argued by two Clevelanders, James Metzenbaum, for the village of Euclid, and Newton D. Baker, for Ambler Realty. Alfred Bettman filed a friend-of-the-court brief which many credit as changing the minds of the justices of the U.S. Supreme Court, persuading them to uphold this newfangled thing called zoning.

## National experimentation with growth management

Up until the 1970s, land use planning and regulatory systems in the U.S. were primarily concerned with putting the right things in

the right places. But, as environmental degradation, congested highways, affordable housing, and growth and how to deal with it became hot local political issues in our country, many rapidly urbanizing communities in the U.S. began to experiment with growth management systems, land use and public facilities systems that direct not only the type and location of development but also the rate at which it occurred.

Dominant among them were **development timing** or **adequate public facilities ordinances**, like those of Ramapo, New York. These allowed development to occur only when specified public facilities were shown either to be available to serve the development or instead provided by a developer at his cost ahead of the long-range schedule, the capital improvement program, adopted by the local government. Florida has a **concurrency provision** in its state planning laws: local governments cannot approve a development permit unless it can be shown that the necessary supporting infrastructure and related community facilities either exist at the time the permit is issued or are committed for construction concurrent with the impact of development. The infrastructure and facilities must at least meet state level-of-service standards.

Other communities like Petaluma, California, established

### building permit allocation

**systems** in which only a certain number of building permits would be awarded in a city for a given year through a sophisticated permit award competition.

Some established **urban service areas**—boundaries beyond which water, sewer and other urban services would not be extended and beyond which urban-level development would not be allowed.

**Impact fee ordinances** are currently popular, as communities,

particularly those without local income taxes, look for additional sources of revenue. They ask that a developer pay a fee to cover the proportional costs, both direct and indirect, for community facilities required for new development. Using devices called **linkage fees**, some communities are requiring developers of market rate housing, and office, industrial and commercial space, to contribute funds to build or help rehabilitate affordable housing where such housing is in short supply.

Thus, there is tremendous ferment and experimentation going on in planning throughout the United States, all of it the result of a more balanced, comprehensive vision of what it takes to produce good communities, the delicate combination of attention to the environment, good design, adequate infrastructure, jobs, and the provision of housing for all income levels and life styles.

## States revamp planning legislation

Much of this experimentation has been fueled by the efforts of the



various states. Since the mid-1980s, states like Rhode Island, Vermont, New Jersey, Maine, Delaware, New Hampshire, Georgia, and Florida (which is, far and away, the most advanced) have revamped their state planning and land use enabling legislation. Currently, nearby states like Michigan and Pennsylvania are considering major changes to theirs. Virtually all of these changes reflect the importance of a strong, even mandatory, planning process underpinning land use regulation and program of public expenditures, with a heightened degree of state-level policy review.

While I'd like to say that the state of Ohio has matched the ground-breaking, visionary efforts of other states, it hasn't. In fact, it has consistently and shamefully fumbled on issues of planning and growth management, dragging its feet behind those of the other states.

### **Ohio land use review committee**

Nearly 20 years ago, Ohio took a stab at land use reform. The Ohio General Assembly created a bipartisan group in 1975 to review land use laws, programs and systems of land use control at the state, regional, county and local levels and to make recommendations to the state legislature. The committee was chaired by former State Senator Kenneth Cox, with then Representative Arthur Brooks, from Cleveland, as vice-chair. It held two sets of public hearings and published two reports; the final report was issued in 1977.

Among its recommendations:

- The planning commission of each municipality should prepare a comprehensive plan for adoption by the legislative body.
- Municipal development regulations and their administration should conform to the adopted municipal comprehensive plan.
- Each municipality should prepare and adopt a capital improvement program which conforms to the adopted municipal plan.
- A single uniform procedure for large-scale development review—review of shopping centers, sports complexes, second home developments, industrial parks—should be enacted by the General Assembly to address projects with regional and statewide impacts.
- A countywide planning commission should be established to oversee the preparation of a countywide general plan and set up a process for designating environmentally sensitive areas.
- Regional tax-base sharing should be studied to eliminate beggar-thy-neighbor/winner-take-all local government competition for commercial and industrial property tax base.

While the report did not anticipate the need for growth management techniques of the type I mentioned earlier, its recommendations would have produced a number of needed and long-overdue reforms in the state's planning laws, arising from a view that the Ohio of the 1970s was not the Ohio of the 1920s.

### **Fate of land use reform in Ohio**

Senator Cox introduced an omnibus bill incorporating the committee's recommendations in 1978. It sank like a stone.

Some reasons:

- Opposition of agricultural interests in Ohio. They were worried that the legislation would place limitations on farmers to have their cake and eat it, too—to get tax breaks for preferential agricultural use valuation (the valuation of property at its farm,

rather its speculative use) and still be able to sell it for development whenever they wanted to with no or minimal penalty.

- Opposition of some local government associations. They were against the bill because it limited local government discretion, curtailed arbitrariness, seemed to require a "reason" for governmental actions, required consistency, and called for expenditure of funds for planning prior to regulation.

- A four-track system in Ohio with vigorously competing interests—counties, townships, statutory plan municipalities, home-rule municipalities—with no incentive to work together for a single system or across local government boundaries to minimize adverse impacts of development and spread around its benefits.

- A highly dispersed urban state with each urban area seeing issues in a different way—the due process you get in Cleveland is different

than the due process you get in Cincinnati.

- Lack of support by a small, narrowly-focused environmental movement, now mostly concerned with landfills and groundwater rather than broader issues of land management which animate environmentalists elsewhere .

- No growth management movement or impetus to start one—no perceived mismatch between rapid development and lack of supporting infrastructure. Planning legislation was viewed as anti-economic development. Ohio was trying to hold onto what growth it had rather than try to slow it down.

- A state government that had no activist tradition either at the executive or legislative levels in the areas of housing, infrastructure or the environment, much less in the provision of local government assistance.

- Finally, the impact of what I call the "garage-sale school" of land use regulation, the still-prevalent philosophy here in Ohio that local government planning operations can be run sloppily (like a garage sale), with little attention to detail, because there were no terrible (meaning monetary) consequences for screwing up or endlessly jacking around developers and home builders with procedural delays.

### **That was then. This is now.**

I think it is time we unearth that old report of the Ohio Land Use Review Committee and see what wisdom it has to offer. This conference today suggests to me that, as we move into the '90s, there is a compelling recognition that we will need the best planning tools available to continue make our towns livable. I think we have long moved past the point where Ohioans will tolerate their communities, and, indeed their state, run like a garage sale and looking that way, too. □

*Stuart Meck is also co-author of Ohio Planning and Zoning Law, recently published by Banks-Baldwin Law Publishing Co.*

*While I'd like to say that the state of Ohio has matched the ground-breaking, visionary efforts of other states, it hasn't. In fact, it has consistently and shamefully fumbled on issues of planning and growth management.*

# State land use reform: still on the shelf

Here are the major findings and recommendations of the Ohio Land Use Review Committee reported to the state legislature in 1977. Except for the provision for agricultural districts, none of the recommendations have been adopted. Most are still good ideas which would help Ohio manage growth in a more rational, coordinated way.

## Strengthening the role of municipalities

- The planning commission of each municipality should prepare a comprehensive municipal development plan—a detailed description of the desired land use patterns and development policy of the municipality. It would address the type, location, timing, and intensity of development as well as the public improvements needed to support such development. It would be adopted by the legislative body, and thus provide a legal base for land use regulation.

- Municipal development regulations and capital improvements programs should conform to the adopted development plan.

- Municipalities should be enabled to combine regulatory measures (e.g., zoning, subdivision regulations, housing and building codes) in a single development code.

## Enlarging the role of townships

- Since land use regulatory measures are non-existent or inadequate in many townships in Ohio, townships should be enabled to create a township planning commission and adopt a comprehensive township development plan, which would then provide the basis for a township zoning code.

- The township development plan should be consistent with the provisions of an adopted countywide plan.

## Achieving regional coordination

- In each county there should be a countywide planning commission whose membership represents local governments and reflects the population distribution in the county. Currently, county or regional planning commissions are optional, as is the participation on them by local governments. Thus their plans may never be implemented.

- A countywide general plan should be prepared, adopted, and periodically updated by the county planning commission. The plan would provide a framework for coordinating the more detailed plans by local governments and guide the capital expenditures of county government.

- The county plan would map future development patterns, the location of major transportation facilities, open space and recreation areas, and critical resource areas such as prime agricultural land and scenic river corridors. It also would delineate urban service areas beyond which services such as city water and sewer would not be extended. And the plan would estimate future housing needs in the county.

## Improving land use regulation

- State enabling laws for zoning and subdivision regulation should be revised to permit flexible standards which will allow preservation of unique natural features through creative site and building design. Statutes also should be revised to foster meaningful public participation in the regulatory process.

## Coordinating state agencies

- So that the programs, regulations and projects of state agencies are consistent with the land use plans of local governments, the Governor should be given the authority and responsibility to coordinate state agencies. The General Assembly also should clarify the agencies' roles regarding land use.

- A state-local government commission should oversee state recognition of countywide plans.

## Reducing fiscal disparities

- The state should reduce fiscal disparities among local taxing districts, perhaps with a tax-base sharing formula like the one in the Twin Cities area. Such

sharing would reduce incentives for communities to raid one another for industry.

## Preserving agricultural land

- Individual landowners should be authorized to create agricultural districts voluntarily. These would reduce governmental pressures which discourage a landowner's long-term commitment to farming.

- The state should adopt a policy which encourages agricultural land use and prevents the state's capital investments from adversely affecting productive agricultural areas.

## Regulating large-scale development

- Major developments may affect future land use patterns, traffic congestion and public investments of whole regions, yet a single community can allow them to be built. Therefore, a single, uniform regulatory process for large developments should be created by the state. The standard application would include an estimate of the multi-jurisdictional effects of the project, including the costs and sources of revenue for any public improvements. Responsibility for evaluating these impacts would rest with the areawide or county planning agency.

## Protecting critical resource areas

- Each of Ohio's counties contains critical resource areas—such as aquifer recharge areas, flood hazard areas, geologic hazard areas, mineral resource areas, significant natural areas, scenic river corridors and wetlands—which are environmentally significant to the future of the state. A cooperative process is needed between state and local governments to identify these areas, evaluate their unique features and select protection techniques to be implemented by local governments.



## The state's role

The State of Ohio plays a major role in determining where development occurs. It builds roads and other infrastructure, gives tax breaks and grants, ignores the need for regional land use planning, and generally promotes sprawl at the expense of the cities.

How should the state change? Here are five principles to stress at the state level, with an emphasis on transportation investments:

- **We need development, not growth.** We need to develop and improve Ohio in many ways, but we should not do so by constantly expanding the geographic spread of highways and other infrastructure. We should become better and more efficient, not bigger.

- **Place matters.** State transportation investments should support development, but it matters *where* that development occurs. All land in Ohio is not equal. The present goal of state transportation policies, however, is to open up every acre of the state to development.

- **Rural land could (should?) remain rural.** Rural land should not be seen as an empty place "needing" development. In most cases, rural areas serve many vital functions—agricultural, ecological, recreational—which should be preserved and enhanced. We should focus large-scale development in existing urban areas. With our stable population, there's no reason to keep tearing up the countryside.

- **Job migration is not job creation.** Too often, the state promotes the migration of jobs from the cities to the suburbs and then counts these as "new" jobs created. This is the tragic result of most Enterprise Zones in Ohio. State development officials need to change how they measure success, so they are not rewarded for moving employment away from urban areas where jobs are needed most. It is ludicrous, for example, to invest state gas taxes in access roads for new industrial parks in Streetsboro. This just wastes tax money on a zero-sum game.

- **Think long term.** In many cases, it may be more challenging to redevelop existing urban areas than to develop greenfields, but we need to accept that challenge and work for the long-term future of our cities. The future of Ohio depends on the future of its cities, and successful, livable and sustainable cities of the 21st century will be compact, not sprawling. Sprawl creates short-term economic gain for a few speculators while imposing long-term costs on the rest of society.

In general, state policy needs a drastic overhaul so that it stops promoting destructive sprawl.

## Being pro-development

Although it may sound strange, I am pro-development. And I believe that all environmentalists should be.

In the past 100 years and especially after World War II, we've built sprawling cities, massive industries and a consumer economy that are ravaging the environment. Now the only solution is to build our way out of the mess. We must keep on developing, but in ways that heal the planet.

This will mean withdrawing from sprawling land uses and building compact urban villages. Getting out of cars and building alternative forms of transportation. Switching from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources. Creating closed-loop production systems that mimic biological systems and create no wastes. Restoring

the ecological integrity of lakes and streams.

Developing sustainable economies that don't depend on constant growth.

Over and over, environmentalists are forced to fight bad developments. One of our greatest challenges is to create a positive vision of the developments we want. To do that, we first need to broaden the range of available choices. After all, the main reason we are always against things is that we're given impossibly bad choices. It always seems to be a choice between a highway interchange at Point A or Point B, or a choice

between jobs and pollution.

I'm tired of those false choices. Instead of the interchange, I want a mass transit system that will make it unnecessary to drive.

On a recent trip to Pittsburgh I found a good example of this desire to broaden the range of possibilities. The State of Pennsylvania wants to spend \$2 billion to build new freeways around the Mon Valley area and promote economic development. But the director of the Allegheny County Planning Department, Raymond Reaves, says there are lots of better ways to invest \$2 billion of public money.

After making sure that the existing road system is well maintained, he would upgrade the local schools so that they could lead the transition to a post-manufacturing economy. He would turn the Mon Valley into an international research, development, training and education center in the environmental field. He would invest in fiber optic cables and other forms of advanced telecommunications. And he would create a center for magnetic levitation research and manufacturing so the Mon Valley could produce high-speed rail systems for North America.

"I have left a few hundred million dollars for you to spend. But you get the idea," says Reaves. "Rather than attempting to re-create yesterday's economy with unimaginative ideas, such as expressways, let's build the future."

He adds, "Critics will say that the funds which might be available to build the expressways cannot be used for these other activities. My response is that is a failure of vision and a failure to use our wealth for the appropriate investments. We need not be captive to the past and to the status quo. We can change laws. We can choose our future."

—David Beach  
Editor

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# Building the city of God

## *Catholics confront the regional challenge of outmigration*

*Bishop Anthony Pilla of the Cleveland Catholic Diocese delivered the following speech in November 1993 to an urban ministry conference in Cleveland. The remarks are based on his white paper, "The Church in the City."*

**I'm here today to talk about building new cities.** The kind of cities our society desperately needs. Cities where people of different incomes, races and cultures can live together, and be enriched by one another. Cities where the poor and disadvantaged can achieve human potential. Where the weak and the powerless are free from the chains of fear forged by violence and drugs. Where children live in decent homes, have sufficient food, and are properly educated for meaningful employment.

*To borrow St. Augustine's term – we must strive to build a city of*

Utopia? Not at all. That word implies the stuff of impossible dreams. This dream is not impossible. But it is certainly a brave new world...a world mandated by the teachings of Jesus Christ.

A world of justice and peace.

An illusion? Again, not at all. The Church can do a lot to help transform society so that people can reach their full potential. We not only can do this. We must do it. To borrow St. Augustine's term—we must strive to build a city of God.

There will be some who object to the Church inserting itself into a discussion that seems beyond its purview—those who will say our primary mission is to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ. And they're right, in the sense that our primary mission is evangelical.

But Christ's message must always be related to the particular circumstances of the people to whom it's spoken. Otherwise the message might not be what Christ intended it to be: liberating.

We must recall the words of the 1971 Synod of Bishops: "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation."

This, then, is a call to action...a framework and a focus for serious discussion in the Diocese of Cleveland for the purpose of developing a formal plan to rebuild our cities.

### **Moving out from the cities**

First, some background. Cleveland, Akron, and Lorain/Elyria are the three largest urban centers in the Diocese of Cleveland. The populations of Cleveland and Akron are declining. The suburbs around these cities continue to grow. While Lorain and Elyria have grown, the Lorain County suburbs have grown even more.

Let's look at Cleveland and Cuyahoga County as our example. In 1950, the population of Cleveland was 914,808 while the rest of Cuyahoga County was 474,724. By 1990, those figures were essentially reversed. The city's population stood at 505,616, while the suburban population was 906,524. Cleveland alone has more than 50 suburbs, including townships and villages.

As the population has shifted, so has the tax base. As the more affluent people have moved from central cities to the suburbs, our cities—and consequently our city parishes—remain home to growing concentrations of low-income people who have little educational opportunity...and no access to employment in the suburbs where the jobs have moved as well.

In spite of these adversities, they remain good, hard-working people with the same dreams, ideals and spiritual values as those in the suburbs. Still, the need for education, job retraining, and social services has never been greater. Because government entitlements are increasingly difficult to come by, this financial burden has shifted to the private sector—and especially to the churches.

The Catholic Church has served the people in our cities for many years. We have made remarkable contributions through our schools, our human services, and the dedication of women and men who have ministered in the city in so many different ways.

These contributions must and will continue. Pope Paul VI wrote in *Octagesima Adveniens*: "Let Christians, conscious of this new responsibility, not lose heart in view of the vast and faceless society; let them recall Jonah who traversed Nineveh, the great city, to proclaim therein the good news of God's mercy and was upheld in his weakness by the strength of the Word of Almighty God."

### **Undermining the region and the church**

In hindsight it is clear: over the past 40 years, there has been little balance between the building of suburbs and the re-building of cities—particularly city housing. A better balance would have given people more choice between city and suburb—since not everyone wants to move farther out.

This social and economic separation is problematic not only



because of its destructiveness, but also because it is costly—for everyone. City and suburb are linked in a single economy. In regions all across America, studies show that where the income of city residents stagnates, the income of the city's suburban residents stagnates as well.

The Cleveland-Akron-Lorain region suffered drops in employment and household income between 1980 and 1990. At the same time, the household income in Cleveland's central city dropped almost 14 percent. Meanwhile, in the Charlotte, North Carolina region, household income increased more than 11 percent during the same period. Is that surprising? It shouldn't be. When a business wants to relocate or expand, it's likely to choose an area that can accommodate its needs and the needs of its employees. It wants to invest in a healthy, growing region.

This is the cost of 40 years of uncontrolled outmigration in our diocese.

The Church, too, is paying a price. Many of our city parishes are left with large, aging buildings—and far fewer parishioners to support them. Faced with the loss of population, and the consequent loss of financial support, parish schools are closing—as well as some parishes.

While these problems are most evident in the cores of cities, they are also at the doorsteps of the inner suburbs. The outward flow of population that undermined our cities will do the same to the suburbs—starting with the inner suburbs. Like city and suburb, the urban and suburban churches are linked by a single economy. So the problems of the city parishes soon become the problems of the suburban parishes.

In 1950, there were 62 suburban parishes in Cuyahoga, Summit and Lorain Counties combined. Now there are 101. Even the most affluent of the suburban churches are not financially equipped to deal with the demands that outmigration is placing on them. And as sudden growth demands new suburban parish buildings and larger staffs, Catholics relocating to the suburbs are often faced with both a home mortgage and a church mortgage, stretching their financial resources.

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## **Imbalanced investments**

Outmigration began in earnest in the years immediately following World War II. Today, people move to escape crime and to find better schools for their children. But 40 years ago, the main reasons for moving were to escape city pollution, noise and congestion.

Blockbusting was also widespread. This sorry practice, which played upon racial fears, was perhaps the most influential factor in outmigration.

Outmigration was encouraged and facilitated by building highways, by widening roads to accommodate increased traffic, by building water and sewer extensions to accommodate developers. Almost all new housing is built in the outer suburbs, adding more and more fuel to the fire. These policies continue today.

The government isn't doing this out of ill intent. It's simply meeting public demand. This isn't the issue here. At issue are the urban problems that have been exacerbated due to the imbalance in the deployment of the government's

resources. Billions of government dollars—that is, public dollars—have been spent in paving the way for new suburbs, with little or no thought given to the consequences for existing communities.

A recent example here is Route 422, which was extended from Solon in Cuyahoga County into Geauga County. The cost? Some \$65 million. The impact of that highway on the inner eastern suburbs of Cuyahoga County and the city of Cleveland is bound to be serious, because it makes moving to Geauga County that much more attractive.

I'm not suggesting the highway should not have been built. But

ignoring its impact has further undermined the city of Cleveland, as well as the eastern inner suburbs. Investment in Route 422 calls for a counter-investment in the communities negatively affected by it.

This is what I mean by imbalance.

And the private sector shares in this responsibility. The need for reinvestment in our cities has not received the needed emphasis, thereby denying opportunity to those who live in the city, by choice or otherwise.

## **No one wins**

If this imbalance of investment continues, we can expect even more urban decline.

Stable neighborhoods will erode. The inner suburbs will soon follow. Spreading decline will spawn even more stress among people and institutions. The fiscal strength of county government will weaken, further jeopardizing the region's ability to compete in the global economy. Health care facilities in the city will close, only to re-open in the outer suburbs. The utility companies will likewise re-deploy their resources...as will libraries, schools, public transportation and recreational facilities.

Will this make our region more competitive in the global economy? Will it reduce unemployment? Build racial harmony? Create community stability? Inspire us to treat each other with kindness and decency?

Most surely not.

We must change course—drastically—if we are to create a society where "social groups and their individual members [have] relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment" (*Gaudium et Spes*).

If outmigration trends continue, the Church, too, will be affected. More and more buildings, too large and expensive to maintain, will be left in the central cities and inner suburbs. Congregations will decrease and not be able to support their parishes. Parishes will end up serving people who return to their old neighborhood for Mass—people who are anxious to preserve buildings and traditions, but not always anxious to serve the people who now live in the neighborhood. Catholic schools in the cities will serve an increasingly poorer population—and will face ever increasing financial difficulties.

Meanwhile, the parishes in the outer suburbs will continue to spend more and more of their parishioners' money to build for the increasing population. And that money is limited. The suburban church will feel the strain because the parishioners will feel it. They are feeling it already,

So no one wins. Under the present trend, increased hardships await people in the city, as well as those moving outward.

### **Principles for a new urban future**

It is clear, then, that we are challenged on two fronts: we must recognize and respond to the needs of the urban poor,

***At issue are the urban problems that have been exacerbated due to the imbalance in the deployment of the government's resources. Billions of government dollars—that is, public dollars—have been spent in paving the way for new suburbs, with little or no thought given to the consequences for existing communities.***

community leaders in the hopeful endeavor of building a new urban future for Northeast Ohio.

Let me suggest five principles we might embrace in order to meet these challenges.

▪ **Social justice.** The practice of charity is different from promoting change that furthers social justice. We are called to work for changing the underlying causes of injustice. We must focus on governmental policies and practices that strongly favor outmigration over moving inward or simply staying in one's community.

The point is not to stop outmigration. People are free to move about as they please. Rather the point is to help balance government policies to allow for the redevelopment and maintenance of cities and inner suburbs.

Ideally, this shouldn't be a struggle. But it is because it will require unprecedented cooperative action on the part of public officials across the region. But rebuilding our cities means more than simple bricks and mortar. It means rebuilding in ways that will heal the wounds and close the separations that have been opened and aggravated over the past 40 years... in ways that further the cause of social justice.

▪ **Redevelopment.** Government policies that support the development of suburbs while neglecting the redevelopment of cities have contributed to the problems caused by outmigration. Similarly, the Church can fall victim to this same myopic strategy by concentrating on the development of the newer parishes in the suburbs, while older parishes in the city are allowed to decline.

For government, banks, developers, real estate brokers and others,

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redevelopment means creating and investing in projects such as Church Square and Central Commons in Cleveland and Opportunity Park in Akron. For the Church, redevelopment means renewing its commitment to cities and finding ways to provide necessary resources for our ministry there.

▪ **Interdependence.** City and suburb are linked by a single economy. City and suburban churches are similarly linked by a common mission. Many differences exist between ministry to city and ministry to suburbs—but a single mission to reveal God's love binds them together.

There are gifts present in every church, urban and suburban, which can be shared among all churches. In order to deal effectively with outmigration, we must find ways of sharing these gifts more widely with one another. The parish that does not, in some way, extend its work beyond its own boundaries fails to be a church in its most complete meaning.

In our diocesan commitment to stewardship, we must seek to define stewardship in a way that encompasses the urban and suburban churches, with their unique gifts and their individual problems.

▪ **Restructuring.** In order to efficiently and effectively serve people living in the city, it will be necessary to restructure the parishes in such a way that they will be able to offer proper ministry to their people, and remain financially stable—and, as much as possible, independent of diocesan subsidy.

This restructuring will not in any way diminish the Church's commitment to the city. It will in fact increase our effectiveness. And in considering the right way to accomplish this restructuring, we must take special care to be sensitive to the cultural diversity of the city's residents.

▪ **Preferential love for the poor.** The love of Christ compels us to turn our attention to the needs of our poorer sisters and brothers. Following the example of St. Vincent de Paul, the Apostle of Charity, we cannot relax our efforts to assist the poor in their need. We must be especially mindful of women and children, who are often the primary victims of social neglect.

## The New Jerusalem

Shifting populations challenged the Church and its mission in the past. From its earliest days, the Church in northeast Ohio has been challenged and shaped by the movement of people. As early settlers crossed the Alleghenies into Ohio, pockets of Catholic

families were served by missionaries on horseback who traveled long distances to offer Mass in places like Wooster, Chippewa and Valley City.

With modern outmigration, history is repeating itself. The Church in the Diocese of Cleveland is being called to respond as creatively and as effectively as it did in earlier times.

Pope Paul VI wrote in *Octagesima Adveniens*: "In the *Bible*,

the city is in fact often the place of sin and the pride of man who feels secure enough to be able to build his life without God. But there is also the example of Jerusalem, the Holy City, the place where God is encountered, the promise of the city which comes from on high."

The New Jerusalem of the *Book of Revelation* is a promise, a challenge and an invitation.

It is a **promise** of God's final manifestation of power and justice, which will restore the world to its original harmony and order.

It is a **challenge** because it reminds us, as Pope John Paul II says in *Sollicitudo Rei*: "to 'have' objects and goods does not in itself perfect the human subject unless it contributes to the maturing and enrichment of that subject's 'being'; that is to say, unless it contributes to the realization of the human vocation as such."

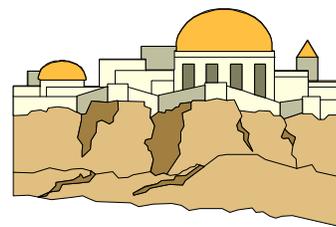
And it is an **invitation** to begin now to participate in the life of that heavenly city by practicing the mercy and justice that will make our earthly cities a reflection of the city which is to come.

Even as we wait for new heavens and a new earth, let us begin to build a new city of justice and peace. I invite all people of good will to cooperate in the work of creating such a city. I ask our government officials to renew and increase their efforts to develop and redevelop our urban centers. In a special way, I call on all Catholics in every part of our diocese to join me in this commitment to our cities—and the churches in our cities.

I am asking that throughout the diocese discussions take place to suggest practical means of implementing this vision. These suggestions will be placed in the hands of a committee charged with the task of developing a formal plan of action.

Jesus loved the city of Jerusalem and wept over its impending destruction. May we imitate Jesus in His concern for the city as we begin our work—

rebuilding our cities as places where people can dwell in life-giving relationships with God, and with one another. □



*It is clear, then, that we are challenged on two fronts: we must recognize and respond to the needs of the urban poor, who have been hurt by outmigration. And we must change governmental policy relative to outmigration...*

*I invite all people of good will to cooperate in the work of creating such a city. I ask our government officials to renew and increase their efforts to develop and redevelop our urban centers. In a special way, I call on all Catholics in every part of our diocese to join me in this commitment to our cities—and the churches in our cities.*

# Restoration inside and out

*In February 1995, EcoCity Cleveland was privileged to join the Community Coalition to Stop the Mart (the group fighting a proposed superstore development on the site of Oakwood Country Club in Cleveland Heights and South Euclid) and the Cleveland Restoration Society in sponsoring a speech by Constance Beaumont of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.*

*In recent years, the Trust has been an outspoken critic of superstore sprawl—the low-density, land-consumptive, auto-oriented, commercial development on the fringes of metropolitan areas.*

*Sprawl from Wal-Marts, Super Kmarts and similar big box stores, shifts a town's center of gravity from the urban core to the edge, Beaumont said. The result is not economic growth but displacement. And this undermines efforts to revive historic city centers and neighborhoods.*

*"It's like trying to fill a pool with a small hose when there's a big hole letting the water run out," she said.*

*Increasingly, historic preservationists are realizing that they will never win their battles unless they also address sprawl and outmigration at the regional level. So they are finding common ground with the many other people and organizations harmed by current patterns of development. (For a list of the constituencies who might be part of an anti-sprawl coalition, see page 62.)*

*The following article on this topic is by Ted Sande, president of the Cleveland Restoration Society. It is reprinted from the Society's May 1995 newsletter.*

By Ted Sande

There are many dimensions to the preservation of our city. Some of the important issues that concern us are not even in the city itself, but on its fringes. What happens on the edges of Cleveland affects the survival of its historic structures and neighborhoods just as dramatically as if these changes were made in the core of the inner city itself.

This is why we were delighted to join with the Community Coalition to Stop the Mart, EcoCity Cleveland and others in co-sponsoring a presentation by Constance Beaumont, the National Trust for Historic Preservation's director of State and Local Policy programs, in late February that addressed the question of "superstore sprawl." The more I thought about it, the more clearly it seemed to me that we cannot draw a sharp distinction between the suburbs and the city when it comes to real estate development. What happens in one area will have profound ramifications in the other, and we

should be conscious of this fact and learn how best to deal with it.

We all know, of course, how commercial and industrial land development on the edges of older cities has sucked the juices out of their urban centers over the past 40 years. Unfortunately, that trend is, as they say, "history," and we are left now trying to restore strength to these weakened urban centers. Bringing them back to what they were intended to be all along—places for people to live and work and enjoy life—isn't easy. But historic preservationists

must accept this challenge, if we are intent upon saving the best of our heritage.

Many of us have recognized for decades the disorder of strip commercial development along suburban roads. Now, it appears, the problem has shifted away from the sides of the road to the fields beyond. Seemingly overnight, huge retail complexes spring up. These "superstores" are located on sites that are very carefully selected, using highly sophisticated analytical techniques that pinpoint the optimum location from a purely economic standpoint. However, they are rarely thought out with respect to

their surroundings. And they seem invariably to create traffic congestion and hazards on the adjacent arteries and increased environmental pollution where they are built.

This is both ironic and tragic. Ironic, because community planning and environmental concerns are no less tangible than the demands of successful retailing. Tragic, because a more holistic, regional approach to locating essential retail centers need be no more costly initially than the present scatter approach, and it undoubtedly would save all of us money in the long run by bringing economies of scale in community services.

The Cleveland Restoration Society seeks primarily to save the best of our city's older buildings, its viable urban neighborhoods, and its historic districts. In pursuing this mission, we must be equally vigilant in recognizing the peripheral forces that could have an adverse effect upon Greater Cleveland. Increasingly, due to the example we have set within the city, we are being called upon to assist those outside its boundaries who want to maintain their architectural heritage and plan intelligently for the future. As we begin to do so, we reaffirm the fact that the basic relationship between a city and its suburbs is one of healthy reciprocity.

The Cleveland Restoration Society looks forward to working with our suburban counterparts in shaping a better region for us all—a region where Cleveland's historic urban core is recognized once again as the essential, vital complement to its surrounding communities. □



**Demolishing schools in Cleveland: Sprawl undermines historic urban neighborhoods while paving over the countryside.**



## Challenging the values that promote urban sprawl

*The following perspective on urban sprawl in Northeast Ohio comes from a corporate insider, Jack Licate, former director of Build Up Greater Cleveland, a program based at the Greater Cleveland Growth Association, which promotes economic development through enhancement of the region's infrastructure. Licate recently became director of government sponsored programs at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation. This article is his farewell column for the Build Up Greater Cleveland newsletter, Infrastructure Update (November/December 1994).*

By Jack Licate

Infrastructure policy is central to any discussion of urban sprawl. Infrastructure is tied in a complex way to land-use decisions, yet public-works expenditures are often made with little or no reference to their potential impact on the landscape. Many critics often blame this discrepancy on the traffic engineer, who they claim has been insensitive to the land-use impact of his or her decisions. Other critics blame planners for proposing unrealistic and unworkable solutions to make our cities more viable.

Both sides generally agree that infrastructure expenditures since World War II have had an unequal impact on different parts of the region. The cities—Cleveland, Akron, Canton and Lorain-Elyria—have lost residents and employers. They have suffered from increased racial and income segregation, impeded access to jobs, inequitable access to transportation and the abandonment of large tracts of potentially usable land already served by a developed infrastructure system.

On the other hand, suburban and rural areas have seen much of their character disappear as they have had to provide the infrastructure to support new residents and jobs.

The map on page 8 shows Northeast Ohio's pattern of dispersed, low-density, metropolitan areas which have physically and economically, if not socially, coalesced into a sprawling mega-city. Discussions of how public-works investments can effectively alter this situation must begin with the realization that infrastructure investment decisions are not made in a vacuum unrelated to other community priorities. Northeast Ohio's urbanized landscapes result from thousands of individual decisions based on deeply held cultural values about the ownership and use

of private property. These values are stable and widely held, but not unchangeable.

In order to rectify the worst effects of urban sprawl in Northeast Ohio, we must change the value system that caused them. To do that, we can start with a simple question that a cross-section of people will consider to be valid: "How can we make our central cities competitive again, and how can we preserve the character of suburban and rural Northeast Ohio?"

One answer that we know won't work—it's already been attempted—is to divert highway funds from one area to another with little or no justification.

Here are three points that might be the basis for the desperately needed discussion on how to address urban sprawl:

- **Infrastructure planning and land-use planning must be better coordinated.** While that's more easily said than done, the most practical place for this to happen is in the region's metropolitan planning organizations (Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study and Stark County Area Transportation Study). They have the staff and the Congressional mandate to take such an initiative, and they have the capability to bring larger numbers of citizens into the planning process.

- **Local political subdivisions or public-private partnerships need to take the initiative in shaping their physical futures.** Notable efforts to that end include Cuyahoga County's work addressing problems posed by abandoned urban industrial land, and Summit County's lead in acquiring abandoned rail lines with a focus on possible use for commuter rail lines into central Akron.

- **The potential role of public transit as an urban economic development tool must be refined.** For example, discussion of Cleveland's proposed Dual Hub project has focused on traditional issues. Instead, we should give serious consideration to how the funds for its construction could be leveraged to attract additional public and private monies for reshaping central Cleveland's physical form to better attract and retain employment opportunities.

As a community, we have not spent enough time discussing such issues, and the result has been unchecked urban sprawl. If we make the effort to redefine our values, it's not too late to change course. □

# If Cleveland builds, the people will come

*Not everyone wants to move farther out to the suburbs. In fact, a surprising number of suburbanites want to move into the city of Cleveland, according to a recent survey by the Housing Policy Research Program at the Cleveland State University College of Urban Affairs. The following conclusions from the survey, "Market Demand for New Housing in Cleveland," explain how the city could meet the pent-up demand and attract new residents.*

- There is demand for new housing in the city of Cleveland that greatly exceeds the current level of production. This survey found a *minimum* of 20,313 households interested in new housing. (The actual figure, including those interested but who did not bother to fill out the survey plus those who will become interested as more development occurs, could double that to 40,000 households.)

- Some of the demand is strongly conditional, mainly because of concern for safety. But with 45 percent (9,000) wanting to move within three years, the near-term demand could be at least 1,000 units per year—three times the present level of production.

- The city's longer-term (beyond five years) planning and development programs should become oriented toward producing 2,000 units per year for at least 20 years.

- The survey found strong interest in West Side locations (as well as East Side and Downtown). However, most new housing development activity has been East Side or Downtown. Activity should be expanded to encompass the entire city.

- Development strategies are needed where demand is greatest: Kamms/West Park, University Circle, Warehouse District, W.65th lakefront bluffs and E.14th lakefront bluffs, which, combined, received 57 percent of the strongest interest. But of those locations, only the Warehouse District has a vigorous development program underway. Except for one project at W.65th, the bluff locations, which received 20 percent of the interest, are devoid of development.

- A construction scale of 2,000 units per year dictates the need for major site preparation activity in the city. An average of 20 units per acre would require 100 acres of land per year. Land assembly (combining small parcels to form suitable sites), site preparation and design should be given the highest priority by city and county governments, nonprofit development organizations and private-sector leadership.

- The findings that 85 percent of those interested in new

housing in Downtown Cleveland prefer to own, and that only 25 percent of those preferring to rent are prepared to pay \$700 or more a

month, call into question the emphasis now being given to developing rental units Downtown. The market for rentals appears to be thin (possibly at most 1,000 units for the time being) while the market for ownership is much larger and untapped.

- There is substantial interest on the part of people now living in suburbs with upper incomes (over \$70,000 a year and numbering possibly 10,000 households). Focus should be given to the location and product preferences of this market segment.

- With 69 percent of the interest in new housing in Cleveland coming from people living in suburbs, attention should be given to the question of how new developments and movement into the city can be accomplished so that social cohesion between existing and new residents will result.

- The city of Cleveland's policies governing subsidies for new construction should be reviewed. Any homebuyer will accept a subsidy if it is offered, but no respondent to this survey went so far as to say that a subsidy was required. The less that subsidies are employed, the more that a normal housing market can operate, and the more active the city's construction program can be.

- The existing IRS provision governing capital gain realized through home ownership is an obstacle to some people who would move into the city from the suburbs. City officials should request their congressional representatives to introduce legislation that would enable homesellers to move down in price without incurring a tax liability (a change that would benefit all cities).

- Outmigration may be the dominate pattern across Cuyahoga County, but not all movers want to move further out. By responding to the market demand documented through this survey (by building housing in Cleveland that will enable more of its residents to move up and remain in the city, and by building housing that will be attractive to suburbanites interested in moving in) the city of Cleveland will steadily shape a new and much more positive future. □



***Outmigration may be the dominate pattern across Cuyahoga County, but not all movers want to move further out. By responding to the market demand documented through this survey the city of Cleveland will steadily shape a new and much***

# PART 3: REGIONAL STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES



*In the past few years, there's been a growing sense of the region in Northeast Ohio. Researchers, planners, politicians and business leaders are starting to appreciate how our major problems transcend city and county lines. We need regional cooperation, for example, if we are to plan efficient transportation systems, restore watersheds or revitalize the local economy.*

*In June 1993, Ohio legislators Grace Drake, Patrick Sweeney and Roy Ray sponsored a "Summit on Regional Competitiveness" at the Richfield Coliseum. The featured speaker was Neal Peirce, syndicated columnist on urban affairs and principal author of the book, *Citistates: How Urban America Can Prosper in a Competitive World* (Seven Locks Press, 1993). Reprinted below is most of Peirce's speech.*

*We are devoting a lot of space to this because it gets to the root of how we should be thinking regionally. Peirce focuses on three "disabilities" plaguing metropolitan areas like ours—the great socio-economic divide between poor inner-cities and affluent suburbs, wasteful urban sprawl, and the lack of coordinated regional governance.*

*As you read his analysis and recommendations, think about how we might begin to do things differently in our region. And think about some additional questions: How can we make our economy more locally self-sufficient and sustainable, not just more internationally competitive? How can we base our regional vision on the limits of natural systems, the land and the watersheds? And, if regional decision-making is essential, how can we make it truly representative?*

## **The age of the citistate**

...[A]cross America and across the globe, the age of the citistate is upon us. Great metropolitan regions—not cities, not states, increasingly not even nation states—are the key competitors in the world marketplace. It is the marketplace, not military power, which in the wake of the Cold War overwhelmingly defines our present, and our future. And it's the great regions that learn, as it were "to get their act together," which will prosper in the new world economy.

***Great metropolitan regions – not cities, not states, increasingly not even nation states – are the key competitors in the***

Imagine, if you will, a visitor from another planet, approaching the dark side of earth in our time. He would quickly note the clusters of light where humans congregate in great numbers. Approaching any one of them—at least as soon as daylight broke—he would see a fully integrated organism: a concentration of human development, of roads and rivers and bridges and masses of buildings, all arrayed together, people and vehicles, air, water and energy interacting in as many ways as stars in a firmament.

This is what people familiarly call metropolitan areas and what I prefer to call the citistate—the closely intertwined, interrelated, geographic, economic, environmental entity that chiefly defines late 20th century civilization. Demographics underscore its reality. The historic rural dominance of human population is fast dissipating. Eighty percent of the world's population occupies just two percent of the land surface of the globe. It's estimated that by 2000 roughly 50 percent of the world's population will live in and around cities; by 2020, that figure could rise as high as 70 percent. In 1950, there were only 14 U.S. metropolitan areas of more than 1 million people; in 1990 there were 39 and their inhabitants constituted, for the first time in American history, a majority of the nation's people.

Metropolitan areas have, of course, been around for a long

time. So why, you may ask, would one suddenly call them citistates?

I came to that conclusion, I might explain, by way of a series of reports I was commissioned to prepare for the newspapers in Phoenix, Seattle, Baltimore, Dallas and St. Paul. For each city I assembled a small team of analysts to work with me. We got full editorial freedom; to get our information and insights we interviewed, in each place, at least 60 leaders, from grassroots community group leaders up to mayors and governors. Now two colleagues and I have assembled our reports on the metro areas into a single book.

From the start, we insisted we had to focus not just on the historic center city but on the entire metropolitan region, its capacities, problems, challenges. We looked hard for appropriate region-wide strategies. So that when we went back to sum up our work, it was clear we'd identified not just formulas for internal improvement, but indeed the components of an international competitive strategy for each citistate. And we decided to coin a new, single word—"citistate"—to underscore the transglobal challenges and connectedness of the great urban regions of our time.

In their classic sense, of course, city states are hardly new in world history. Before there were nation states, there were city states. One can trace them back to antiquity, to Athens, Sparta, Syracuse, Carthage and Rome, then to the Hanseatic League of the 14th and 15th centuries, to the Italian City States of the Renaissance.

Measured by historic time, nation states are relative newcomers, having arisen to conduct great campaigns of transoceanic colonization, to launch great land wars across the face of Europe. They eventually led us into cataclysmic world wars...

Yet no natural law of history says nation states' absolute dominance must remain for all time to come. We see a remarkable confluence of events, rushing to a head at a single moment in history. Telecommunications have advanced so rapidly that messages, data, money transfers generated in our citistate financial centers now leap national boundaries in nanoseconds. Investment capital, the mother's milk of urban economic development, becomes increasingly mobile. Trade barriers are crumbling, opening distant markets, making it much more difficult—as the Europeans, for example, are now learning—to subsidize and sustain politically favored regions. And nation states are losing a real measure of sovereignty as their control of their own currencies falters, walls against immigration tumble down, free trade agreements proliferate and the one activity they were perhaps best at—amassing huge armies and preparing for war—subsides in importance with the end of the Cold War.

Across continents, provincial and ethnic loyalties are tearing apart the once-secure borders of nationhood: witness, by way of example, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, or what used to

be Yugoslavia today. John Gardner, planning director for Metropolitan Toronto, suggests that the forces abroad today are simultaneously pushing power up, to the international level, and downward, to the local. The "Earth Summit" in Rio de Janeiro underscored, for example, the imperative for coordinated international attention to such vital and shared issues as global warming. Yet at the same time, it becomes ever clearer that all these figures they give for national economies are really just averages, that the reality is constellations of regional economies, each with a major city at its core.

## Competing with the world

Each citistate has to be consciously aware of where it stands in a worldwide competition, not just with other American regions, but competitor regions spread from Seoul to Singapore, Oslo to Osaka,

Berlin to Barcelona...The critical question is: how do our citistates position themselves for the new world order?

Looking for the right strategy, how broad a slate do you write on?

One approach would be quite narrow: to focus simply on trade relationships, perhaps airports and maritime facilities, maybe foreign consulates, but not much more. This is in line with quite traditional economic development thinking, simply applied to foreign connections. And as far as it goes, there is surely nothing wrong about it.

The second approach broadens the camera focus quite significantly, to all the

factors which have a pretty indisputable and direct linkage to a citistate's international positioning. Examples would be the international curriculum and outreach of local universities, advancing higher technology and financial service capacities, the outlook for attracting international gatherings over the coming decades and related issues of foreign language instruction in the local schools. Urban livability, tourism, sister cities, advanced telecommunications, getting ready for NAFTA, would all fit into such strategies.

Yet having said that, I believe a serious look at today's citistate and its international positioning can carry one to a third, even broader level of debate and analysis—a truly macro-view of citistate issues. Perhaps it's too wide a lens for many people. But think with me, for a moment, of the very broad picture that emerges when one thinks in the most expansive way about citistates. The land issue, for example, switches from local zoning disputes to a question of the physical shape and environment of a region, how decisions are made about where people work, where they live and recreate, and the consequences for the environment, for social cohesion, indeed for the viability of the entire region. The image of the cities' centers, their appearance and vitality, becomes not just a challenge for downtown leaders but a question of the entire citistate's image—to itself, and quite critically, its mirror to

*Each citistate has to be consciously aware of where it stands in a worldwide competition, not just with other American regions, but competitor regions spread from Seoul to Singapore, Oslo to Osaka, Berlin to Barcelona.*

the world. Economic development becomes a question of whether the region's special niches in the new global economic order have been identified, and are being nurtured. Government efficiency becomes an international competitive issue, whether vital transportation and environmental and human resource needs are being satisfied.

Social issues become a question of a regional society's whole strength, and its capacity to see troubled peoples not just as a social burden but as potentially valuable human resources, waiting to become, one day, regional assets. Philanthropy becomes a question of mobilizing all sorts of civic capacities to meet compelling needs across multiple jurisdictions. School and university issues suddenly have to be viewed in the context of regional workforce preparedness in an era in which brains, not brawn, have become a ticket to economic success. And the leadership question takes on demanding new aspects: the need to supplement political leadership with strong business and citizen and nonprofit group efforts, perhaps better organized and coordinated than American regions up to now ever thought necessary.

### **Disabilities of American citistates**

In my *Citistates* book, I focus heavily on those ultra-wide lens issues. And I do that not because I believe the narrow lens of the traditional economic development groups, or an intermediate approach, is invalid. But rather because of the three great disabilities which American citistates seem to suffer so grievously, over and against their keen competitors in Asia and Europe.

▪ **Gulf between city and suburb.** The first of our citistates' great disabilities is the deep socio-economic gulf between their poor cities and affluent suburbs. "There are levels of depopulation in urban America," notes urbanologist Mark Hughes, "that on other continents would require war, famine or pestilence." And it does not even take semi-abandoned neighborhoods to cause incredible tensions. Consider immigrant-packed Los Angeles, for example, and the difference between the urban riots of the '60s, and Los Angeles rainbow eruption of 1992. Back in the '60s, the violence was contained to identifiable neighborhoods. Afterwards, indeed for the better part of 25 years afterwards, we simply tried to isolate and ignore the affected areas. But the outbreak last year refused to stay nicely contained to South Central L.A. The savage effects were felt quickly, fiercely, radiating outward to Hollywood, Pasadena, Long Beach, San Bernardino. The bottom line is that one can run, but in the long run not hide, from unattended urban woes.

Nor is our problem any longer one of center cities alone. Evidence has emerged—out of several carefully conducted

studies—that suburbs which surround healthy inner cities stand a better chance of prospering than suburbs which surround sick cities. Suburbanites may believe they're shielding themselves from urban decline, but the fact is that the worse off the center city is, the more average suburban incomes are depressed.

Many working-class suburbs, in fact, are in severe decline, like the center cities before them. Each new spurt of residential development on the metropolitan fringe, notes Thomas Bier of Cleveland State University, drives down property values in older communities. Decline follows almost inevitably. Indeed, I have found Tom Bier's research [several examples of which are in this publication] so compelling that I cite it in my book and in my speeches around the country. In recent research, Tom continues to analyze the meaning of the successive rings of outward movement, first from Cleveland, then from its suburban rings, buyers each

time going for more expensive, farther-out housing. "The wake of decline and urban pathologies that spread behind outmigration will not stop at the city-suburban line," he now projects. With such suburbs as Parma, Maple Heights and Euclid perhaps the most vulnerable, Bier warns that "the present risk is that over the next 20-30 years, Cuyahoga County will follow the city of Cleveland into distressed fiscal condition, which would in turn further jeopardize the economic condition of the multi-county Cleveland region."

Tom Bier also names the reasons—not just Americans' seemingly incessant desire to move to ever-greener outer acres, but higher governments' anemic support for housing renewal and the welfare of existing communities and the way federal, state and local governments alike have

"used [their] power and influence to support the development of new suburbs through the provision of roads, highways, sewers, water, utilities, the tax code—and thereby supported outmigration."

Would there be a way to slow the migration out of Cleveland and the older suburbs...? I suggest you ought to focus on that in your deliberations, now and into the future. Because just modifying the trend some could have immense payoffs. Bier makes a point that's always seemed to me to be obvious: No one expects center cities to monopolize population as they did a generation ago. We just want to see them have a reasonable share, so they can keep a decent tax base and do well. Bier notes that in a 1986 survey, 11 percent of *suburban* homeowners in Cuyahoga County indicated an interest in living in downtown Cleveland. That's far from a majority, of course, but so what? If that 11 percent were to move downtown, the number of downtown households would jump from 2,000 to 27,000. "Downtown Cleveland would be transformed," says Bier, indeed, "it would be transformed if just five percent moved in."

*Suburbs which surround healthy inner-cities stand a better chance of prospering than suburbs which surround sick cities. Suburbanites may believe they're shielding themselves from urban decline, but the fact is that the worse off the center city is, the more average suburban incomes are depressed.*

▪ **Sprawl.** The second and directly related American citistate disability is physical "sprawl"—the alarming environmental and social consequences of our inability or unwillingness to contain urban growth within reasonably compact geographic areas. Sprawl contributes directly to traffic congestion, vast numbers of hours in lost productive time, mounting levels of air pollution. It obliterates city and town identities. As new job locations go farther and farther "out there," we create an American apartheid, the poor stuck in old center cities without a way to reach the new work sites. Big lot zoning destroys the potential for coherent new community. Suburbanites live in enervating social isolation, driving their treasured little kids everywhere, denying them the pleasures of informal neighborhood life. Even while in inner-city neighborhoods, areas drained of employed role model adults, kids never see any reason to take education seriously and never make the normal contacts of a more socially integrated society, contacts that could lead them into productive lives of work. We are engaged, in short, in a form of development that, at its heart, is profoundly *anti-community*.

Sprawl is economically foolhardy, too. We have been squandering a massive share of our available national capital in recreating, on the metropolitan periphery, what already exists in our cities—road and bridge systems, universities and hospitals, retail facilities, office and sports complexes and more. In a capital-short era, such needless duplications means less capital available for investment in research and development, productive new technologies, in education and job training and our existing urban infrastructure.

▪ **Regional anarchy.** Finally, American citistates are dismally ineffective in achieving coordinated governance. Their constituent governments seem continually at sixes and sevens, unable to reach the most fundamental cooperative agreements, fighting over economic scraps, pushing environmental or social problems off to their neighbors. The international image created is of a malfunctioning, divisive citistate. We all know that most American regions lack the most rudimentary systems to resolve differences between their cities and counties.

At a minimum, they need regional councils able to resolve conflicts and broker collaborative planning. In today's world, the challenge may not be so much to create new formal structures (though some are surely required) than to search for pragmatic arrangements, find ways to resolve conflicts, look toward a regional vision and capacity.

Road building, transit and the whole transportation sector are vital regional issues, for example. In my book I write about two bills—the Clean Air Act of 1990, and especially the so-called ISTEA—the big transportation bill passed by Congress in 1991—

as the first federal legislation of the citistate era. The reason is compelling. All stakeholders across a region—not just the state highway engineers—have to be in on the discussion of which roads get built. Greenways, intermodal transit, mass transit all get in on the equation. And for the first time, there has to be a conscious policy of picking priorities, how to use scarce transportation monies. It's the kind of process which might, for example, pick rebuilding of existing roads, mass transit and similar improvements over new outer-loop superhighways.

### **It's the economy...**

But let me stress—economics, not improvement of governance, should be the carrot leading most people to thinking seriously about citistate approaches. The fact is that virtually every monopoly in today's international economy, service or

manufacturing, is crumbling... Today's industries don't enjoy a protective envelope of time and distance. They must, among other things, exercise rigorous control over their costs and have access to vital resources, human and physical. They must be able to hire a competent workforce, perhaps the most critical variable of all. They also need to move people and goods cost effectively. They must have basic water and sanitation needs fulfilled. They need clean air. They need an environment not plagued by crime. They have a major concern about the quality of life for their employees.

But think about it. Not a single one of those needs can be supplied, fully, by the single municipality in which a business is located. All of them are first and foremost metropolitan-wide, regional issues. Local governments may deliver most of them, but

without regional coherence, the gaps and inequities are sure to remain immense.

Well, if these are American citistates' three great competitive disadvantages—first, city-suburban, rainbow-hued hole in the white donut problems; second, sprawl and its alarming consequences; and third, the lack of coordinated regional governance—what are the solutions?

### **Strengthening citistates**

On that point, I have been working on a list of guideposts—formulas for citistate cohesiveness and strength.

▪ **Recognize the indivisibility of the citistate**—the intricately interrelated region the visitor from outer space would see. We're "all in this together," President Clinton suggested in his February economic address to the nation. The same applies directly, maybe even more so, within individual citistates, the new "common markets" of our time.

▪ **Plan the regional economy to marshal internal strength**

*Sprawl contributes directly to traffic congestion, vast numbers of hours in lost productive time, mounting levels of air pollution. It obliterates city and town identities. As new job locations go farther and farther "out there," we create an American apartheid, the poor stuck in old center cities without a way to reach the new work sites.*

**and find a profitable niche in the new world economy.**

Citistates which hope to prosper in the international economy need to plan as carefully as the smartest corporations. They need to decide what they're good at and seize their comparative advantages.

The Seattle region, for example, knows it's good at aircraft and software manufacturing, but with a downturn in world markets recognizes it has to push diversification harder than ever. The Trade Development Alliance of Greater Seattle, created by the Seattle Chamber of Commerce together with Seattle and King County, is charged with making the region a premier gateway and trading port for North America...Pittsburgh, seeing its steel-based economy almost evaporate, has tapped its lead universities to become a formidable center of new technology research and development. Louisville, once bedeviled by industrial loss, has made itself a beacon of collaboration on every front, from new-style, cooperative manufacturing environments to shared regional economic development agendas and city-county tax-base sharing.

▪ **Reaffirm the critical importance of the citistate's heart—its historic center city and neighborhoods.** Center cities continue to define a citistate to the world. The mere words "Paris," "Moscow," "Hong Kong," "New York," "San Francisco," "Chicago," "New Orleans," evoke powerful images. This means urban design, waterfront planning, streetscapes and historic preservation, are powerfully important issues for a citistate's entire presentation to the world. By contrast, a trashy, graffiti-laden, uncared for city landscape can herald serious decline and telegraph a negative message world-wide.

▪ **Remember quality of life issues and pay special attention to environmental quality.** Once upon a time, quality of life may have been thought of solely as an aesthetic or social issue. No more. Today it is a critical *economic* issue profoundly affecting the future prospects of a citistate. As Dallas consultant James Crupi notes, there is a very real and increasingly recognized "symbiotic relationship between arts, culture, health care, crime, the environment and economic strength."

▪ **Focus on the growing link between social deprivation and workforce preparedness.** This is one of the most compelling reasons regional cohesion now becomes an imperative, far more than 20 or 30 years ago. Not ore or steel, not capital or geographic position is the most vital component of a citistate's positioning. Today, rather, it's the quality of its workforce. We need to remember that a vast and growing proportion of our future workforce will be today's young people of color, whose education and well-being becomes critical to us all. In America today, one out of every three Hispanic children, one of every two black

children grows up in poverty. Unless we do much better, where will our citistate employers find qualified workers in the years ahead?

Let us not deceive ourselves. The 1990s may represent the last chance to avert an almost complete suburban-inner city standoff in America, an appalling scenario of good jobs flying to the metropolitan periphery while entire cities sink ever deeper into disinvestment, underclass life, crime and despair, at horrendous cost to our entire civilization.

A broad agenda of remedial education, social service, community-based self-help and guaranteed work programs will be required to address these problems. Federal and state assistance will of course be required. But the recreation of mutually supportive community is a task well beyond the reach of higher governments. Indeed, if there's to be any realistic hope of success, citistates themselves must take greatly expanded responsibilities for designing and implementing their own systems of education, social support, and neighborhood rebuilding.

Just for an example: given the varieties and levels of skill needed for the Cleveland-Akron citistate's economy to prosper in the next years, what's a strategic, truly region-wide assessment of the quality of education now being offered from kindergarten up, what specialties are critical for high schools, community colleges and universities, where are the gaps, and how can they be addressed? And how can those capacities, and their development, be monitored constantly in the interest of the whole region's future?

In my *Citistates* book I make specific reference to Cleveland as a region of special resources in these areas...Though I would say that in practice, such regions as

Denver and Louisville, Hamburg and Barcelona, Portland, OR, and Austin, TX, Toronto and Rotterdam and Singapore, are acting far more cohesively than what seems the Balkanized region of Cleveland, Akron and environs.

▪ **Make governance work.** Along these lines, there is a lot to be said for the National Civic League's prescription—a two-tier type system, most existing subunits left in place, but new metropolitan authorities, with elected councils, formed with the power to plan regionally, and resolve conflicts between existing cities and counties.

To get there, we need very fresh thinking including citistate-wide accords in which all the players give up a little. Rotterdam provides an example of such fresh thought. Leaders believe there has to be political unity to modernize the port and transportation networks and thus maintain Rotterdam's role as a key shipping center for Europe. The suburbs are reluctant to cooperate with the city because it is so much bigger and might dominate any

*Let us not deceive ourselves. The 1990s may represent the last chance to avert an almost complete suburban-inner city standoff in America, an appalling scenario of good jobs flying to the metropolitan periphery while entire cities sink ever deeper into disinvestment, underclass life, crime and despair, at horrendous cost to our entire civilization.*

collaboration. So Rotterdam leaders are suggesting that the city proper be reorganized into 10 to 12 new districts comparable in size to the suburbs. Once that's done, they suggest, the municipalities would feel comfortable in creating a new metropolitan authority, without today's center city dominating the whole.

When will we Americans, in a land supposedly built on innovation, be ready for similarly bold experimentation? It's hard to be optimistic. Class, race, tax fears, the sacred cow of home rule, all too often stand in the way. The answer will have to lie in compelling campaigns of public education which link, quite explicitly, the governance issue to the citistate's growth and survival in the new world economy. Indeed, the public education part is critical. As I heard the president of the Lilly Endowment say in Indianapolis last weekend, we need to be far more creative than ever in mobilizing people, both the civically literate and those who normally ignore public affairs. One simply must mobilize the Public Will; otherwise, in familiar fashion, the Public Won't.

▪ **Undergird governance with strong citizen organizations for the citistate.** I am thinking here of organizations like the Citizens League of the Minnesota Twin Cities area or the Citizens League of Greater Cleveland, but on a much broader basis, with thousands of members and strong representation from every city and suburb, class and race and income group. We need such broad-based organizations to assemble regionally-minded citizens to think through citistate-wide issues and propose the kind of thoughtful solutions we rarely get from the politicians who are locked into the tight little parochial boxes of their individual districts or municipalities. But I think we need citizen groups to join with the business and non-profit and new ethnic sectors, pulling some of the best strength out of each in what one might call new metropolitan or citistate partnerships, which in turn can broaden options and engage in productive dialogue with our progressive political leaders.

Every interested group of community stakeholders needs to be in on these kinds of efforts. We Americans have perfected special interest and ethnic and racial pleadings to a fine science. But it's time, at least a couple days a week, to can the conflicts. The understanding has to be common that everyone's goose will be cooked if the citistate fails to face its challenges and starts to slip, economically and socially. State governments have an immense stake in this too, because to a stunning degree, their prosperity,

their tax bases, depend on healthy citistate communities.

## Our regional identity

Recently in Indianapolis, the National Academy of Public Administration held a conference focused on the idea of citistates. I was astounded to hear how some of America's best minds not only grasped the idea, but in one way or another had been coming to it themselves.

Henry Cisneros, the HUD Secretary, in a major address to the conference, said a central challenge of our time is "to help citistates endure and progress."

Dan Kemmis, the very imaginative mayor of Missoula, Montana, a town all of us back here in the Big Bad East would call a minor league player, already had clear-cut ideas about citistates. Large or small, Kemmis said, citistates are organic, defined by function and the natural and economic community about them rather than by arbitrary government borders. The boundary lines we draw around cities are almost always too restrictive. State boundaries, by contrast, are too broad to represent cohesive community. Check where a city's newspapers circulate, its television stations reach, its banks hold deposits and deliveries get routinely made, and you'll likely have a closer definition of the citistate than any lines drawn on maps.

"Politics in the original Greek meaning was simply the life of the city state," Kemmis noted. "We lost sight of what cities are really about in the centuries of the nation state." Now we need to return to "a primal sense of politics." Only through the true city, the citistate, the geographic region of our shared fate, can we "regain a sense of democratic citizenship."

Virtually everyone at the conference agreed that a renewed sense of inclusivity and social justice must be critical to successful citistates—first because it is

right and second if the citistate is to compete globally. "The concept of the citistate is organic, free form, it's not structural," said Astrid Merget of Ohio State, NAPA's current chairperson. "And," she continued, the citistate "elevates values, not issues of efficiency. It gets at racism, justice, and the moral order of our social contract."

Camille Barnett, the highly respected city manager of Austin, Texas, added, "The term citistate is not a fearful term, it is a powerful term. It broadens our lens for looking. It brings a sense of respect, and a sense of possibility. In it, there is a sense of unity. And in relation to the ancient city state, a sense of stewardship." □

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# Past the point of no return?

## Cleveland needs regional strategies to stem urban decline

It's taken Greater Clevelanders many years to overcome their collective inferiority complex and begin to call themselves the "Comeback City." So it was hard to listen to David Rusk when he came to town in December 1994 and said that Cleveland may very well be "past the statistical point of no return."

Rusk, the former mayor of Albuquerque, NM, has spent the past few years studying which American cities are succeeding or failing, based on measures of poverty and racial segregation. He has found that healthy cities are those with metropolitan governments or other regional approaches for sharing responsibility for urban problems. Failing cities, like Cleveland, have been isolated by their surrounding suburbs.

Speaking at the Northeast Ohio Area-wide Coordinating Agency and the City Club, Rusk said that Cleveland's much-heralded downtown developments—Gateway, the Flats, North Coast Harbor—are making it "a great place for a yuppie lawyer to live." But such developments have not, and will not alone, reverse the city's alarming slide into urban oblivion.

Rusk cited the ominous trends:

- Cleveland is increasingly becoming the poorhouse of the region. The city's poverty rate jumped from 17.3 percent in 1970 to 28.7 percent in 1990. The number of "poverty" census tracts in the city (those with more than 20 percent poverty) grew from 64 to 147 during the same period. And the number of "hyper poverty" census tracts (those with more than 60 percent poor) grew from one to 21.

- Poverty in the region has taken on the appearance of apartheid. Overall, the area has nearly as many poor whites as poor blacks, but poverty is much more concentrated in the black community of the inner city. Almost two out of three poor whites live in middle-class neighborhoods dispersed throughout the region, while nine out of ten poor blacks live in poverty neighborhoods. Cleveland is the fourth most segregated city in the nation behind

Hammond, IN; Detroit; and Chicago.

### Fingers in the dike?

These kinds of sobering statistics have been cited before, such as in the reports of the Council for Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland. Boosters of the "Comeback City" do recognize the challenges. But they maintain that we are already responding effectively. They say that strategic investments in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and other attractions will make Cleveland a tourist destination and create jobs. They point to neighborhood-based programs to retain industry and build new housing. They brag about the new federal Empowerment Zone, which will bring concentrated investment to three neighborhoods on Cleveland's east side. We're making progress, they say. We are turning things around.

Critics like Rusk respond that such programs are important and good, but they can't overcome the regional forces of urban sprawl and inner city decline. No city has successfully carried out an inner-city, neighborhood-centered strategy sufficient to reverse the city's decline, Rusk said. Often, the persons who benefit from such programs are able to move out to better communities, leaving poor neighborhoods more isolated than ever.

### A metro strategy

Rusk's alternative is a metropolitan strategy—one that is far more politically controversial than anything attempted in Greater Cleveland. It would involve at least the following four policies to reduce racial and economic segregation:

- "Fair share" housing policies (supported by planning and zoning) that will encourage the development of low- and moderate-income housing in all jurisdictions of the metropolitan area.
- Fair employment and fair housing policies to ensure full access by minorities to the job and housing markets.
- Housing assistance policies to disperse low-income families to small-unit, scattered-site housing projects and to rent-subsidized private rental housing

throughout a diversified metropolitan housing market.

- Tax-sharing arrangements that will offset tax-base disparities between the central city and its suburbs.

In his recent book, *Cities Without Suburbs*, Rusk writes: "In baldest terms, sustained success requires moving poor people from bad city neighborhoods to good suburban neighborhoods and moving dollars from relatively wealthy suburban governments to poorer city governments. The long-term payoff will be an overall



reduction in poverty, dependency, and crime areawide, and 'prosperous cities [which] are the key to vital regional economies and to safe and healthy suburbs.'"

The state and federal governments must play a strong role to promote such metropolitan strategies, Rusk adds. For example, the state government must:

- Improve annexation laws to facilitate central city expansion into urbanizing areas.
- Enact laws to encourage city-county consolidation through local initiative or to reorganize local government by direct state statute.
- Empower county governments with all municipal powers so that they can act as de facto metro governments where appropriate.
- Require all local governments in metro areas to have "fair share" affordable housing laws.
- Establish metrowide tax-sharing arrangements for local governments, or use state aid as a revenue-equalizing mechanism.

Could such policies be enacted in Ohio? Certainly it's hard to imagine a local

## Environmental nightmare

...Overlaying this socio-economic polarization is an environmental nightmare. As the wave of socio-economic decline rolls outward from the city and older suburbs, tides of middle-class homeowners sweep into fringe communities. Growing communities in turn use expensive home zoning to "protect themselves" and to compete for tax base. In so doing, they lock the region into low density development patterns that are fiscally irresponsible, foster automobile dependency, contaminate groundwater, and needlessly destroy tens of thousands of acres of forest and farmland.

—Minnesota state legislator Myron Orfield

politician brave enough to suggest that growing suburbs like Solon or Hudson should build low-income housing or share tax revenue with Cleveland or Akron.

### People regionalism

But a handful of metro areas in the nation—including Minneapolis/St. Paul, Chattanooga and Rochester—are doing such things. They have embraced what Rusk calls "people regionalism," in addition to the more common "things regionalism" (e.g., regional sewer or park districts).

"These are communities that are working on acting like a region," Rusk said during his visit. "They have a high level of engagement over the issue of disparities."

In the Twin Cities area, for example, community activists and a courageous state legislator named Myron Orfield have worked to strengthen their Metro Council. They showed that the cities, older blue-collar suburbs and rural areas were all being victimized by high-end growth in outer suburbs. And they put together a political coalition of those interests to level the playing field. In addition to preserving the region's tax-base sharing program, they have worked to require low- and moderate-income housing in all communities, reduced tax incentives for selling farmland to developers, and placed regional sewer and water authorities under metropolitan control so that growth can be managed better at the regional level.

### Organizing a force for change

The same arguments about who is hurt by present patterns of development that have been influential in the Twin Cities could also win in Cleveland, according to Rusk. [See our ideas for an anti-sprawl network on page 62.]

"The case is waiting to be made—by the central city, older suburbs and really by all of Cuyahoga County, which is passing into a phase of decline as a whole," he said.

The case could also be made by the business community, which needs an educated, productive workforce. Or by taxpayers who must pay to duplicate city infrastructure in new suburbs.

"The European cities with which we compete don't simply discard an earlier generation's capital investments," Rusk noted. "They don't incur that burden."

The case for regionalism could also be made by environmentalists, who decry sprawl's impact on fossil fuel consumption, air pollution and land use. Environmentalists would add, however,

that it's not enough just to reduce fiscal disparities. We also need sensible land use planning at the regional level to steer development and keep cities geographically compact. We need policies such as urban growth boundaries and green belts.

Allowing the central city to annex surrounding communities (like Columbus does) might keep middle-class residents and tax base within the city limits, but it won't stop sprawling land use.

"To end Cleveland's isolation you need a regional solution," Rusk concluded. "You need to open up economically and racially...If you don't, it will affect the economic competitiveness of the entire region."

We should strive for a society of "balanced opportunity," he said. "We are not well served by the abandonment of the inner city and the movement ever outward."

In Greater Cleveland, our civic leaders have raised the possibility of regional cooperation to finance football stadium renovations for the Browns. What we need are leaders willing to advance regional solutions for the far more serious problems of racial segregation, economic disparity and sprawling land use. □

## Where the growth is

### Residential real estate assessed value % change, 1983-1993

City of Cleveland	1.2
Inner suburbs (Cuyahoga)	7.6
Outer suburbs (Cuyahoga)	37.0
Total Cuyahoga	17.0
Western Geauga	50.2
Western Lake	11.0
Eastern Lorain	19.9
Northern Medina	21.1
Northwest Portage	26.3
Northern Summit	72.8
Total adjacent counties	28.1

Real change after inflation

Prepared by the Housing Policy Research Program, Cleveland State University

## The toughest issue

Enterprise zones, community development banks, nonprofit inner-city housing developments—all the tools of "empowerment"—are not futile efforts. They will produce some new businesses, some new jobs, some new homes, and some revitalized neighborhoods. They will be more effective, however, if carried out within a framework of actions to bring down the walls between city and suburb. Absent efforts at reunification, such programs will be unable to reverse the downward slide of the inner cities...

Throughout history cities have been the

arena of opportunity and upward mobility. In America the "city" has been redefined since World War II. The real city is now the whole urban area—city and suburb—the metropolitan area. Redeeming inner cities and the urban underclass requires reintegration of city and suburb.

This is the toughest political issue in American society. It goes right to the heart of Americans' fears about race and class. There will be no short-term, politically comfortable solutions.

## A movement to heal the cities

Sustained change will require a grassroots movement like the civil rights movement or the environmental movement. This new movement will be tougher to begin. The civil rights movement in the 1960s mobilized moral outrage against Jim Crow laws. The environmental movement in the 1970s reflected compelling concern with human survival on a despoiled planet. But for the movement against urban segregation to get off the ground in the 1990s, a climate of perception, a climate of support, and a climate of change must be created.

Over 80 percent of all minorities now live in America's metropolitan areas. A racially equitable society can be achieved only if urban America is changed. Conversely, solving the problems of cities requires addressing the city-suburb schisms that have developed since World War II.

This is a journey on which few may initially choose to embark. But consider some of the alternative choices.

In an increasingly global economy would we choose to sacrifice the talent and

productivity of inner city residents and burden society with growing costs of dependency and social disruption?

In a capital-scarce society would we choose to discard the tremendous investment in the inner cities?

In a world of fragile interdependence would we choose to have the suburbs survive as independent and prosperous communities while the inner cities collapse at the metropolitan core?

In a world in which the technology of violence can touch anyone, would we choose to live in a garrison state where police power tries to seal off the have-nots from the haves?

These "choices" suggest where the racial and economic segregation of urban America is leading. The crisis requires not just urban aid or even a true "urban policy" but a commitment to a spirit of shared sacrifice and renewal. The crisis requires exchanging the old politics of exclusion for a new politics of inclusion. It will test whether or not the American people can develop a new spirit of community.

—David Rusk,  
excerpted from his book, *Cities Without Suburbs*, 1993

# Seeds of an anti-sprawl movement

On the previous page, urban critic David Rusk calls for a grassroots movement to heal America's cities—a movement on the scale of the civil rights movement or the environmental movement. It would involve all the constituencies harmed by the sprawling development patterns around our metropolitan areas.

A movement is needed because in places like Northeast Ohio the scale of our existing political institutions (local and county government) does not match the regional scale of our problems. Every mayor and county commissioner is looking out for his or her own turf. No one is elected to represent the region (although there might be room for a state representative or

senator to speak out).

If all the constituencies hurt by sprawl could be organized, however, they would make a powerful political force. Below we offer a preliminary list of such constituencies. Then we list some of the organizations—in the city and the country—that are already working on pieces of the sprawl problem.

Linking the city and country is key, for we have to fight the sprawl battle at both ends. We have to revitalize inner-city neighborhoods so people will want to move into them. And we have to stop subsidizing the sprawling development on the metropolitan fringe, which saps the strength of the central cities.

## Constituencies hurt by sprawl and urban abandonment

- Residents of declining inner-city neighborhoods, with all their community development organizations whose hard work is being undermined by outmigration.
- Residents of older, inner-ring suburbs, who are also victimized by the spreading disinvestment (and who typically have fewer resources and amenities than the central city with which to stem decline).
- Everyone who can't drive—children, senior citizens, people who can't afford a car.
- Institutions with fixed investments in the city—churches, schools, hospitals, arts organizations, banks, utilities.
- Environmentalists working to protect natural areas and wetlands, save energy, and prevent air pollution.
- Transit and bicycle advocates.
- Fair and affordable housing advocates.
- The many ad hoc groups fighting Wal-Marts, highway interchanges and road widenings in their communities.
- Historic preservationists.
- Country residents who want their communities to remain rural.
- Farmers who want to keep farming without the threat of encroaching subdivisions.
- Business leaders who realize that their sprawling metropolitan areas will have a hard time competing with compact, efficient cities in Europe and Asia.
- Developers who are tired of fighting anti-development NIMBYs and who would like to see a consensus on where development is appropriate.

## Parts of an anti-sprawl network

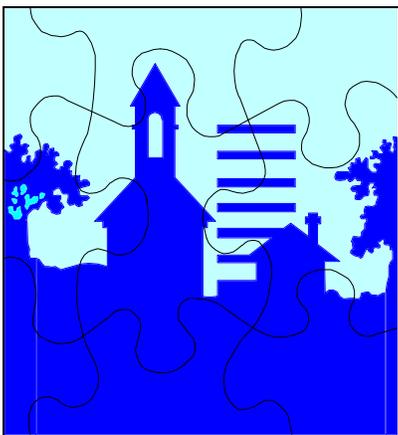
- Governments of central cities, inner-ring suburbs, exurban townships—United action

on economic disparities and sprawl.

- County planning commissions and metropolitan planning organizations (NOACA, AMATS)—Joint land use and transportation planning in the multi-county region.
- Urban research programs at Cleveland State University and the University of Akron—Studies of housing trends and outmigration impacts.
- Other university partners (Case Western Reserve University Center for the Environment and Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, Oberlin, Kent State, community colleges).
- Cleveland neighborhood development organizations—Greater attention to the outmigration trends that undermine their work.
- Anti-poverty programs (Council for Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland, Cleveland Community-Building Initiative)—Regional solutions for poverty.
- Fair housing organizations (Metropolitan Strategy Group, Cuyahoga Plan, Greater Clevelanders for Fair and Affordable Housing)—Support for low- and moderate-income housing in every municipality.
- Public housing authorities—Scattered site housing and rent vouchers.
- Park districts—Cooperative projects to preserve open space on a regional scale.
- Land conservation organizations (Land trusts, Trust for Public Land, Nature Conservancy)—Land protection in the path of development.
- Transit agencies in the region—Investments to make cities more livable and transit-oriented.
- Environmental organizations—Support for transportation alternatives, compact development, sustainable communities.
- Watershed organizations (Cuyahoga and Black River Remedial Action Plans, Grand River Partners, Friends of the Crooked River, Friends of the Black River)—Action to

stop suburban development's destruction of streams; restoration of urban creeks.

- Sprawl-mart foes—Organization at the regional level.
- Cleveland Museum of Natural History—Basic research on ecology of the region.
- Religious groups (Catholic Diocese, Interchurch Council, Jewish Community Federation, WE-CAN!)—Moral arguments against sprawl, sister church relationships between city and suburb.
- Schools—Sister school relationships between city and suburb.
- Environmental education (Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center, Lake Erie Nature and Science Center, Shaker Lakes Regional Nature Center, Great Lakes Science Museum)—Programs to increase awareness of the bioregion and the natural limits of life here.
- Farms—Links between farmers on the edge of the metro area and consumers in the city.
- Arts organizations—Cultural critiques of suburban sprawl, celebrations of urban life.
- Business organizations (Greater Cleveland Growth Association, Cleveland Tomorrow, Build Up Greater Cleveland, Akron Regional Infrastructure Alliance)—Business locations and infrastructure investments to revitalize central cities instead of promoting sprawl.
- "Good government" groups (Citizens League)—Ideas for regional governance.
- Utilities (water, sewer, electric, telephone)—Promotion of compact development patterns instead of facilitating sprawl.
- Real estate industry—Goal of steady appreciation of real estate values in existing urban areas instead of speculation on the suburban fringe.
- Computer FreeNets—Regional information and discussion groups in cyberspace.
- Media—Coverage of sprawl and disparity issues in a coordinated, comprehensive way.



# A new metro strategy

*More and more we live in an aggregation of cities and suburbs; a regional metropolis which forms one basic economic, multicultural, environmental and civic entity. Given this reality, our policies for economic development, pollution, open space, housing, and transportation have many dimensions that would benefit from regional strategies and regional coordination. Yet we lack the basic tools to respond to these challenges at the scale they can most effectively be resolved.*

By Peter Calthorpe,  
Calthorpe and Associates

Many of the nation's compelling issues now addressed at the federal, state, and local levels are truly regional in scope. More and more we live in an aggregation of cities and suburbs; a regional metropolis which forms one basic economic, multicultural, environmental and civic entity. Given this reality, our policies for economic development, pollution, open space, housing, and transportation have many dimensions that would benefit from regional strategies and regional coordination. Yet we lack the basic tools to respond to these challenges at the scale they can most effectively be resolved.

Perhaps because of this, we are at a political crossroads. At the same time that frustration with centralized public programs has reached a watershed, local solutions seem unable to deal with the concentrated and self-reinforcing social, physical, and economic problems of our cities and suburbs. We are left between national solutions too generic, bureaucratic and large, and local solutions too isolated, anemic and

reactionary. The answer lies between, in strategies which link regional resources with local programs.

But lacking regional tools of governance, policy makers have persisted in treating only the symptoms of our problems. We address inner-city disinvestment with CRA legislation, small community banks, and regulation rather than providing more fundamental tools to enhance and target regional economic growth. We control air pollution with tailpipe emissions inspections, fuel consumption with more efficient engines, and congestion with more freeways, rather than making cities and towns which are less auto-dependent. We limit lost open space with piecemeal acquisitions, habitat degradation with disconnected reserves, and farmland conversion with convertible tax credits, rather than defining regional forms which are compact and environmentally sound. Too often we address affordable housing by building isolated blocks of subsidized housing rather than zoning for mixed-use neighborhoods and implementing regional fair

housing practices. Most now agree that these current policies, though well intentioned and partially successful, are insufficient to divert further deterioration in each area of concern.

Many have demonstrated how past federal programs helped to create the sprawl and inner-city disintegration which underlie these fragmented problems. Examples include environmental regulations that unintentionally inhibit urban redevelopment, a federal tax structure that favors low-density, single-family dwellings, and an infrastructure investment bias that allows motorists to evade the full costs of their driving. Given this context, our efforts should not only support locally initiated regional solutions, they should begin to rectify the imbalances created by past programs and policies.

## Goals for regional effectiveness

Urban decay, middle class disaffection, and environmental degradation are paramount national issues that a regionalist agenda can help address. At the root of urban decay is a massive decentralization of jobs and

opportunity, a loss of coherence and identity in neighborhoods (new and old), and a dysfunctional regional distribution of tax base. At the root of environmental degradation in cities is the unequalled physical expansion of the metropolitan region and urban forms too dependent on the car. At the root of middle-class disaffection is the sense that one cannot truly escape urban ills, that even with two jobs the quality of life is declining.

It is time to stop addressing inner-city problems, middle class disaffection, and environmental degradation in isolation. Effective regional governance can coordinate our patterns of development and renewal in a fashion that addresses the cause as well as the symptoms of these compounding issues.

Regional governance should focus on forging alliances around common interests rather than creating bureaucratic structures. These alliances tend to be organized around three broad areas of interest: economic development (including problems of uneven development and resulting fiscal disparity), growth management (infrastructure provision and environmental protection), and issues related to social inequalities. Effective regional governance does not displace local programs or government, it augments them with coherent coordination and adequate resources.

While the federal or state governments should not mandate regional policies, they could establish goals in this area, support their local implementation, and help level the playing field with respect to regional patterns of growth.

## The economy of regionalism

In part, the justification for "a new metropolitan strategy" is simply to respond to the public's demand for

more efficient public investments and more efficient government. Optimizing public investments requires a regional approach. Investments in inner-cities and urban businesses ought to be linked to regional opportunities, not isolated by gridlock, quarantined by exclusionary zoning, and drained by suburban growth. Investments in transit should be supported by land use patterns which put riders and jobs within an easy walk of stations and by a coherent regional plan which strategically clusters development. Investments in affordable housing should place families in economically diverse neighborhoods where services, decent schooling and transit are available. Investments in open space should reinforce regional habitat reserves, greenbelts, and urban limit lines. Investments in highways should not unwittingly support sprawl, inner-city disinvestment, or random job decentralization. As the fundamental vessel of these investments our regional form and local design codes should be restructured to enhance communities, not enclaves.

In optimizing public investment the needs of the urban poor are congruent with the working middle class; both are in need of a more frugal, sustainable, and community-oriented model of the American Dream. And both are in need of the new regional order which results from such a transformation. □

*Peter Calthorpe, AIA, Calthorpe and Associates, is a renowned architect/planner and author of The Next American Metropolis: Ecology, Community, and the American Dream. He has been named by Newsweek as one of 25 "innovators on the cutting edge" for his work redefining the models of urban and suburban growth in America. This article is from a larger report prepared for the President's Council on Sustainable Development, and it is reprinted from the November 1995 newsletter of the Surface Transportation Policy Project.*

# Regional fundamentals

The following are fundamental programs for healthy and sustainable communities which only regional coordination and integration can achieve:

## Regional transportation/land use integration

To counter the negative effects of sprawl we must focus new development, redevelopment, and services in walkable, transit-served neighborhoods. These patterns serve not only youth, elderly, and low-income groups but also working middle-class households in search of more convenient and affordable lifestyles.

## Fair housing policies

Each jurisdiction must provide its fair share of affordable housing in order for a region to function effectively. In addition to zoning for affordable housing, appropriate financing vehicles must be developed for adequate volumes of multi-family housing to be produced.

## Regional open space networks and urban growth boundaries

Without clear, defensible limits to growth, investments in infrastructure and jobs will continue to sprawl. It has been demonstrated that sprawl leads to higher costs in municipal services, housing and infrastructure, to more congestion, and to loss of valued open space. Sprawl and environmental degradation not only result in a diminished quality of life but also rising tax obligations.

## Regional tax base equity

As long as basic local services are dependent on local property wealth, property tax-base sharing is a critical component of metropolitan stability. Property tax-base sharing creates equity in the provision of public services, levels the quality of education, breaks the intensifying sub-regional mismatch between social needs and tax resources, undermines local fiscal incentives which drive sprawl, and ends intermetropolitan competition for tax base.

## Livable community design

Progressive regional policies and programs can be largely negated if the physical design of communities follows the old patterns of isolated uses, super block configurations, and auto-only streetscapes. Four design principles are central to making a fundamental difference in the quality of our communities: neighborhood orientation, human scale, integrated diversity, and sustainability. In the end, development must reinforce neighborhoods through physical form as well as social and institutional programs.

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