

Uniting Cleveland through the Euclid Corridor Transportation Project

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As a bus passenger takes a ride to downtown Cleveland through Euclid Avenue, constructions can be seen along the road. The narrow lanes and the flying dust are the reasons for the traffic congestions and unattractiveness of the road. Moreover, the cost and time it takes to complete the construction cause Cleveland residents to have negative attitudes toward the new city project. All the negativities toward the project are reasonable, but Cleveland is in need of creating more public attractions and services to draw newcomers and to keep the lived-in residents satisfied. Thus, Clevelanders should have supportive attitudes toward the carefully planned Euclid Corridor Transportation Project because its goals are to both provide better transportation and to make the city more livable. The Euclid Corridor Transportation Project might be one of the major initiatives that the city can take to renew the vivacity of the city. It will succeed in instigating the renewal of the city's liveliness because not only are the immediate effects of better transit service and decrease of pollution rewarding, but the long-term effects of building strong regional economy and communities are also worthy of the cost and time that the Euclid Corridor Transportation Project takes to complete.

It is ambitious to believe that the Project will perfect the city's image and terminate all its problems. However, the new service will improve most of its current public transportation problems. The Euclid Corridor Transportation Project is proud that one of its goals is to provide a cleaner environment. Joseph Calabrese, the CEO and General Manager of the Greater

Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA) stated in the Annual Western Reserve Symposium¹ that the Euclid Corridor Vehicle (ECV) is a 62 foot long, diesel-electric bus that has electric engines powered by a low-sulfur diesel motor. This vehicle will reduce air pollution that the current operating bus contributes because ECV is partially run on electric diesel. Thus, the byproducts of diesel released into the air will decrease. The new engine will also allow bus traveling to be quieter. The improvement of regional air quality will both enhance residential living condition and the city's image. The transformation of public transportation can lead the city in protecting air quality by setting as an example to the rest of the operating vehicles.

By the completion date of 2008, the plan of the Project is to have a reserved lane in the street used exclusive for buses. This will be supported by the bus signaling preference designed to give the preferential treatment to buses as the intersection signals detect their arrivals.² Other adjustments that will also ease bus traveling are the elimination of on-street parking and relocation of loading zones. All these rearrangements of the streets are designed to shorten the traveling time for passengers as Joseph Calabrese predicted that there will be a 20 percent reduction in traveling time³. This will hopefully change the attitude that many Cleveland residents have about the irregular schedule and long waits of the current transportation system. Not only will time saving be a factor in the increase of rider ship, but residents' curiosity will also be a contribution.

Once the Project is concluded, bus riders will have more reasons to be pleased because other improvements such as bus boarding islands and time indication of the next available bus

^{1, 3} Calabrese, Joseph. "Transformation of Region: The Western Reserve and 'The Livable City.'" Case Western Reserve University. Dively Building, Cleveland, OH. 3 Nov. 2006.

² "Euclid Corridor Transportation Project." Euclid Corridor Silver Line. 2006. Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority. 1 Dec. 2006 <<http://euclidtransit.org/home.asp>>.

were planned aiming to satisfy passengers. There will also be curb realignment which will prevent traffic congestions so the bus system will be reliable. Since the bus line links the central business district to University Circle, it will travel through the major employment centers, the culture, medical and educational districts⁴. Due to the job and studying opportunities that are provided by these areas, employees and students will be encouraged to ride the bus as it provides better access to their destinations. The Project board considered more than the needs of bus riders; they also focused on the wants of pedestrians. New pedestrian zones, sidewalks, lighting, and tree lawns will be established to support walking activities⁵. More importantly, there will be bicycle lanes from Cleveland State University to Case Western Reserve University. The new amenities will uplift community activities because it has been demonstrated by Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, that supportive pedestrian environment directly affects the liveliness of the city as it slows down the moving of residents to suburbs, “Copenhagen opened a new subway system in 2002 and expanded the existing commuter rail system along with constructing new bikeways and pedestrian streets. Denmark has worked to halt sprawling...”⁶ (Walljasper 238). Residents will feel comfortable utilizing the public space and bike routes once the city provides the environment. These additions to Cleveland will promote health awareness and increase the sense of community as individual drivers depend less on personal vehicles.

Becoming less dependent on automobiles is a long-term effect that the Euclid Corridor Transportation Project will cause. It will be beneficial for most Cleveland residents, yet it is difficult for them to recognize the concept. The embedded thought is that having a car equals

^{4,5} “Euclid Corridor Transportation Project.” Euclid Corridor Silver Line. 2006. Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority. 1 Dec. 2006 <<http://euclidtransit.org/home.asp>>.

⁶ Walljasper, Jay. “How to Fall in Love with Your Hometown.” Toward the Livable City. Ed. Emilie Buchwald. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2003. 238.

having freedom. However, most drivers are spending a great portion of their time traveling in crowded traffic from their suburban homes to work in the city. They take little notice of their surroundings and lose connection with the rest of the community. The author in *Divorcing the City*⁷ lived most of her life in a populous city. She admits that when she depended more on her car after moving to the suburb, it forced her to lose her sense of community, “Instead of being in one community where we live and work we are traveling mindlessly over gray space between home and work...we are alone in our cars, in semi-daze, neither in community nor in conversation” (Morgenroth 33). Driving destroys the pride and connection that residents have in their cities. As a result, it leads to urban sprawling which strips the vitality of neighborhoods and congested roadway networks with traffic and air pollution. Sara St. Antoine, the author of *Cambridge Walking*,⁸ explained that she was comfortable with a car less lifestyle because her city maintained an excellent public transportation system (St. Antoine 57). If the Euclid Corridor Transportation Project develops into a dependable transportation system, then most Cleveland residents will realize that public transportation is more affordable and convenient than automobiles. This will hopefully encourage them to consider public transportation as their primary sources of traveling. The long-term effect of car less lifestyle will strengthen the city by slowing urban sprawling and building firm communities.

The other long-term effect that the Project will greatly impact Cleveland is the heightening of local economy. Not only will the transportation system create 13,000 new jobs, but the city will also attract businesses with more than \$700 million in construction proposed

⁷ Morgenroth, Lynda. “Divorcing the City.” *Toward the Livable City*. Ed. Emilie Buchwald. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2003. 33

⁸ St. Antoine, Sara. “Cambridge Walking.” *Toward the Livable City*. Ed. Emilie Buchwald. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2003. 57.

along with the Project⁹. These economic opportunities will recruit more working forces to the region along with the cultural and educational positions available at the University Circle. With the operation of the Euclid Corridor Vehicle, it will hopefully be an encouragement to businessmen to re-develop the area. Although there are interruptions of current businesses along Euclid Avenue due to construction, investments and sacrifices unfortunately are collateral damages in this process that is pressed for a better economic future for the city. With the assistance of the Project, the economic gains will be great and compensate for the current loss. In the end, the ECV will serve both as a tool uniting the economic forces at the two central business districts and as a catalyst to the development of Euclid Avenue businesses.

After learning immediate and long-term effects that the Euclid Corridor Transportation Project involves, it is fair to conclude that it will be one of the most important steps that the city can take to rejuvenate its vivacity and prosperity. The Project will succeed in achieving its objectives of decreasing pollution and providing better transit service by utilizing environmentally and passenger friendly vehicles and redefining the priority of bus operation in traffic systems. The addition of pedestrian areas will lead to more community involvement that will unite the neighborhoods as residents become less dependent on their personal vehicles. Most importantly, urban sprawling will decrease while new job opportunities will blossom to help local economy grow. The changes that Cleveland's public transportation system is introducing are valuable; they will help to preserve the existing assets of the city and redevelop to make Cleveland a popular metropolis. By meeting the mobility needs of residents, the Euclid Corridor Transportation Project will unite the area to further establish Cleveland as a livable city.

⁹ "President's budget includes \$25 million for Euclid Corridor." RTA News. 3 Feb. 2004. Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority. 1 Dec. 2006 <http://www.gcrtc.org/nu_newsroom_releases.asp?listingid=562>.

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