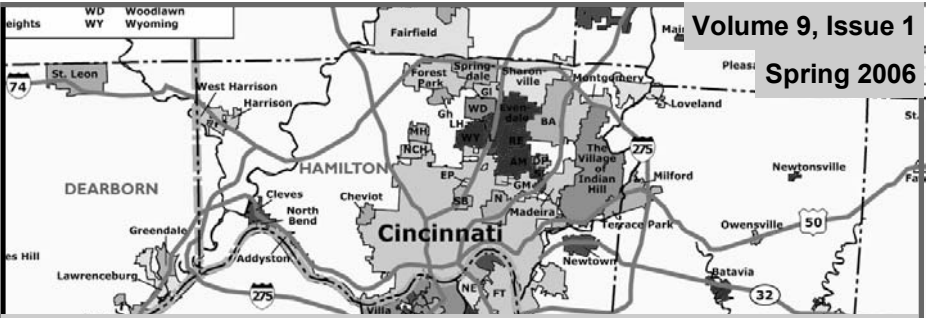


# CCR

citizens for civic renewal



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empowering citizens and serving as a catalyst for civic action in greater cincinnati

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## Louisville Style Merger — Answer to Banks Quagmire?

CCR was pleased to have Louisville Metro Vice-Mayor Joan Riehm speak at the CCR Annual Meeting. Riehm outlined how the successful merger of County and City governments, that occurred in Louisville, has left the region stronger-with a can-do attitude replacing an aw-shucks inferiority complex.

Although the quantifiable benefits of the merger are just starting to be documented, many intangibles such as the change in attitude show what a sea of change merged governments can bring to a region. By merging governments an opportunity was created to reinvent government and replace dysfunction with new ideas. A new city/county police force is a shining example of the results of this reinvention. A new chief has aggressively moved to address lingering racial issues and has committed the force to community-oriented policing.

The new form of government has also brought the

power back to the people. Districts have replaced the countywide-elected commissioners, allowing true citizen representatives to take the reigns of power. And instead of a commissioner representing 200,000 people in the old system, a council person represents 25,000 people. But most importantly there is now one person in charge of both city and county, and in a sense for the whole region.



Wouldn't that be great if Greater Cincinnati had a unified government? What would the *Enquirer* write about? No more finger-pointing between

the County Commission and the City Council. No more questions of "who is in charge here?" No more passing the buck of accountability. Maybe it is time to look at applying the lessons of Louisville to Cincinnati. CCR's Building Economic Strength Together Task Force is developing a strategy to do this. To join the effort contact Steve Johns at [ccrcinn@juno.com](mailto:ccrcinn@juno.com).

## Results of Race Relations Survey Released from the March 13 *Business Courier*

A new study released Monday has found notable gaps between local residents' perceptions of racial progress and fair treatment of minorities. The survey results were announced by the National Conference for Community and Justice of Greater Cincinnati in cooperation with Applied Information Resources Inc. and the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.

The survey showed that residents of the city of Cincinnati and those of the region's suburbs are often disconnected in both their perceptions and their experiences. Within the city, 51 percent of residents say Cincinnati has made interracial progress, while 65 percent of residents outside the city say that's true. Within the city, 68 percent of

residents say they feel "close to" African Americans, while 47 percent of suburban residents said they feel "close to" African Americans. Nationally, 56 percent of respondents said they feel "close to" African Americans.

The survey also found notable differences between whites and African Americans in perception of progress in both race relations and fair treatment by police. Nearly 54 percent of white city respondents said that African American and white citizens receive equal treatment from the police, but only about 14 percent of the African Americans surveyed in the city gave that answer.

"This is the first study of its kind and NCCJ is committed to biennial measurement of our progress," Mitchel Livingston, chairman of the board for the National Conference for Community and Justice, said in a news release. "The

# Race Relations Study

(Continued from page 1)

challenges are not insurmountable; the work of NCCJ and many partner organizations is all about relationship-building, which requires interpersonal and institutional efforts to change the status quo."

The isolation of the growing Hispanic population is evidenced by the region's overall contact and closeness with Hispanics. Twenty-eight percent of city respondents and 21 percent of suburban respondents reported feeling "closeness" to Hispanics, which compared to 48 percent for the nation. About 50 percent of all respondents reported contact with Hispanics, as compared to 78 percent for the nation. Residents in the region also feel distant from Muslims, gays and lesbians and Jews, the survey found.

Sponsors of the study noted that progress has been made since AIR Inc. helped conduct a racial attitudes survey in Cincinnati 10 years ago. They also noted that young adults throughout the region are closer to different racial, ethnic and cultural groups than older adults and have more open, accepting attitudes. They recommended continued partnerships with the various groups involved in the survey and suggested convening meetings across cultural groups to understand the different perspectives and build relationships. They also suggested leveraging young adult connections with different racial, ethnic and cultural groups and improving connections between all communities to help create "a regionwide climate of respect and understanding."

"It is our hope that this report will help educate citizens about the human relations issues facing our region and serve as a compass for directing social and public policy for city and county governments, local media, the corporate sector, non-profit and grass-roots organizations," Robert "Chip" Harrod, executive director of NCCJ, said in a news release.

## Briefly Noted

### Northern Kentucky Vision 2015 Wins ARS Award

Northern Kentucky's Vision 2015 Strategic Planning Project was one of three recipients of the Alliance for Regional Stewardship's 2005 awards. The Vision 2015 process was created by a coalition of business, government, education and civic leaders. The process has included a regional stewardship workshop, a regional summit and five action teams focused on economic competitiveness, education, urban renaissance, livable communities and governance. Each of the three Regional Stewardship Award recipients was presented with a \$15,000 stipend to help promote their successes to other regions. More information on the Vision 2015 process is available at the project website [www.vision2015.org](http://www.vision2015.org).

### Social Areas of Cincinnati Available

The School of Planning, University of Cincinnati and the UC Institute for Community Partnerships recently released a new study that examines demographic trends in Cincinnati and the metro region over the past 30 years. It is entitled "The Social Areas of Cincinnati: An Analysis of Social Needs" Fourth Edition. Authors Michael Maloney and Christopher Auffrey presented the findings to the Woman's City Club. To purchase a copy, send \$5.00 to: Michael Maloney and Associates 5829 Wyatt Avenue Cincinnati, Ohio 45213 or call (513) 531-8799.

### CCR City Beat Annual Manual Resource

Did You See? CCR was listed in *City Beat's* Annual Manual 2006 - on page 71 in the section Involve Yourself. The Annual Manual also included a great synopsis of how to instigate change. See page 65 "Get Started in Direct Action." For a five-step process that CCR could apply to some of its initiatives.

## A Future Vision for CCR

A Guest Column By Kim Nixon, CCR Intern

There are some who say Cincinnati's culture of politeness has kept the region from having the tough discussions that could help resolve the pressing issues that face us today. Our civic community may be most complicit in perpetuating this culture of politeness. Gone are the days when non-profit organizations could play the nice guy by not ruffling feathers and things would get done. Organizations need a clear focus that all members agree on and are willing to work toward accomplishing.

Non-profits now have to think like private businesses in many respects because funding is becoming more and more scarce, and competition for this money is getting stiffer and stiffer. In order to survive and be successful, just like private businesses, CCR must be able to distinguish itself from all the other non-profits, so that everyone knows the organization's name and what it is fighting for. It is okay to talk about what you want to do, but you have to be strong, willing and able to put it into action.

One way to accomplish this is to join forces with some of the power players in Cincinnati, such as Children's Hospital Medical Center and the Uptown Consortium. Here is a non-profit hospital that runs its operations like a privately owned hospital that is extremely successful from a financial standpoint, and is renowned for its scientific research and technology. CCR needs to be looked at as an organization that is not only aggressive, but also has a strong intent to accomplish its mission of empowering citizens and serving as a catalyst for civic action in greater Cincinnati.

Editor's Note: Thanks to Kim who recently wrapped up her internship with CCR. Kim's internship was paid through a UC HUD scholarship. Kim has accepted a job with the City of Cincinnati. Best of Luck!

## Director's Corner

### Cost of growth coming home to roost

By Steve Johns, CCR Director

Costs of constructing new schools and providing new services are propelling fast growing suburban areas' tax bills past historically higher areas' tax bills. So reported the *Cincinnati Enquirer* in a feature story in the Sunday, February 26<sup>th</sup> issue. The story reported that the property taxes in the Mason school district have increased a whopping 42% since 1995 - pushing the taxes past a similarly priced house in similarly performing school districts in Hamilton County. But public school districts aren't the only service that has needed increased taxes to pay for the demands incoming suburbanites place on once rural areas.

The *Enquirer* analysis also showed that police and fire levies in rural townships that are morphing into suburban communities have exploded, adding to the tax bill that newcomers had claimed they were trying to escape.

Property taxes aren't the only thing that costs more in the suburbs. An insert in my Waterworks bill compares the quarterly water cost for an average single-family house from different utilities in the region. Cincinnati Waterworks costs are roughly half that of the Butler County water system.

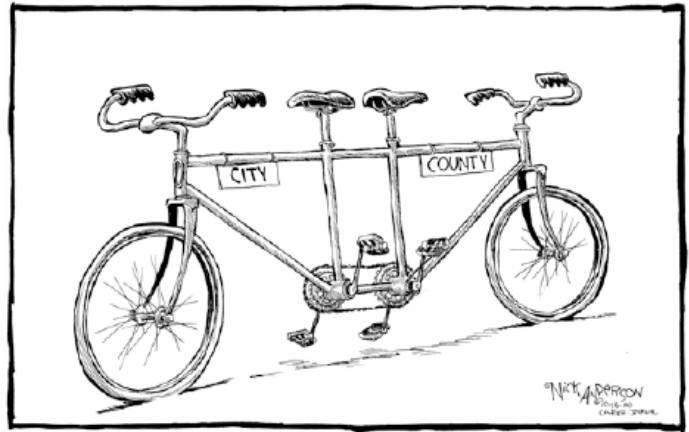
It seems Greater Cincinnati's quest to run away from its problems and duplicate the infrastructure that already exists in and around I-275 is finally coming home to roost. Building new schools, roads, fire stations, and water plants instead of using the ones we already have wastes a lot of money, and now it is clear that the bill has come due.

As if to reinforce the point that the way our region is growing is costing us a lot of money, the *Enquirer* has followed the suburban tax story with front-page stories on the condition of the roads in the City of Cincinnati and the plight of the First

Suburbs.

But it is pretty clear that few are connecting the dots. The City of Mason's reaction to the news will be quite predictable - too high property taxes? Let's lure more office jobs to Mason - even if they come from surrounding jurisdictions. Let's only annex commercial property and only zone for huge McMansions. And who can blame them? This is what our system currently rewards - cannibalization of your neighbors economic development and exclusionary zoning.

Meanwhile the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County will be tripping over each other to build "The Banks" rather than work together to trumpet the benefits of living where the infrastructure already exists and tackling our thorny issues of race and class.



Is there a higher authority that can get us out of this mess? Oh yes, there is a race for governor this year. The challenge to all of us is to make growth and development a key issue for the candidates. Because as Greater Ohio Director Gene Krebs says if sprawl equals economic health, Ohio would be in great shape. And if economic health isn't the number one issue in the governor's race, I don't know what is.

## Meet Liz Blume

Citizens for Civic Renewal is pleased to welcome Liz Blume to the CCR Board of Trustees. Liz is the Associate Director of the Community Building Institute. The Institute is a partnership between the United Way and Xavier University and is engaged in training, research and consulting around comprehensive, asset-based community development and revitalization.



Prior to working for the Community Building Institute, Liz was also Director of the City of Cincinnati Planning Department. In addition to planning for the city, the Planning Department was responsible for maintaining and administering

the zoning code and promoting community development. Liz was also the Director of Planning and Development for the City of Dayton and has experience as a planning consultant.

In addition to her service on the CCR Board, Liz is a board member of the Smart Growth Coalition, has held leadership positions with the Ohio Planning Conference and is a former Co-Chair of the Hamilton County Planning Commission's Planning Partnership.

Liz and her family live in Clifton. CCR is fortunate to have Liz on the Board of Trustees



**Rookwood Tower, Ste. 549  
3805 Edwards Road  
Cincinnati, OH 45209-1948**

**Landlords, Tenants and Neighbors,  
an Educational Housing Forum**

Session 1: April 1, 2006, 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.  
Mt. Washington Presbyterian Church  
6474 Beechmont Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45230

Session 2: April 29, 2006, 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.  
Westwood First Presbyterian Church  
3011 Harrison Avenue. Cincinnati, OH 45211

The two identical forums will examine what makes a community healthy, then offer a choice of workshops on the ABCs of assisted housing and maintaining property quality in a community followed by a panel discussion on the housing choice voucher section 8 program. The forums are being lead by the League of Women Voters.

**Building Stable, Integrated Communities  
*Presented by H.O.M.E.***

A panel of neighborhood representatives will tell their stories on efforts to build and maintain a stable, integrated community.

Panelists include:

- Gerry Kraus - North Avondale, citizen activist
- Ray Hodges - Forest Park, city manager
- Kay Clifton - Price Hill, president of Price Hill Will

The audience will then participate in facilitated group discussions on the opportunities and challenges in building stable, integrated neighborhoods in the greater Cincinnati area.

April 21, 2006, from 2:00-4:30 p.m. at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.

**Citizens for Civic Renewal Membership Form**

Join CCR Today! Your membership will: Keep you informed—CCR newsletters and forums featuring national experts are just two of the ways in which CCR members enhance their awareness of issues of regional importance. Aggregate your voice—As a member of CCR, you join hundreds of others so that when we get the ear of public officials, your voice is heard. Support our efforts—Your membership dues augment our work and match the support of local foundations and funders.

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual \$25      \_\_\_\_\_ Household \$50      \_\_\_\_\_ Student \$5  
Please mail to Citizens for Civic Renewal 3805 Edwards Road #549, Cincinnati, OH 45209

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Interests** (circle those that apply)

Education                      Social Justice

Transportation                Economic Development

