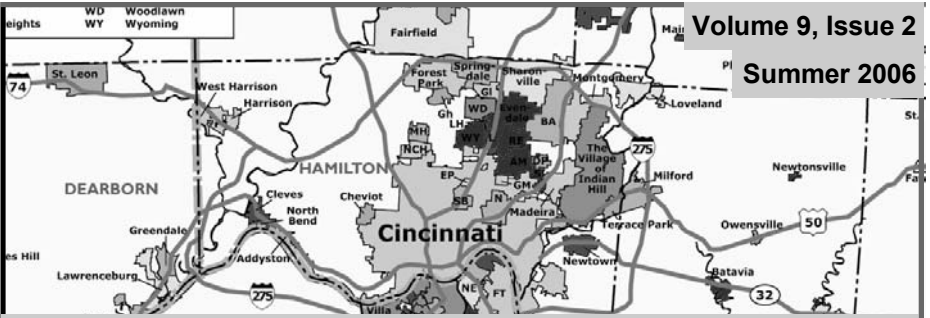


CCR

citizens for civic renewal



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

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Address

Rookwood Tower
3805 Edward Rd. Ste. 549
Cincinnati, OH 45209-1948
(p) 513-458-6736
(f) 513-458-6610
(e) cccinn@juno.com
citizenscivicrenewal.org

BEST Foot Forward?

Is greater collaboration between the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County on the horizon? Recent events may indicate that the stars may finally be aligning. CCR's Building Economic Strength Together (BEST) Task Force has been hard at work promoting better collaboration between the City and the County - that hard work is starting to paying off.

In part due to the efforts of CCR and other non-profits like the Cincinnatus Association, local government leaders have been taking actions to promote government cooperation. CCR Advisory Council member Bill Seitz recently took a trip to Louisville with City of Cincinnati Councilpersons Laketa Cole, David Crowley, and Jim Tarbell to learn how to apply some of the governmental collaborations there to Greater Cincinnati.

CCR Advisory Council member and director of the Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission Ron Miller is working with City of Cincinnati Councilman Chris Bortz and Hamilton

County Commissioner Pat DeWine to initiate a study of potential service consolidations between the City and County. The BEST Task Force is actively supporting this study and anticipates serving on the steering committee that will help guide and implement it.

Local media has also weighed in on the city/county collaboration issue. The July/August issue of *Cincinnati Gentlemen* features an excellent article on how "The Banks" project is making many rethink how governments do business in Greater Cincinnati. And heaven forbid, the article encourages the region to look to Louisville, Nashville and Indianapolis for models of greater government efficiency.

The *Enquirer* also got into the act by publishing a CCR guest column in the Thursday, August 3, edition. If you missed it, it is reprinted on page three of this newsletter in the Director's Corner.

We need your help to keep this effort going. You are invited to the next BEST meeting - September 11, 4-5 pm at the fifth floor of the Rookwood Tower.

Future of Paratransit

To implement CCR's goal of improving regional transit in Greater Cincinnati, CCR Board member Jeff Stec and CCR Director Steve Johns have co-facilitated four meetings of the paratransit providers in Hamilton County. Paratransit is a public, pre-scheduled service that provides curb-to-curb or door-to-door service upon request. Paratransit is often associated with transportation of the elderly or disabled. In Greater Cincinnati paratransit providers include Metro's Access, Hamilton County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities' (MRDD) Petermann buses and senior centers' vans and buses.

As a result of these meetings, the participants have created a vision for paratransit in Hamilton County, mapped the paratransit providers in Hamilton County and their assets, and identified four key workplan areas to begin working toward their vision.

1. Collect More Information - Create a map inventory of service providers, locations served and number of vehicles

2. Get Creative About Funding - Identify other possible sources of funding as well as develop ways to use existing funding more effectively.



Continued on next page

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3. Identify Ways to Work Together. Evaluate the possibilities of creating a “one-stop-shop,” a centralized brokerage service and centralized dispatch system

4. Reinforce the Idea of Paratransit Hubs. Find a way to link the local and subregional providers to the larger network of countywide providers through a hub and spoke system—similar to what was proposed in the 2002 *Metromoves Plan*.

Plans are underway to determine how CCR can integrate the work of the paratransit group into the federally mandated coordinated public transit – human services plan. CCR is working with both OKI and ODOT who will likely spearhead the creation of the plan.

Thanks to all the agencies for participating in these meetings and to the Seasongood Foundation for funding this effort.



Della Davis of the Talbert House and Tom Eamoe of the ARC Hamilton County discuss the future of paratransit services.

Briefly Noted

Hospitals follow growth

If there was any doubt that commercial development follows residential development, recent announcements of two huge hospital expansions prove the old axiom.

Greater Cincinnati’s Health Alliance and Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center announced plans to build two regional medical complexes in booming Butler County. The Health Alliance unveiled plans to build a 370,000 square-foot, 160-300 bed, hospital in West Chester. The project is reported to bring between 700 and 1,000 jobs to the area.

Meanwhile, Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical center is planning a 65 acre campus near SR 129 and I-75 in Liberty Township. The first phase will include a three-story, 200,000 square-foot outpatient medical facility. The two facilities will join Mercy Fairfield and Middletown Regional Hospital, a 750,000 square-foot complex at SR 122 and I-75.

IKEA Planned for West Chester

Speaking of commercial development following residential growth, Swedish furniture maker Ikea just announced plans to build a 300,000 square-foot store in West Chester. Although obviously a boon for that community, the announcement also has regional implications.

Ikea’s entry into this market underscores that the region still has clout as a regional hub, said Stan Eichelbaum, president of Marketing Developments Inc., a downtown Cincinnati retail consulting firm. “Strategically, Cincinnati is a hub for several markets - certainly Dayton and Lexington and potentially Columbus and Indianapolis,” he said. “Cincinnati’s best days were as a regional hub, and it’s a potential strength for the future.” (quote courtesy of the *Cincinnati Enquirer*)

Ohio Equity Platform

Greater Cincinnati’s AMOS Project joined other Gameliel affiliates from Cleveland and Youngstown to create an Ohio Equity Platform for use in their upcoming gubernatorial candidate forums. The Platform identifies five issues that will be key to a positive future for Ohio - education, jobs, health care, urban revitalization and housing.

Three of these issues are key to CCR’s *Cincinnati Metropolitans’* Regional Agenda - education, urban revitalization and housing. Key aspects of the Ohio Equity Platform include:

Education

Create a pilot program that funds regional schools that serve the children of employees of major urban anchor institutions such as hospital and universities. These schools would also serve the neighborhood children.

Urban Revitalization (Fix-it-First)

Appoint a director of ODOT who will make investment in the existing infrastructure of cities and first suburbs a priority over investments that facilitate sprawl.

Housing

Create a Ohio Housing Finance Agency policy that reforms its point system for funding affordable housing projects so that affordable housing is built in low crime, low poverty communities with good schools and access to employment and transportation.

The AMOS candidate forum is scheduled for the evening of Monday, October 2nd. Time and location TBA.

Thanks to the Stephen H. Wilder Foundation, a sponsor of the Summit for Ohio’s Future - where this platform was created.

Director's Corner Can we "stretch" the region?

By Steve Johns, CCR Director



Why has Cincinnati become the poster child for urban population loss while neighboring cities continue to grow? So asked the *Enquirer* after recent census population estimates showed the City of Cincinnati losing population at a rate faster than any other large city in the country. Cincinnati ranks as the 58th largest U.S. city; it's the third largest in Ohio, but it's uncomfortably close to becoming the state's fourth largest behind Toledo. Articles in the *Enquirer* speculated that Lexington's small town charm, Columbus' twenty-first century economy, and Indianapolis' downtown renaissance are some of the possible reasons that these three Midwestern cities are thriving while the City of Cincinnati declines.

The most obvious reason was barely mentioned—all three of

If regional growth rates from the 1990s continue in upcoming decades, Greater Indianapolis and Greater Columbus will be larger than Greater Cincinnati in 2040.

the cities that were compared to Cincinnati are "elastic cities." Former Albuquerque Mayor David Rusk coined this term in 1993. Rusk found that cities that continued to expand either through annexation or government merger not only grew themselves but also helped the region grow faster. A quick look at the growth of the three comparable cities validates Rusk's findings. The Indianapolis and Lexington regions

grew twice as fast as Greater Cincinnati's 8.9% growth rate during the 1990s, while Greater Columbus grew 14.8%.

The benefits of becoming an "elastic city" compelled Louisville to choose the merger way of Lexington, Indianapolis, and Columbus. Louisville merged with Jefferson County in 2003 to become the nation's 26th largest city, and if history is any indication, the economic benefits will accrue to the entire region. A similar consolidation between Hamilton County and the City of Cincinnati would create the nation's 12th largest city. So far thirty-five cities have consolidated with counties for economic development and cost-cutting purposes, the most recent of which was Louisville, and more seem headed in that direction.

"Elastic cities" create regional strength in many ways, two of which are: (1) economic development and (2) political capital. First, cities with larger populations are more attractive areas for business, more economically viable, and open the area to more grants and funding opportunities to spur growth of the region. Rather than trying to divide a shrinking pie, cities that reengineer and promote themselves as a unified regional entity are at a competitive advantage in the global marketplace. Second, "elastic cities" have population levels that translate into strength both at the state and federal levels. For example the City of Indianapolis and the City of Louisville each make up 13% of the populations of their respective states; the City of Columbus has 6% of the population of Ohio, while the City of Cincinnati accounts for less than 3% of Ohio's population. A city-county alliance would better address metropolitan-wide issues with the state and federal governments.

So the question remains - Do we continue to do nothing while our neighbors move forward, or do we find a way to create an "elastic city" that helps Greater Cincinnati become a model for growth in the Midwest?

Editor's note: This column first appeared in the August 3 edition of the Enquirer.

Meet Al Kanters

Al Kanters is completing his first year of service on the CCR Board of Trustees. Al is the Executive Director of the Lincoln Heights Community Improvement Corporation, a not-for-profit development company, whose mission is to promote economic development in the Village of Lincoln Heights.



Al is also the President of Kanters Consulting, providing international and domestic management, marketing and risk management consulting services to businesses seeking to expand as well as economic development and community planning services to the public sector.

Al recently completed a project for the Cincinnati Empowerment Zone Corporation helping to establish a process for selecting neighborhood improvement projects that generate positive economic benefits.

Al holds an MBA degree from Clarkson University in Potsdam, NY, a Master's in Community Planning from the University of Cincinnati, an Associates Degree in Risk Management from the Insurance Institute of America and a Bachelor of Arts in Communications from the University of Windsor.

Originally from Canada, Al has lived and worked in various cities across Canada, Europe and the United States. He became an American citizen in 2001 and moved to Cincinnati with his wife who is a Professor at the University of Cincinnati.

Al also serves as the co-chair of CCR's BEST Task Force.



**Rookwood Tower, Ste. 549
3805 Edwards Road
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Subdivision Jumps Little Miami

The *Business Courier* recently reported that a 21-house subdivision is being planned near Waynesville. The subdivision, Trillium Run, will feature million dollar homes on two-acre lots.

The development will be located near SR 73 and Clarksville Road, making it one of the first subdivisions that would access I-71 on the east side of the Little Miami River. For many, the Jeremiah Morrow Bridge, the I-71 bridge over the Little Miami River, was the *de facto* gateway between the exurbs of Cincinnati and the farms that line the interstate almost all the way to Columbus.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Nominating Committee
Monday, August 28, 4:00-5:30
Rookwood Tower

Building Economic Strength Together (BEST)
Monday, September 11, 4:00-5:00
Rookwood Tower

Transportation
Thursday, September 7, 5:30-6:30
Rookwood Tower

AMOS Candidate Forum
Monday, October 2, TBA

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
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Interests (circle those that apply)

Education Social Justice
Transportation Economic Development