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Hopkins Airport expansion runs into creek

Green building will be new home for enviros

Town homes planned for Cleveland EcoVillage

Hot air on climate change

Transportation updates and Bioregional Calendar

Good words

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

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

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

— Robert Hinkle
Cleveland Metroparks

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

— William McDonough

RAIL VISIONS IN THE MIDWEST

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

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

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

See pages 8-11
What if rail?

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

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

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

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

You liked it

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

Thanks

Thanks to the George Gund Foundation and the Thomas and Joann Adler Family Foundation, a supporting foundation of the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland, for recent grants providing operating support.

---David Beach
Editor
Community generates ideas for EcoVillage homes

The Cleveland EcoVillage project kicked off the design process for its first major housing development with a community design workshop on February 3. More than 60 participants provided input on landscaping, community issues, architecture, material use, and energy sources. The new development is expected to include 20 town houses on a site along W. 58th Street just north of Lorain Ave. The homes will integrate green building techniques, such as energy efficiency, passive solar design, reduction of storm water run-off and healthy materials, while striving for urban design that fosters pedestrian character, neighborhood interaction, and architectural quality.

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

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

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

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

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

- Create beautiful buildings with native materials.

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

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

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

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**Green building workshops and speakers**

April 23
Integrating Green Design into Residential Building workshop with instructor Joseph P. LaFond, PhD and P.E. and Betsy Pettit, AIA. This workshop is an opportunity to work with two of the county's leading experts to review plans and develop strategies to improve indoor air quality and decrease environmental impact while maximizing financial savings. The workshop will use as a case study 20 green town homes currently being developed by Detroit Shoreway in the Cleveland EcoVillage. Advanced registration required. Discount offered to EcoCity Cleveland members.

May 8
John Knott, Jr. will be speaking as part of the Redesigning Cleveland Speaker Series, 5:30 p.m. at the Cleveland Public Library, Louis Stokes Wing. John is the managing director of Devere Island, an oceanfront island retreat dedicated to environmental preservation and recognized as one of the leading environmental developments in the nation. Free and open to the public, but please preregister at www.cleveland.org.

July 23
Workshop on Natural Building Construction: Straw Bale, Cob, and Adobe, an opportunity to learn natural building design principles while contributing toward the construction of a hybrid straw bale, cob and straw/clay building. Conducted by Mark Pettit, NASA trained engineer and founder of Mark Pettit, Inc. and president of Natural Homesteads. Inc.

To register or find out more about these workshops and educational events contact the Cleveland Green Building Coalition at 216-633-4033 or see www.cleveland.org.
Hot air

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

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

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

- **Temperature rising:** The average global temperature is now projected to rise between 2.5 to 4.0 degrees Fahrenheit by 2100, probably the highest rate of warming in the last 10,000 years. This will cause increased temperature extremes, heat waves, and water shortages, declining food production, the proliferation of deadly diseases such as malaria and dengue fever, and a more variable hydrological cycle (precipitation and flooding in some regions, and more severe droughts in others).

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

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

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

- **Costs soaring:** Environmental degradation is also leading to more severe natural disasters, which have cost the world $680 billion over the last decade (as much as in the previous four decades combined).

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

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A global citizen

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

Here is the last column Meadows wrote, dated February 2, 2001.

As with most of her writings, it focuses on relationships—the relationships between the trends affecting global ecosystems, and the relationships between human beings and our hopes and fears.

**The Polar Bears and the Three-Year-Olds on Thin Ice**

The place to watch for global warming—the sensitive point, the canary in the coal mine—is the Arctic. If the planet as a whole becomes too hot, a few people will still worry by about three degrees. Which is just what is happening.

Ice now covers 15 percent less of the Arctic Ocean than it did 20 years ago. In the 1930s that ice averaged 10 feet thick; now it's less than six feet thick. At the current rate of melting, in 50 years the northern ocean could be ice-free all summer long.

That is the conclusion of Scientists from Oberlin College hosted a panel of climate-change experts to discuss the latest research on global warming. Here are some of the disturbing trends:

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*The Limits to Growth* recently noted that the most greedy and short-sighted among us will always be permitted to rule, that we can never constrain our consumption and destruction, that each of us is too small and helpless to do anything, that we should just give up and enjoy our SUVs while they last, well, yes, it's over. That's the one way that gives us a guaranteed outcome. Everyone I know wants polar bears and three-year-olds in our world.

**Global warming resources**

- Public Agenda Online, http://www.publicagenda.org/

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Revising rail in the Midwest

By Ken Prendergast

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

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

Over the next 10 years, tracks would have to be upgraded, stations expanded or built, new signal systems installed, as well as road-crossing improvements such as building new underpasses, adding "full-closer" gates or closing existing grade crossings. The price tag for developing all 12 routes is $4.8 billion, which would be funded by a mix of federal, state, local and Amtrak dollars.

In the past, some high-speed rail proposals were too costly for a single route, such as previous plans for the Cleveland-Columbus-Dayton-Cincinnati (3-C) Corridor. Those were electrically powered "bullet trains," which required all new railways before a single wheel could turn. Even some rail advocates and organizations, while supportive of high-speed rail, had many concerns about those earlier plans. On the other hand, the MRRI project seeks a "building block" approach to upgrade existing rail services and increase train velocities, rather than employ the "big bang" approach attempted before. That is why a broad base of support is lining up behind the MRRI project.

Already, a number of states and Amtrak are making the MRRI plan come to life by pumping money into existing station improvements. Amtrak has put $25 million into Chicago-area track improvements, Illinois plans to invest $140 million. Michigan has already put up $25 million, and Wisconsin plans to invest $60 million. While Ohio has committed only to funding thus far, two independent advocacy efforts have been initiated: the 3-C Corridor Campaign and the Cleveland-Toldeo-Chicago Corridor Campaign (see page 9). And that's just the start.

New trains arriving

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

The trains, capable of 125-mp, will be powered by diesel-electric or liquefied natural gas engines. As "tilting trains," they would be able to round existing curves at higher speeds by automatically tilting the entire train to counteract the effects of centrifugal forces. Each train will be able to seat 300-400 passengers in two classes, such as economy and business. In addition, there will be a cafe car, as well as two cars to carry express packages. Amtrak wants to introduce the new trains in 2003 on three routes from Chicago: to Detroit, to St. Louis, and to Madison via Milwaukee.

Challenges and opportunities

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

The addition of multiple daily passenger trains operating at 110 mph seems like an engineering and operational challenge. In reality, those are the least of the challenges facing the MRRI. While freight train traffic is heavy on many remaining rail lines across Ohio, most of the MRRI routes would use rail lines that have one or two more tracks than they have now. Laying a new, passenger-only track along these lines typically costs about $1 million per mile (including trackside signals, rebuilt bridges and other accesso ries). This is a veritable bargain compared to adding lanes in highway medians or building more airport runways. The 10-year widening and reconstruction of I-71 between Cleveland and Columbus will cost more than $500 million while airport expansions costing in excess of $1 billion each are planned at Chicago, Cleveland and Dayton.

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

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

Past rail proposals offered either too little or too much for skeptical rail officials to sink their teeth into. A recent, $50 million plan for adding service between Cleveland and Columbus, for example, offered only two fully round trips, a 45 mph average speed, omitted Dayton and Cincinnati, and would carry only 8,000 people a year. At the other end of the scale, a sales tax was proposed during the recession of the early 1980s to build all-new bullet trains for more than $1 billion. Both plans failed to gain support.

In contrast, the MRRI takes a middle-ground approach. While 110 mph is the goal, the plan would begin with modest steps, such as implementing train service with one or two daily round trips using mail and package express shipments to provide a market alternative to non-sponsored operating subsidies. This approach is already occurring on the Cleveland-Chicago corridor, with three trains a day on each direction are now available (with a fourth train due in 2001), but top speeds are still limited to less than 100 mph.

This is where the MRRI's strength lies. If a basic level of passenger rail service fails to meet one-stop expectations then no further development is warranted. But if it is warranted, then each route can be improved, section by section, targeting the lowest parts first. Over a period of a decade or so, as more sections are upgraded and ridership grows, more trains would be added.

Connections to Ohio

At full build-out, advanced passenger rail services as early as 2010 would offer at least eight trains between Cleveland to Toledo and Chicago, and Cleveland to Columbus, Dayton and Cincinnati, plus a number of smaller cities like Sandusky, Elyria, Galion-Manifesto and a suburban station in Brook Park, serving Cleveland Hopkins International Airport. Express trains from Cleveland would make the run to Cincinnati in 3.5 hours, and to Chicago in four hours. Local trains would serve more stations, therefore taking about a half hour longer to make these runs. Considering that the Federal Aviation Administration says the average time an air passenger spends in airports is now up to 70 minutes per flight, the train becomes increasingly competitive on those 100-400 mile trips. Ohio is specially true since trains not only serve the central business districts of cities, but enroute suburbs as well.

Why rail?

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

Campaigns promote Ohio rail corridors

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

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

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

Advanced rail service would also pull redevelopment dollars into older central cities (where most rail stations are, or will be located), creating a counter force to urban sprawl. And there are many direct environmental benefits. For example, a diesel-powered high-speed train, with an average passenger load, is 17 percent more efficient (in terms of energy use and pollution emissions) than a commercial jetliner with an average load, and 31 percent more efficient than the average car on the road today.

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

Traffic volumes in the I-71 corridor... have grown at a rate of over 20 percent over the past five years and are projected to grow at a rate of 50 percent in the next 20 years. In 1987, ODOT approached the ultimate build-out of the I-71 Corridor with respect to the interstate. Additional right of way would likely be required for additional pavement beyond the third lane in the rural sections of I-71. The need for additional right of way may make paving these additional lanes non-prohibitive. Ohio Department of Transportation report on the I-71 pavement reconstruction program, 1998
TRANSPORTATION UPDATES

Linking I-90 and I-480
As new development moves across western Cuyahoga County and eastern Lorain County, there is increasing pressure for wider roads. That part of the region has good highway access running east and west, but it lacks north-south connectors.

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

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

Lakewood mayor joins RTA board
Cleveland and the inner-ring suburbs have new advocates on the board of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority. Lakewood mayor Dennis Kelley, who has been added to the board in March, replacing Westlake mayor Dennis Cloharty, said in the First Suburbs Consortium.

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

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

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

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

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

City officials say that completing the Flats Transportation Study (FTS), which will recommend truck routing between the Port of Cleveland and nearby highways, is necessary before bikeways and community development issues can be settled. City Planning Director Hunter Morrison wants to be sure that neither the Cleveland Inn season interfers with a world-class Towpath extension, and he pledges the studies will improve transportation choices and intermodal connections in and around downtown, while also improving truck access.

For a full report on the towpath trail extension, visit http://planning.ca.ucoyahoga.oh.us.

Bike maps
To encourage more bicycle riding, local transportation planners are creating bicycle suitability maps for Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain and Medina counties. The maps rate major roads according to the skill level (basic, intermediate, experienced) needed to navigate them safely by bike. Other bike paths and facilities are also mapped.

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

Less driving?
New data from the Federal Highway Administration reports that for the first time in twenty years, the number of vehicle miles driven each year in the U.S. declined in 2000. Yearly Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) dropped by 0.11 percent from 1999 to 2000. VMT in December, 2000 was a full 5.5% below that of December, 1999. In contrast to what may be a new downturn in driving, transit use has increased by 25% over the past several years. The number of boardings grew by 2.5 percent in 2000 alone.


—Updates compiled by Ryan McKenzie

EcoCity Cleveland © March/April 2001

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

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

Bigger is better?
A surefire competitive for least-green vehicle in 2002 was recently unveiled by DaimlerChrysler. The Grand Cherokee is three feet taller than a Chevy Suburban and nearly seven feet longer than a Volkswagen Beetle.

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

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

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

The worldwide event was inspired, in part, by the 0.5 million citizens of Bogota who recently celebrated their second Earth Car-Free Day, with a city-wide 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. ban on private car traffic. The traffic-choked Colombian capital is the country’s largest city and one of South America’s fastest-growing metropolitan areas.

Following a successful grassroots event early in 2000, Bogota’s citizens voted last September to annually make the first Thursday of February a car-free day, with a city-wide 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. ban on private car traffic. The traffic-choked Colombian capital is the country’s largest city and one of South America’s fastest-growing metropolitan areas.

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For more information on Car-Free Day activities around the world, visit www.carfreeaday.com.

Wider roads may not be safer
Advocates for highway widenings and capacity additions often justify new projects with claims of traffic safety benefits. But new research suggests the opposite.

A recent study Robert Noland, a lecturer in Transport and the Environment in the Centre for Transport Studies at Imperial College of Science, Technology & Medicine in London and a former policy analyst at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, analyzed data from 50 states over 14 years to determine the effect of highway improvements on traffic volume and road capacity.

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

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

For more information, contact the Smart Growth America and the Surface Transportation Policy Project at 202-974-5131.
The following environmental grants were awarded by The George Gund Foundation during the first quarter of 2001 for more information, see www.gundfd.org.

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

$3,730 (over two years) The Nature Conservancy The Great Lakes Program has identified 270 biodiversity conservation sites in the Great Lakes region, but only 5% of them are under formal protection. This grant will assist identification of threats, planning and coordination of site protection with other agencies and organizations. Contact: Heather Potter, 312-759-8017.

Grants for the environment
Leadership development, non-profit capacity building, and coalition building
$20,000 Center for En. Civility CDC's college campus training program will organize students in Ohio and the Midwest on action issues—both environmental justice and environmental journalism topics. This grant will support training of Ohio-based students. Contact: Anne Costantini, 202-234-5997.

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

Urban sprawl/smart growth
$65,000 EcoCity Cleveland ECC's broad agenda includes the Sustainable Communities Symposia, regional open space planning, watershed restoration, the Cleveland EcoVillage, transportation planning and policy reform as well as a variety of public education activities to promote a sustainable Cleveland bioregion. General support: Contact: David Bonaiuto, 216-592-3307.

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

$21,300 (over two years) League of Women Voters Ohio Ed Fund Working though local civic organizations, the LWV in Cuyahoga County will conduct a series of workshops to assist communities in understanding and addressing local land use and transportation issues. Contact: Carol Gibbons, 216-922-8753.

$45,000 (over two years) Rails to Trails Conservancy RTC's Ohio chapter provides statewide planning and assistance to the over 100 rail trails groups across the state. In 2001 RTC Ohio will establish regional Websites in the foothills of the state, and assist in the planning and funding of a state-funded grant program that will exceed $35 million for trail development projects. General support. Contact: John Houdek, 614-841-1075.

$70,245 Western Reserve R&CD The Countryside Program promotes conservation development zoning in suburban Northeast Ohio. Currently there are 15 communities in Northeast Ohio that have these zoning ordinances in place or in progress. Future plans include research and development of models for small township/commercial center conservation development, and research on conservation development for commercial and industrial centers. Contact: Kimberly Dela, 216-295-0511.

Green Buildings
$50,000 Ohio City West CDC For the development of the Cleveland Environmental Oratory. This relatively new building that will enhance capacity building by providing below-market- rate shared office space for nonprofit organizations in the unique Cleveland. This grant will also purchase equity in land and subsidies rental rates in the building for the nonprofit environmental tenants. Contact: John Wilbur, 216-781-3222.

$25,000 Ohio North City West CDC Program-related investment (low interest issue) for the Cleveland Environmental Center (see above for information).

$30,000 U.S. Catholic Church Common Ground is a non-denominational ra·

ral retreat center in Lorain County. This grant will assist green design for renovation of use meeting facilities and construction of over·

ight accommodations. Contact Rose Butler, 440-965-5555.

Environmental media/public ed.
$55,000 Citizens Policy Center CPC works with environmental program gathers and analyzes data on campaign contributions in Ohio. This past year emphasis was on Supreme Court election 2000. CPC also includes training on the CPCDatabase.

$33,000 Society of Environmental Journalists This grant will allow SEP's Ohio chapter to conduct an annual reporting tour, support an intern and provide fellowships for participation in the national conference. Contact Beth Parker, 216-513-1014.

$20,000 Michigan State University The Great Lakes Environmental Journalism Training Institute gathers journalists from throughout the Great Lakes basin and places them in an intensive two-week course that awards $3,500 for travel and living expenses. General support. Contact: John Houdek, 614-841-1075.

$20,000 University of Michigan The Great Lakes Radio Consortium provides 30 minutes of environmental programming a week to public radio stations in 18 states and reaches an estimated 2.5 million listeners. This grant will also assist in radio training. Contact David Hammond, 734-744-9210.

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

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

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

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

The Northeast Ohio Regional County Planning Commission and the Ohio Department of Development, through the Ohio's Strategic Plan for Growth, has set the following goals: (1) greater fiscal equity among local jurisdictions to reduce wasteful competition for economic investment; (2) a comprehensive regional approach to land use planning in the region; and (3) a stronger focus on governance from regional perspective to shape the development of the region.

This full report on Cincinnati and its Metropolitans, may be found at www.metroresearch.org. For additional information about the Cincinnati study, call Citizens for Civic Renewal at 513-381-3034.

Chagrin Highlands galvanizes region
A amazingly bright and united front of opposition has risen up against the recent proposal to build big box retail stores at Chagrin Highlands. From the Northeast Ohio Artsway Coordinating Agency, the local newspapers, people are outraged that Cleveland City Council is considering development that would allow developers to build low-end retail instead of a high-class office park on the prime, 630-acre site at I-77 and Harvard Road. (The City of Cleveland owns the land, which is located in Beachwood, Orange, Warrensville Heights, and Highland Hills.)

In a letter to Cleveland Councilman President Michael Polensek, the 12 Community First Suburbs Consortium outlined the following concerns:

Chagrin Highlands should be developed to attract the greatest number of higher paying jobs to the site, as envisioned by the present development agreement, without generating the highest tax revenues for Cleveland and the participating suburbs. The proposed legislation removes the controls needed to achieve this vision.

A failure of imagination... I believe that reverting to Big Box Retail development under the current legislation, will result in the region's concentrated glut, in a failure of imagination. It will worsen the county's documented glut of retail, intensely traffic congestion, undermine our quality of life, and sell our taxpayers short. —Judy Rawson, mayor of Shaker Heights, in letter to Cleveland Councilman President Michael Polencek

Drugstore glut
The cut-throat competition for market share among national drugstore chains is creating an excess supply of Big Box Retailers, two new Rite Aid stores are closing. The most common reason for this glut is for more "consumers" dollars away from currently operating merchants.

The regional decision to target $15 million in transportation funds to the I-271 corridor, rather than elsewhere in our communities, was conditioned on commitments by all of the stakeholders that Chagrin Highlands would be developed consistent with the amended Master Agreement which requires the developers, the Jacobs Group, to build an office park and limits retail development. Nullifying those commitments now, after spending the transportation funds, will undermine future cooperation on long-term strategies to benefit our region.

By removing essential development guidelines, the city’s action will signal to drugstore developers, who have already developed throughout the Chagrin Highlands, reducing the long-term value of this real estate. Cleveland asset in return for short-term gains.

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

April 9, ongoing
First of nine Monday evening meetings to discuss Choices for Sustainable Living, 7:30 p.m. at Shaker Lakes Nature Center. Free course, $16 for discussion guide. For registration or more information call 216-321-9393.

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

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

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

April 20
Sacred Landmarks Forum at Cleveland State University. Call 216-875-9999 for more information.

April 21
Earth Day Celebration at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information, call 216-321-9393.

April 21
March for Parks to benefit the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and its Junior Ranger program, 9 a.m. at Ritchie Lodges in the Virginia Kendall Area off Truel Road. For registration information, call 330-657-2999.

April 21
Annual Earth Day Celebration at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information, call 216-321-9393.

April 21
Organic gardening workshop about bed preparation, seed sowing and transplanting, 10 a.m. at the Green Peet Ecology Center. Call 330-668-8995 for registration information.

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

April 23
Green Building Coalition workshop on integrating green design into residential building, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Urban Design Collaborative, 820 Prospect Ave. in downtown Cleveland. For registration information, see www.clevelandgb.org or call 216-622-0033.

April 23
Slide presentation on butterfly gardening, 7:30 p.m. at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes. For more information, call 216-321-9393.

April 25
Streamside management workshop for preventing erosion and improving water quality, 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo. For registration information, call the Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District at 216-524-6380.

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

April 29
Buying Into Cleveland Home Show, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Cleveland Convention Center. For more information, call the Living in Cleveland Center at 216-781-9422 or the City’s Department of Community Development at 216-644-2699.

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

April 29
Workshop on teaching about world economies, diversity, geography and education in the global neighborhood, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Cuyahoga Community College East Campus. Hosted by Global Issues Resource Center. For more information, call 216-987-2133.

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

May 1
Streamside management workshop for preventing erosion and improving water quality, 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Silver Springs Park Lodge in Stow. For registration information, call the Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District at 216-524-6380.

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

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

May 8
Green Building Coalition Speaker series featuring John Knots, manager of Dewers Island and developer of affordable urban housing, 5:30 p.m. at the Stoken Wing Auditorium of the Cleveland Public Library downtown.

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

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

May 14-17
National conference on nonpoint source water pollution in Chicago. For more information, call 312-456-3837.

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**PUBLICATIONS**

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NEW!

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EcoCity Cleveland has created an unusually beautiful and fascinating image of the neighborhoods of Northeast Ohio – from the Lake Plain to the Chagrin Highlands, from the Vermilion River to the Grand River.

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- The Greater Cleveland Environment Book, the 340-page guidebook that is the comprehensive reference about all the environmental issues affecting Northeast Ohio. Send ______ copies at $19 each (includes sales tax and shipping).
- Car-Free in Cleveland, the fun guide to getting around Northeast Ohio by transit, bike and on foot. Send ______ copies at $9 each (includes sales tax and shipping).

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Total $_____.

Please make check out to EcoCity Cleveland and send to 2841 Scarborough Rd., Cleveland Heights, OH 44118.

For more information, call 216-932-3007.

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EarthFest 2001

Ohio’s largest environmental education event, EarthFest, 2001, is April 22 at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call 216-281-6468 or see www.earthfestival.org.
Dike 14

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

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