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**Multiple speakers** [00:00:04] [setting up]

**Greg James** [00:00:04] Okay, here we are again. This is Greg James. Mike Turk here for the Euclid Corridor Project with Mr. Van Petten here down at his office at Superior in Cleveland on August 2nd, 2006.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:00:15] Good afternoon.

**Greg James** [00:00:16] Thank you so much for giving us an opportunity to...

**Richard Van Petten** [00:00:19] Okay.

**Greg James** [00:00:19] To do this. As we go along here, I'm going to try to ask you brief questions about your local, growing up as a child, and then try to build into because we know a little bit about you.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:00:29] Okay.

**Greg James** [00:00:31] So that we can understand...

**Richard Van Petten** [00:00:33] Okay.

**Greg James** [00:00:32] What those effects were when you were there.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:00:33] Okay.

**Greg James** [00:00:34] Very first question here. What community did you grow up in as a child?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:00:38] Well, I grew up in northern Ohio, actually, but I grew up in the town called Akron, which isn't all that far away. I don't tell everybody this, you know? I try to keep, kind of keep some things quiet. But since you're so direct about it, I guess I don't have any choice.

**Mike Turk** [00:00:56] So you grew up in Akron?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:00:57] That's right.

**Mike Turk** [00:00:58] What was that community and that home life like down in Akron?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:01:02] Well, it was terrible, but, but that was a few years ago. And it's very interesting, you know. I didn't think we were going to talk about Akron. But Akron is a city that has changed very much in recent years.

**Greg James** [00:01:14] Can you explain it to me? I'm curious.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:01:14] As I was growing up, Akron was the "Rubber Capital of the World" where all they, where all tires were manufactured. Well, a lot were manufactured there. And... But the thing is a lot has happened to the city in the meantime. It's become a much more cosmopolitan city. I think the rapid development of technology in the last quarter of the 20th century brought a lot of communities closer together. That is, what was happening in New York was all of a sudden seen in every city in the United States because you could see it all of a sudden, and that all of a sudden meant that a small provincial town wasn't nearly so provincial as it had been at an earlier time. And as a result, I think Akron is a much more sophisticated city today. And at the same time in terms of the arts, Akron has come a long, long way.

**Mike Turk** [00:02:27] That's very interesting.

**Greg James** [00:02:28] Now, one of the things I'm curious about here is like the Goodyear blimp, I mean, this is just my own personal standpoint. Is that why they talk about the Goodyear blimp always being from Akron or is that?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:02:36] Well, of course.

**Greg James** [00:02:38] Because of that history right there?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:02:38] That's, that's the company that developed it. And they... And they built an enormous hangar back in the 1930s, which was big enough to put one of those blimps into. And...

**Greg James** [00:02:52] Because it's weird because you think of Akron and you think of the United States of America, and you think about this little town, which is, it is compared to most cities. You know, you think of Akron being like the outskirts of Cleveland. But that's, that's interesting you did grow up in the Akron area. Knowing that about your, about your life, where you grew up. Your parent's occupation or educational backgrounds?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:03:13] Well, my, my father was trained educationally as a schoolteacher.

**Greg James** [00:03:22] Okay.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:03:22] You, you would...

**Greg James** [00:03:23] Absolutley.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:03:23] Appreciate that. And as far as I know, he never taught school. But if he did, it was for a fairly brief length of time. They got moved to, to Akron by whatever company that he was working for, for the purposes of selling advertising, which he did for 40 years. Or maybe it was 35 for that, for that company. And so that's why they happened to settle there.

**Greg James** [00:03:56] So what, where did they grow up? Were they, did they... You said they settled there. Did they? So you were born in Akron? So your parents...

**Richard Van Petten** [00:04:02] Well, actually, I was born in Cleveland. But that's...

**Greg James** [00:04:05] Born in Cleveland.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:04:05] Another whole story or two, maybe don't want to go into... But my father had grown up in central Illinois.

**Greg James** [00:04:20] Central Illinois?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:04:21] And he met my mother after he returned from the war. This was the first war.

**Greg James** [00:04:27] First war.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:04:28] By the way, and, and she at the time was living in Virginia. But she'd been born, had been born, and grew up in the New York City area. And, and after my parents married, they worked in the Washington area for a few years and then lived in some other places. They moved to Akron from Atlanta and in Georgia. My mother always said she loved Atlanta.

**Greg James** [00:05:01] Yeah, a lot of you say that you love Atlanta, Savannah, and all of those places.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:05:06] My parents also lived in Syracuse, in New York. My mother always said she hated Syracuse. I lived there for six months, and she never saw the ground in front of her house not covered with snow.

**Mike Turk** [00:05:21] Oh, that's just like me. That's why I hate Cleveland. So I hate Cleveland. Okay, we've got your parents. Now, next couple things here. What led you to be interested in the arts? And on top of that, did your parents have any push over you to be interested in the arts?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:05:36] No, my mother, my mother, quite rightly I may say always said to me, well, if you were asking my opinion, I think you should go into medicine. Yeah, of course. She was right. But I had my own thoughts on the matter. And I was certainly always very interested in architecture and design. And so when it came time to select a university, I decided I really wanted [to go to] an art, a design school rather than a, than a more liberal arts college. And so I made the application to the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence, where I was for four years.

**Mike Turk** [00:06:40] You went to Providence for four years?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:06:41] That's, that's right. And you know, and you're speaking about cities, the parallels between Akron and Providence are really quite interesting. And I think we're at an age now where sort of the second-tier cities in this country have really come into their own.

**Mike Turk** [00:07:05] They have.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:07:05] And I haven't been back to Providence for a lot of years, but I, but what I read and what I see, cities come a long, long way since, since I was there. And a lot of really great things have happened in the downtown that make it a much more livable city than it had ever been before.

**Mike Turk** [00:07:27] In Providence?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:07:27] In Providence. But this is also true of, you know, some other smaller cities. Portland in Oregon, as well as Portland in Maine, are just, you know, are both they're relatively small cities that have in the last 10, 20 years become far more livable than they ever had been before and have most major larger cities.

**Mike Turk** [00:07:58] That's like Canton. Those type of cities driving through, drive through there. Okay. Well, you said you grew up in, you were in Akron. You'd tell us where you went to college when you talked about... What high school?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:08:10] Oh, I went to public high school. The Akron public school system. And I went to a school called John R. Buchtel High School.

**Greg James** [00:08:27] Buchtel. Is that still the same Buchtel high school that's there today? Is that what?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:08:30] Well, so far as I know it is.

**Greg James** [00:08:31] Okay.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:08:31] We're tearing down school so fast in the state, I, I really am not quite sure of it. I was back to.

**Greg James** [00:08:39] It was a big powerhouse in sports.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:08:39] I see. I was, I was, in Akron. Oh, sometimes six months or a year ago. And the, and the primary school, the grade school that I attended to, which was, you know, architecturally one of the more interesting schools in the city had just been knocked down. [And] I understand is they're going, they're building a new school on the same site, which is from a preservation point of view, really very unfortunate thing to do. You know, in terms of the environment, knocking buildings down and building them over again is, is, is, is very wasteful.

**Greg James** [00:09:27] Oh it is.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:09:27] And along the way, a lot of the, the architectural elements that are replaced [aren't] nearly as durable and maybe as having as much to do with the community as the original building.

**Greg James** [00:09:42] I've heard a lot of people say that about the new architects. You were saying, you know, we were talking Mr. Madison yesterday, and that's one of the things he was mentioning, which we'll get to around here, like the tearing down projects. Now, just to get a time.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:09:52] Okay. Okay.

**Greg James** [00:09:53] Frame for our listeners here. What, what timeframe was college?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:09:55] That was in the '50s.

**Mike Turk** [00:09:58] In the '50s. Okay.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:09:58] Yeah.

**Greg James** [00:09:58] In the '50s high school. Okay. So that, now that we've got a time frame on everything. Now as we move along here, we've got that. Can you describe the history of your firm and can you share some examples of your local projects you've had some of your works.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:10:12] Okay. My firm is relatively young. We've been, we've been here 10, 12 years now.

**Greg James** [00:10:23] Okay.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:10:23] And I have to tell you, through my professional years, I've always worked for other people.

**Greg James** [00:10:30] Okay.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:10:30] The security of a paycheck on a regular basis...

**Greg James** [00:10:33] Oh, yes.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:10:33] Is, is very compelling, I'm afraid. It certainly was to me. And so I didn't strike out until fairly late in my years. And, of course, I've been kicking myself ever since for not having gotten around to it, 35 years sooner because I'm having an awful lot more fun now.

**Greg James** [00:10:59] I can imagine.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:11:00] And I can make my own mistakes and not have to have anybody else worry about it and clean them up as best we can without, without somebody other than myself feeling terribly, terribly injured about it. In terms of projects, the most, most interesting things we're doing are, of course, the most recent things that we're doing. And, and the most recent thing that we're doing is a very small addition to Pilgrim Church, which is an historic church in the Tremont area of Cleveland.

**Mike Turk** [00:11:55] Beautiful church.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:11:56] It's, it's, and this is a particularly interesting, interesting church. Our assignment was to build a very small addition to make the building more accessible. That is, it includes a small... An elevator to get people to the various levels of the church. And the, and the location that needed to get built was at the confluence of the church building and a later community building that had been added on to it. Each one of them three levels. No two of which lined up with each other so that it offered some, some interesting challenges and complications. It's really [a very] special project for me because we happen to have a really wonderful group of people that comprise their building committee. And, you know, over the last eight, nine months, we've met with them at least once a month. And for every meeting, there's 10 or 12 people sit down and focus [on the] project. And none of the meetings have been less than two and a quarter hours. And at the end of the meetings, they're all still focused on it. And they've, and they've done... And then along the way, they've asked a lot of very thoughtful questions and had some discussion about issues among themselves and, and come to, to decisions. This is, you know, this is quite a remarkable board. GM would have done well over the years to have as good a group of folks.

**Mike Turk** [00:13:49] Now, you said one thing here. I'm curious, one thing you said. What's the biggest difference between having your own firm and working for someone else? If you could say the number one?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:13:58] Well, the number one thing is you don't get paid on a regular basis when you have your own firm, if you're very fortunate.

**Greg James** [00:14:06] I'm curious about that. What do you mean you don't get paid?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:14:06] Well, if you for a firm as if you work for a school board. You anticipate that you are every two or four weeks you're going to have somebody hand you a little envelope that has a check in it that has what's been previously agreed upon as just compensation. And if you work for your own firm, then you can get paid after you've done the work and after you've put together a bill for your client and after they decide to pay it. A process, which may take some several months, or longer in certain cases. So, so it is, it is all a much, a much less certain arrangement.

**Mike Turk** [00:15:02] But you did say it's more fun having your own.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:15:03] But it's a lot more fun.

**Greg James** [00:15:05] Okay. That's, that's the thing I wanted to say... [inaudible] That's the thing. Okay.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:15:09] And, and also I think for me at least, a lot more rewarding. And, you know, one of the reasons that we do what we do is at the end of the day, that there's some reward. And one has the opportunity to think that, gee, what I have done, what I've been able to do today makes a difference.

**Greg James** [00:15:36] I know what you are saying. That's the same thing Madison was saying too.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:15:37] Yeah. Well sure.

**Greg James** [00:15:37] Along with like being able to have your own firm, seeing your own people, develop them in that process, and then when they branch off and go someplace else, you get that same, you know, same feeling of reward there. That, that's some of the things that we are starting to see the trend about people with their own firms. Now a little sidebar question here. What's your favorite building in the world?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:15:56] My favorite building in the world. I'm, I'm not sure I've got one.

**Greg James** [00:16:01] Just one.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:16:01] But if you're, you're going to press me on this, I have a feeling. And I will have to say that one of my favorite, maybe the favorite building of all time is the Pantheon in Rome. This is the temple...

**Greg James** [00:16:26] Yes.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:16:27] You remember that has a hole in the roof.

**Greg James** [00:16:29] Yes.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:16:30] And that. Okay.

**Greg James** [00:16:31] You ever been there to see it?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:16:32] Oh, yeah, of course.

**Mike Turk** [00:16:34] What is so special. Like when I, when I study that history books. I've never been over a chance to see that. How come those types of things over there look so much more special? I mean, even though that they're broken, they still look more fabulous than anything that I've ever seen over in Greece and Rome and those places. Why is that? I'm just, I mean, this was so this these things were built so many years ago. Is it because we don't see that anymore or is it because, myself as a history teacher, I try to embrace my students like guys that was built without all these types of things we have today. And, you know, by, by the people that put out those materials, how could something be that awesome?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:17:15] Well, I think, yeah, I think probably each culture brings its own, its own particular things to the table. And, and part of what we learn from, from the from historic arts is, is something about the, the attitudes and the cares and the interests and the times that the people were building those buildings.

**Mike Turk** [00:17:48] Okay.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:17:48] So I think, you know, there is a, there's a lot of, lot of different levels of history involved. And, and in the case of the antiquities, there may be certain art facts that were worked on as a development over the years that, that are very special. And, and as we put them into perspective of the times that it was done, why it becomes much more special.

**Mike Turk** [00:18:22] Because those took years. Now we see buildings put up in what months, a year. I mean, they have is it's amazing. Okay it says you were an editor of the Guide to Cleveland Architecture 1997.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:18:35] You know, you've, you've done a lot of research.

**Mike Turk** [00:18:37] What are your three favorite buildings in Cleveland?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:18:40] Oh, okay. That, that's a tough question too. And I'm not sure that I would have given the same answer when we were editing that particular journal, because one of the buildings, which I find the most exciting, of course, is the Gehry building, which has happened since that guide was written. And I really think that that's one of the more exciting things that we've seen in Cleveland. And, you know, it's a very interesting building because it, you know, you were talking about the effect of technology. And this is a building which, quite frankly, just simply couldn't have been built before we had computers available to us. And every little piece of structural steel with its twisted, convoluted shape could be designed because somebody could set it up on a computer and get information which couldn't otherwise be gained. And then from a place in the site, set it up in a way which by computer they can direct somebody to put that little twisted piece of, of something into, into its appropriate place. It's really quite an amazing building.

**Mike Turk** [00:20:06] Okay.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:20:06] So that, that certainly has, has become one of, one of my favorite buildings.

**Mike Turk** [00:20:14] One of your favorites, okay. What's another one?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:20:15] And another one, which I have to tell you a bit of personal history about, is the historic house that I lived in for, for 35 years until it got sold two years ago. And this is the Schweinfurth house.

**Mike Turk** [00:20:39] Okay.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:20:39] Which is on East 75th Street between Euclid and Chester. So it's right in the...

**Mike Turk** [00:20:45] Oh, I know just where that is.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:20:46] Euclid Corridor area. And, and it, and it's a very interesting building designed by Charles Schweinfurth. Its construction started in 1892. It was finished in 1894. So as you were pointing out, it took a little longer to build buildings a century ago. An interesting building because of its form its rusticated sandstone and the original, the original building is almost a cube. Almost as wide as it is long and almost as tall as it was wide... And was built with a lot of care and a lot of interesting details.

**Mike Turk** [00:21:40] That's how buildings were back then and I mean that's...

**Richard Van Petten** [00:21:41] Well, this is a very, very different house than any other of that time. He designed a couple of buildings that were not dissimilar at about the same time but they no, so far as I know, no longer exist. So this is really quite unique in terms of history and its development.

**Greg James** [00:22:10] Okay, that makes sense. And you said two there. Can you name one more?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:22:12] That's right. I thought you were going to come up with the third one.

**Mike Turk** [00:22:17] You don't have to.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:22:17] Pretty soon.

**Mike Turk** [00:22:17] Now that we are done with two. You don't have to.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:22:18] Yeah.

**Mike Turk** [00:22:19] We like for the really.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:22:20] Okay.

**Mike Turk** [00:22:20] To really make those two.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:22:21] Yeah. Okay. Well [I'm] sorry. [This is] an area which would help if you give me a little advanced.

**Mike Turk** [00:22:29] Yes. I see what you are saying.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:22:31] Warning so I could have.

**Mike Turk** [00:22:32] Okay. That's fine. That's fine.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:22:32] I'd given it a little bit, a little bit more thought. [crosstalk] Okay. Well. All right. Let's skip it. Okay.

**Mike Turk** [00:22:38] So I was going to go with what's your favorite building on Euclid Avenue? So we'll come back to that a little bit later so you can think about that. Maybe instead of answering your third favorite building in Cleveland, you could sit there and think about the favorite on Euclid Avenue.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:22:48] Well, let's talk about that.

**Mike Turk** [00:22:51] Okay, let's go.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:22:52] It's interesting. The Schweinfurth house I mentioned is not, is not exactly on Euclid Avenue. But aside from that, there is Trinity Cathedral, which is also a Schweinfurth building. It's Trinity Cathedral. It's the Anglican church at East 22nd and Euclid.

**Mike Turk** [00:23:17] Any particular reason why that is? Is it just by the same designer, or is that just fascinates you the way that...

**Richard Van Petten** [00:23:23] Well, it's... I think one of the most carefully done historic churches in Cleveland. They, the materials selected and the design are really very well thought out, very well organized and...

**Mike Turk** [00:23:49] Okay. You like detail.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:23:50] Assembled, and I think it's also a building which works very well in its setting both of the time it was originally designed and built and, and, today part of the building complex is a chapter house which predates the original church. And the chapter houses are a Romanesque sort of building. And the, and the main church was down in this, in this, Elizabethan Gothic style, which is much more severe and much more plain and much more of a Gothic statement.

**Mike Turk** [00:24:39] Okay. So. What are the similarities between those two buildings just curious that you see? I mean, do you see between like when you look at designers and those types of things. Are there some basic... Yourself being an architect, you know, does every building that an architect has being by a designer does it have, and it's my own curious question here. Does each building have a distinct feature on each building? Is there something that an architect has on every building their own?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:25:09] What you're saying is, can I look at a building...

**Mike Turk** [00:25:16] And not yours.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:25:18] Or know that it was done by an architect because it was very similar to all of their other...

**Mike Turk** [00:25:24] Yes. I'm curious about that. I look up at these buildings and that's one thing... [crosstalk]

**Richard Van Petten** [00:25:24] Other buildings. And I think this very much depends. A lot of us, a lot of us feel and feel very strongly that buildings really sort of need to grow out of the demands that are put upon the architect when he sits down to design it, the constraints of the site, and the particular needs and desires as stated by the client. We refer to that as the program, except in Britain, where it's referred to as the brief. But these sort of requirements give a great deal of shape to the building. Beyond that, are there, are there very typical things that any one architect will repeat over and over again...

**Mike Turk** [00:26:20] Yes, that's something.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:26:21] Because, because he or she happens to like them? Yeah. I think that that happens sometimes without, without our being really terribly aware that it's happening. But certainly, certainly as we look at work of a Frank Lloyd Wright more than any other that comes to mind, there are, there are things that, that we see over and over again that we begin to associate with his, with his work. But, you know, others of us, perhaps aren't quite as interested in those kinds of elements and, or even I suspect some of us try to avoid that kind of characterization.

**Mike Turk** [00:27:16] [crosstalk] Okay. And some of the, like, different Gothic stuff, all that stuff. I'm just curious how architects perceive that and go with it. So. Try to go. Says you are a contributor to the Euclid Corridor Project. What is your vision for Euclid Avenue for the future Midtown Corridor?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:27:34] Okay, my association with the transportation project. And, you know, that's a project that's been around the city for a long time.

**Mike Turk** [00:27:47] How long has it been around?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:27:47] I think it, I think it, it was first started seriously being designed and considered in the early '90s, '91 maybe.

**Mike Turk** [00:27:57] And they just now got to it?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:27:58] And they're now, now... Well, it's gone through a few, a few manifestations over the years. It started out as, you know, as a rail project, what's become termed light rail. And light rail as opposed to heavy rail; it's a little bit like light beer as opposed to another kind of beer. A light rail project. And, you know, when the price tag got up over $600 million and why nobody could figure out a way to pay for it. And so what's happening now and this is really very interesting, it's going to be very interesting to see how this works. And I, it and the transportation planners in a group went off to Brazil a few years ago. I think it's Brazil because a mayor, a very enlightened mayor of a city, had done, was doing a very similar project that evolved with the question, is there a way to build a transportation project that will have the same efficiencies as a rail system without the staggering cost involved? And so this is the approach that's being tried here. And as I say, how well that works in this country at this time will be interesting to see. But the... What they found was that rail systems work much, much more efficiently because people pay before they board the vehicle. And they enter the vehicle on the same level without having to go up or down steps as the, as the floor of the vehicle. And then that the vehicle can travel between stations without having to stop along the way. So what they have, what they have done here is design some little stops, I believe, where people will buy some means or another prepaid before they go on. And they're raised just a little bit off the street and they, vehicles are very low so that they will be able to walk right on from the platform. And then the traffic signals are proposed to be activated by the transit as it goes through so that when you get to a cross street and there's a red light as the train approaches, the light will change, the train will go on through and people in their cars will get held up until the, the train passes. With the theory being that you're going to be able to get on this vehicle and get between University Center, Circle and downtown in less time than you can, than you can drive it.

**Mike Turk** [00:31:25] That's a lot nicer.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:31:26] And so this is going to be very interesting to see how this plays out. And, in fact, if it does work as well as it has been planned.

**Mike Turk** [00:31:41] Now with the construction that's going on down there, I mean, what are your thoughts on like the businesses? And I've been reading the Plain Dealer, I mean, is it fair for those businesses with the construction the way they're losing money? Should they be compensated for that? I know if I had a business that's...

**Richard Van Petten** [00:31:52] Well, let me, let me look at this from another angle for just a second. One of the things which I've done for a lot more years than I have realized is to sit on a committee for Midtown Cleveland, their design review committee...

**Mike Turk** [00:32:12] Okay.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:32:12] Which looks at a lot of projects. And one of the projects which we looked at last week is a hotel project, an existing hotel at, at 30th and Euclid Avenue, the hotel which was originally built as a Holiday Inn across the street from the Arena.

**Mike Turk** [00:32:39] Oh, right.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:32:39] You remember the Arena, and it got knocked down, I think, in the late '60s. It was a while ago. And the, and the hotel business went away when they, when the Arena went away and it quickly slipped into prostitution, as happens with old hotels, and over the years there have been a whole series of hotel owners that have tried to make a go of it. Well, now it's a national, it's going to be a national chain. They, they and they're going to do some things that are going to make it work better, I would believe. And they have the resources to do it properly, which hasn't happened before. But you know, what's interesting here is that their whole reason for being there is the fact that it's on the Euclid Corridor system. And incidentally, they'll have a stop right in front of their hotel doors.

**Mike Turk** [00:33:59] Which will be nice.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:33:59] Which will be... Well, again, it's going to be very interesting to see how this plays out. But, you know, one of the reasons, maybe the prime motivating reason that you do a transportation program like the Euclid Corridor is as a way of generating development. And what we're seeing in terms of the hotel, but, you know, a few other projects along the way is now all of a sudden a lot of interest in creating development, which has the availability of good transit.

**Mike Turk** [00:34:46] It's going to bring in some business with it.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:34:47] So I think the, I think the effect, again, is we're going to have to wait and see. But I, but already we're beginning to see a lot of interest in terms of development along there that hasn't been there for, for 50 years. And will, and will some merchants be hurt along the way? I wouldn't be surprised. But, you know, it's maybe a price that you have to, you have to pay. Most of the bigger businesses have, have access from the side streets or from Chester and or Carnegie. So that I don't think that too many are being badly hurt. Some of the used car lots probably are going to be badly hurt. And there are few of us that would feel too bad if they got, got muscled out.

**Mike Turk** [00:35:56] I see what you're saying there. And I'm just because I was driving through there, I was just thinking in my own head, you know, like we were going to drive down there the other day thinking about all the destruction that was there. But again, seeing the flipside of that scenario is that he brought in this nice thing. Okay. With that being said, now about you. It says personally, what projects have you worked on that has given you? You can talk about just one in the area that's giving you the most joy or rewards?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:36:20] Well, I already talked about Pilgrim Church, [crosstalk] which is one that we're currently, currently working on. And that certainly more, more than any I can, can think of is...

**Mike Turk** [00:36:33] Can you explain that in detail for us?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:36:34] Yeah, yeah.

**Mike Turk** [00:36:34] Okay.

**Greg James** [00:36:36] Back to a little bit here. What should be done with Public Square? If anything, do you see anything that should be done with Public Square?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:36:42] Well, I think there are a lot of opportunities there. And, and, you know, it's too bad. Every few years, we seem to need to do it over again. And we, you'd hope we could get it right one of these times. And I think that as I, as I walk through it on a daily basis, I think that there is an opportunity to make it a lot greener than it is. And there's, there's a lot of concrete, which certainly deteriorates, has deteriorated fairly rapidly. So the big bugaboo and there's maybe no, no good solution for it is that Public Square carries a lot of traffic through it.

**Mike Turk** [00:37:35] It does.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:37:36] And it carries it around the outside and it carries criss-cross through the middle of it and in two directions. And the questions that keep being asked, is there a way to get some of the vehicle traffic out of there and get more pedestrian traffic into it? Is there a way that we can cut off some of the streets that dump traffic into it? And I think these are certainly areas that need to be, to be looked at. There might be a sensible approach to running traffic around the outside and keeping it from crossing it. And this is certainly something that can be, should be looked at. The other big problem is that the Square carries an immense amount of, an immense amount of utilities through it: sewers, and water lines, and gas. And we seem in our society to be set up in a way that we have to, we have to dig it up and fix them all, all the time. I think actually the Russians in this case probably got it right because I think they've built tunnels under their city. They've built utility tunnels under their street. And so they can get down there and work on that stuff whenever they need to and do it without disturbing the street. But in any case, we seem to spend [a lot of energy putting in utilities and then taking up pavement to do it over again. Yeah. And that certainly is going to be a prime consideration to whatever wants to happen in the Square to do it in such a way that. And, you know, maybe there is a way to build a utility tunnel under the Square in part so that it could make it more accessible. One of the things that's being talked about is putting some buildings in the Square.

**Mike Turk** [00:40:02] What size buildings?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:40:05] Well, sort of recreation sort of buildings. And I'm not sure I, I don't think this is a poor idea.

**Mike Turk** [00:40:12] You think it's a poor idea?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:40:13] I think, I think maybe it's a, I think it might be a poor idea. I... The, Civil War memorial, the Soldiers and Sailors Monument, is pretty wonderful. Though I remember a time not all that many years ago that there was a large contingency of people that thought that it should be gotten rid of at all costs.

**Mike Turk** [00:40:35] Why?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:40:35] And all that. Oh, because it was so ugly as they say. And, you know, maybe, maybe some of the sculptures could be desported in some of the public spaces around the city someplace. And... But anyway, I think we have come to regard that period of civic sculpture in a very different way than we did, than we did a few years ago. And I would think that that's a building that you actually can walk into. Not that there's much to see when you get there, but you can, but you can do that. And people do, and I'm inclined to think that maybe that's enough and that the other spaces really should, should function more as open green gardens.

**Mike Turk** [00:41:32] Yeah, you've got to have, you've got to open it up for the people. [Inaudible]

**Richard Van Petten** [00:41:33] Yeah. I think, I think there is an opportunity to do performance space, so that people can use it for dance and musical entertainment and setting off of fireworks and other things. And I would hope that that sort of thing could happen without making it too, too brutally hard-surface.

**Mike Turk** [00:42:13] Okay. Biggest question. We have a couple more questions here. And this is one that I, that myself moved to Cleveland in which I was very much and I guess I live in Euclid right outside Cleveland right there. But I drive up and down 90 all the time. I see this when you hit to going down, heading past Browns Stadium and all that. What would you like to see done with the Cleveland lakefront? That's probably the biggest question everyone sees of all time. What should be done with our lakefront? And we have one more question after this. But this one, we are very concerned about we didn't get a chance to ask Mr. Madson this yesterday, but with you we'd like to see what.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:42:50] Mr. Madison has done quite a bit on the, on the Cleveland lakefront already. And I think, you know, as a, as a community and our last administration expended a lot of capital in doing a plan for the lakefront. And I, and you know, I think if you examined any of it in great detail, there's a lot that you could find fault with. But, you know, conceptually, I think the kinds of thoughts that that plan brings to light is really pretty wonderful. And, in implementing that plan may be that the number one, number one thing that needs to happen. I think the, the idea of downgrading the route to as it leaves the, as it leaves Dead Man['s] Curve and crosses the city, downgrading it to a parkway makes a lot of sense and I think it will do a lot to increase the livability of the city.

**Mike Turk** [00:44:13] Do you think they'll ever do that?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:44:14] Yes, I do. I think that will happen. And I think, you know, sort of along with that, we, we need to continually think about how we can get people from the downtown, across the, the enormous barrier of the rail lines and the roadways to the, to the lakefront and the, and the activity. The other thing which we need to think about, is the long-term opportunities that may be afforded by a portion of or maybe all of the, the Burke Lakefront Airport. Certainly, you know, historically it's a tragic misuse of some land.

**Mike Turk** [00:45:21] There's all that land there.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:45:22] That's a lot of land there.

**Mike Turk** [00:45:24] There could be so much use.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:45:25] And so there's some very interesting opportunities there and...

**Mike Turk** [00:45:30] I say we get rid of that airport.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:45:31] And. Well, that, there's a lot of people that would strongly disagree with that view and...

**Mike Turk** [00:45:44] Look at all the land. I mean, that's a lot of land.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:45:45] But. Well any, any airport uses a lot of land.

**Mike Turk** [00:45:49] But that's why we don't...

**Richard Van Petten** [00:45:49] That's the nature of airport. Well, not entirely. I am told that there are, that there are a lot of commercial flights that come in, in and out.

**Mike Turk** [00:46:01] Seriously?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:46:01] Yeah. And I do know for a fact there are, is commuter air service between Burke and Detroit for instance, and I'm not sure where else. But, but it's not just a private airport. And... but... and I am also told that because of the way that functions, it takes a lot of the load off of Hopkins. And, and therefore it's considered important by the air, air traffic planners. All that aside, in the long view, I think there's an opportunity for some better use of that particular site. Even if the airport stays there, there's a lot of land there that apparently is not being used by the airport. They could have some other uses on it. So this is a whole area, I think, which needs further, further thought and further consideration in the long run.

**Mike Turk** [00:47:12] Okay. With all that being said. Now, we are still going to come back to the, about, if you thought about your, your other third building too. But this the last question we have for you this, this afternoon. We've talked a lot about all the [positives.] What is the biggest challenge you see with your work? You can think about the most recent challenge.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:47:30] Well, this is, this is like the. There's, there's a fairly famous quotation, and I'm trying to think who said it. But in any case, it's get, it's getting the job, getting the job, getting the job. And...[crosstalk] And that, and that certainly is the, is the biggest challenge [that] any architectural firm has.

**Mike Turk** [00:47:59] How does it? People contact you guys? do you. Do people contact you or do you go out and contract yourself? Do you only work Cleveland? You work nationally. I mean...

**Richard Van Petten** [00:48:10] Well, most architects are basically whores. You have to understand that. And as we apply our trade, we, we do anything that we can to get somebody to give us a commission.

**Mike Turk** [00:48:28] Okay.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:48:28] And, and that involves a lot of things, including researching particular building types, being very social and engaging in civic activities, and being known in the and getting to be known in the community, [and] developing a reputation for successfully completing certain things. It.

**Mike Turk** [00:49:00] I can't imagine.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:49:01] So this is, this is the biggest challenge that running any firm has got.

**Mike Turk** [00:49:09] Getting the job.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:49:09] Yes.

**Mike Turk** [00:49:11] Okay. Now.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:49:11] The third building. [crosstalk] Let's come back to that because, because I am... I don't know why it didn't immediately come, come out of my mouth because it's, of course, the most important building in Cleveland symbolically. And this is, of course, the Terminal Tower.

**Mike Turk** [00:49:36] Terminal Tower.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:49:37] Because of its, of its positioning and its, and its size and the fact that it, that it really becomes a a major transportation interface and supports from at a whole host of other activities and facilities. You know, the number, quite a number of hotels have access now directly undercover to that facility. And if Forest City Enterprises has their way, a major convention center will also get connected on to there. Not an approach I support, by the way.

**Mike Turk** [00:50:31] You don't support that?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:50:33] But... No, and that's a whole other conversation, which we can have if you'd like. But, but, you know, the point of it is that that building at the center of a much larger thing is really very, very important building for the city. And over the years, over the years, it has been an icon, which you would you see when you fly into Cleveland. You saw it from the trains. You see it from the highways. It demarcates the center of the city.

**Mike Turk** [00:51:08] You said the skyline.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:51:08] And whether you like it or not, it certainly is a, it, it really symbolizes Cleveland anywhere you are.

**Mike Turk** [00:51:19] Okay. It does give Cleveland its symbol but that. Okay. Now thank you for the opportunity for this.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:51:23] Okay.

**Mike Turk** [00:51:25] You opened my eyes to some new buildings in the area.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:51:28] Okay. Okay.

**Mike Turk** [00:51:29] I'm definitely going to concentrate and focus on some things I really didn't understand. I mean, you got really detailed. I appreciate that so much.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:51:36] Okay.

**Mike Turk** [00:51:37] I'm really fascinated.

**Greg James** [00:51:38] Just one more?

**Mike Turk** [00:51:38] Yeah.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:51:38] Sure.

**Greg James** [00:51:39] One question. Along Euclid Avenue, there's a lot of, you know, vacated buildings and stuff. What would you propose to do with eyesores? Are you for like raising them for greenspace or rehabbing them or painting murals on the side or? What would your?

**Richard Van Petten** [00:51:57] Well, that's an interesting question. Having, having lived in, in that neighborhood for, for a lot of years. One of the things which we were very much concerned about was the, the amount of the buildings that are dilapidated that were scheduled to be torn down and were torn down. You know, and it's a very curious thing, you know, it's people that don't take care of their buildings. They cause them to be dilapidated. So instead of punishing buildings, people for not doing what, what they're supposed to do, we punish the building. Too bad. There is, there is, at the corner of East 55th and Euclid Avenue, a number of buildings which have come down to expand the right of way for the, for the transportation project. However, on the north side of the street, there's a particularly dilapidated building which I have lobbied strongly for its preservation, because I think architecturally its pretty, pretty wonderful. And this is a Victorian office. Commercial building, which is what it was when it was built. One of, one of many similar buildings in, in Cleveland and similar buildings in other parts of the country. They're done in the Italianate style, I believe. A building with wonderful potential. And it's just crumbling and falling apart. A wonderful opportunity [for] somebody to, to do some, some very significant development. Hasn't happened. I don't know that it will. But, I think this is the sort of thing which, which should, we should be encouraging, and not the, and not the creation of green space, because the creation of green space means that we just tear down buildings. And we cause, we cause the things which have made a lot of Euclid Avenue look like anywhere America. And, I would believe it can be a lot more. And one of the ways that it can be a lot more is by building appropriate new buildings, but also by, preserving some, some things that are of, of quality that are there. And, you know, let me remind you. The apartment building, the residence that was acquired by the, by Cleveland Clinic a couple of years ago. The Drury Mansion, which is 80th, 86th, maybe, and, and Euclid Avenue. An interesting building, which when I first saw it in the '70s was a home for unwed mothers. And you remember before 1970, ladies, young ladies, that, that didn't have a spouse and had a child were viewed, were viewed a little more differently than we view them today. And so the process back in the 1950s and before, you sent these young ladies off to a place of confinement and so forth. And, and I guess that was actually before I first saw the building. I knew that was, was, had been its use. And then it became a prison. It became the prerelease center for some time before the prerelease center was built. So that building had a lot of hardware and the, the clinic acquired it and did an absolutely lavish job of restoring it. And fortunately, they've also done it and, and not let anybody else see it unless they're, unless they're very special guests of the, of the Clinic. But, you know, this is a case, I think, when there's really a very rich piece of city history and a really great architectural gem that makes the community much richer by the fact that it is still there and has been carefully and thoughtfully refurbished.

**Mike Turk** [00:57:15] I mean, that sums it up right there.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:57:16] Yeah. Okay.

**Greg James** [00:57:17] Thank you so much. This was awesome.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:57:19] Oh, okay. Well, thank you. Okay. Okay.

**Greg James** [00:57:22] Thank you.

**Richard Van Petten** [00:57:22] Okay.

**Mike Turk** [00:57:23] Thank you. We are definitely going to have this stuff transcribed.