Abstract

This narrative details how highway building, environmentalism, race and class intersected in suburban Shaker Heights, Ohio, during the 1960s. The methodology combines local, environmental, political and social histories. While the city’s successful racial integration narrative has defined Shaker Heights, its class narrative is also significant. The unsuccessful attempts to build the Clark and Lee freeway through the eastern suburbs of Cleveland reveal important aspects of the class narrative and had national resonance, directly and indirectly connecting to important individuals and movements of the era. The success of the anti-freeway movement adds to Shaker’s atypical postwar social narrative. Part of a larger movement of freeway revolts, the Shaker Heights activists benefited from class advantages, political connections and the evolution of Interstate highway legislation since 1956. Activists benefited from built and natural environmental movements of the 1960s as well. In succeeding in preventing the highways, citizens managed to protect the suburb’s prewar character during an era of massive physical and social change. Rejecting an archetypal view of suburbs in the postwar era, this project stresses the importance of looking at the variability of actions, individuals and ideas within individual communities. Singular narratives of postwar
suburbs, or of suburbs themselves, obscure these differences and prioritize certain narratives over others, including the narrative of this project.
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List of Abbreviations

Bureau of Public Roads (BPR)

Clark Freeway (I-290)

Cleveland-Seven County Transportation-Land Use Study (SCOTS)

Committee for Sane Transportation and Environmental Policy (CSTEP)

Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA)
Introduction

Sitting next to the aging industrial center of Cleveland, Ohio, suburban Shaker Heights is an oasis of beauty, calm and wealth. Its large homes in a natural setting recall the early prewar nature of Cleveland itself, both its reputation as Forest City and its wealth gleaned from Standard Oil, the steel industry and the automakers. Cleveland’s light rail system, the Rapid transit, still runs through Shaker Boulevard in Shaker Heights. The once advanced transit system now gives Shaker Heights a quaint feel, with the quiet trains rumbling down a street of gorgeous, large and well-landscaped homes. This peaceful, historic environment did not maintain itself naturally, and rather, the citizens of the community needed to put out a great deal of effort, organization and commitment to prevent its destruction. Part of a national series of freeway revolts, the Shaker Heights reaction against planned highway projects reflects national trends in conservation, and also magnifies the national, state and local political and social complexities of urban highway planning.

In the 1960s, Cuyahoga County’s Engineer Albert Porter and the Ohio Department of Highways promoted the construction of highways through Cleveland’s eastern suburbs, including part of an Interstate highway, the Clark Freeway, and the Lee Freeway. Convinced that highway construction was the answer to Cleveland’s traffic in the eastern suburbs, and bolstered by the Interstate Highway Act of 1956, Porter pushed
hard for the freeways. He was met with resistance from the dismayed citizens of the eastern suburbs, and an argument that played out in the local press. The well-heeled residents of America’s wealthiest city, Shaker Heights, disliked the project because it would remove local homes and destroy parkland. The dispute over the Clark, and to an extent the Lee, tangled not only Porter, the privileged Shaker residents and local leadership, but also local and state leadership, conservationists, and followers of writers Lewis Mumford and Jane Jacobs. Actively protesting freeways through the eastern suburbs, Shaker Heights residents refused access to the highway network connecting Cleveland and its surrounding suburbs. The result was no relief from traffic through the eastern suburbs, and an opportunity for Shaker Heights to survive the postwar era without altering its prewar infrastructure.

Shaker Heights is an example of a suburb both embracing and resisting progress. In the 1960s, activists mobilizing against proposed freeway projects acted simultaneously with activists working to regulate the mass migration of African-Americans into and whites out of the suburb. These tendencies to control, borne out of privilege and concerns for community stability, proved effective in this situation. Shaker Heights’ dominant postwar narrative centers on racial integration rather than on the anti-freeway campaign. However, the fight to keep Shaker Heights in its original physical form actually did more than the racial integration efforts to preserve the suburb’s original character.¹

While other suburbs provided new, quiet, comfortable neighborhoods, highway access, and greater physical distance from Cleveland’s economic and social problems,

¹ For more on Shaker Heights’ racial integration in the postwar era, see Cynthia Mills Richter, *Integrating the Suburban Dream: Shaker Heights, Ohio* (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1999).
Shaker Heights remained a destination suburb. Some of Cleveland’s other inner-ring suburbs and inner city neighborhoods lost homes to the new freeways and suffered the aesthetic and social consequences of highways interrupting neighborhoods. As a community study, this project seeks to highlight the preservation of inner-ring suburbs not as rich, exclusive areas, but as cities refusing to abandon prewar identities for the supposed inevitabilities of the postwar suburban expansion.

This anti-freeway protest fits into the larger historical project of freeway revolt history. Historians have investigated the national movements known as the freeway revolts from local, state and national vantage points. This local history of a freeway revolt fits into their findings, as well as into the work of various suburban and urban historians. It is the freeway revolt work of historian Raymond Mohl that most closely mirrors the structure for the Shaker Heights project. In addition to local activism, the “commonalities” Mohl finds between successful revolts include strong activists and “alliances” of different races and classes; political and journalistic support; lawsuits and other “legal intervention” to delay building; and a final shutdown from a governor or legislature. He cites historian Zachary Schrag’s argument “strong and historic planning” in cities also helped the process.² Not all of these factors played equal roles in the Shaker Heights dispute, and the preservation of the natural environment also factored into Shaker Heights’ argument. The placement of the Clark and Lee extended the project’s support beyond the wealthy boundaries of Shaker Heights into Cleveland and other nearby suburbs. Local leadership, minus Porter, provided support for the activists, and the

Cleveland Plain Dealer, Cleveland Press and Heights Sun Press, in varying degrees, gave the activists a platform and especially in the case of the Sun Press, large support. Activists appealed to leadership at state and local levels, and benefited from evolving highway legislation. They also defended the community on the basis of its Shaker historical past. The official end came when Governor James Rhodes canceled the project in the early 1970s.

This protest did not have one dominant theme, and this narrative reflects its numerous parts. In order to contextualize the freeway fights, the first section will briefly introduce relevant literature in each of these fields, with attention to writers directly influencing the activists. The second section looks at the history of the city of Shaker Heights, with special attention to its design and racial integration histories. The third section considers the Interstate Highway system, mass transit and other relevant transportation issues. The fourth section deals with Cleveland’s political leadership and racial migration during this era. The fifth section analyzes the Interstate highway acts leading up to the 1960s and their amendments. Activism against the Clark and other area freeways is included in the sixth part, with attention given the local press coverage of the event. The seventh section is a discussion of the environmental aspects of the fight, particularly the creation of the Shaker Lakes Nature Center and National Historic Landmark status given to the parkland in the 1970s. The conclusion will assess the significance of the anti-freeway victory. Shaker Heights residents prevented disruption of neighborhood structure, helped preserve the stability necessary for continued racial transition and managed to maintain its character in an era when progressive measures like highway building often sacrificed old neighborhoods’ stability.
Historiography

Shaker Heights, like many northern American suburbs, experienced major changes in the postwar era. Actions in the prewar era, however, established a strong physical and social character in Shaker. In order to address the various environmental, social and political issues involved in the freeway conflict, it is necessary to look to relevant studies of suburbs and design in the prewar and postwar eras.

An example of a prewar enclave or destination suburb, Shaker Heights is located on the southeastern border of Cleveland, between the suburbs of Beachwood, Cleveland Heights, University Heights and Warrensville Heights. Its peer suburbs, in wealth and housing, include Oak Park, Illinois, near Chicago and Scarsdale, New York, near New York City.3 Historians have analyzed the social formations of these suburbs, which were convenient and peaceful neighborhoods for the white, Anglo-Saxons eager to abandon industrial, crowded cities.4

3 W. Dennis Keating has compared the racial integration efforts in Oak Park and Park Forest, Ill., Southfield, Michigan and other cities to those of the Cleveland suburbs in The Suburban Racial Dilemma: Housing and Neighborhoods (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 210-220. He discusses the various methods of managing racial integration in successful suburbs, including maintaining housing stock and making efforts to attract whites. Southfield’s Jewish population, Keating argues, was pivotal to that suburb’s racial integration efforts.

Shaker Heights’ unusual architecture and design, with winding streets and blending of parks and homes, reflects prevailing trends in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Influenced by British designer Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City movement, it incorporates English country influences into a suburban structure. Howard’s ideas called for a revolution in housing conditions in the early 20th century. The garden city paired “advantages of town and country” by integrating parkland, trees and lakes with residential property.  

Howard’s “town-country” needed to provide jobs as well as atmosphere, as he sought to draw people away from anonymous and crowded cities. Not “self-contained” in the manner of ideal garden cities, Shaker Heights relied economically and physically on its ties to Cleveland. Even though their Garden City did not follow the exact rules, Shaker Heights citizens did combine social life with nature. Howard argued, “human society and the beauty of nature are meant to be enjoyed together,” a principle similar to those the highway activists defended in the postwar era.

Cleveland’s partial rings of suburbs surrounding the central city reflect its years of suburbanization stretching back to the 19th century. Inner-ring suburbs in old, industrial centers like Cleveland are more established, tied to the center city and are often connected to a mass transportation system. Outer-ring suburbs in the Cleveland metropolitan area, the immediate ring of suburbs around the inner-ring, fall largely into the postwar archetype of ranch-style homes and reliance on automobiles. Beyond the

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8 Howard, Garden Cities of To-morrow, 48.
outer-ring lie even more suburbs, and the self-contained suburbs more recently referred to as exurbs. Not all metropolitan areas have the same pattern of suburbanization as Cleveland. The city’s postwar suburban history results from the city’s response to white flight, deindustrialization, its own ethnic and social divides, social trends and nationwide changes in housing policy.

Suburban history has evolved over the years, with much of the debate revolving around the character of American suburbs as well as white flight.9 Kenneth Jackson’s *Crabgrass Frontier* (1986) has provided until the past few years the dominant narrative of American suburbanization. Focused mainly on the social and physical structures of suburbs, Jackson’s work provides a solid base for histories of suburban infrastructure. Jackson calls suburbanization “the outstanding residential characteristic of American life.” The ties that bind are “population density, home-ownership, residential status and journey-to-work,” with residential status referring to his idea that suburbs are largely home to better-educated and wealthier people. He acknowledges distinctions between suburbs but argues that American suburbs, even from different regions, can be universalized to an extent.10

Recent suburban historians, particularly Thomas Sugrue and Kevin Kruse, have criticized Jackson’s tendencies to generalize the physicality of suburbs. In Kruse and Sugrue’s 2003 compilation, *The New Suburban History*, they criticize characterizing the suburbs as white enclaves that restricted blacks’ presence. By looking at a suburb like

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Shaker Heights, with a growing black population in the 1960s, the problems with associating suburbs solely with whites become clear. People, issues and interactions are ignored, and events mischaracterized. Kruse and Sugrue, using a metropolitan or urban-suburban focus, separate themselves from historians Robert Fishman and Joel Garreau, who look at suburbs as separate cities unto themselves. Many of the *New Suburban History* essayists like Matthew Lassiter, who has written about busing and desegregation in Atlanta and Charlotte, look at suburbs’ specific political and economic issues. By looking at suburbs in this metropolitan context, these historians locate power differentials between city and suburb, rather than tracing a continuing shift of power from city to suburb.\(^{11}\)

Studying postwar experiences in established, successful communities like Shaker Heights requires re-thinking the methods of Jackson’s emphasis on the significance of design and Sugrue and Kruse’s emphasis on political and economic power. While Shaker Heights’ status as a powerful aging suburb successfully dealing with integration in the 1960s makes it individually significant, the freeway situation demonstrates the continuing cooperation between inner-ring suburbs and central city. Not all of Shaker Heights’ interactions with Cleveland were collaborative, but in this instance, city and suburb banded together against a politician representing the interests of regional growth and connectivity. While design was at the heart of the matter, and specifically the design of Shaker Heights itself, local politics and power relations play an equal role to suburban design.

Other postwar suburban historians have shifted the focus onto new, planned communities springing up in the 1950s and 1960s and emphasized the monotony and uniformity of suburban life. Lizabeth Cohen’s 2003, *A Consumers’ Republic*, looks at the suburban expansion in the Newark, New Jersey, metropolitan area in the postwar era through this lens. Her narrative traces the expansion of consumption-based suburbia, at the expense of the old, urban neighborhoods in Newark. She distinguishes this lifestyle from earlier residential patterns, arguing, “whereas once work and family had dictated residence, now increasingly consumption—of homes, goods, services and leisure—did.” While Cohen’s discussion addresses the experiences of a large number of middle class suburbanites in the postwar era, the upper middle class suburbanites in older suburbs like Shaker Heights are unusual. Cohen acknowledges these suburbs, but her prevailing narrative marginalizes them. Not part of the deteriorating center and not aligned with the expanding outer-ring, these older suburbs can get lost in the shuffle when suburbanization is mainly discussed in terms of small, ranch-style homes, malls, new appliances and highways as paths for expansion.

Shaker Heights’ Clark and Lee freeways dispute bridges the gap between suburban history and freeway revolt history. Freeway revolt historians like Raymond Mohl, Zachary Schrag and Louise Nelson Dyble have studied this particular issue of freeway revolts within the same metropolitan areas and individual communities as suburban historians. This project employs a local, rather than fully metropolitan, structure for a few reasons. Shaker Heights had little in common with many of

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Cleveland’s other suburbs, and much of the argument espoused by Porter set up the battle as the wealthy Shaker Heights citizens versus the freeway. In addition, Shaker Lakes, though sitting on land in Cleveland Heights, Cleveland and Shaker Heights, is—and was to Porter—often associated with Shaker Heights. Porter generally set up the battle as between wealthy Shaker Heights residents and the freeway, rather than a wider group of citizens. Their individual voices, because they were privileged in the argument, are especially significant.

In order to understand the Shaker Heights freeway fight, it is necessary to review the history of Interstate highway planning. The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 accelerated growth, with the federal government supplying 90 percent of the funds for highway building to the states and localities constructing these projects. Highway projects aided white flight to the outer suburbs, making it easier for urban workers to live outside of the city and inner suburbs. The peculiarities of highway building through urban areas troubled many metropolitan areas in the U.S. during the postwar era. The accelerated pace of the federally funded highway building after the 1956 Act caused quick destruction of certain established neighborhoods, like those in Cleveland, in the paths of urban highways. For state road engineers, “traffic flow” trumped “urban renewal.”


Many suburbanites did not accept this shift of control and took part in what are known as the “freeway revolts,” during the 1950s and 1960s. Concerns about the damage freeways would exact on communities’ social structures and how freeways would change the physical layout of suburbs and towns motivated residents to act. Cleveland-area residents who protested the freeways plowing through the urban center worked parallel to residents of metropolitan areas across the country. Shaker Heights activists benefited from class privilege, political connections and simply the timing of the Clark and Lee freeway projects versus earlier Cleveland-area highway projects. Mohl’s research on the “commonalities” of successful freeway revolts, as well as his nod to Schrag’s conclusions on historic and well-planned areas, exemplifies the freeway revolt literature.16

Revolts across the country reflected residents’ frustrations with the destructive nature of highway development, and the greater problems with building in heavily populated areas. Historian Ben Kelley has detailed the successes and failures of various freeway revolts in urban centers, including Nashville, Boston, Washington D.C. and Cleveland. In addressing the freeway revolts in Miami and Baltimore, Mohl provides a convincing argument that national legislation and changes leading to the development of the Department of Transportation were more significant to the success of the freeway revolts than the often-credited grassroots efforts. “It is important not to romanticize the freeway fighters” because of these political advantages that increased during the 1960s


16 Mohl, “Stop the Road,” 676.
with ongoing highway legislation, he argues. According to Schrag, in his history of the Three Sisters Bridge in Washington, D.C., “another freeway revolt emerged within the federal power structure.”

While the wealthy citizens of Shaker Heights found assistance in these political measures, destruction to neighborhoods had already occurred. Detroit highway projects in the 1940s and 1950s targeted somewhat different groups than the Clark and Lee freeway projects—the poor and African-American. Inner city neighborhoods like those on Detroit’s south side were in “a ‘no-man’s land’ of deterioration and development” after highway construction. In the case of Baltimore, African-American and lower income residents were targeted by the highway development. Baltimore’s “interracial and cross-class” collaboration aided its activists’ cause, preventing the poor and non-white from being uprooted. The precedent set by some of these harmful projects resulted in growing hostility toward highway construction. Like lower class whites and African Americans, residents of Shaker Heights found themselves further down on the Cuyahoga County priority list than the whiter, outer-ring suburbs. However, their advantages as white, wealthy citizens cannot be discounted.

One of these advantages was accessing the works of urban planners and scholars of the era. Two of the most well known participants, Lewis Mumford and Jane Jacobs,

17 Ibid., 700.
19 Sugrue, On The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit, 47.
20 Mohl, “Stop the Road,” 700.
provided inspiration for many activists as well as participating themselves. Jacobs protested New York urban planner Robert Moses’ plans for the Lower Manhattan Expressway; a planned highway planned connecting the Manhattan and Williamsburg Bridges. After a small portion of Lomex, or I-78/I-488, was built, it was permanently stopped.  

Jacob’s landmark 1961 book, *On the Death and Life of Great American Cities*, contributed to the reaction against suburbanization. An assault on the anonymity and inadequate neighborhood character in the suburbs, Jacobs reached a wide audience of concerned citizens. Jacobs encouraged residents to protect their neighborhoods: “a successful city neighborhood is a place that keeps sufficiently abreast of its problems so it is not destroyed by them.” Her concerns about neighborhood stability contributed to anti-freeway disagreements over traffic solutions, community values, and efficiency. Mumford, in *The Highway and The City*, advocated for the growth of green space for recreational use, and for roads to encourage motorists to slow down and enjoy nature rather than to quickly speed to the next location. He defended the existing natural and built environment. Jacobs and Mumford, though important to many of the freeway activists nationally, had significant resonance with Shaker Heights activists who insisted on the importance of both the built and natural environments.

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26 Mohl, “Stop the Road,” 675.
While their reasons for participation in the freeway revolts differed, many residents took interest in preserving the natural environment. Activists fought the freeways to prevent environmental blight. They coincide with the mid-century environmentalists described by historian Samuel P. Hays. He explains that both urban growth and “the proximity of natural landscape features” encouraged environmentalists and the environmental movement to move into the mainstream. They also fit into the sea change that historian Louise Nelson Dyble has located in the 1960s and 1970s with regards to “the proliferation of growth control measures.” She argues changing local policy in another area fighting highways, Marin County, California, resulted in natural preservation, “but at the expense of affordable housing, accessibility, and social integration.”

Unlike in Marin County, Shaker Heights residents’ efforts managed to help maintain the present racial and social integration while also preserving the natural environment. Changing ideas on preserving nature, even at the expense of progress, suited the Shaker Heights activists. Conservationists in Shaker Heights already lived in a place that met many of their needs and interests with regards to the natural environment. By looking at the origins and history of Shaker Heights, it becomes evident that maintaining the natural environment is a long-standing tradition in the suburb.


Shaker Heights background

In the 19th century, the city of Shaker Heights was a Shaker religious settlement known as the North Union Shaker settlement. The community sold the land in the 1880s to a Buffalo company, who resold it in 1906 to developers Mantis James and Oris Paxton Van Sweringen. They incorporated Shaker Village in 1911.29 The Van Sweringens also capitalized on the area’s Shaker Heritage and “peaceful” nature in their advertisements.30

As two of Cleveland’s most famous developers, the Van Sweringens had the capital and influence to create an ideal suburb. The city’s industrial success in the early 20th century, including its steel manufacturing, made development a profitable venture for the Cleveland businessmen. The brothers designed Shaker Heights carefully, allotting natural space to residents, while making it accessible to Cleveland. Geographically, living on “the heights” in Shaker or neighboring Cleveland Heights elevated residents above Cleveland and its industrial pollution.31 The Van Sweringens created “large, pseudo-English-style homes set on curving streets which fed into a wide central


boulevard carrying a streetcar line into town.” 32 Owners of a streetcar line, the brothers made rail transportation central to Shaker Heights. Wealthy urban workers would board the train downtown in the Van Sweringens’ newly designed Terminal Tower, and travel to their upscale homes in Shaker Heights. Jackson acknowledges the “successful” nature of Shaker Heights’ rail transit, though he notes that most similar systems were not so lucky. 33 The unusual success of rail transit in Shaker Heights no doubt influenced the postwar activists’ interest in maintaining the line, and their faith in its viability as an alternative to cars.

Physically, Shaker Heights followed the Garden City tradition, but socially and economically it adhered to a more profit-oriented model. Howard and his followers designed communities to diminish class conflicts and tensions in Europe, but in Shaker Heights covenants and zoning provided residents with assurance of suitable neighbors. 34 Zoning regulations led to the construction of single-family homes, and originally kept retail out of the Village of Shaker Heights. These regulations minimized socioeconomic diversity. 35 Designers separated the town into districts with a “green area or park system to act as a buffer,” and neighborhoods with an elementary school within these districts. Shaker Heights’ successful school district, private academies and high quality housing


34 Harris, The Garden City Movement, 14.

35 Jackson, Crabgrass Frontier, 242. Jackson argues that “zoning was a device to keep poor people and obnoxious industries out of affluent areas” and “became a cudgel used by suburban areas to whack the central city.”
pulled in wealthier Cleveland residents, draining successful residents from the center city.

With rapid growth, the suburb became a city in 1931.\textsuperscript{36}

Map 1. Published by the Lee Freeway Citizens Committee as an illustration of the proposed Clark and also proposed Lee freeways’ interchange. This map clearly shows

the interruption to the street design freeways would have created. Shaker Heights’ street
design, particularly the winding streets, is evident.

The neighborhoods of Shaker Heights in the 1960s had expanded with growth and
annexation, giving the city more diversity of housing stock and residents. Map 1
illustrates the proposed Clark-Lee Interchange, placed near these streets over the Shaker
Boulevard-Lee Road intersection and the Shaker Rapid tracks. Many of the suburb’s
most impressive homes are located along South Park Boulevard, near the center of the
map, and the city’s integrated Ludlow neighborhood is to the near left of the proposed
Lee Freeway. The Clark Freeway set to destroy many of the finest homes, but another
proposed highway, the Lee Freeway, would have impacted homes stretching from the
Cleveland border communities to the northern boundary with Cleveland Heights.

The proposed paths interrupted neighborhoods integrating in the 1950s and 1960s.
Shaker Heights residents in the early 20th century followed restrictive covenants, which
favored white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants and restricted Jews and blacks.38 Van
Sweringen Company approval, or the approval of neighbors, was needed to move to
Shaker Heights.39 But, as American Studies historian Cynthia Mills Richter explains, the
idea that Shaker Heights was racially homogenous by the 1950s was “a very interesting
fiction” that ignored the presence of black workers.40 The Supreme Court in Shelley v.

38 Richter, Integrating the Suburban Dream, 21

39 Herbert H. Harwood, Invisible Giants: The Empires of Cleveland’s Van Sweringen Brothers
(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 19.

40 Richter, Integrating the Suburban Dream, 29.
Kraemer (1948) ruled racial covenants illegal, enabling further racial migration to Shaker and other restricted suburbs, at least in theory.\(^41\)

Though Shaker Heights would gain a reputation for peaceful integration in the 1960s, residents did not universally welcome blacks following the *Shelley* decision. The middle class Ludlow neighborhood attracted wealthier migrating blacks. John Pegg, an African American lawyer, was building a home in the Shaker-Cleveland border neighborhood when in 1956 a bomb hit his garage, and provoked concern about the future safety of Shaker’s neighborhoods.\(^42\) This event spurred the development of the Ludlow Community Association in 1957, originally established for “maintenance of the quality of the neighborhood.”\(^43\) This included protecting land from zoning changes and “discouraging blockbusting and the proliferation of for sale signs” in Ludlow.\(^44\) The LCA’s “pragmatic neighborhood housing program to preserve racial integration” began in 1961, Richter explains, after the association members were informed the suburb would become all African-American without intervention.\(^45\) Rather than allowing Shaker Heights to follow national trends of white flight, the LCA worked to maintain diversity.

Moreland, a working-class border neighborhood annexed in the 1920s, along with Ludlow sheltered eastern Shaker Heights neighborhoods from African American migration, the proposed the Clark and Lee freeways would have further isolated these


\(^{42}\) Richter, *Integrating the Suburban Dream*, 34.


\(^{44}\) Ibid., 26.

\(^{45}\) Richter, *Integrating the Suburban Dream*, 46.
transitioning neighborhoods from the rest of Shaker Heights. A huge barrier in the suburb likely would have interrupted the process of racial integration. Providing uncertain whites in the eastern neighborhoods with a giant wall through the center of the city may have damaged the small-scale integration efforts going on in neighborhoods like Ludlow, with neighbors unable to assure whites of the steadiness of property values and the stability of the neighborhood. The distinctiveness of the winding streets of Shaker Heights compared to “the image of an urban grid pattern” helped “temper fears of Negro ‘colonization’” Resident Emilie Barnett, in an interview with Richter, claimed city officials had physical boundaries in mind for racial integration. These included the Cleveland boundary, Rapid Transit and railroad tracks. If built, the Clark and Lee freeways could provide similar barriers to integration.

Richter’s history of Shaker Heights’ postwar racial integration provides the most complete suburban, design and social history of the suburb in the second half of the 20th century. In her study, she argues the suburb’s narrative is “the story of how a community developed according to an explicitly exclusive suburban vision could be transformed into a deliberately inclusive community makes Shaker Heights an important case study.” Richter focuses on community groups in the border neighborhoods of Shaker Heights than on the eastern neighborhoods. Not a departure from Richter’s narrative, this project looks at the white, wealthier residents of Shaker Heights, their continued political

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49 Richter, Integrating the Suburban Dream, 1.
influence, and on the freeway project as the pivotal disruption in Shaker Heights in the postwar era. This project is limited to Shaker Heights of the 1960s, while Richter moves onward into the 21st century and locates a “liberal, color-blind vision of race” in the community. Richter’s research on Shaker Heights’ neighborhood and school integration illustrates even a well-off suburb with residents open to change had difficulties with the transition. Her discussion of Shaker Heights’ design and its effects on the citizenry set a precedent for this project.

But, in addition to the Shaker Heights context provided by Richter and others, this narrative requires some attention to Cleveland and its political climate. Cuyahoga County’s engineer pushed for freeways through Shaker Heights, but he did not speak for the entire county or the city of Cleveland. Porter’s relationships with political leaders, both Republican and Democratic, were often stormy. These uneasy relations coupled with the negative suburban reaction to the highways did not speed their completion.

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50 Richter, *Integrating the Suburban Dream*, 250.

In the postwar era, Cleveland’s inner-ring suburbs and inner city encountered uncertainty and change. Patterns of white flight and deindustrialization sapped the urban center of its tax base and employment opportunities. Racial tensions grew and resulted in two riots in two East side neighborhoods, Hough and Glenville, in the 1960s. Glenville and Hough’s race riots gave the eastern neighborhoods a reputation for volatility and revealed the underlying tensions on the city’s east side. The city’s numerous social and economic problems overwhelmed concerns for design and aesthetics. Like Detroit, Cleveland found itself in an impossible situation: easing racial tensions and resentment caused in large part by a seemingly irreversible flood of jobs out of the city.\(^\text{52}\)

Home to the metropolitan area’s largest African American population, eastern Cleveland and the eastern suburbs had the most African-American migration. The process of African American migration in many suburbs was slowed by the actions of local white homeowners’ committees, by the actions of real estate agents and by the slow process of legal protection for black homeowners.\(^\text{53}\)

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Shaker Heights’ slow and steady integration is evident when comparing census statistics in 1960 and 1970 with Cleveland and the surrounding suburbs. While in 1960 only 357 African-Americans lived in Shaker Heights out of the total population of 36,460, by 1970 15 percent of Shaker Heights’ 36,306 citizens were black. Neighboring Cleveland Heights’ 60,670 population was only three percent black in 1970, up from under one percent in 1960. East Cleveland had the highest percentage of African Americans with 58 percent of its nearly 40,000 residents in 1970, a percentage that skyrocketed from its 1960 population of approximately two percent black. Cleveland’s population—over 750,000—was 38 percent black by 1970, marking an increase in the ratio of black to white residents and a loss of over 110,000 in total residents. Shaker’s total population dropped only slightly during these ten years, by 456 residents, and its transition in this pivotal decade of integration appears remarkably smooth when comparing its numbers to either East Cleveland or Cleveland. Cleveland Heights integrated more rapidly after the 1960s, reaching 37 percent black population in 1990.

Shaker Heights’ economic situation in 1970, however, was vastly different from any of these cities, as its home values were some of the highest in the metropolitan area, at $42,900. But, Shaker Heights’ western neighbor, Beachwood, had even higher home values, and Beachwood’s western neighbor, Pepper Pike, had the metropolitan area’s


56 Keating, The Suburban Racial Dilemma, 130. He discusses the influences of Cleveland Heights’ substantial Jewish population in the Taylor Road area on integration, and the impact of bordering East Cleveland’s racial “transition” in the 1960s on Cleveland Heights residents.
highest average home values at $55,400. Pepper Pike and Beachwood both border Interstate-271, the major north-south artery in the eastern suburbs. Shaker Heights’ more affluent neighbors continued in affluence after the 1960s, and provide the suburb with a barrier to the highway. Shaker Heights itself provides these outer suburbs with a buffer zone between themselves and the southeastern neighborhoods of Cleveland.57

The outer neighborhoods also provided a buffer of both white residents and some socioeconomic success for Shaker Heights. In 1960, the residents in the census tracts closest to Shaker Heights were still overwhelmingly white with families’ median incomes ranging from $5,000 to above $9,000, the latter in the tract closest to Shaker Heights. The interior southeastern neighborhoods affected by the freeways had larger African-American populations in 1960. During the mid-1960s, these neighborhoods were rapidly transitioning, and the freeways’ construction would have affected and/or displaced both white and black residents. These statistics indicate the tenuous nature of life in the inner eastern suburbs and in the eastern neighborhoods of Cleveland during the 1960s. Shaker Heights was positioned between the wealthiest suburban citizens and the most disrupted and transitioning city residents.58

Racial change in greater Cleveland had political as well as social implications. It led to the election of the first African American mayor of a major city. Carl Stokes’ historic election in 1967 marked a transition for the city and for the Democratic Party, as

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57 U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Housing: 1970 Block Statistics, Final Report HC(3)-178 Cleveland, Ohio Urbanized Area*, 1. These numbers refer to owned, not rented, homes. These statistics only deal with areas of 2,500 or more residents.

well. Ralph Locher held the office of mayor in the term before Stokes’ 1967 election. Locher represented the old guard of Cleveland Democrats, with labor and white ethnics as some of his major constituencies. Stokes, the first elected African American mayor of a major American city, shifted priorities in city government and demonstrated an ability to reach across party lines to meet his goals. Historian Leonard Moore has argued that race rather than party affiliation was most important to Stokes.59

As Stokes’ star rose, County Engineer and County Democratic Party Chairman Porter’s fell. Porter, county engineer since 1947, became an increasingly insignificant naysayer.60 During Stokes’ 1967 run for Cleveland mayor against the incumbent Locher, Porter’s Democratic Party office distributed newsletters indicating the “noted racist” Martin Luther King Jr. would run the city of Cleveland by proxy if Stokes won. Stokes called for Porter’s resignation as Party chairman, but Porter continued in the office through 1968.

Cleveland’s African-American population, which had increased over the 20th century, became a major force in the Democratic Party’s constituency. Racist housing policies and real estate tactics kept the African American population in Cleveland from migrating to the suburbs. Cleveland’s internal segregation was as severe as the city-suburb segregation, with the black population concentrated in the eastern portion of the city. Stokes, during his two terms as mayor, pushed urban renewal projects in eastern Cleveland and prioritized the neglected problems of the area’s black population. These


neighborhoods, some near Shaker Heights, experienced transition and conflict, as whites living in ethnic pockets and working-class neighborhoods reacted angrily to Cleveland authorities’ busing and integration initiatives. Suburbs like Shaker Heights looked relatively peaceful and stable in comparison to the eastern Cleveland neighborhoods. 61

The political and social unrest locally played out simultaneously with a large amount of relevant national legislation, specifically the Federal-Aid Interstate Highway acts. This legislation would change how highways were built in the U.S., how cities like Cleveland were connected to their outlying areas as well as the national network, and how different areas viewed themselves and each other. Beyond the possible social ramifications, the new highway acts and the federal funding that accompanied them shaped the physical landscape. In urban areas like Shaker Heights and Cleveland, highways’ physical impact was felt more acutely, as they often required extreme changes to the neighborhoods and landscape.

Interstate Highway Context

Simultaneously with urban-suburban racial migration, the United States established a national program that would change the ways metropolitan areas interacted physically. The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 provided incentive for localities to construct freeways and connected the United States in new ways. The city of Cleveland experienced a surge of highway growth, with interstates constructed to connect the city to neighboring cities and to the national network. In Cleveland, as in other American cities, expanding the highway system involved sacrificing existing housing for new highways. 62

The Federal-Aid Highway Acts provided funding and guidelines for the construction of the Interstate highway system in the postwar era, and over time evolved to address concerns and problems with highway building. The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 and the Highway Revenue Act of 1956 set a precedent for funding the Interstate system. It contained two parts, the first to establish “provisions” on construction and use and the second establishing a Highway Trust Fund for taxes to be used on the system, with the excise taxes being pooled nationally. This Act changed the way highways were

funded, by making a “pay as you go” system of funding. This system strengthened the highway system in the postwar era, as it allowed for quick and large-scale progress.63

The 1962 Federal-Aid Highway Act amended the 1956 Act to force planners to consider alternate forms of transportation when planning roads. The Secretary of Commerce and the states were to work together on “the development of long-range highway plans” and the Secretary could “not approve any program after July 1, 1965, for projects in any urban area of more than 50,000 population unless he finds that such projects are based on a continuing comprehensive transportation planning process carried on cooperatively by States and localities.”64 This Act recognized the problems of damaging mass transit and community structure with highway construction. It also acknowledged communities’ significance, rather than requiring them to sacrifice for the greater regional good. It mobilized activists to fight freeways and for their communities’ preservation.65 The Cleveland-Seven County Transportation-Land Use Study, discussed later on in this paper, was established and began its research in 1965 to satisfy the requirements set out by Section 134 of the 1962 Act. Shaker Heights, and the eastern

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64 Prospectus for a Comprehensive Transportation-Land Use Planning Program for the Cleveland Seven-County Region, September 16, 1964, 3.

The highways constructed through Ohio increased the connectivity of the state’s metropolitan areas, and also improved the traffic patterns and movement of residents within metropolitan areas. Like other states, Ohio’s spending on highways spiked after the 1956 Act. In 1962, Ohio had 19 Interstate highways planned, including the Clark Freeway or I-290. The largest highways, Interstate 80 and Interstate 71, planned to run east-west and north-south across the state respectively, had sections already open to drivers by 1962. Cleveland’s Outerbelt East, I-271, was under construction in 1962, but none of its planned 37.6 miles were open to the public.

Made public in 1963, the Clark Freeway, or I-290, was planned to connect the Outerbelt East (I-271) to near Interstate 77 and cost $61,400,000. Clark’s selected design would run east-to-west and impact the communities of Cleveland, Shaker Heights, Beachwood, and slightly impact Pepper Pike and Cleveland Heights with an important 8.7 mile portion from E. 55th Street to Interstate 271 of the highway stretching through city and suburb. This section began at E. 55th because a section of highway from this

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68 Governor James A. Rhodes, in a letter to Mrs. Marjorie B. Sheedy, February 11, 1964. Shaker Heights Public Library, Local History Collection. Clark Freeway/Lee Freeway—Correspondence; Citizens Freeway Committee, “Freeway Facts.”

The engineering firm Howard, Needles, Tammen and Bergendoff prepared plans for the possible freeway routes for Interstate 290 or the Clark Freeway. A 1952 survey of northeastern Ohio residents indicated a need for highways through the eastern suburbs in order to prevent major traffic problems. The Lee Freeway was to be built north-to-south through the eastern suburbs and neighborhoods, with a large portion through Cleveland Heights, to connect the Lakeland Freeway or Interstate 90 with the Outer Belt South (Interstate 80 originally, now I-480), and the Lee Freeway Stub would connect Harvard Avenue with the Outerbelt South. Hundreds of homes would be demolished with the construction of these freeways, with Cleveland losing upwards of 800 homes and Shaker Heights losing around 80 to the Clark Freeway.


71 Ibid., 1.

Map 2. This depicts projected highway progress in northeastern Ohio in 1967. The Clark Freeway is “Under Study” as 290.73

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Map 3. This map reflects the freeway plans in the 1960s, before both the Clark and Lee freeways were thwarted.74

The freeway design reflected the engineering view on highways, and clashed with the activists’ view. County Engineer Porter and Howard, Needles, Tammen, and Bergendoff prioritized the preservation of homes when choosing a freeway path, rather than the natural environment. But, the major appeal of Shaker Heights lies in its combination of “controlled, very planned (built) environment” with an untamed natural

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Residents valued the open spaces, while traffic planners saw these spaces as the most affordable and least disruptive places to construct highways.  

In addition to the Clark’s destruction of parkland, the proposed north-south Lee Freeway necessitated the demolition of numerous homes in the eastern suburbs and eastern Cleveland. The two freeways’ planned interchange sat on top of the Shaker Lakes. The Clark’s connection to the Interstate system makes it a significant highway, relative to the Lee or to the other planned area freeways, the Central and Heights. Lee followed the path of Lee Road, and would have affected the retail of this major suburban road as well.

Heights citizens organized quickly against the planned highways. The Shaker Heights City Council and Mayor Paul K. Jones approved a plan for the Cleveland Seven-County Transportation-Land Use Study that emphasized the careful and intelligent use of existing land. Though Porter emphasized the low cost of land in Shaker Lakes, the Council and Jones cited the 1962 Federal-Aid Highway Act’s provision that transportation building should “maintain and increase residential and commercial property values, minimize blight-producing traffic volumes, and increase the economic productivity of the area.”

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76 Morton, “The Clark, Lee and Heights Freeways.”

77 Howard, Needles, Tammen and Bergendoff, Route Location Studies: Clark Freeway, 7.

Confidence existed from the beginning, particularly with regards to state support.

According to Shaker Heights Mayor Jones, both Governor Rhodes and Highway Director Pearl Masheter gave him “assurance” in early 1964 that the Clark Freeway would not pass through Shaker Lakes. Historian Marian Morton argues that protecting the environmental beauty and integrity of Shaker Heights and Shaker Lakes was not a priority, and that Rhodes considered a route that would have damaged more homes.\footnote{“Rhodes Promised Freeway Would Bypass Shaker, If Built,” \textit{Heights Sun Press}, 2 February 1967.}

Masheter publicly mediated between the competing interests involved in the freeway battle. Like Porter, he emphasized possible job and fund losses if the Clark Freeway project failed. Local politicians, including Stokes and Republican Congressional representative William E. Minshall opposed construction of the Clark Freeway. Minshall argued for greater attention to the community’s input on the freeway project, and felt that it was overly destructive. He called it “willy nilly” and wanted the state to halt construction of the Clark until after the Outerbelt South and Outerbelt East were constructed, in order to study the Clark’s necessity.\footnote{Brian Williams, “State Determined on Clark Freeway,” \textit{Cleveland Plain Dealer}, January 24, 1964.} Cleveland Heights Mayor Kenneth Nash and Shaker Heights Mayor Jones fought the construction of the Clark and Lee Freeways as well. These mayors took leading roles in the freeway fight, helping to organize activists and direct funds to blocking the highways.\footnote{Morton, “The Clark, Lee and Heights Freeways”; Brian Williams, “State Determined on Clark Freeway,” \textit{The Cleveland Plain Dealer}, 24 January 1964; David D. Van Tassel and John J. Grabowski, eds., \textit{The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History}, second edition (Bloomington: Indiana University Press and Cleveland: Case Western University, 1996), 686.}

One significant regional element to this conflict is the precedent set by the urban freeways already constructed. In Cleveland, the Lakeland Freeway (I-90), Willow

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\footnote{“Rhodes Promised Freeway Would Bypass Shaker, If Built,” \textit{Heights Sun Press}, 2 February 1967.}

\footnote{Brian Williams, “State Determined on Clark Freeway,” \textit{Cleveland Plain Dealer}, January 24, 1964.}

Freeway (I-77) and Medina Freeway (I-71) were already partially constructed with mixed results for residents. Residents near the path of the Medina Freeway complained about the difficulties working with Ohio’s Freeway Association. These residents’ state representative, Democrat Arthur N. Kruczyk, accused the state of buying homes on one side of the street, demolishing them and asking other residents to sell their devalued homes. Philip W. Porter, then executive editor of the Cleveland Plain Dealer, wrote an editorial in the paper about the difficulties local residents had bargaining with the state on home values. He emphasized the power of the Ohio Department of Highways over homeowners living in the path of Interstate 90. Porter argued the “official knows he has the citizen over a barrel” and municipalities did not have much power to override the state action. Residents of Brook Park, who found the I-71 highway in their backyard, had to try to fight the state or live with the new highway. Resident Steve Savanich went to court because the freeway would pass 16 inches from his home, and managed to get it pushed back to 14 feet and was one of few to attempt the difficult legal process. His wife commented, “I hope there is never another freeway in my life.”

With homes went population. Stokes did not support the freeway because of “the destructive impact of highways that not only drained residents away from the city but destroyed the neighborhoods in the highways’ path.” Morton notes that highway

82 “Cleveland: Confused City on a Seesaw, by Philip W. Porter,” Cleveland Memory Project
http://clevelandmemory.org/SpecColl/porter/index.html


84 John P. Coyne, “Families Find Freeway is in the Backyard,” Cleveland Plain Dealer, September 1965, p. 37.

85 Morton, “The Clark, Lee and Heights Freeways.”
development accelerated the population drop in Cleveland. The Citizens Freeway Committee argued that the Clark Freeway did not even benefit downtown Cleveland, but would rather “bypass downtown.” Cleveland was deteriorating in the 1960s, but had not reached the extent of deterioration during the 1970s-1990s. Time would prove the Citizens Freeway Committee and Stokes right, as Cleveland’s highway system not only harmed the old neighborhoods, but the city itself.

One example of this destruction is lakefront accessibility. The Lakeland Freeway, along with the Cleveland Memorial Shoreway, lines Cleveland’s Lake Erie shore. Running east to west along Cleveland’s lakeshore and through the northeastern suburbs, the freeways are Cleveland’s piece of Interstate 90. The Lakeland Freeway extends the Shoreway to Painesville in Lake County, and runs through the land known as Gordon Park. Donated by William J. Gordon to the city of Cleveland in 1893, the park includes swimming and boating opportunities. Similarly, John Rockefeller signed over the land to become Shaker Lakes to the city of Cleveland “on the condition that the land be preserved for park purposes” before the city leased it to Shaker Heights. While Shaker Lakes survived its freeway onslaught, the Lakeland Freeway “almost totally destroyed (Gordon Park),” and certainly altered the land’s viability and use.

Interstate highway construction also caused social problems in metropolitan areas nationwide. With the growing suburbanization and automobile ownership postwar,
traffic became a genuine problem in many cities like Cleveland. Engineers led the movement to solve traffic problems in increasingly congested areas. “Social and political differences as well as competition for funds blocked political action,” and prevented engineers from realizing total traffic efficiency.89

The Shaker Heights activists, following the 1962 Federal Highway Act’s precedent, put issues of social welfare back into highway building. Porter was empowered by the principles of efficiency. Policy complicated the singular focus on traffic, just as it had the focus on social welfare. As the Federal-Aid Highway Acts accumulated, the relationship between engineers and citizens grew more complex. Both sides needed to make compromises. In the Clark Freeway fight, Porter stubbornly refused to compromise, while the freeway activists attempted to use every piece of legislation to nullify the freeway plans. While Porter seemed to be singularly possessed on the highway issue, he was representative of numerous highway engineers in the postwar era losing control over the highways due to changing policy in the federal government.90

The anti-freeway activists lobbied national, state and local politicians in their efforts to thwart the project. In a letter from Federal Highway Administration official Rex M. Whitton to Betty M. Nord, secretary of Shaker Historical Society and member of the Freeway Committee of the Shaker Historical Society, Whitton explained “states have the responsibility for the selection of locations of all Federal-aid highways, including the

90 Mohl, “The Interstates and the Cities,” 194.
Interstate routes, for consideration by the Bureau of Public Roads. A small group of activists including Mayor Jones traveled to Washington to discuss the Clark Freeway with Whitton, who “made known that the federal highway administration itself was deeply concerned about the seemingly wasteful construction of needless freeways just to get federal funds,” and his “deep concern” for the destruction of Shaker Lakes. In his Sun Press column, Harry Volk wrote that Whitton’s decision for the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) to consider parkland more carefully when construction highways came as a result of the Shaker situation. The Bureau of Public Roads’ new policy forced states to allow local public agencies to reexamine plans before construction.

Cost was a prohibitive factor in determining highways’ existence. The costs of the Great Society programs and Vietnam War also shorted funds for federal highway construction. The Department of Transportation was established in 1966 and in the same year the Bureau of Public Roads needed to reduce spending, resulting in Ohio dropping in road funding from $246 million to $183 million. Rhodes, though committed to infrastructure construction in Ohio, did not want to foot the total bill for this project. His administration famously spent freely on other highway and infrastructure projects.


Mass transit, an option supported by many anti-freeway activists in the Cleveland area, benefited from new policies during the Johnson years. The massive spending of the Federal-Aid Highway Acts, and large commitments to an automobile-based infrastructure made improving existing mass transit a complex issue. The Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964 resulted in the creation of the Urban Mass Transportation Association, providing matching funds for improvements and construction of mass transportation projects.\(^{96}\) But, supporting rail service involved adopting a faith that citizens would begin to utilize a form of transit that they had been abandoning in the postwar era. Shaker activists emphasized the significance of the Shaker Rapid to local travelers, its centrality to the Van Sweringen design, and the Rapid’s lack of invasiveness relative to a freeway. Porter argued the Shaker Rapid lost riders over time, while the driving population increased. His disgust for rapid transit was not hidden, and he called it a “10-hour-a-week business” with little use aside from commuting. Porter called plans for Rapid expansion “garbage.”\(^{97}\) He wrote “when laymen like newsmen take ridiculous positions on engineering matters you can be somewhat tolerant because they just don’t know any better,” in a Letter to the Cleveland Press.\(^{98}\)

Engineering plans indicated the lack of confidence in the Rapid’s abilities to provide service for many in the eastern suburban area. The preferred route for the Clark

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\(^{96}\) Blaine Hays, “Cleveland’s Dynamic Transit Heritage” Commemorating the First Ten Years of RTA (Cleveland: Northern Ohio Railway Museum and Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, 1985), 6.

\(^{97}\) “Proposed Rapid Network for Area” Heights Sun Press, 7 March 1968 (quote); Donald Sabath, “Rapid Foes Use Porter’s Words” Cleveland Plain Dealer, 13 February 1968.

Freeway ran along the Rapid tracks, a design that would lessen the attractive view of homes from the Rapid in Shaker Heights. Changing the aesthetics would make it difficult for the Rapid to appeal to travelers other than commuters and others reliant on public transportation. The attractive views from the Shaker Rapid in Shaker Heights made it a form of transit that would appeal to tourists, too. Designed by the Van Sweringens, the original path of the Rapid was intended to fit into the neighborhoods. Even the convenience of parking and riding the Rapid would be diminished by the freeway construction. Parking lots displaced by the new Clark Freeway, in one proposed plan, would be moved into a parking deck above it. Not simply making parking less convenient, this deck would push the freeway even further out of scale with the surrounding community.99

The Shaker Rapid provided local residents not only with transportation but also with an important argument against highways. The already-constructed Rapid provided transportation without interrupting the community, as Shaker Heights was originally designed with a light rail system. The Van Sweringens’ plans carefully placed train lines into the community, and this design made the train unobtrusive to pedestrians and drivers. The Rapid’s future was one of many issues capitalized on by the Shaker Heights activists, who found many ways to defend their homes, the built environment and the natural environment in their struggle.

99 Howard, Needles, Tammen and Bergendoff, Route Location Studies: Clark Freeway, 12. Cleveland State University Special Collections.
Freeway Fighters

Shaker Heights residents angered by the freeway proposals were in danger of being characterized as entitled complainers, and many did protest the freeway with class-based arguments. The parkland, threatened by the planned freeway, provided local residents with lush surroundings. Residents feared the aesthetic damage to their neighborhoods. “I hope they put a kink in the freeway,” said Eaton Road resident Mrs. Kenyon C. Bolton. “Maybe it will just take the tennis courts.” The residents’ own efforts aside, Porter proved fairly talented at characterizing the Shaker Heights activists as privileged, entitled and self-serving. He played into the stereotype of “Deep Shaker,” which “suggested the distance and impenetrability of some areas where racial and economic, and at one time religious, homogeneity were preserved.” The characterization of “Deep Shaker” reflected some realities of Shaker Heights, which had a local reputation derived from its position as one of America’s wealthiest suburbs.

Other Cleveland suburbs had to accommodate other freeways, including Interstate 71, which connects Cleveland and Columbus. “Bitterness” at the Shaker Heights activists’ success stemmed from class conflict and from both their political connections

100 “Shaker Shaken: Residents Sad About Freeway,” Cleveland Plain Dealer, 7 December 1963.

and savvy at dealing with the issue. Prominent citizens stood to lose their homes to the Clark Freeway, including Carl Stokes, Cleveland Orchestra conductor George Szell and U.S. Ambassador to Austria Milton Wolf. Mayor of nearby Richmond Heights, H. Donald Zimmerman, complained that the Shaker activists were getting the freeway moved and leaving Richmond Heights and Highland Heights as “guinea pigs.” “I’m not an obstructionist, but I don’t want to be the dumping grounds for the wealthy suburbs. A lot of Shaker money and big-business money has been successful in blocking the freeway. But what are we to do?”

Though Shaker Heights and Cleveland Heights provided many of the activists and organizations for the freeway battle, Cleveland residents actually bore the brunt of the Clark Freeway impact. With 810 homes proposed razed, and numerous others affected by the soon-to-be neighboring freeway, Clevelanders anticipated losing communities. In addition to the Clark’s destruction, the Lee Freeway would take 100 Shaker Heights homes, 60 Cleveland Heights homes and 320 Cleveland homes. Our Lady of Peace Parish in Cleveland sat in the way of the Clark Freeway in Cleveland, and defined much of the neighborhood surrounding it. Not seeing their section of Cleveland as a neighborhood of “transients,” the residents saw their neighborhood as “stable” and as a community. “I think human beings are more important than speeding automobiles and where are we going at this high rate of speed, into coronary attacks?” commented Mrs.

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102 Kathleen Barber discussed this “bitterness” in “What if the Freeways had gone through?”

Daniel Doverspike. Her views mirror those concerned about the changes that had already taken place in Cleveland after construction of Interstate 71. Working-class residents benefited from the activism of wealthier neighbors, and did not want Shaker Heights destroyed either. The suburb’s ability to keep a wealthy, stable, well-educated community in the area benefited the commercial and safety interests of surrounding residents.

Residents organized into action groups in order to preserve their way of life. These groups included the Citizens’ Freeway Committee of Shaker Heights, the Shaker Historical Society’s anti-freeway campaign, and the Lee Freeway Citizens Committee. Propaganda from these groups emphasized the destructive nature of the freeways, and the groups kept on top of new developments in urban planning. Activists cited the Hershey Conference on Freeways in the Urban Setting, which directly addressed urban freeways’ destruction in communities. The conference, which brought together engineers and designers, emphasized working together and balancing innovation with impact. Finding a common understanding between the Shaker Heights citizens and County Engineer Porter seemed impossible.

Municipal action also took place. Shaker Heights Mayor Paul K. Jones appointed the Shaker Heights Transportation Advisory Committee to study traffic needs in Shaker Heights. The committee participated in letter writing campaigns, actively courted press coverage, and funded a separate study undertaken by the engineering firm Tippetts,

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Abbett, McCarthy and Stratton to find a less invasive route for Clark. Their community values were buttressed by state policy. In August 1967, House Bill 429 aided the activists when it became law. Governor Rhodes signed the bill, “requiring that highway planners take into account existing community values. The planners could be taken to court to prove they followed guidelines.”

Other freeways in the planning stages raised concerns from citizens, including the Lee and Central freeways. The Lee Freeway Citizens Committee, formed in 1965 in opposition to the Lee Freeway Stub, made connections with the Citizens Freeway Committee and called for mutual support. Shaker Heights City Council passed a resolution against the stub in 1965 and the Committee took a letter from Cleveland Service Director Louis Drasler to Masheter to indicate that the City of Cleveland opposed the Lee Stub. More importantly, the Committee report noted the City of Cleveland would have to pay for the Lee Stub in part. Citizens involved in the Lee conflict demonstrated solidarity with the Clark Freeway activists. The Committee for Sane Transportation and Environmental Policy (CSTEP) later formed in 1969, out of the Lee Freeway Citizens Committee, Park Conservation Committee, Citizens Freeway Committee and later the League of Women Voters of Cleveland, Cleveland Heights-University Heights

107 “Shaker names Committee to Study Transportation,” Heights Sun Press, 2 December 1965; “Freeway Facts”; “Jones, Wick Optimistic Clark Freeway Won’t Be Built; Engineers Hired” Heights Sun Press 11 June 1964;


and Shaker Heights. The solidarity demonstrated between the disparate groups illustrated the wide-ranging support for the anti-freeway cause.110

The Van Sweringens designed Shaker Heights to have a close relationship with the city of Cleveland, and during the 1960s, Shaker Heights city leaders attempted to reinforce this relationship. As an inner-ring suburb, Shaker Heights experienced some of the same problems as Cleveland. In a statement responding to the Cleveland-Seven County Transportation-Land Use Study (SCOTS), Shaker Heights officials argued the city “must not permit the inner rings of suburbs to be used as mere stepping stones by the residents of the more distant suburbs.” The Shaker Heights activists realized that the freeways did not simply change the physical nature of their community, but would perhaps make it a less significant part of the wider metropolitan area.111

Beyond the major political ramifications of constructing the highway were the more specific local concerns in Shaker Heights. The activists pressed for greater protection of their school system and parkland, two of the city’s most important assets. Protecting these valuable assets of Shaker Heights involved creating reasons why a suburb like Shaker Heights benefited the metropolitan area, and why its assets’ value outweighed the value of the highway.


It also forced Shaker Heights citizens to confront a highway’s possible effects on racial integration. As Shaker Heights Schools’ Superintendent Donald G. Emery wrote in a *Heights Sun Press* article, the Clark Freeway would create a barrier that would give the western side of Shaker Heights the “flavor” of Cleveland.\textsuperscript{112} Mary Croxton and Jean Eakin of the Park Conservation Committee raised concerns about the African-American population in the Clark Freeway’s proposed path. Calling this black community “possibly the best maintained in Cleveland,” they warned of the “enormous relocation burden” the Clark would necessitate. Insecurities over racial migration and population changes in eastern Cleveland extended beyond the freeway fight. Cleveland’s African American population happened to be concentrated near the area affected by the Clark and Lee Freeway plans.\textsuperscript{113}

Changing the “flavor” of Shaker Heights schools was inevitable with racial integration, but a difficult task for such a well-regarded school system. The suburb built a solid reputation and drew new residents to the community with its excellent school district. Both racial integration and freeway construction threatened to test the system in Shaker Heights. Concerns about the Lee Freeway’s possible impact on Shaker Heights schools—it would remove two schools and necessitate rebuilding—arose in the Ludlow Community Association newsletter.\textsuperscript{114} The school experience varied across the suburb.


\textsuperscript{113} Mary Croxton and Jean Eakin of the Park Conservation Committee of Greater Cleveland, “RE*290,” Letter (December 22, 1969): 2.

\textsuperscript{114} Byron Krantz and Martin Mazoh, “The Freeways are Coming,” *Ludlow Notes, News and Neighbors* VI (24 May 1965) 5, Shaker Heights Public Library, Local History Collection. Community Associations, Ludlow Community Association—Historical Collection, Newsletter.
Most of the students dealing with racial integration lived in the border neighborhoods, “while school populations in the eastern part of the suburb remained predominantly white for several more decades.”

Parents and students from the affected schools used school organizations to push the anti-freeway agenda, and their protests reflect some of the upper class roots of Shaker citizens. At the Onaway School, located on Woodbury Road near the proposed Lee Freeway, the Onaway Parent-Teacher Association performed a musical skit mocking Porter and the proposed highway. “We’ll sue for the stately homes of Shaker,” they sang to the tune of “The Stately Homes of England.”

The construction of a metropolitan artery through the center of town did not help ease feelings that Shaker racially transitioned too much in the 1960s. Older suburban communities felt shuffled to the back of local and state officials’ priorities, and the residents of Shaker Heights felt this shift. Kathleen Barber, a professor emeritus at John Carroll University in University Heights, Ohio and an activist for the anti-freeway committee, explained in 2006 that highway engineers were “writing off” the racially mixed inner-ring suburbs. Highways made living close to the city less important and inner-ring communities like Shaker Heights scrambled for relevancy. Unable to provide residents with a racially homogenous atmosphere, Shaker Heights relied on its services, housing and natural and built environment to appeal to homeowners.

115 Richter, Integrating the Suburban Dream, 73.

116 This includes Onaway School and Woodbury Junior High School, both nearby the proposed Lee path. “PTA Spoofs Porter, Freeway,” Cleveland Plain Dealer, 16 April 1964.

117 Kathleen Barber, “What if the Freeways had Gone Through?”.
Residents’ arguments against the freeway were connected to the urban development and built environment literature of the mid-1960s. Urban planner Mumford argued highway building was “pyramid building with a vengeance: a tomb of concrete roads and ramps covering the dead corpse of a city.” Mumford’s ideas were echoed in a Cleveland Plain Dealer reporter’s article, which claimed Mumford’s essay “should be required reading for all city planners and engineers.” Mumford railed against the destruction and desertion of the urban center for the developing suburbs. Both Cleveland and Shaker Heights residents could rally around Mumford’s ideas, as both areas stood to lose population and relevance with the continued postwar suburban growth. Hardly receptive to the urban planners attempting to manipulate highway paths, Engineer Porter expressed his disgust with the interference often. In a New York Times article dealing with freeway revolts, Porter said, “there’s no individual profession more comfortable than the professional planner’s. The professional planner doesn’t have to raise any money,” in response to questioning about an “urban concept team” planning in Baltimore. Bemoaning the vastly different situation for engineers, Porter said, “if a doctor makes a mistake, it’s buried. If an engineer makes a mistake, they bury the engineer.”

Porter’s frustrations also came largely from his miscalculation that Shaker Lakes and the natural environment in Shaker Heights and surrounding areas would be less offensive places for freeways than dense neighborhoods. The Shaker Lakes supporters reflected the influence of national conservation movements as well as the concerns of

118 Mumford, The Highway and the City, 238.
119 Don Robertson, “Cult of the Auto—Curse or Blessing?” Cleveland Plain Dealer, 26 June 1964.
many freeway revolt participants that highways would destroy many of the natural features permanently.
Environmentalist groups and Shaker Lakes

The Clark Freeway’s path would cut through upwards of 80 Shaker Heights homes, as well as parkland known as Shaker Lakes. Designers made efforts to impact as few homes as possible, but the path chosen by officials did not avoid the parks. Not simply an issue of moving fewer people, acquiring homes was a more expensive endeavor for the state than acquiring parkland.121

Many of Shaker Heights’ residents did not view parkland as expendable and activists formed the Park Conservation Committee, a cooperative of garden clubs chaired by Croxton, in 1965. The Committee anticipated the multi-level fight they were undertaking, and aimed at local, state and federal government agencies and politicians with their protest materials. This group, which represented the wider interests of Cleveland-area environmentalists and wildlife enthusiasts, used the parkland as a convincing reason to keep the freeways out of this particular part of Cuyahoga County. Citing the ensuing pollution of the over 200,000 cars taking the proposed Clark Freeway, Croxton and Eakin encouraged the city to simply improve current roads and mass transit. The 1968 Federal Highway Act helped Croxton’s cause, as it forced the engineers to consider alternate routes to those running through parkland. The environmental activists possibly made the most compelling anti-freeway argument. Unlike homes, the natural

121 Howard, Needles, Tammen and Bergendoff, Route Location Studies: Clark Freeway, 18. Cleveland State University Special Collections.
environment of the Shaker Lakes could not be reconstructed, and the educational value of
the area depended on its undeveloped nature. 122

The environmental activists argued for the preservation of parkland because of its
physical importance and because of its importance to the mentality of residents. Just as
those interested in protecting the built environment cited Mumford’s ideas,
environmental activists used the apocalyptic views of professor and architect Peter Blake,
author of God’s Own Junkyard. Using his colorful language about the “hideous scars on
the face of this nation,” anti-freeway activists attempted to ratchet up concern for the
parks. 123 Freeways altered the landscape, and activists argued they altered the mind as
well. Organizations like the Cleveland Audubon Society, argued the freeway would
cause social ills. The “intolerable Berlin Wall” to be created by the freeway caused
apprehension “about its effect on men’s souls.” 124

Porter countered these arguments with a more Populist approach, arguing that
“100,000 people will be able to enjoy the lakes daily,” from their cars on the Clark
Freeway.125 This promoted the idea of “highway beautification” and efforts by designers

Area,” folder, Shaker Historical Society (November 1965); “CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT in Preserving the
Shaker Lakes Park,” based on tape recording by Frank A. Myers April 1, 1975 at request of Cleveland
Audubon Society, p 1-3c. Shaker Heights Public Library, Local History Collection. Clark Freeway/Lee
Freeway—Misc.

123 Peter Blake, God’s Own Junkyard: The Planned Deterioration of America’s Landscape (Holt, Rinehart
and Winston, 1964). Reprinted with permission in “Which Deserves the Higher Priority? The “Concrete
Noose” of the Clark Freeway or the “Emerald Necklace” of Shaker Parkway?” by anti-freeway activists,

124 J.E. Bush, President of Cleveland Audubon Society, in a letter to Governor James Rhodes of Ohio,
January 23, 1964. Shaker Heights Public Library, Local History Collection. Clark Freeway/Lee
Freeway—Misc.

125 Albert Porter quoted in Stephen N. Karlan, “County Engineer Vows Clark Freeway Will Go Through,”
Heights Sun Press, 15 February 1967
to make roads more palatable to Ohioans. The Ohio Department of Transportation, in a 1968 pamphlet on highway growth, explained “the absence of billboards and junkyards and the addition of scenic trees and shrubs” as efforts to make the state’s highways more appealing to drivers.\(^{126}\) Citing Porter’s newspaper quote that Shaker Lakes “is just a two-bit duck pond,” Croxton explained that the “undeveloped” land described in the study was regularly “developed” with plants and flowers by the local garden clubs.\(^{127}\) The Hershey Conference established “rules for urban freeway planning,” used by activists to support their agenda. Though “visual aspects of freeway location and design,” the “points of view” of those using the freeway and those living nearby were to be considered, “freeways should not encroach upon park land” is the fifth rule of freeway planning.\(^{128}\)

While interest in the built environment bolstered the support of many local leaders and citizens, the preservation of the natural environment had perhaps more impassioned support. “Existing park land in urban areas should be considered, from the public standpoint, as the most precious of all properties—the very last and not the first to be


\(^{128}\) From “Clark Freeway Violates All the Rules For Urban Freeway Planning,” reproduced by Citizens Freeway Committee from \textit{Architectural Forum}, October 1963 article on the conference at Hershey, Pennsylvania, 1962.
gobbled up for new transportation facilities,” said Shaker Heights Mayor Jones. ¹²⁹ The removal of the parkland from Shaker Heights went against the Garden City blend of nature and development. Porter rejected these sentiments. “Parks are not ruined by freeways,” Porter said, rather “roads have enhanced the parks.” The construction would maintain Shaker Lakes “as retention basins to prevent flooding in the lower sections of Doan Brook.”¹³⁰ Porter’s argument, that practicality should determine the path of the Clark Freeway, did not prove to be convincing.

Arguments against Porter’s freeway-within-nature include its possible damage to the Cleveland watershed. Doan Brook, which stretches for nine miles through the Cleveland area, “has been losing its battle with the city for many years,” wrote Natural Science Museum Director William Scheele. Pushing more development on this watershed would lead to even greater destruction of the natural stream, which already ran through a highly urbanized region.¹³¹

Locally, Shaker Lakes represented a municipal conundrum. The Shaker Lakes stretch across Shaker Heights and into Cleveland Heights. Stokes, in his bid for mayor of Cleveland in 1967 suggested the Shaker Lakes either be sold to Shaker Heights for a high sum or the rent raised on the valuable area. While Stokes did not support the freeway project, he showed interest in taking back some of the control held by wealthy


suburbanites. 132 Cleveland’s ownership of the land, and the pressure caused by the impending freeway project, likely led the activists of Shaker Heights to establish regional rather than community or individual land use. Rather than framing the issue around the impact on home values, the activists used environmentalist and educational language and to frame their discussion.

The Shaker Lakes activists were representative of the environmentalists of the era, with their concerns about infrastructure’s impact on the natural environment. Samuel P. Hays, in Beauty, Health and Permanence, discusses 1965-1972 as a time when pollution became as important as “natural-environment areas” to environmental activists.133 Projects like the Clark and Lee Freeways bridged these two issues. Stewart Udall, Secretary of the Interior under President Lyndon Johnson, wrote The Quiet Crisis, a 1963 book dealing with the history of land use in America and the future of conservation, and played a “highly significant role” in environmental policy according to Hays.134 Like the freeway activists, Udall saw further exploitation of natural land as unnecessary and he was part of the wider movement reconsidering metropolitan growth and development in the 1960s. Udall’s introduction to The Quiet Crisis illustrates the urgency of the times, with regards to the natural environment. “America today stands poised on a pinnacle of wealth and power, yet we live in a land of vanishing beauty, of increasing ugliness, of shrinking open space, and of an over-all environment that is diminished daily by

132 Weinberg, Black Victory: Carl Stokes and the Winning of Cleveland, 107.

133 Samuel P. Hays, Beauty, Health and Permanence, 55.

134 Samuel P. Hays, Beauty, Health and Permanence, 53. He provides an excellent overview of the environmental movement in the 1960s, and how
pollution and noise and blight,” he wrote. Udall’s office also received letters from citizens concerned about the freeway developments through Shaker Lakes.

The resulting development in Shaker Lakes managed to both preserve the natural environment and make it more accessible to the public. The Shaker Lakes Nature Center, a collective project between educators, garden club members, scientists and activists was established in 1966. The Nature Center’s property extends across the communities of Cleveland Heights, Shaker Heights and Cleveland. Not simply a Nature Center, it sits amid the Shaker Lakes, originally created by damming projects from the Shaker inhabitants of the North Union Settlement. The Nature Center underwent a campaign to become a National educational landmark in 1967. While residents used the Shaker Lakes parkland for years before the freeway fight, the addition of the Nature Center justified its utility. Educating local students diversified the purposes of the parkland, and reflected the freeway’s intentions to use the land for the best regional purposes.

In 1967, the County Engineering Office revealed a slightly revised Clark Freeway route, which accommodated an expansion at St. Luke’s Hospital in eastern Cleveland. This new report also required 65 more homes and 35 more commercial buildings demolished than did the original route. In 1968, SCOTS revealed alternate plans for an


122 *The Van Sweringen Influence*, 9.


I-290 route northwest of the original Clark path. The new route would “skirt the northern edge of Cleveland Heights, then through South Euclid, Richmond Heights and Highland Heights” with possibilities for an east-west highway through Shaker and a north-south route on Warrensville Center Road in the Heights neighborhoods.140 The north-south route would replace the Lee Freeway. More centralized mass transit was called for by SCOTS in the 1968 report and in its 1969 report; the latter indicated “cooperation” was possible through creating “regional or county transit authorities.”141 SCOTS, in its 1969 report, presented alternative routes for highway and rapid extension in Cuyahoga County. Even with extensions to the CTS and Shaker Rapid—most of which never came to fruition—in 1969 SCOTS still recommended highway building that included corridors through the northern and southern Heights neighborhoods.142 The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA), which replaced SCOTS, worked with Porter to determine an appropriate highway route. Neither SCOTS nor NOACA decided the freeway issue, as the projects continued to be politically and socially complicated.143

In 1970, the freeway issue seemed up in the air. NOACA recommended construction of the Clark Freeway in late 1969.144 Shaker Heights and Cleveland Heights activists looked to use legal action against the state, on the basis that they did not approve


143 Morton, “The Clark, Lee and Heights Freeways.”

of having Howard, Needles, Tammen and Bergendoff and Alden E. Stilson & Associates design the highway. Rhodes cancelled the project in February 1970, rather than moving the Clark from its Shaker Lakes path. Morton calls his 1970 announcement to cancel the freeway a political, not environmental, decision because of his upcoming run as a Republican candidate for Senate. This assessment effectively explains the timing of Rhodes’ announcement. His private assurances against the project, to suburban officials and the *Heights Sun Press*, and public support for I-290 demonstrate the complexity of placing a highway through an urbanized area and a wealthy area full of Republicans.

Soon the land became permanently protected, whether or not plans for another freeway through the eastern suburbs materialized. In 1974, Shaker Lakes’ 146 acres became a national historic site, preventing the land from being used as a freeway, being rezoned or for use by “nonhistoric groups.” The act ended the fears of a parkland freeway in Shaker, once and for all.

Shaker Lakes’ combination of education, history and nature is representative of the combination of causes necessary to combat projects like the Clark Freeway and the Lee Freeway. Not simply an environmental or conservationist victory, the activists’ efforts reflect a multiplicity of causes. The Nature Center today, with its permanent display on the Clark Freeway and quotes from environmental writer and activist Rachel

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147 Morton, “The Clark, Lee and Heights Freeways.”

Carson carved into its fences, pays homage to the 1960s local and national conservation efforts at its roots. This environmentalist push in Shaker Heights is an additional element to the framework of a successful freeway revolt laid out by Mohl. The Center’s lasting significance is not its singular victory against the Clark Freeway, but instead, its efforts to add permanent environmental awareness and a focus on conservation to the city of Shaker Heights.
Conclusion

Shaker Heights, without the addition of the Clark and Lee Freeways, has remained in largely the same physical shape as in the prewar era. Without a major infrastructure interruption through the eastern suburbs and this upscale suburb in particular, the residents avoided having their community separated by a concrete wall. They avoided having to shift school lines and avoided losing homes and the usability of Shaker Lakes. Also, these activists enabled Shaker Lakes Nature Center to become an educational facility that added a draw for visitors to Shaker Heights. Activists, in their efforts to maintain the integrity of their suburb and to avoid it becoming bypassed by many travelers, helped add draws to their suburb. This wealthy enclave suburb did not shift to progressive ideals immediately in the postwar era, rather it housed a greater variety of citizens, some committed to integration and others to the natural environment, and yet others to their own homes and the built environment.

The fight is a familiar one. It fits largely into Mohl’s discussion of freeway revolt history, as the Clark and Lee freeway disputes matched all of his criteria common to freeway revolts. Local journalists supported the activists and local politicians aided the cause. Rhodes’ shutdown of the highway project came after Shaker Heights and Cleveland Heights officials considered legal action.\textsuperscript{149} Shaker Heights’ advantages in

pushing the importance of its parkland and the Van Sweringen’s Garden City design in the freeway fight, follows Schrag’s argument that planned and historic communities often succeeded in preventing highway projects.\textsuperscript{150}

This project, in addition to placing the Shaker Heights efforts into a national context, recognizes the importance of local efforts and context. The local accomplishments, even as aided by national legislation, are significant. Shaker Heights activists’ success helped maintain an unusual highway design in Cleveland, in which an entire section of the metropolitan area’s densely populated suburbs do not have immediate highway access. Engineer and Cuyahoga Democratic Party chairman Porter also is a significant figure. His tendencies to stigmatize the activists as privileged, along with his abilities to provide sound bites for local and national press, reveal the power and vulnerability of suburbs like Shaker Heights in the 1960s. The suburb’s racial integration narrative tends to mask some of its reputation for privilege and fine living in the postwar era, when in reality it was an extremely wealthy community. Porter’s words also illustrate the necessity of suburbs like Shaker Heights to reinvent themselves as not simply wealthy enclaves, but important to the wider metropolitan area. The Shaker Lakes Nature Center’s educational mission gave the activists a direct response to Porter’s accusations.

Today, the population of Cuyahoga County has decreased as the populations of its neighboring counties, Lake, Medina, Geauga, Lorain and Summit, have all increased. Interstate 90, Interstate 271 and Interstate 480 make it fairly convenient for drivers to

\textsuperscript{150} Raymond Mohl, “Stop the Road,” 676.
avoid the near eastern suburbs on their way into Cleveland. Even with increased drivers, traffic problems in Cuyahoga County hardly reached the predicted levels. SCOTS, in its study of the socioeconomic characteristics of the Seven County area, overestimated the population growth in both Cuyahoga County and Lake County, Cuyahoga County’s neighbor to the east, through 1990. While SCOTS estimated Cuyahoga County’s population would hit 2,290,000 in 1990, the actual Cuyahoga County population for 1990 was 1,412,140. These differences result from deindustrialization and Cleveland’s inability to attract replacement businesses. More importantly, the discrepancies show how different Cuyahoga County’s transportation infrastructure needs are today. Porter’s insistence that Cleveland’s highways would be unnecessarily clogged seems absurd considering the city’s relatively low levels of traffic. SCOTS’ figures seem overly optimistic when considering the state of affairs in Cleveland and Cuyahoga County today because many of the drivers have moved.¹⁵¹

Had Porter succeeded, he would have managed an impressive feat: bulldozing one of the nation’s wealthiest and most distinguished communities. Shaker Heights proved its individual significance in this fight while also managing to work with its local communities and the city of Cleveland. Perhaps simply a case of common sense winning out, the freeway battle influenced the day-to-day lives of many in the metropolitan area. Convenience and beauty do not always go hand-in-hand, and in this case, they are mutually exclusive.

¹⁵¹ Ohio Department of Development, Office of Strategic Research, 18; David L. Walker and Mary Rothfusz, “Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Seven-County Study Area.” Cleveland-Seven County Transportation-Land Use Survey, April 1969, 3.
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