

Cleveland: A City on Schedule

Narrator: The Cuyahoga River Valley is the beginning of a transportation route south to the Ohio River system and the Gulf of Mexico. Over there along the lakeshore runs the only water-level route linking the midwest with the east coast. In 1796 Moses Cleaveland chose the crossing of these two transportation arteries to found a town, which soon became a natural meeting place for iron ore from the north and coal from the south. Ever since, this has been a place where things have been happening.

One of the most important things, the business of making steel. Cleveland was in at the beginning of the modern steel industry. In 1855 a Cleveland-owned ship brought down the first cargo of iron ore from the Lake Superior region. From that day forward, the city has been a strategically important production center of the world. Today 40,000 Cleveland area workers earn their living in this basic industry. Its payrolls pour some \$200 million a year into the economy.

But the strength of this city cannot be measured in terms of a single industry. For the economic base of Cleveland rests on a broad foundation. The city is famous for its machine tools, automotive products, aircraft parts, chemicals and paints, metal fabricating in all fields. It is a world-renowned center of industrial, medical and scientific research.

Each morning as the workday begins, the city draws on its reservoir of human skills, matching the knowledge and experience of men with the power and ingenuity of machines. The result is continuous and expanding productivity, which has always been the starting place for progress.

Cleveland works just as hard maintaining and developing its famous cultural institutions as it does its industries. By 8:30, the Natural History Museum is about ready to receive visitors. Housekeeping chores are being completed at the Art Museum. And all around University Circle, there is progress and productivity in the arts, the sciences and in education. At the Health Museum, Juno, the transparent woman, will soon be instructing new classes of schoolchildren in the wonderful mysteries of life. At Severance Hall, the world-renowned Cleveland Orchestra is about to begin a rehearsal.

The Cleveland Playhouse prepares for an opening night...

At Case Tech, the business of learning is under way...

At the Zoo, in Brookside Park, it's breakfast time...

At the stadium, the ground crews are preparing for the possibility of rain...

In Cleveland, at any time of the day, there is always something interesting and rewarding to do or see or learn. Cleveland works hard and plays well.

This is one side, a bright side of the Cleveland story. A city self-confident, composed, secure in its productivity and the range of opportunities it provides its people for growth and a rewarding life.

But like all cities, Cleveland has its problems and its conflicts. There are traffic problems. There are residential areas in conflict with industry. Whole neighborhoods in conflict with changing times. Within the city, there are all too many monuments to lost productivity, for industries have moved out. Property values have melted away in once-thriving commercial areas. The unmistakable signs of deterioration and blight can be seen spreading through the city's core. And there are hopeless slums. Places that no one wants to call home, but some must. How do these things happen? These conflicts? This deterioration? These islands of want in a sea of plenty? Well for one thing, they are easy to ignore. And for a long time, Cleveland, like most cities, did ignore them.

The simple way was to move out. To start over again in the clean, wide open spaces of the suburbs. And Cleveland did move out. Whole communities sprang up around the central city. Luxury apartments added millions of dollars in tax revenues to the resources of outlying communities. Old established commercial institutions moved out to serve the new communities, providing competition for the parent organizations downtown. Industries, which had outgrown the available land within the city limits, built attractive new plants in the outlying areas. New industries moving into the city, located where there was land. The new plants and laboratories made good neighbors, contributed good jobs, and contributed welcome growth to the area. But as long as the growth occurred beyond the city limits, Cleveland itself could not share in the benefits.

Freeway systems reached out and made it easy for the suburbanites to get into town. And they had to, because no matter how the suburbs grew, the downtown area remained the headquarters location, the planning center and the principle marketplace for goods and services. Because of the concentration of these and other resources within the city, the wellbeing of the suburbs has always been dependent on the wellbeing of Cleveland itself.

For several years, Cleveland's leaders, aware of the city's conflicts and its problems, had been organizing the [?]. In 1942, there was decisive action at City Hall. The voters had amended the city charter to create a seven-member planning commission. In its first meeting, the mayor, Frank Lausche, explained what action was needed to put Cleveland on schedule.

Frank Lausche: And we see the disintegration of the city and its core. Men, I think it's clear that the people expect that we will bring this disintegration which has set in to an end. They contemplate that you will take action that will restore the health of this city. That you will create a city with an environment that will be attractive to people, to industry, to visitors, and that it will contribute to the economic growth of everyone that lives within. I think the people expected that you would keep the good and eliminate the bad. They want you to prepare a master plan, a plan that will be an intelligent guide for the rehabilitation of the old and the development of the new.

Narrator: Cleveland was fortunate to have in its midst, one of the pioneers of city planning in America. Here's how he remembers it.

Ernest Bohn: I'm Ernest Bohn. I'm chairman of the city planning commission. I was there, I was present when Mayor Lausche instructed the new planning commission as to their job, what they were to do. Our first job was to assemble all the information, meager as it was, that was already available. For example, at City Hall, we had an archive department. Here are stored many records of the Streets Department, of the municipal utilities, the Water Department, the Service Department. These had to be gone into to see what information we could assemble that would help us in the development of the plan. Then most importantly, to send our own staff out into the field to obtain information as to housing, as to utilities, as to subdivisions, as to roads, as to streets. Everything that would enter into a determination of what should be the plan for the future development of the city of Cleveland. We finally in 1949 issued a report that became known as the general plan of the city of Cleveland.

Narrator: The general plan of 1949 showed what Cleveland could become by 1980. One of the men who worked from the beginning to put it into effect was James Lister, who was to become the city's first director of urban renewal and housing.

James Lister: Basically what the plan called for was a program that would recognize the maximum and highest and best use of the land in the entire city. And to do this in a way that was arranged by logic rather than by chaos. The general plan of the city set aside land for residents, single-family neighborhoods, apartment neighborhoods, and then in connection with each neighborhood, called for areas for recreation, an overall plan for park systems, open spaces for the entire city. And in each neighborhood, there was an area set aside for shopping and business, and also the major shopping area in the center of the city. Also areas for light industry, and the principle heavy industrial neighborhood in the Cuyahoga Valley. And tying all of these areas of the city together was an overlying system of expressways, interconnecting all parts, each with the other and with the core of the city. This was the general nature of the overall plan of the city of Cleveland. During Mayor Thomas Burke's term as mayor, the general plan was finally adopted by the City Planning Commission. And ever since that time, all of the major improvements in this city, have been carried out in accordance with that plan. The Innerbelt bridge was built where the overall highway / freeway network showed that it should be built. Cleveland's water system has been built to serve the plan of Cleveland. Cleveland's sewage treatment plant, one of the finest in the world, followed the pattern of the plan. And the schools that have been built since the plan was adopted were built where they should be located.

Narrator: But the objectives of Cleveland's general plan went far beyond an orderly and efficient expansion of general services. It also called for urban renewal and redevelopment in the very core of the city. This was a part of the program that was undertaken by Mayor Anthony J. Celebrezze and he did so in a report to the people of Cleveland on television.

Anthony J. Celebrezze: One of the great decisions facing this country and this great city of ours is whether or not we have the ability, the knowhow and the tenacity to renew our cities. To wipe out from our cities slums and deteriorated conditions. You the people of Cleveland spoke in 1953 when you allocated two bond issues, \$7 million for this purpose. Now many cities have preceded with renewal of the downtown area. I must admit, this is very spectacular. But it is our belief here at City Hall at this particular time that the great need is for housing. And so we have made the decision to move into the housing area of urban renewal and slum clearance. Now we're not interested in brick and mortar. What we are interested in is the human needs. For those who have to live in slums do not have the ability to meet the problems of the community, to take their active part as decent citizens because they lose hope. Urban renewal gives to these people hope. It says to them that we as a community care about their living conditions and are going to do something about it. And I'm asking you the people of Cleveland to join with us in this community project of rehabilitating our city for human needs.

Narrator: Work began in the area of greatest need, which was not difficult to determine. It was the Longwood section of the central district. A 56 acre tract in which 1,500 families were crowded into some 250 miserably inadequate, unsanitary, ramshackle structures, 97% of which were owned by absentee landlords.

With financial help from the federal government, the city was to buy and clear the land and then rebuild the area. But as it turned out, it wasn't quite that simple...

_____ : I don't see any reason why your project wouldn't be eligible. And I think the federal government can be helpful to you. The Urban Renewal Administration can help in the acquisition and clearance of the land. And the Federal Housing Administration would be helpful in encouraging developers to come in to build the necessary housing.

_____ : Well, Bill our basic problem is that we need displacement housing. We have to tear down the last areas of slum and blighted housing and, of course, we have to move these people into decent, safe and sanitary housing according to the law that was passed in Congress. We can't move them into other areas, because then we will create a problem of overcrowding. So the question is where do we move them. Now, Ernie, just how far can public housing go in aiding us on this program.

Ernest Bohn: Well, as you know, Mayor, we've helped you these many years in relocating families who were in the path of public improvements, that is highways and parks and playgrounds. And we'll do the same here. But, I wanna remind you that the state law puts great, definite limitations on the incomes that families can have to obtain admission to public housing. And there are other people who, therefore, are in the area who are not eligible for public housing, and, therefore, we must build and build some more housing. And since you can't build on top of people, there's only one thing to do and that's to get some vacant land.

Narrator: At that moment, the machinery of urban renewal in Cleveland came to a dead stop. But the city had one great resource that it had not yet tapped: it's thriving,

productive business community, including commerce, industry, the trades and professions. Cleveland had always been a healthy place for business and the city's businessmen had a long-established tradition for responsibility to their community. In the month of June, 1954, this was about to be proven once again. Representatives of the city's leading industrial firms were invited to a meeting by John Burton, then chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland. Curtis Lee Smith, president of the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce, addressed the meeting.

Curtis Lee Smith: As you men know, the City of Cleveland, that is the administration and the Council, have gone about as far as they can go with legislation for urban rehabilitation. They've passed the legislation and done everything in a very cooperative way. But what we need is something to get this program off dead center and in operation. Each of your companies are going to be asked for money. And we propose to raise a fund of \$2 million which will be a revolving fund and will be the catalyst and operate between the municipal government of Cleveland and the federal government in Washington in order to get urban rehabilitation off the ground. We propose to form a foundation, possibly to be called the Cleveland Development Foundation, which will handle these funds and serve as a catalyst to bring these operations into being.

Narrator: With Cleveland's best-known industrial leaders solidly behind the program action was quick and decisive. Within two months, the fund was subscribed. But even \$2 million couldn't create land where none existed, or so it seemed. However, in the central area along Kinsman Avenue, there ran a deep ravine, known as Kingsbury Run. Until this time, it had been considered industrial waste land. No one had thought it could be salvaged. But in this emergency, engineers took a new look at it.

_____ : Yeah, I remember this area in the late 40's when I made a survey here. It was approximately a half mile long and 900 feet wide. It was very rugged and filled with brush and debris and some trees. It was good for nothing mainly other than a dump, and that's what it was used for.

Narrator: It would be an enormous job, but there was a possibility the ravine could be reclaimed. The project was studied by the executive committee of the Cleveland Development Foundation, the mayor and the planning director. On an inspection trip to the site, a final decision was reached. The Foundation would acquire the land and proceed to improve it. A culvert would be built over the stream. That would cost half a million dollars. The city would build a new storm sewer to protect the area against surface floods. That would cost \$3 million. To fill the ravine would require millions of tons of material. Republic Steel Corporation had offered slag to do most of the job at no cost. If all this could be done, 105 acres of vacant land would be available for urban renewal construction. The investment in land and buildings for the Garden Valley project, as it was called, would be in excess of \$20 million.

When you set out to change a city, the best of plans will mean nothing without the cooperation and assistance of a determined city council. They are the people who must take away old privileges, changes the old rules and draw up new ones. There is always

resistance to change, and they are the people who must face it. Over the years, Cleveland city council members have made hundreds of important, serious decisions. When new legislation was required to carry out urban renewal programs, the council has never failed to provide it. Even though many of the decisions required political courage, and no small amount of statesmanship, every ordinance proposed on behalf of urban renewal has been passed by Council.

The Council passed the necessary legislation and the voters of Cleveland backed their lawmakers to the hilt. They approved the changes. They voted bond issues that provided the money. Their decisions got the program under way. The years of dreaming, organizing, planning, legislating were behind. From here on, it was action. Cleveland was on schedule.

Debris was piled in open areas and the Fire Department took over the job of burning the city's past. By the 1960s, many of the major projects had been completed. What had been a few years before desolate, miserable slum areas had been transformed into one of the most dramatic urban renewal development programs in the United States. In terms of dollars spent, bricks laid and structures built, the statistics are impressive indeed. But there is no measure for the human values added. Cleveland replaced hopelessness and degradation with decency, dignity and a fair chance in the pursuit of happiness.

Because Cleveland's urban renewal program has proceeded on schedule and with outstanding success, the Federal Urban Renewal program points to the Cleveland program as a model for the rest of the country. To quote its words, Cleveland's record in urban renewal is possible only because a courageous mayor, backstopped by dedicated and efficient city officials enjoy the full support of the business community. In twenty years, Cleveland envisions a slum-free city. These new communities stand as monuments to what can be accomplished when business and government work together for a common goal.

But if the city is to become and remain a desirable place in which to live, it must preserve and improve older homes in substantial neighborhoods. In many of them, Cleveland's nationality groups have preserved their identity and their spirit.

In those neighborhoods where national traditions have been preserved, the people are fiercely proud of their city. Many of them have resisted the move to the suburbs, preferring instead to improve their neighborhoods. With the help of Cleveland's rehabilitation program, they have made tremendous progress.

Action begins in local meetings organized by the Department of Urban Renewal and Housing. Its commissioner, James Yielding.

James Yielding: I think it's real gratifying when a group of neighbors from one geographic area of a neighborhoods gather together to call on their city, call on the Division of Urban Renewal to join with you in analyzing a problem. A real neighborhood rehabilitation and conservation program is available for the whole city of Cleveland, but

only upon the request of the citizens of a given neighborhood. We like to be invited to participate with you, to carry out all of the improvements of your own property and of the neighborhood, including the public improvements. How do we go about it? Let's get right down to brass tacks...

Narrator: When local residents ask for assistance, the city pays for the costs of establishing and staffing a neighborhood field office. It becomes the headquarters and information center for the whole area. A housing expert is assigned to help residents plan and finance needed improvements. The movement gets organized block by block. One way or another, before long the whole neighborhood comes alive with the sounds of progress. It really doesn't take much to put a new face on a neighborhood. A few willing hands with a paintbrush, a saw and hammer, a few garden tools. The principle elements are determination and community pride. Cleveland's neighborhoods have both.

There are 138,000 dwelling units in Cleveland that can be saved by these improvement programs. The work is well begun. Throughout its neighborhoods and anywhere you look in Cleveland, the spirit of urban renewal is in the air. Communities such as Garden Valley and Longwood have converted slums into civic assets as scheduled in the general plan of Cleveland.

The schedule called for construction of the Innerbelt freeway. Today Clevelanders are driving over it. And construction is under way on the remainder of a billion dollar highway program.

The schedule called for new hospitals and health centers and they have been built. More are under construction and still others are being planned.

The schedule called for improved police and fire protection. Today there are more men and more facilities. Both services rank among the best in the world.

The schedule called for airport improvements. The people voted a total of \$5.5 million to build the new terminal at Cleveland Hopkins. Burke Lakefront airport within five minutes of downtown is a major facility and still growing.

The schedule called for improved public transportation. Today Cleveland has a city rapid transit city equal to the best.

The schedule called for improved parking facilities. Major lots have been opened near the freeways downtown and in the established commercial areas throughout the city.

The schedule called for port development. The people voted \$11.5 million to provide it. And Cleveland is today a world port.

The schedule called for school expansion. 71 new buildings, 838 classrooms have been added to the Cleveland system.

The schedule called for new recreation facilities. 47 playgrounds and 14 new swimming pools have been built.

The schedule called for continued improvement of Cleveland Civic Center. The new \$10 million exhibition hall is under construction and will be outstanding in the United States.

The schedule called for major development of University Circle. The plan, developed by the University Circle Development Foundation, envisions a \$175 million expansion program, \$60 million of which completed within five years. Meanwhile in the areas around University Circle, the City has inaugurated one of the largest urban renewal projects in the United States. It includes clearance and rehabilitation of the residential and commercial areas in a 1,400 acre tract. As these programs progress concurrently, major new developments such as the expansion of the universities and the new Veterans Hospital, now under construction, will be the center of a pleasant, thriving community, the greatest concentration of educational and cultural facilities in the world, and a priceless asset to Cleveland and its surrounding communities.

As the 1960s began, it was time to move ahead with the next great project on the schedule: a full-scale renewal of the downtown area. In the 1920s, more than a thousand old buildings were torn down to build the imposing Terminal group. That achievement captured the imagination of a whole nation and brought new life and vitality to the city. It's time to do it again. On its way is the largest scale downtown urban renewal project ever undertaken. When it has been completed, land that returned less than half a million dollars in income to the city, will be producing tax revenues of \$3 million a year. Thousands of jobs will be created for Clevelanders during construction and for years to come. The project has got the attention and admiration of the whole country. If you are willing to wait a little while, a few sunrises from now, you will see something new. Its name: Erievew.

The impact of Erievew on the future of Cleveland can hardly be overstated. By creating outstanding commercial facilities in the heart of the downtown area, it will attract new industries to the city and new headquarters locations for existing companies. By providing downtown living quarters for 6,000 families, it will create new markets for existing stores and businesses. Because it will renew and revitalize the whole downtown area, it will reverse the trends of the past and open a new era of growth and opportunity. By building Erievew, Cleveland will maintain its place of leadership among the great cities of the world.

With continued loyal support of its citizens, its lawmakers, its business community and especially its voters, this kind of dramatic progress will continue in Cleveland, city on schedule.