

## **Proposal for KEC Focus Group on Transportation**

Attention KEC members and prospective members! Join in the formation of a Focus Group on Transportation. An initial meeting will be held on Saturday, April 4, at 1 p.m. (location to be announced). A regular monthly meeting time will be proposed at the April 4 meeting. Intervening meetings will be called as needed. If you are interested, contact Harold Walker (or 330-673-6534).

Among the factors responsible for broad and deep environmental impact, transportation and the habit of life fostered by the dominant transportation system are among the most basic. A cursory scan of this impact would touch on the following (and more):

- Land use (urban abandonment and suburban sprawl)
- Profligate use of energy
- Deterioration of air quality
- Global climate change
- Erosion of community life
- Encouragement of sedentary personal habits

Any effort to sustain an ecologically friendly community in our region (or any region) will require an understanding of the influences of transportation and attention to the possible reconception of transportation for the region.

A KEC Focus Group on Transportation would seek a specific acquaintance with the existing modes of transportation in the region and clarification of transportation-related issues and advise KEC concerning the issues that deserve our attention.

An initial agenda for the focus group would include the following:

- Reflection on the immediate and long-term aims of the focus group
- Review of patterns of highway and infrastructure development in Kent and the region (including the Crain Avenue Bridge project, and other forthcoming projects)
- Review of progress on the development of a system of pedestrian and bicycle trails for the region and an assessment of KEC's contribution to this development
- Detailed examination of the existing facilities for public transportation for Kent, Portage County and the region
- Study of current efforts to shape a 20-year vision for transportation in the region, including proposals for a multimodal transportation facility for Kent, proposals for commuter rail and various forms of passenger rail developments, and visionary progress in transportation systems in other regions

Among the proposed meetings of the focus group would be a field trip to the new intermodal transportation facility in downtown Akron and attendance at a May 19 address on "High Speed Rail Transportation in Ohio: A Reality at Last!" by Ken Prendergast,

executive director of All Aboard Ohio (to be sponsored by the Portage Trail Group of the Sierra Club).