

Shaker Heights Strategic Investment Plan

Final Report

Prepared by U R B A N D E S I G N A S S O C I A T E S

with American Communities Partnership
Glatting Jackson Kercher Anglin Lopez Rinehart
Robert Charles Lesser & Company
Zimmerman/Volk Associates

Prepared for
The City of Shaker Heights

JULY 2000



Table of Contents

B

Introduction	I
The Vision	5
I Goal for the Planning Process	
II The Best of Shaker Heights	
III The Worst of Shaker Heights	
IV Goals for a Better Shaker Heights	
The Strategy	19
A Shopping List of Initiatives	
I Lee/Chagrin/Van Aken	
II Van Aken/Warrensville Center/Chagrin	
III South Lee	
IV West Chagrin	
V Moreland and Western Lomond Initiatives	
VI Possible First Steps	
VII Market Conditions and Fiscal Impact	

Introduction



I Introduction

THIS REPORT IS THE FINAL PRODUCT in the development of a Strategic Investment Plan for the City of Shaker Heights, and represents the conclusions and recommendations, based on a collaborative effort of public and private community leaders and the consultants, from a design, market and fiscal perspective. The purpose of the Strategic Investment Plan is to advise the City on how to best leverage its limited assets to encourage appropriate private investment, and to ensure that Shaker Heights remains one of the premier communities in the country.

The Strategic Investment Plan is now completely in the hands of the community, as you face the task of implementing the plan, and further shape it in the process.



A Strategic Investment Plan

In discussions with members of the community, the endearing characteristics of Shaker Heights were described: the quality of its residential neighborhoods, the quality of schools, the economic and racial diversity of the community, the network of parks and open space, the diversity of housing stock, and convenience by virtue of location and transit.

During those conversations, a series of issues and problems were raised, including: some neighborhoods showing signs of decay and decline, the limited number of quality rental apartments and a number of run down apartments; poor quality of public spaces in retail areas; the general lack of quality retail within Shaker Heights; and the lack of high quality “empty nester” housing.

It became clear that economic “stability” and economic “development” for Shaker Heights will consist primarily of continuing to enhance its role as an extremely desirable and highly prized residential community. Although there is interest in improving retail facilities, the goal in doing so is to enhance the quality of life for the residents.

The legacy and character of Shaker Heights is the city’s greatest asset. The challenge is to respond to changing needs while preserving that character. The essential attributes of the Shaker Heights character form the basis of this Strategic Investment Plan.





The Visioning Process

The Strategic Investment Plan has been guided by broad public input at every step, beginning with a community-wide Visioning Process, undertaken by the city and led by a member of council. The Visioning Process, which started in 1998, gained consensus on a series of goals for the future of Shaker Heights. The process began with a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the community. These were described in general terms without specific focus on locations or planning concepts. Additional community input was garnered through a telephone survey. In 1999, when the Urban Design Associates team began work, American Communities Partnership took information for 1998 visioning and held two workshops to develop goals from the information gathered.

A Steering Committee and task forces worked with the consultants throughout the planning process on specific issues, including residential, commercial, transportation, institutions and open space, and community appearance. Two charrettes, held in April and June 1999 respectively, included a series of working meetings with residents and property owners to develop consensus on the program and initiatives. The June charrette opened with a public presentation of the analysis and initiatives from the first charrette, followed by discussion groups that further tested the ideas and evaluated the concepts and priorities.

The Vision



I Goal for the Planning Process

In the charrette, six groups identified best and worst places by putting green dots (for good places) and red dots (for bad places) on a large map. This diagram summarizes the six maps they produced.

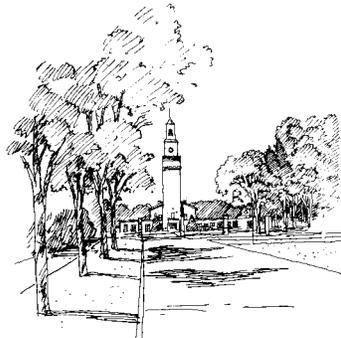
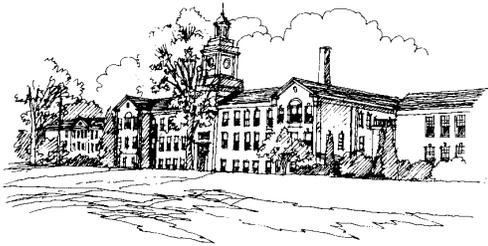
THE LEGACY AND CHARACTER of Shaker Heights is its greatest asset. The goal of the planning process was to build on that legacy, while stemming and correcting decline in certain areas. 6

To establish this direction, members of the community were asked to identify and discuss the “best” and “worst” places in Shaker Heights. The April 1999 charrette included a process in which six groups of participants discussed the “best” and “worst” places. Each group evaluated places from a different point of view: traffic, residential uses, commercial uses, community appearance, etc. And yet there was an extremely unusual degree of consistency about the location of the “best” – and unanimity on the “worst.”

The process identified a number of remarkable strengths on which to build a plan. It also identified some weaknesses, of which there are two types: those concentrated in two geographic areas within the City for which targeted strategic initiatives are required, and “floating” problems for which prototype solutions and design standards are needed when opportunities arise.



II The Best of Shaker Heights



THE CHARRETTE PROCESS IDENTIFIED a series of remarkable strengths on which to build a plan. In the group discussions there was an extremely unusual degree of consistency about the location of the “best” of Shaker Heights. Shaker Heights strongest assets include:

Streets and Parkways

The original design of Shaker Heights is a well-known model of good community design for urban designers and traffic planners. The east/west boulevards and parkways were carefully designed as public spaces. Due to the design of the green parkways, traffic moves easily, but without disrupting the character of the neighborhoods along them. The ingenious design of the traffic circles moves a great deal of traffic without congestion, in a park-like setting.

Shaker Heights’ elegant tree-lined streets of beautifully-designed houses make it one of the premier residential addresses in the country. Some streets are gently curved, others are rectilinear; but for all of them there is a perfect balance between accommodating vehicles and pedestrians. The narrow streets with wide planting strips, large trees, and sidewalks, combined with the consistent setback for houses, create elegant and sociable neighborhood spaces.

Institutions and Open Spaces

The original design for Shaker Heights created a continuous network of parks by following natural features, and providing recreational amenities and dignified settings for civic and institutional buildings. Neighborhood schools, either in the park system or park-like settings, have been one of Shaker Heights major strengths. Their excellent educational programs are housed in dignified architectural landmarks. The traditional institutional and civic buildings, including churches, were largely built in the Georgian style. With their red brick facades and white windows and columns, they provide anchors for the community.



Transit and Commercial Areas

8

Shaker Square, though not technically in Shaker Heights, is a nationally recognized model for relating rapid transit to retail and commercial facilities as well as to high density residential areas. It is now more fully understood that transit stations should be located in areas with the most variety of activities and people within walking distance. Shaker Square accommodates this beautifully and creates a public space that absorbs high volumes of vehicular traffic as well. The character of its retail buildings is consistent with the Georgian architecture of institutional buildings which established its importance as a focus of community life as well as a retail area. In other areas there are original, elegant buildings in the Tudor style which have retail on the ground floor and office or residential above, which is an effective pattern for neighborhood scale commercial activity. Fairmount Circle mixes retail with institutional uses in an efficient and gracious traffic configuration. Throughout Shaker Heights, the residential street patterns are designed to make pedestrian movement from the neighborhoods to the stations easy.

Diversity of Housing and Community

Houses are the glory of Shaker Heights: The original development program provided model homes to serve as prototypes using a number of architectural styles and architects to create a beautiful collection of residential addresses. The inventory of house types includes a wide range of sizes, configuration and prices. They range from huge mansions, to large houses, to medium size houses, to small cottages, to two family houses, to apartments that were designed to look like mansions, and large apartment structures with a monumental character. This diversity of type of housing makes it possible to provide for a diverse population both in age and income. This is an essential attribute of a stable and successful community.

III The Worst of Shaker Heights



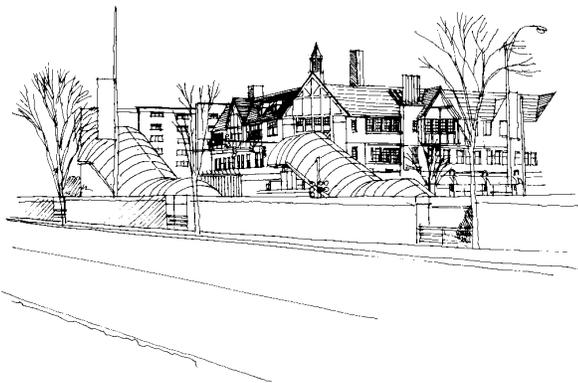
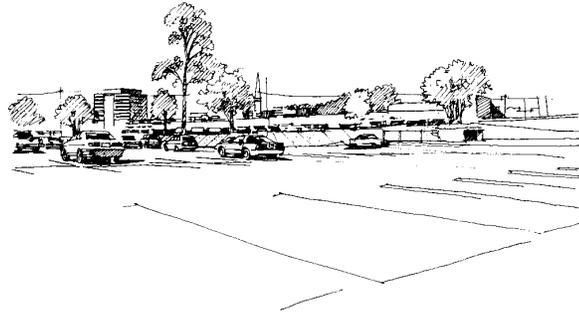
THE CHARRETTE PROCESS ALSO IDENTIFIED some weaknesses in Shaker Heights. In group discussions about the worst areas of Shaker Heights, there was near unanimity that these were the Lee Road/Chagrin/Shaker Towne Center area, and the Warrensville Center Road/Chagrin/Van Aken area. These weaknesses stem from the following problems:

North/South Streets and Connections

The original designers were mostly concerned with carrying people from Downtown Cleveland to their homes and ignored the need for major north/south streets. As a result these are chaotic, undesigned streets. Commercial streets are barren wastelands, devoid of character and scale, with no visible evidence that they belong to Shaker Heights. They have far more capacity than is needed, and therefore too much asphalt, no landscaping, and inadequate pedestrian areas. The intersection and traffic patterns in the Van Aken, Warrensville Center, Chagrin area are dysfunctional.

A Segregated Community

Although there is a wide range of type, style, and price of housing in Shaker Heights as a whole, individual neighborhoods have a limited range. While Shaker Heights is a remarkable example of an integrated community, both racially and economically, the built pattern serves to segregate neighborhoods within the City. In general this is a north/south separation, with the more stable, affluent neighborhoods in the north. Neighborhoods are "type-cast", which exaggerates tensions between groups, and the more modest neighborhoods lack long term stability because of this lack of diversity.



The Common Ground

10

The "common ground" between these neighborhoods of different physical and social character – the places where the northern and southern communities should be coming together – tends to be the areas identified in the process as having the most problems: the Lee Road/Chagrin area and the Warrensville Center Road/Chagrin/Van Aken area.

There is a dramatic contrast between the superb character, pedestrian scale, and quality of Shaker Heights' residential streets and the squalid, anti-pedestrian, and bleak quality of these commercial areas. These areas are not conducive to social interaction.

Commercial Areas

The commercial areas at Lee/Chagrin and Warrensville Center/Chagrin/Van Aken do not provide the model public environment seen at Shaker Square. Although transit stations are located near both of areas, there is a difficult if not impossible pedestrian environment around them, particularly at Warrensville Center and Van Aken. The last 100 feet one must walk to the transit Stations are characterized by hostile roads, parking lots, mis-aligned sidewalks, and heavy traffic. The stations themselves are little more than bus shelters which do not provide adequate shelter, nor do they indicate the importance of transit. And they are not located adjacent to areas with the most intense mix of land uses. All of these factors contribute to the transit system being underused.

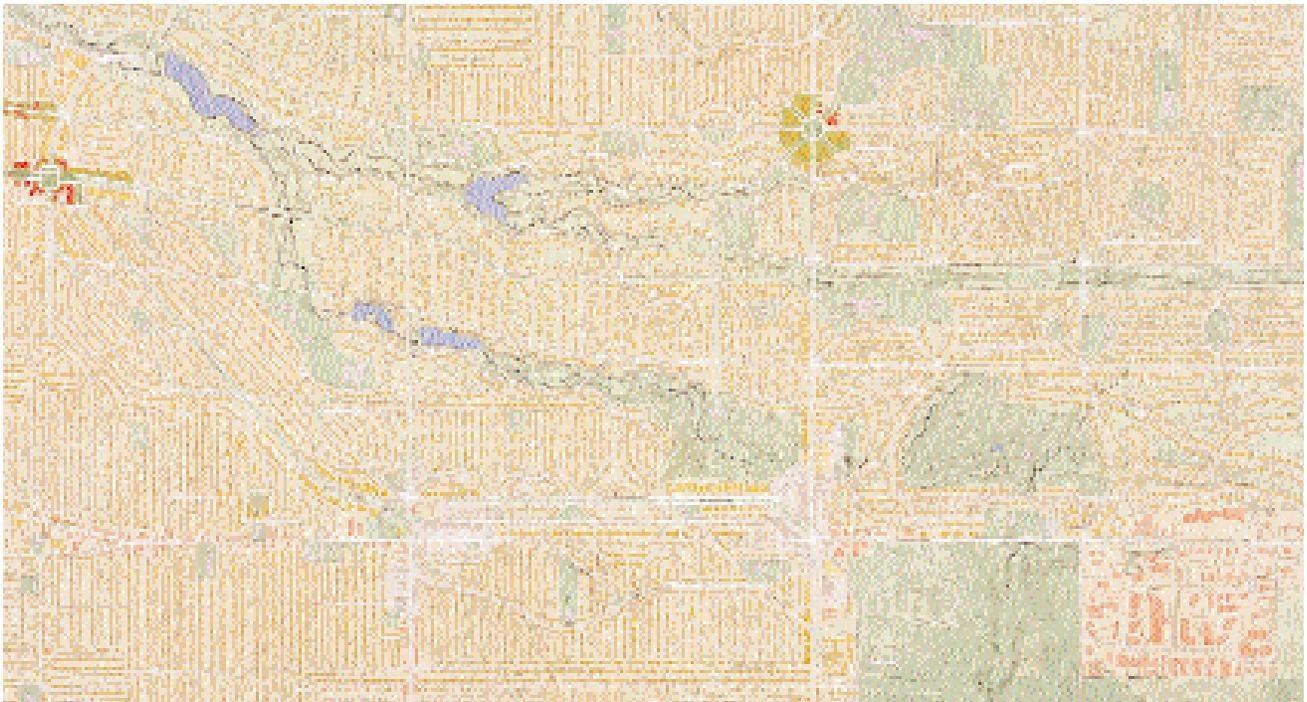
The architectural character and careful design of Shaker Square is not to be found in these areas either. The commercial development in these areas have very little architectural character, and are an uncomfortable combination of traditional retail and strip shopping centers. The image and character of the commercial areas are not of the same quality as Shaker Heights' residential neighborhoods, and fail to serve as a shared focus of community pride and identity.

IV Goals for a Better Shaker Heights

THE VISIONING PROCESS produced a series of goals produced by citizen groups for the Strategic Investment Plan that build on the strengths of the community and correct the weaknesses. The statement of goals established a conceptual frame work for the planning process.

In studying these strengths and weaknesses we have found that a weakness in one aspect of the City, such as street design, will have a direct impact on another, such as residential diversity. The Strategic Investment Plan identifies initiatives that can have a positive impact on several problems at once, as a cost effective strategy. We call this approach "Urban Acupuncture" – finding the place to make a change that can have the greatest impact on the health of the whole.

The technical analysis performed by various team members, combined with working sessions in the charrette have identified a set of design principles and a program for both the overall plan and for strategic initiatives.



Goals: Shaker Heights Strategic Investment Plan

Goal 1: Transportation

Shaker Heights offers an attractive, convenient, pedestrian-friendly transportation system that promotes alternatives to the automobile, provides access to the greater metropolitan area, controls traffic flow, and reduces congestion in the city.

Goal 2: Visual and Physical Image

Shaker Heights is a city of unified consistent beauty, excellence of design and appearance – a place of well-maintained and attractive housing (that includes architectural preservation), of well-maintained and attractive commercial/ retail, and of plentiful green spaces.

Goal 3: Commercial/Retail

Shaker Heights offers a vibrant mix of quality commercial businesses and distinctive stores and restaurants that serves all economic groups and attracts local and well as regional markets.

Goal 4: Housing

Shaker Heights offers a wide range of well-maintained housing that is accessible to a variety of income levels and household types, and that accommodates people of all ages and physical abilities.

Goal 5: Education

Shaker Heights has an education system that prepares all young people for a successful future within an educational community that fosters collaboration among various constituencies, informs and involves families in decision-making, and serves the larger community.

Goal 6: Connections

Shaker Heights commits to looking beyond our borders in order to secure the long-term viability of our community.

Principles

From the analysis and the statement of goals, we have developed a set of design principles for the plan to respect as it is further developed. These include:

- 1 Focus financial resources and design energies on agreed problem areas.
- 2 Build with Shaker character: wide and verdant; traffic, pedestrians, and green.
- 3 Continue tradition of Shaker traffic and light rail machines.
- 4 Heal and unify damaged areas.
- 5 Provide new housing opportunities for elderly, empty nester, and young starter-uppers.
- 6 State character at entrances and edges.

Program

- 1 Bring the “Shaker image” to the commercial areas that are the common grounds of the community.
- 2 Undo to damage caused by previous funding strategies for the streets.
- 3 Provide empty nester housing mixed with retail to fill unmet market niches and stabilize retail areas.
- 4 Establish the Shaker Heights character at the edges and gateways into the community.

Program

Bring the “Shaker image” to the commercial areas that are the common ground of the community.

The areas identified as having the most problems, the Lee Road/Chagrin area and the Warrensville Center Road/Van Aken area, are the places where the disparate northern and southern communities of Shaker Heights should be coming together. The bleak, anti-pedestrian qualities of these areas need to be repaired to encourage social and civic interaction. Streets, intersections, and surface parking lots must be rebuilt to reduce the vast amounts of asphalt, improve pedestrian circulation

and add the verdant, lush greenery and quality architecture that is characteristic of Shaker Heights in order to create an environment that is conducive to social interaction.



Undo the damage caused by previous funding strategies for streets.

In order to receive outside funding from state and federal agencies, street reconstruction projects had to “improve” traffic flow. This caused many streets to be built with much more capacity than necessary, encouraging high-speed traffic and creating an environment that is hostile to pedestrians.

Each initiative in the Strategic Investment Plan should make the restoration of the pedestrian environment an utmost priority.



Provide empty nester housing mixed with retail to fill unmet market niches and stabilize retail areas.

The lack of residential uses in the commercial centers is seen as an obstacle to creating good centers for the City.

Apartments and townhouses, mixed with retail, should be developed in both the Chagrin/Lee and in the Warrensville Center/Van Aken/Chagrin areas. Bringing residents to the immediate vicinity will help to stabilize the retail, while the proximity of neighborhood services will make the housing more desirable to these targeted populations.

In addition, there is a need for more appropriate housing for young professionals and empty nesters in Shaker

Heights. Providing this type of housing will help to attract new residents to Shaker Heights, and allow older residents to remain in the community.



Establish the Shaker Heights character at the edges and gateways into the community.

The perception of Shaker Heights as a place is determined to a great extent by the visual character one encounters upon entering the community. Particularly at the city limits at south Lee Road and west Chagrin, where Shaker Heights abuts less desirable areas of Cleveland, physical decay threatens to spill over Shaker Heights' borders. The perception is that this area is in decline, is unsafe, and is not able to attract people who will enable property owners to make much needed investment.

We believe that the stability of these neighborhoods is being hampered by the character and condition of structures

along the main streets which serve as their front doors. Neither Chagrin Boulevard at the entry to Shaker Heights from Cleveland, nor Lee Road south of Chagrin, have the character that is associated with Shaker Heights. Therefore, we recommend the redevelopment of Lee Road, with attractive entrances into the neighborhoods on each side; as well as a small scale redevelopment of Chagrin Boulevard frontage at the western boundary of the City.



Create Private/Public partnerships to do this.

Given the needs of the redevelopment effort and desires of the City of Shaker Heights, the preferred implementation model is a City redevelopment agency in joint venture with private developers. This proposed approach will have the City joint venture with developers to create assets that create long-term cash flow while redeveloping the targeted parts of the City. Using an independent redevelopment agency approach to act on the City's behalf with private developers should also be explored since this could mitigate a drawback of this model; over-politicization of the process. The reason for this preferred approach is due to the fact that the City owns many of the land/buildings that need redevelopment. The land is currently surplus City land or is land under public right-of-ways that could be reclaimed and put into more productive and pedestrian friendly uses. The City is encouraged to put the land and buildings, as well as tax increment financing and tax abatement, into joint ventures with developers. These assets will accrue to a "city capital account", which is the basis of the City's investment. Developers need to be carefully screened to insure they have a civic orientation, not just short-term financial motivation, though these projects need to be profitable to attract them in the first place. The City involvement should be structured such

that the City owns a part of the various developments. The City would take their returns in the mid- (6 to 12 years) to long (13 years plus) term, basically letting the developer obtain a greater share of short term cash flow since his equity probably needs a faster return. This approach combines the City resources and long term civic goals with a civic-minded developer who will hopefully bring the entrepreneurial skills necessary to make development successful.

The Strategy

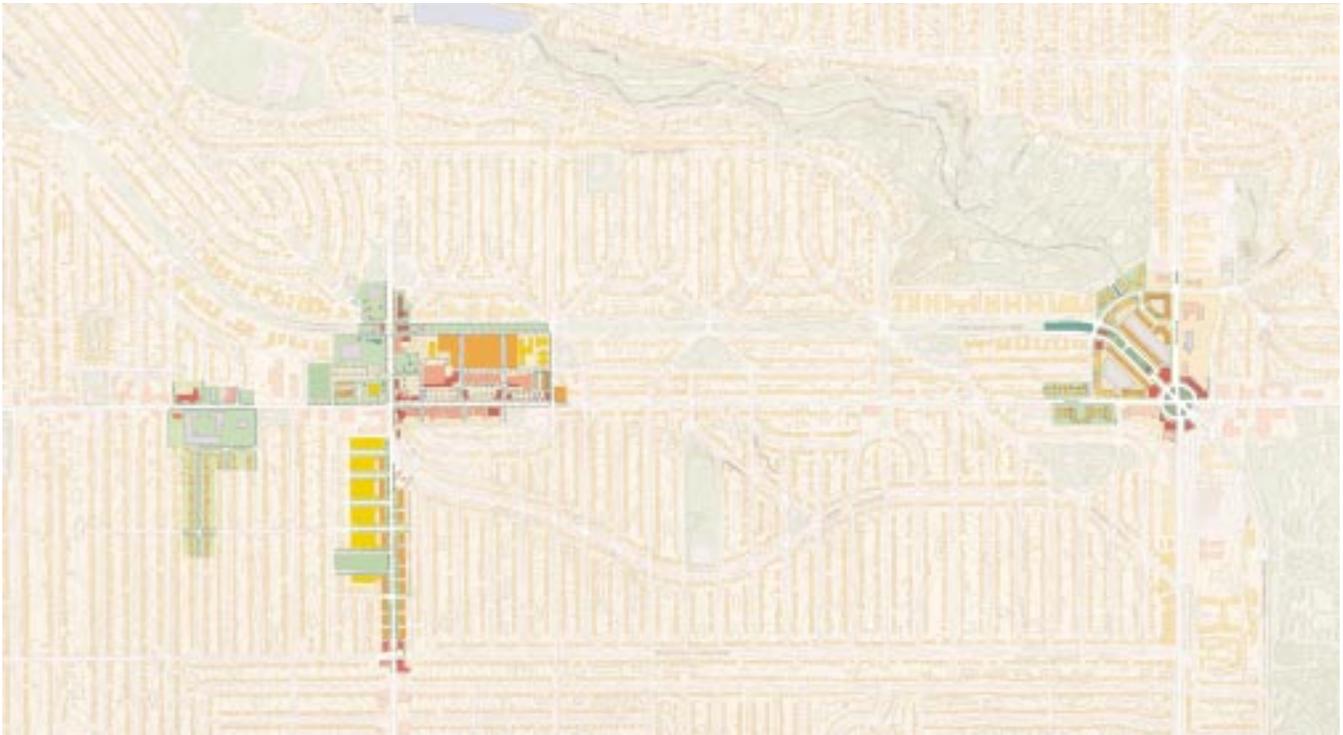


A Shopping List of Initiatives

DUE TO THE FACT THAT MOST OF THE INITIATIVES in the Strategic Plan require the participation of the private sector, it is difficult to prioritize the initiatives or set a timeline. The City must be prepared to work with the private sector regarding timing, and take advantage of any opportunities that arise. In deciding which initiatives to tackle, the City must work with its private partners to weigh the benefits of each initiative against its public costs and ease of implementation at a particular time. For instance, the City may choose to spend public funds on the Lee Road Initiatives rather than on the relocation of North Farnsleigh, because the public benefits that are leveraged will be greater on Lee Road. Because of this maneuverability, the initiatives in the Strategic Investment Plan are presented as a “shopping list” or menu from which the community can choose.

20

The Shopping List is seen as a way of attracting investment rather than a way of spending public funds. It breaks the overall goals for the City of Shaker Heights into independent pieces, and allows the goals to be accomplished incrementally and flexibly.



A Shopping List of Initiatives

I – Lee/Chagrin/Van Aken Initiatives

- 1 Revitalize Chagrin Boulevard as an active retail corridor.
- 2 Establish an address at Avalon.
- 3 Strengthen the connections between the Chagrin retail corridor and adjacent neighborhoods.
- 4 Strengthen the connections to the RTA stop.

II – Van Aken/Warrensville Center/Chagrin Initiatives

- 1 Develop city-owned property along a new North Farnsleigh.
- 2 Redevelop Farnsleigh South.
- 3 Reconstruct Van Aken.
- 4 Reconstruct the Van Aken/Warrensville Center intersection.
- 5 Redevelop the existing shopping

centers as a mixed-use town center.

III – Lee Road Initiatives

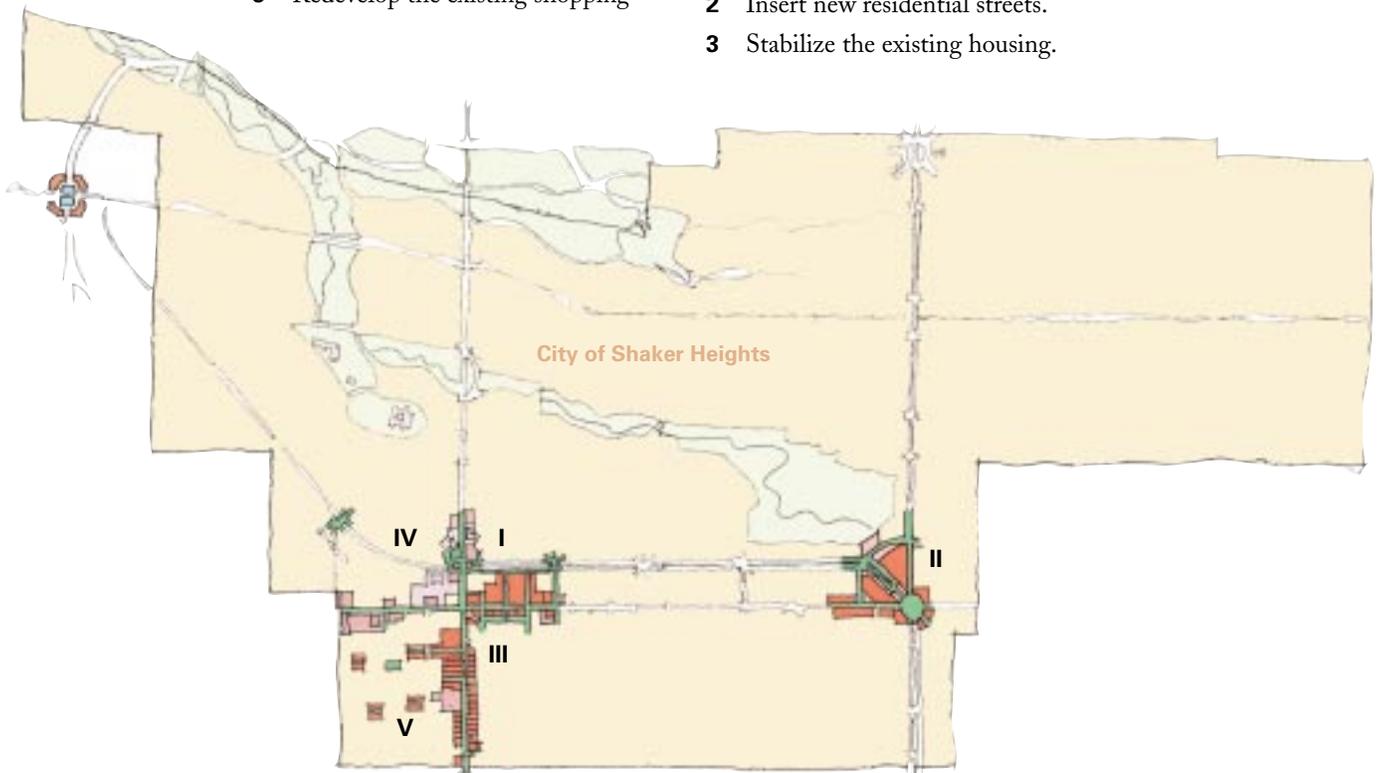
- 1 Renovate the streetscape on Lee Road.
- 2 Develop live/work and office space on the east side of Lee Road.
- 3 Develop cottages and town houses on the west side of Lee Road.

IV – West Chagrin Initiatives

- 1 Acquire the property immediately west of the City Service Center.
- 2 Redevelop the city parking lot and extend streetscape improvements.

V – Moreland and Western Lomond Initiatives

- 1 Redevelop the two-family houses for live/work.
- 2 Insert new residential streets.
- 3 Stabilize the existing housing.



I Lee/Chagrin/Van Aken

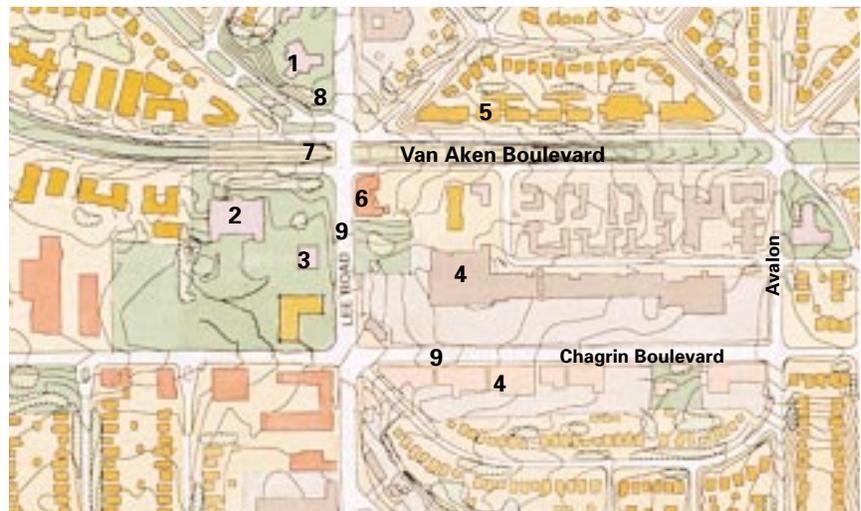
Existing Conditions

The Lee/Chagrin/Van Aken area was perceived by all participants to have the greatest problems. Because of these perceptions, it is important to address this area first.

Strengths of this area include its location on main streets – streets that bring sufficient traffic through to support a quality village center – and the presence of a transit station. There is a full collection of civic uses including: (1) City Hall; (2) the Library; (3) and the Community Building and recreation complex. The area also includes: (4) a broad mix of commercial uses, strengthened by major investment over the past 10 years; (5) apartments; and (6) mixed use structures. This area is located between the neighborhoods of Shaker Heights with the greatest diversity and has the opportunity of creating a shared focus for these neighborhoods.

The major weakness of the Lee/Chagrin/Van Aken area has been its inability to function as an effective village center. The rich diversity of uses is located in an unattractive environment with no coherent patterns of pedestrian circulation. The transit station (7) is located in a hostile environment unfriendly to pedestrians and transit users. The area around it is mostly road pavement, with the public open space (8) cut up into useless areas. The streets, especially Lee and Chagrin, (9) are far too wide for the volume and nature of traffic and hostile to pedestrians. Chagrin between Lee and Avalon is a half-mile

- Lee/Chagrin/Van Aken today**
- 1 City Hall
 - 2 Library
 - 3 Community Building
 - 4 Commercial Uses
 - 5 Apartments
 - 6 Mixed Use Structures
 - 7 Transit Station
 - 8 Public Open Space
 - 9 Wide Streets



long block which provides no opportunity for interconnected streets, an essential element of a good village center.

Goals for Initiatives

In order to create a vibrant, mixed-use village center that encourages community interaction, the strategic initiatives seek to stabilize the retail in the area, add housing mixed with the retail, and link the retail, civic uses, and the RTA with a comfortable pedestrian environment.

Lee/Chagrin/Van Aken Initiatives

Level 1: Revitalize Chagrin Boulevard as an active retail street.

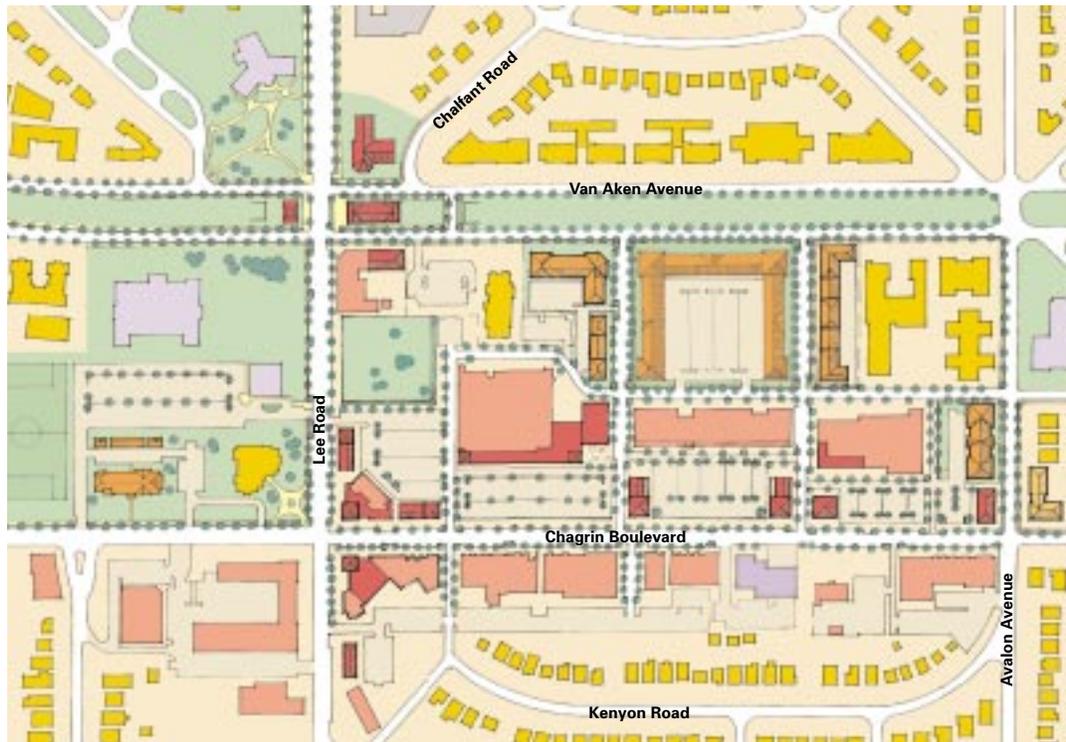
Level 2: Establish an address for Chagrin at Avalon.

Level 3: Strengthen the connections between Chagrin and the rest of the community.

Level 4: Strengthen the connections between the RTA stop, City Hall, and Chagrin Boulevard.

Lee/Chagrin/Van Aken tomorrow

The Shopping List of initiatives is geared toward strengthening this area as a vibrant mixed-use village center.



Level 1 Initiatives: Revitalize Chagrin Boulevard as an active retail street.

A. Provide for Heinen’s expansion.

Heinen’s Grocery seeks to expand its store by a maximum of 10,000 square feet. This expansion refronts the building and wraps around to the eastern side, creating a new facade for the store and a location for a new cafe space.

B. Construct a new street from Van Aken to Chagrin.

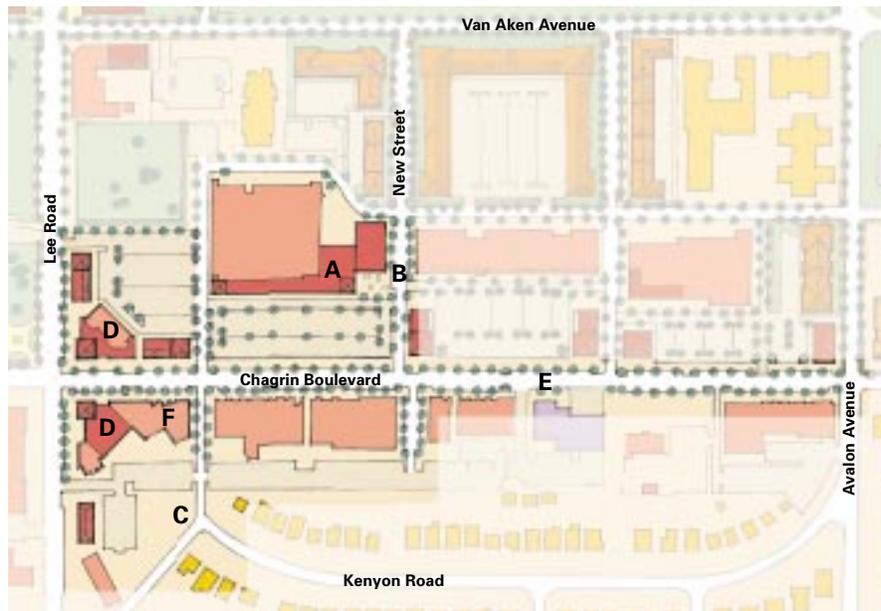
A new north/south street establishes a block pattern with a scale that is more conducive to walking. The new street will also provide greater visibility to the retail core from Van Aken, easier pedestrian access from the residential areas north of Van Aken, and provide new addresses for development opportunities.

C. Re-route Kenyon Street to reconstruct the Chagrin/Lee intersection.

The current intersection is confusing, consists of a vast expanse of asphalt at the most visible entry to Chagrin, and creates long delays for vehicles because of the lengthy signal cycle. Re-routing Kenyon simplifies the traffic and pedestrian patterns.

D. Build “gateway” buildings on the new southeast corner and added onto the bank building.

Re-routing Kenyon creates a key development site that allows the construction of an appropriate gateway at the Lee/Chagrin intersection.

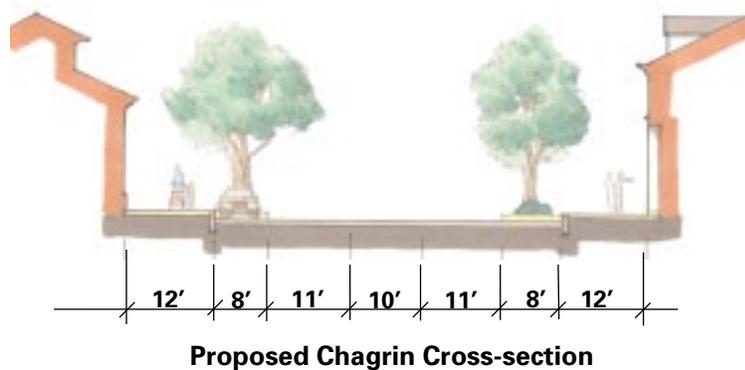
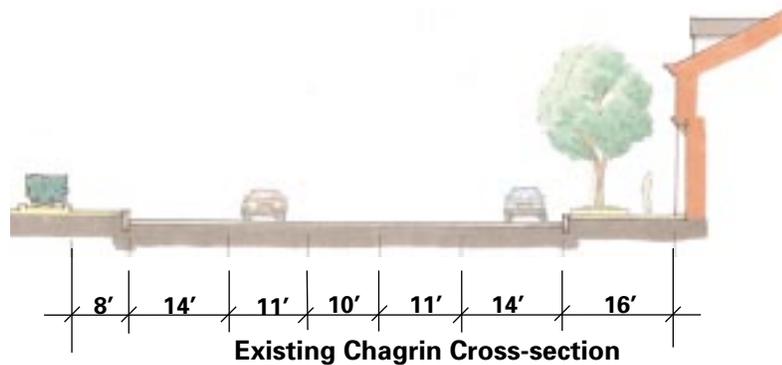


E. Narrow Chagrin, widen the sidewalks, and add new landscape elements.

Re-construct Chagrin Boulevard between Lee and Avalon in a scale that is appropriate to a pedestrian-dominant shopping street. The narrower street will accommodate the current volume of traffic while encouraging slower traffic speeds. On-street parking, wider sidewalks and new landscape elements, including new lighting and street trees and lighting will make the street more inviting to shoppers.

F. Rehabilitate the westernmost stores on the south side of Chagrin.

The existing traditional storefronts on the southside of the street offer the most feasible opportunity to re-invigorate the area as a shopping destination. The lower costs and risks associated with existing, amortized buildings makes it easier to attract with a cluster of ethnic restaurants or other one-of-a-kind retail businesses to provide a draw for shoppers. A concerted effort to create a cluster of desirable retail should begin by concentrating on the more visible western end of the street near the intersection of Lee.



Level 2 Initiatives: Establish an address for the Chagrin retail corridor on Avalon.

Develop a building on the northwest corner of Chagrin Boulevard and Avalon Road.

This new building may be a new fire station, or an apartment building with retail on the ground floor. A building on this site should “hold” the corner, and, together with the retail building on the south side of Chagrin, create an eastern gateway to the retail corridor.



Level 3 Initiatives: Strengthen the connections between the Chagrin retail corridor and the rest of the community.

A. Construct a second new north/south street from Van Aken to Chagrin.

The two new north/south streets establish a block pattern with a scale that is more conducive to walking. The new streets also provide greater visibility to the retail core from Van Aken, and easier pedestrian access from the residential areas north of Van Aken.

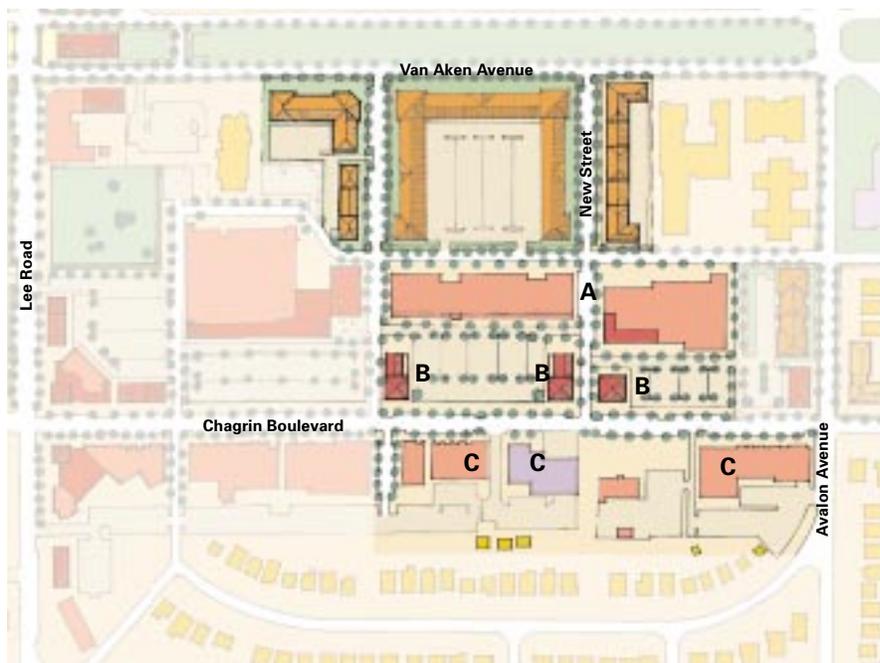
B. Develop small retail pavilions on the north side of Chagrin.

A retail presence on the north side of the street adds to the vibrancy of the street, and helps to encourage pedestrian traffic between the stores on the south side and

the shopping center further back on the north side. These pavilions can house small retail outlets such as coffee stands or sandwich shops. The pavilions should be pedestrian oriented and face Chagrin. They are encouraged to have outdoor displays or cafe seating.

C. Rehabilitate the mid-block stores on the south side of Chagrin.

Continue eastward with the rehabilitation of the existing traditional storefronts on the southside of the street to reinvigorate Chagrin as a shopping destination. Eventually, new infill development and a new fire station can fill in the “missing teeth” to create continuous store fronts.



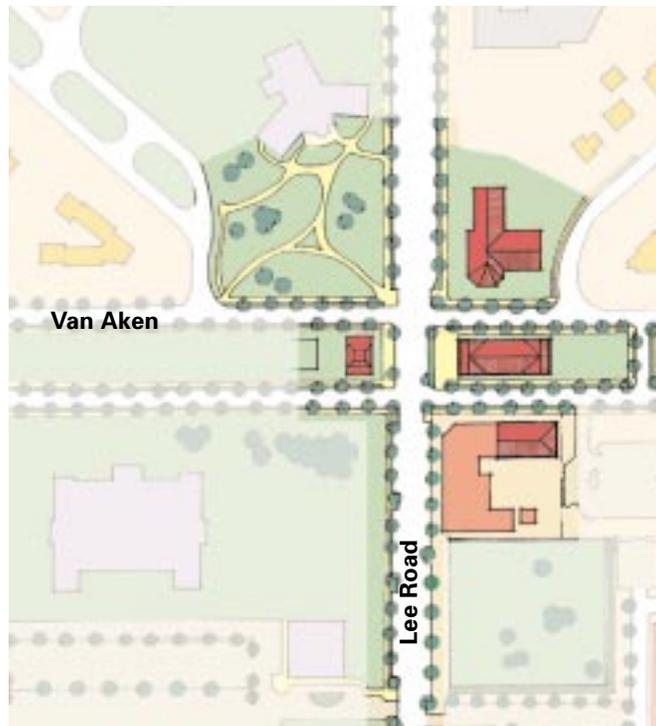
Level 4 Initiatives: Strengthen the connections between the RTA stop, City Hall, and the retail on Chagrin.

A. Develop mixed-use buildings at Lee and Van Aken.

Chalfant Road at Van Aken is modified to simplify the intersection and to create a site for a mixed use residential building. The new building would help to bridge the gulf between City Hall and the areas to the south.

B. Develop mixed-use buildings with a new entrance to the Rapid on the air rights above the tracks at Lee and Van Aken.

Work with the RTA to fund air rights development over the tracks for mixed use residential/retail buildings to create a more active entrance to the Rapid, increase the perception of safety, and provide a retail link to encourage a connection between the Rapid and the shopping on Chagrin Boulevard.





Lee/Chagrin/Van Aken tomorrow

(above)
 The area is transformed into a town center by re-designing existing streets, adding new streets, and developing a series of small scale buildings.

Lee/Chagrin/Van Aken today

(left)
 The area around the intersection includes many of the uses and the activities of a town center, but not the physical form.



**Chagrin Boulevard-
Tomorrow**

(above)
A revitalized Chagrin becomes a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly retail corridor.



**Chagrin Boulevard
Today**

(left)
Wide streets with meager sidewalks and streetscaping provide an uninviting environment.



A New Chagrin Gateway

(above)

A new building and an expanded bank chain establish a gateway to the retail corridor, providing greater visibility from Lee Road.



A Revitalized Shaker Towne Centre

(left)

New pavilion buildings, a landscaped parking area, and a new expansion for Heinen's enhances Shaker Towne Centre as a shopping destination.



**Van Aken/Lee
Tomorrow**

(above)
One option is to build mixed use buildings over the transit line, linking civic buildings, the RTA, and retail areas.



**Van Aken/Lee
Today**

(left)
Traffic and unused open space separate the civic buildings from the retail at Lee and Chagrin.



**Van Aken/Lee
Tomorrow**

(above)

A new mixed-use building on the west side of Lee, together with a new station house and a small scale retail building, link civic and retail areas to create a vibrant town center.

**Van Aken/Lee
Today**

(left)

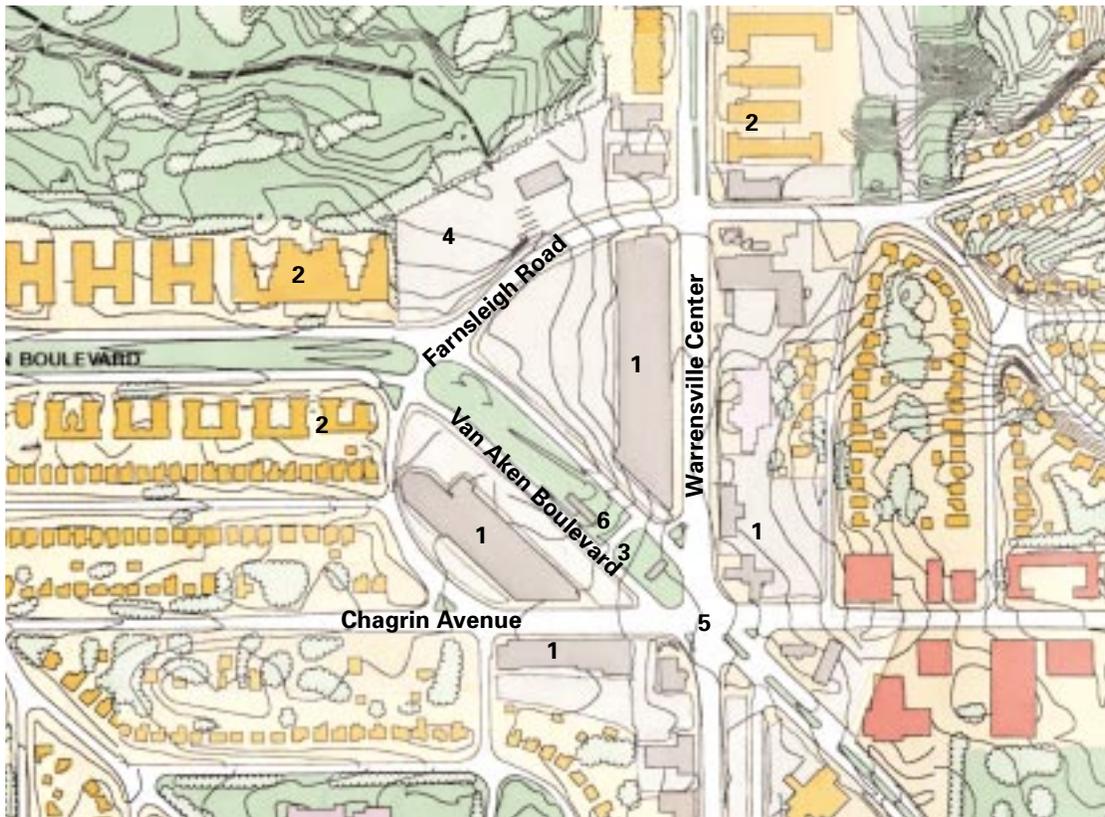
A environment dominated by cars and unfriendly to pedestrians, with isolated civic uses, retail areas, and transit.

II Van Aken/Warrens ville Center/Chagrin

Existing Conditions

The Van Aken/Warrens ville Center/Chagrin area includes: high quality retail uses; (1) office buildings, (2) apartment complexes; and (3) the last station on the blue line of the transit system. It has the appropriate mix of uses to become a vibrant center for Shaker Heights. A City-owned property (4) on the edge of the golf course has great development potential, but lacks an attractive environment and connection to the surrounding uses.

The area is unable to function as a viable mixed use pedestrian area because there is no coherent pattern of pedestrian and vehicular circulation and the different uses are located on separate parcels isolated from each other by traffic. There is both traffic congestion and confusion at the Warrensville Center intersection (5) in which too many lanes of traffic come together. The transit stop and bus transfer (6) are lost in a sea of asphalt and are not connected to retail activity.



Warrens ville Center Today

- 1 Retail and Offices
- 2 Apartments
- 3 RTA Station
- 4 City Property
- 5 Warrensville Center Intersection
- 6 Transit Stop; Bus Transfer

Goals for Initiatives

A mixed-use “downtown”, or viable retail center, for Shaker Heights in this location is created by stabilizing retail on a network of urban streets which connect into surrounding neighborhoods. New housing and retail front strengthened addresses in a comfortable pedestrian environment.

Van Aken/Warrens ville Center/Chagr in Initiatives

- 1 Develop city-owned property along a new North Farnsleigh.
- 2 Re-align and redevelop Farnsleigh South.
- 3 Reconstruct Van Aken with a new public space.
- 4 Reconstruct the Van Aken/Warrens ville Center intersection as a Shaker Circle.
- 5 Redevelop the existing shopping centers as a mixed-use town center.



Initiative One: Develop city-owned property along a new North Farnsleigh.

The northern portion of Farnsleigh Road re-routed through City-owned property, creates developable parcels on both sides of the street. This development creates a desirable residential address that opens onto the golf course and connects to neighborhoods to the west.

A. North Parcel

Type of Unit	Golf Condos
Unit Size	1,295 square feet
Unit Total	68

B. South Parcel

Type of Unit	Condos
Unit Size	900 square feet
Unit Total	46
New Retail	12,000 square feet

Development Parcels

(above)
Shifting Farnsleigh creates city-owned property on both sides of the street (shown in purple). The light green color indicates the portion of Farnsleigh to be improved.



City Parcel

(below)
The development of the city-owned property is also a possibility without the reconfiguring of North Farnsleigh.



Initiative Two: Re-align and redevelop Farnsleigh South.

Realigning Farnsleigh South to connect at a right angle with Chagrin Boulevard creates a new parcel for a building to screen the back side of the existing shopping center. The new intersection provides safer pedestrian crossings and reduces the amount of pavement. Residential development on the new parcels strengthens the residential address on this part of Chagrin Boulevard.

Development Parcels

(above)
Reconfiguring Farnsleigh creates a new parcel (in purple) Other parcels are developed privately (in red). The light green color indicates street improvements.



Development Parcels

(below)
Private Parcels are built out without changing the configuration of South Farnsleigh.



A. Existing Parcels (on Chagrin)

Type of Unit	Townhouses
Unit Total	50

B. New Parcel (corner of Chagrin/Farnsleigh)

Type of Unit	Condos
Unit Size	1295 square feet
Unit Total	20



Initiative Three: Reconstruct Van Aken with a new public space.

A major public space is created along the alignment of the rapid tracks in Van Aken by developing a linear park in the center and improving the street scape. By narrowing and reconfiguring Van Aken Boulevard, development sites are created at the Van Aken/Warrensleville intersection and at Farnsleigh.

Reconfigured Van Aken

New Retail	30,000 square feet
------------	--------------------



Development Parcels

(above)

This initiative largely focuses on public improvements to Van Aken Boulevard, creating a linear park that links the two shopping centers, and laying the ground work necessary to create a vibrant pedestrian-oriented downtown.



Initiative Four: Reconstruct the Van Aken/Warrensville Center intersection as a Shaker Circle

A new traffic circle is created at the intersection of Warrensville Center, Chagrin, Van Aken, and Northfield, modeled after the “Shaker Mover” street pattern seen at Fairmont Circle. Provision is made for a future expansion of the transit line through the center of the circle. Around the perimeter, new retail buildings create an urban space similar to Shaker Square as a grand entry into Shaker Heights.

A. Van Aken Parcels

New Retail 19,000 square feet
(included in Van Aken count)

B. Traffic Circle Parcels

New Retail 23,000 square feet



Development Parcels

(above)

Reconfiguring Van Aken and adding a new traffic circle creates new public parcels (in purple) and private parcels (in red). The light green color indicates areas for public improvements.



Initiative Five: Redevelop the existing shopping centers as a mixed-use town center.

The existing shopping centers are redeveloped with apartments above retail that front onto the new Van Aken public space. Surface parking is replaced with parking structures in the center of the blocks. New residential uses are located at the edges of the site to transition to neighborhoods to the west. The mix of retail and residential, in buildings that define and animate public gathering spaces, forms a true urban center.

A. Van Aken Parcels

New Retail	174,500 sf
New Residential Units	434
Unit Size	1000 sf



New and Available Parcels

(above)

The existing shopping centers occupy large parcels with potential for redevelopment (in red). The light green color indicates areas for public improvements.





Existing Conditions
Van Aken/
Warrensville
Center/Chagrin
(above left)

Public improvements
with existing shopping
centers remaining.
(above right)

The complete plan
combining all initiatives.
(left)



**Van Aken/
Warrensville Cen-
ter/ Chagrin
Tomorrow**
(above)

The Shaker Circle concept consists of a series of urban streets lined with mixed-use buildings, creating a small scale “downtown”.

Today
(left)

The area around the intersection includes many of the uses and activities of a town center but not the physical form.



**Chagrin/Farnsleigh
Tomorrow**

(above)

On Chagrin, a new address is created.



**Chagrin/Farnsleigh
Today**

(left)

Chagrin Boulevard is characterized by expanses of pavement and the rear of the shopping center.



**Shaker Circle
Tomorrow**

(above)
A new traffic circle brings coherence to a prominent gateway to Shaker Heights, allowing new development to create an urban place.

**Chagrin/Warrens-
ville Center
Intersection Today**

(left)
A sea of asphalt is hostile to both vehicles and pedestrians, and land is vastly underutilized.



Van Aken Boulevard Tomorrow
(above)

A vibrant, mixed-use environment creates a social public space.

Van Aken Boulevard Today
(left)

An unattractive wasteland isolates strip center retail areas, provides an environment hostile to pedestrians, and discourages transit users from accessing shops.

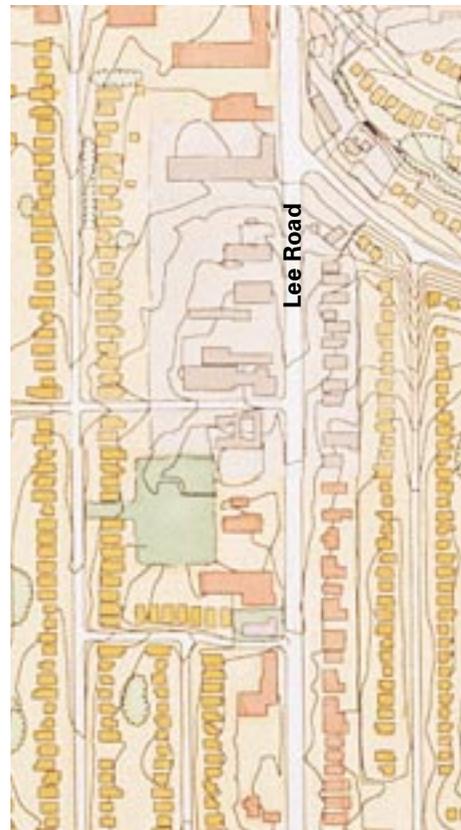
III Lee Road Gateways

Existing Conditions

46

The east side of Lee Road is lined with small office buildings with asphalt front yards. These properties are shallow, originally planned for residential lots while the majority of the west side frontage is occupied by deep lots, most of which are underutilized. This provides an opportunity to create new park space that is sorely needed in this part of town, as well as new residential streets and commercial development.

Currently Lee Road maintains a five-lane cross section with on street parking and sidewalks within 94 feet of right of way. Many residents from Shaker Heights indicated that the current design and traffic speed of Lee Road act as barriers to pedestrian traffic and development opportunities.



Goals for Initiatives

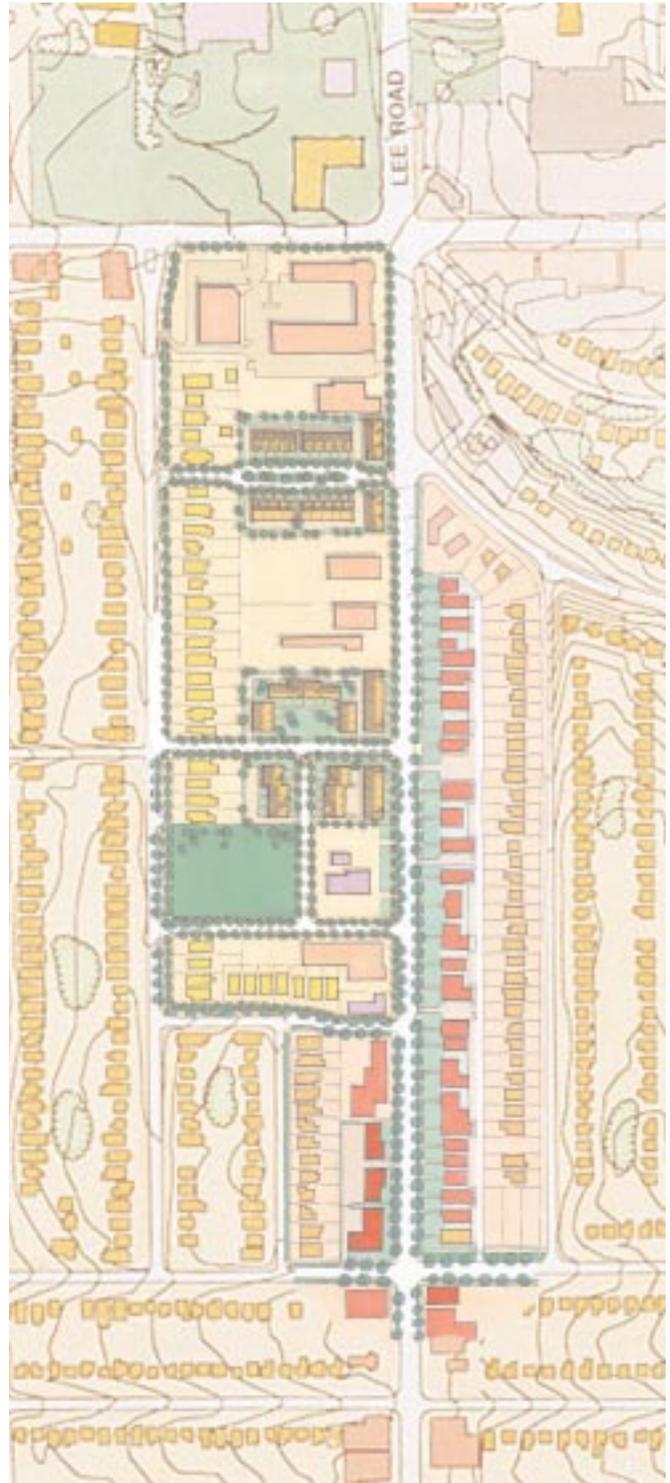
A redevelopment program for south Lee Road can transform it into an attractive gateway into the adjacent neighborhoods, helping to stabilize them.

Initiative One: Renovate the street scape on Lee Road.

Improvements to the appearance and pedestrian facilities on Lee Road will be necessary to make it an attractive address for residential and professional offices, and to create a gateway that is in keeping with the character of Shaker Heights. This proposal calls for reducing the five-lane cross section to four lanes and spacing trees between every five parking spaces. The ten feet gained in this proposed would be allocated to the sidewalk on the western edge of the street.

Initiative Two: Develop live/work lofts and small professional office space on the east side of Lee Road.

There is a demand for office space for small professional and high-tech businesses within Shaker Heights. The addition of live/work housing and office space will provide an unmet need in Shaker Heights, attracting a diverse population and increasing the tax base. Many of the existing buildings can be renovated for these new uses.



Initiative Three: Develop cottages and townhouses on the west side of the street for seniors and empty-nesters.

With new streetscape improvements and the rehabilitation of commercial properties for live/work and professional offices, Lee Road will be transformed into an attractive address that can be suitable for residential development. There are vacant and underutilized parcels on the west side of Lee Road that present opportunities for infill development with townhouses that can help to meet a need for empty-nester housing. Where possible, we suggest introducing new east/west residential streets in the deep double-block lots between Hampstead and Nicholas Avenues.

Chelton Park is presently hidden from public view and could be expanded and improved to create a handsome entry to the neighborhood from Lee Road.

This development would require a public private partnership with a developer experienced in this type of program. Because it is an area that has not been perceived to be attractive for market rate apartments, we suggest a mixed income, mixed finance program similar to ones that have successfully stabilized many similar areas around the country. If it is mixed income rental development with appropriate management, it will be well maintained and managed. We suggest that it be a mix of rental and ownership, so that the more marketable sites could be sold to homeowners.



Lee Road Tomorrow
(above)

A new gateway corridor is created to Shaker Heights



Lee Road Today
(left)

Lee Road is defined by small office buildings with asphalt yards.

IV West Chagrin

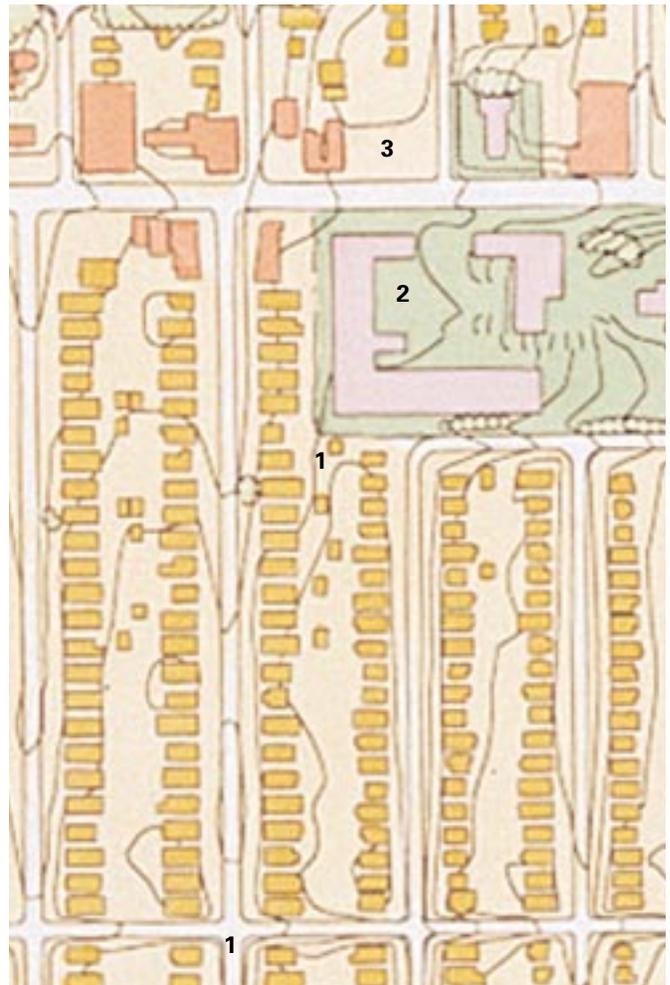
Existing Conditions

50

The western edge of Shaker Heights (1) is an irregular boundary with Cleveland, often dividing blocks into two parts. The City Service Center (2) on the south side of the street has had some improvements lately. The north side (3) is a mix of empty lots, deteriorated buildings, and an auto impound lot.

Goals for Initiatives

Our discussions indicate that the most unstable conditions in Shaker Heights are in the blocks immediately adjacent to this boundary. Therefore, it is important to change the character and improve its image by creating a more appropriate entrance to it.



Chagrin Boulevard Today

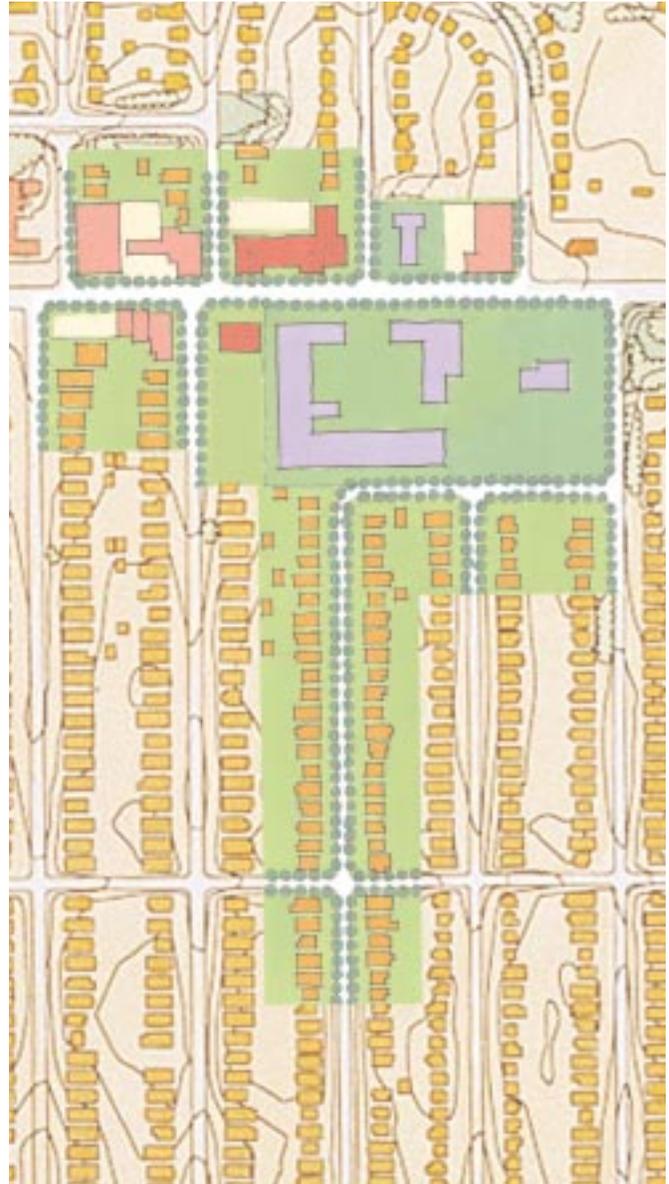
- 1 Shaker Heights Boundary
- 2 City Service Center
- 3 Empty lots, deteriorated buildings and auto impound lot.

Initiative One: Acquire the property immediately west of the City Service Center.

The property should be landscaped as part of the facility with a character appropriate for a gateway into Shaker Heights.

Initiative Two: Redevelop the city parking lot on the north side of the street, and extend the Chagrin streetscape improvements to the City limit.

The city-owned property on the north side of the street, currently used as staff parking, can be redeveloped as a small-scale development of well managed, mixed income/mixed finance rental housing. Street improvements and traffic calming as described for the rest of Chagrin Boulevard should begin at this point. The result will be a new front door for the neighborhoods on both side of Chagrin Boulevard.



Chagrin Boulevard Tomorrow

Restoring existing property, improving the streetscape, and developing infill housing create a radically improved gateway to the city and adjoining neighborhoods.

v Moreland and Western Lomond Initiatives

Existing Conditions

Several initiatives emerged as necessary elements in securing the stability of Shaker's neighborhoods and, therefore, the stability of the City. In a series of meetings with property owners, residents, city officials, and real estate professionals, it became clear that some neighborhoods are under stress due to the combination of absentee landlords and the difficulty those landlords face in attracting stable families and maintaining properties.

The most serious issue is the perception that the Morewood and Western Lomond areas are in decline, unsafe and not able to attract people who will enable property owners to make much needed investment.

Goals for Initiatives

The final location of initiatives are to be determined by private developers and would require a public process within the neighborhood that would receive the development. Prototype development models have been produced that could be used. As part of this plan, the prototypes would have community support, and would establish standards for the physical design of the new development. They would also be known and understood by the community. Standards and subsidies for redevelopment and renovation are also to be determined with a special focus on the two-family house typology.

52



Initiative One: Encourage revitalizing two-family houses.

We recommend that a program should be initiated which would support homeowners. This is possibly done with technical support, potential grant programs, possibly acquisition or subsidies which would encourage one of two things. For large, clearly two-family houses owner-occupiers would be encouraged. For smaller two-family houses, a conversion to a single-family house would be encouraged. Facade improvements could be subsidized and a kit of parts created by a local architect.

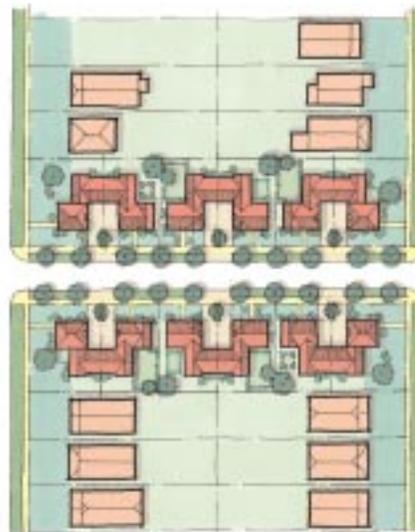
Initiative Two: Insert new residential streets.

There is a market for small one-story houses for an elderly population, particularly in the Moreland area. Architectural variety could be introduced into these long straight streets by a small scale development. By acquiring 8-10 houses, it would be possible to insert 12-18 new houses on a new cross street.

Initiative Three: Stabilize the existing housing.

As an integral part of this program, we recommend a coordinated home improvement effort be implemented on a block by block basis. The utilization of all available current programs for assisting property owners in restoring and maintaining their properties, combined with the implementation of streetscape improvements and infill construction on a block by block basis, can achieve dra-

matic results. These improvements, seen together with substantial improvements on Chagrin and Lee, can result in a radical change of perception by the residents and the real estate community, as well as the greater community of Shaker Heights.



vi Possible First Steps

First Steps

54

In determining which of the initiatives to pursue, it is important for the city to weigh the public benefits against the expenditure of public funds. In the process of creating a partnership between the public and the private sector, the city should take advantage of small projects in key locations as well as projects in key locations which create the highest impact. The results of these well-placed initiatives sustain momentum and confidence in moving toward the realization of the complete set of goals for the City of Shaker Heights.



Possible First Steps

(in no specific order)

1 West Chagrin Gateway

The western entrance of Chagrin creates an important gateway immediately portraying the character of Shaker Heights.

2 West End Stores on Chagrin

The goal to redevelop Chagrin as a pedestrian retail environment must begin at the corners, establishing anchors which solidify and draw the pedestrian into the corridor.

3 Chalfant parcel

This parcel helps to bridge the gulf between City hall and the areas to the South.

4 Fire Station

A new fire station would bring a strong civic function into the Chagrin Retail corridor by utilizing an available parcel on the south side of Chagrin Boulevard.

5 Streetscapes on Chagrin and Lee

Chagrin and Lee are narrowed and given wide sidewalks, new landscape elements, new lighting, and street trees.

6 New Residential on South Lee Road

Introducing new high-end residential streets would change the character and perception of the South Lee/Moreland area.

7 Heinen’s Expansion

The expansion of Heinen’s would strengthen the Shaker Towne Centre retail area.

8 Avalon Parcel

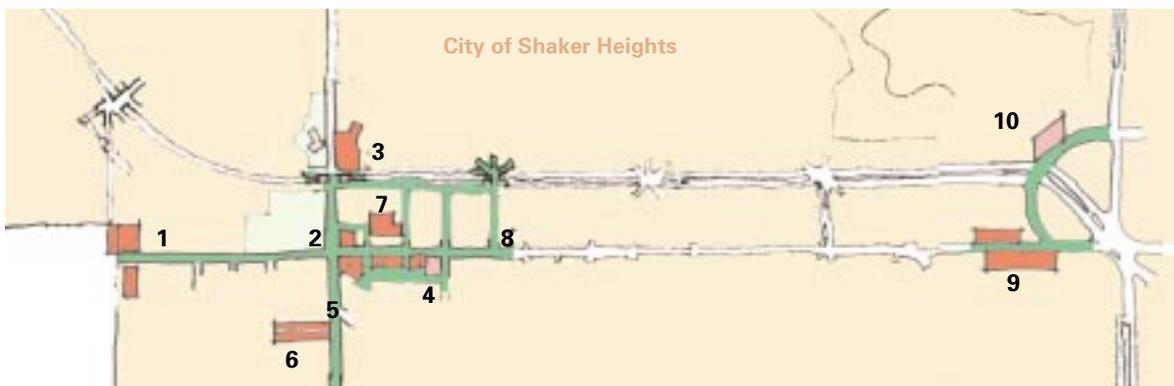
A city owned parcel can be developed as a residential anchor at the east end of the Shaker Towne Centre corridor.

9 Farnsleigh South Parcel

A new residential development creates a new address for this area of Chagrin.

10 Farnsleigh North Parcel

This is a prime developable city-owned site available for residential development.



VI Market Conditions and Fiscal Impact

Residential Market Summary

56

A significant market, particularly local affluent empty-nest and retiree households, exists for new housing units within Shaker Heights. To retain existing households, or attract new ones, the city must offer appropriately located, newly-constructed housing units in addition to maintaining and upgrading the existing housing stock. From a practical perspective, the residential market potential for Shaker Heights is largely limited to attached housing types, not because of lack of demand for single-family detached houses, but rather because of the lack of single-family detached building sites.

The most significant new construction opportunities are for housing types not currently available, or under-represented, in the city: single-family attached units (townhouses), a majority with the master suite on the ground floor; and rental or for-sale apartments in both mid-rise and small-scale "mansion" buildings (small apartment buildings compatible with low-density single-family and duplex neighborhoods). Sizes, rents, and prices for these housing types and other new construction opportunities follow the delineation of market potential.

Where appropriate, the city must sustain and support the existing housing stock. Strategies to achieve this goal should include the repositioning of selected existing apartment buildings and the enhancement through rehabilitation of existing two-family houses. New residential units can also be introduced through the adaptive re-use of existing non-residential buildings.

A full discussion of the market potential for new housing units in the City of Shaker Heights, including general city-wide residential initiatives, programs for prototypical sites, and supply-side market data, is provided in the Preliminary Findings Memorandum dated April 5, 1999 and the subsequent Interim Report dated June 10, 1999. (Appendix III)

Retail Market Summary

Based on our study of the Chagrin-Lee and Warrensville-Van Aken retail cores and our understanding of the current and likely future competitive retail market, we believe that there is a market opportunity to strengthen and improve both of these areas as predominantly local-serving community/neighborhood retail concentrations.

Given the high probability the town center development/redevelopment in the near term at Shaker Square and Chagrin Highlands, it is unlikely that there would be market support for an additional town center development in Shaker Heights anchored by a multiplex cinema, bookseller superstore, multiple national chain restaurants, specialty retail, etc. As such, an incremental/infill strengthening strategy is more appropriate in the Warrensville-Van Aken core. With improved pedestrian linkages and traffic calming contemplated in the master plan, there would be market support for additional community/neighborhood retail (approximately 50,000 square feet) and some regional/destination retail (approximately 15,000 square feet), particularly restaurants.

In the Chagrin-Lee area, there is also an opportunity to strengthen the existing center by improving pedestrian linkages to retail, transit and residential, traffic calming and parking enhancements. However, given that this market is currently oversupplied with retail, even with these improvements, there is demand for only a limited amount of net new additional space (approximately 12,000 square feet) in the near term (3-5 years). Assuming that the initial improvements are successful in stabilizing and strengthening the core, it is reasonable to assume that it would be possible to capture additional demand for retail in the Shaker Town Centre core. Over the next five to ten years it may be possible to support between 55,000 to 60,000 square feet of total additional space.

Office Market Summary

There is very limited market opportunity for office space in the Chagrin-Lee core in the near and even mid-terms. To the extent that there is demand for office in Shaker Heights, the Warrensville-Van Aken core is the most logical location from a market perspective. The market opportunity for large-scale Class A regional serving headquarters office development is limited even in the Warrensville-Van Aken core for several reasons. First is the limited availability and accessibility of sites in the city suitable for large-scale development. There are few existing sites that can accommodate a 200,000+ square foot regional headquarters office building. Visibility and accessibility to Shaker Heights, if such a site existed, would also be limited and roads would be highly congested during rush hour. Locations far from I-271 interchanges

are considered inferior. Finally, businesses are not likely to relocate into Shaker Heights due to the high property and income taxes.

58

While it may be difficult to attract large-scale office users/development, there is pent-up demand for well-located quality professional office space serving small and mid-sized professional service and medical tenants in Shaker Heights. Office space would be under 10,000 square feet each with most in the 3,000 to 5,000 square foot range. Lease rates would likely have to range between \$23.00 to \$25.00 to justify new construction. We estimate that the City of Shaker Heights can absorb approximately 10,000 to 15,000 square feet of local serving professional/medical office space per year. Based on these penetration rates, it would be possible to justify 75,000 to 125,000 square feet of space over the next five to ten years.

Fiscal Impact Summary

The redevelopment of both sites would have a very positive fiscal impact on the City and the School District. The proposed Warrensville/Van Aken development will generate \$28.0 million positive net fiscal impact from 2000 through 2020. This represents a \$19.8 million increase over the No Change scenario. The proposed Chagrin-Lee will also generate a positive net fiscal impact, approximately \$26.1 million between 2000 and 2020. This represents a \$10.7 million increase over the No Change scenario.

RCLCo also conducted a tax increment bond capacity analysis for the Warrensville/Van Aken redevelopment area under a No Change Scenario and Improvement Scenario. The difference in real property revenues between the two scenarios equals the "tax increment" available for bonding. The results of our tax increment analysis indicate that there is excess bonding capacity available for the entire Warrensville/Van Aken area to cover the capital improvement and acquisition costs taken as a whole. With the exception of the Traffic Circle, each section of the redevelopment plan can also support required capital improvement and acquisition costs. In order to justify the cost of the Traffic Circle, some of the other three sections must be redeveloped in order to support the bond payments.