

The City of Shaker Heights

**HOUSING
PRESERVATION PLAN**

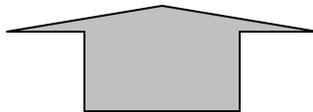
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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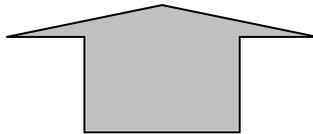


MAINTAINING STRONG PROPERTY VALUES

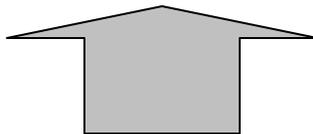
**DESIRABLE, DIVERSE
NEIGHBORHOODS**



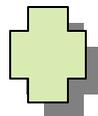
**STRONG MARKET DEMAND
FOR HOUSING**



**HIGH QUALITY HOUSING
STOCK**



**COMMUNITY
SUPPORTED CODE
ENFORCEMENT**



**PUBLIC & PRIVATE
INVESTMENT**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Shaker Heights is known for the excellent quality of its housing stock, its attractive, Garden City landscape and its vibrant, diverse neighborhoods. These are the characteristics which draw people to the community and cause them to stay once they are here. These are the characteristics which the City should strive to preserve in order to retain its desirability as a place to live.

While all cities seek to be regarded as desirable places to live, for cities like Shaker Heights with minimal commercial property, maintaining strong property values is an imperative, not a choice, in order to maintain and enhance city revenues.

Housing is Product #1 in the City of Shaker Heights. To ensure the continued financial stability of the City, the City needs to have a pro-active strategy which preserves the characteristics that have made this City one of the premier places to live in the country – **quality housing in a quality setting** - while simultaneously keeping pace with changing market demands for a broader range of housing choices.

There are four main areas in which interventions by the City can help it fulfill its overall goal of strong property values and desirable, diverse neighborhoods:

1. Code Enforcement
2. Quality of the housing stock
3. Market demand
4. Landscape Setting

For each of these areas, a related goal has been proposed and the recommended short and long term actions that the City should take to help it attain these goals has been identified.

Also identified are the 6 key tools which the City has at its disposal when structuring its responses to housing related issues. These are referred to as the six “M”s:

- Maintenance
- Marketing
- Modernization
- Money
- Monitoring
- Management

Use of any given tool may impact one or more of the goal areas. So, for example, “money” will clearly be an issue for all of the areas, and the report presents the various ways that financial constraints may be addressed in a city like Shaker Heights.

The aim of this report is to provide the City with some principles to guide the development of specific housing preservation strategies in the future, as well as to provide some specific short and long term recommendations for action.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

A Sustainable Housing Policy for an Historic Garden City

- Shaker should enhance its ability to compete in the regional marketplace as a place to live, work, and shop by leveraging public funds to enhance its competitive position.
- Shaker should celebrate and strengthen its historically well-defined and well-beloved neighborhoods.
- Shaker should preserve its unique and architecturally significant housing and update its housing to meet current and future demand.
- Shaker should build new “Shaker-quality” housing to meet the demands of emerging markets in Northeast Ohio.
- Shaker should reestablish the Garden City landscape framework that set it apart as a sublimely beautiful city and served as a model for planned suburbs throughout the 20th Century.
- Shaker should identify, celebrate, and utilize fully the special assets of each neighborhood and should insure that each City department serves the neighborhoods in ways that will retain existing residents in and attract new residents to Shaker.
- Shaker should continue to maintain and market high quality city services.
- Shaker should continue to enforce its codes uniformly in order to ensure that people have confidence to invest and live in Shaker.
- Shaker should reconnect transit and land use—the nexus of Shaker’s original development plan—and use Shaker’s robust transit infrastructure to attract new development to the Chagrin/Van Aken corridor.
- Shaker should reconnect with the Doan Brook watershed as the community’s gateway to Lake Erie and the Cuyahoga Valley.
- Shaker should build on a long-standing partnership with the City of Cleveland—best seen in the renovation of Shaker Square—to address development issues of common concern along the southern and western boundaries of the City.
- Shaker should strive to become a national model of community design for the 21st Century as it has been for the 20th Century.

GOAL 1: EFFECTIVE, COMMUNITY SUPPORTED CODE ENFORCEMENT



KEY PRINCIPLES

- ❖ Shaker should continue to enforce its codes uniformly in order to ensure people have confidence to invest and live in Shaker.
- ❖ Shaker should build on a long-standing partnership with the City of Cleveland—best seen in the renovation of Shaker Square—to address development issues of common concern along the southern and western boundaries of the City.

SHORT TERM ACTIONS (1-2 YEARS)

- Improve citizen understanding of the compliance process and code enforcement's role in maintaining property values.
- Amend City building, housing & zoning codes to eliminate inconsistencies that hamper effective code enforcement.
- Amend the Housing Code to utilize the Certificate of Occupancy as a business license.
- Amend the Housing Code to allow revocation of a Certificate of Occupancy for non-compliance of a structure or its use with the requirements of the Code.
- Amend the Zoning, Housing & Fire codes to enable more effective regulation of legal 3rd floor units.
- Amend the Housing Code to require the posting of Certificates of Occupancy at the entrance of apartment buildings.
- Amend the Nuisance Abatement Code to provide for full cost recovery for City services used to contract for and oversee correction of the violations.
- Adopt spot blight ordinance to enable acquisition & redevelopment of properties that cannot be improved through nuisance abatement or aggressive prosecution.

LONG TERM ACTIONS (3-5 YEARS)

- Establish protocols with the City of Cleveland to insure consistent code enforcement of multi-family properties in Shaker Square neighborhood.
- Establish protocols with City of Cleveland to insure consistency in issuance of Certificate of Occupancy for multi-family properties in Shaker Square neighborhood.
- Strictly enforce continuity of use of legal 3rd floor units through annual occupancy inspections.
- Pursue joint planning & develop initiatives with the City of Cleveland in neighborhoods that share common borders.

GOAL 2: HIGH QUALITY HOUSING STOCK



KEY PRINCIPLES

- ❖ Shaker should preserve its unique and architecturally significant housing and update its housing to meet current and future demand.

SHORT TERM ACTIONS (1-2 YEARS)

- Aggressively pursue nuisance abatement to eliminate blighting influence of problem properties.
- Establish “Certified Shaker” program to encourage upgrades to rental housing stock.
- Document economic benefits of property maintenance and investment for single & multifamily properties.
- Use Inter-departmental forum to develop coordinated strategies to ensure housing stock meets or exceeds housing code.
- Strengthen Landmark Code to provide for denial of inappropriate modifications & to better reflect national best practices.
- Develop & promote models for combining 2nd & 3rd floor units & develop incentive program to encourage conversions.
- Study feasibility of conversions of 2 family houses to live/work.
- Aggressively market Heritage Loan program.
- Focus marketing of financial incentive programs in Shaker Towne Centre Neighborhood Cluster.
- Consider modifying financial incentive programs eligibility criteria to encompass Shaker Towne Centre ½ mile radius area.
- Evaluate all existing financial incentive programs to determine if they are meeting needs and modify accordingly.
- Conduct annual curb appeal survey.
- Develop a City-wide photographic inventory of all properties.

LONG TERM ACTIONS (3-5 YEARS)

- Promote development of live/work along Chagrin Boulevard.
- Consider Apartment Improvement Program offering 30-50% matching grants.
- Evaluate partnership with an existing community development corporation to undertake specific aspects of Housing Preservation Plan.

GOAL 3: STRONG HOUSING MARKET DEMAND



KEY PRINCIPLES

- ❖ Shaker should build new “Shaker-quality” housing to meet the demands of emerging markets in Northeast Ohio.
- ❖ Shaker should continue to maintain and market high quality city services.
- ❖ Shaker should celebrate and strengthen its historically well-defined and well-beloved neighborhoods.

SHORT TERM ACTIONS (1-2 YEARS)

- Document economic benefit of buying & improving two-family houses.
- Tell the “Two Family Homeowner Story” on the web site.
- Develop annual report on residential attraction and retention with university based research organization.
- Identify the unique, marketable attributes of Shaker neighborhoods.
- Expand marketing effort to promote City using internet and print media.
- Consider landmark designation for streets such as Winslow, Ludgate & Pennington.
- Identify characteristics & costs of developing new senior friendly housing and identify vacant lots that may be suitable for redevelopment as senior friendly housing.

LONG TERM ACTIONS (3-5 YEARS)

- Develop protocols with City of Cleveland to establish consistent practices for evaluating and marketing Shaker Square apartments.
- Use landmark designation to preserve architecturally significant streets, blocks & neighborhoods.
- Consider designating as individual landmarks two-family houses of architectural significance.
- Consider tax abatement for development of senior friendly housing.
- Target Ludlow Crescent as a site for new senior friendly housing.
- Encourage elimination of legal 3rd floor units through conversion programs.

GOAL 4: ATTRACTIVE, GARDEN CITY LANDSCAPE SETTING



- ❖ Shaker should reestablish the Garden City landscape framework that set it apart as a sublimely beautiful city and served as a model for planned suburbs throughout the 20th Century.
- ❖ Shaker should reconnect transit and land use—the nexus of Shaker’s original development plan—and use Shaker’s robust transit infrastructure to entice new development to the Chagrin/Van Aken corridor.
- ❖ Shaker should reconnect with the Doan Brook watershed as the community’s gateway to Lake Erie and the Cuyahoga Valley.

SHORT TERM ACTIONS (1-2 YEARS)

- Amend Building, Housing & Zoning codes to establish a consistent landscape framework throughout Shaker.
- Enhance major arterial roads that have insufficient trees (Van Aken, Lee & Chagrin).
- Pursue a targeted, transit-oriented Right of Way enhancement plan with RTA & NOACA, focusing on Van Aken-Lee-Chagrin and Van-Aken-Chagrin-Warrensville-Northfield.
- Reduce traffic on Milverton in North Moreland.
- Enforce existing newspaper box regulations.

LONG TERM ACTIONS (3-5 YEARS)

- Restore the City’s historic Landscape Framework along rights of way.
- Traffic calming in residential neighborhoods.
- Consider a strengthened newspaper box ordinance.
- Work with the RTA to make the Lee Road Blue Line Rapid station ADA accessible.
- Work with the RTA to extend the #14 bus line east along Chagrin.
- Work with the RTA to develop a state-of-the art transit center at Van Aken.
- Undertake transit oriented development initiatives along the Blue Line: study vacant properties for redevelopment as senior friendly housing; study upgrading apartments in the area.