



## SHAKER HEIGHTS

### Neighborhood and Economic Development Agenda Via Conference - Zoom Wednesday, January 14, 2026 - 6:00 p.m.

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1. Minutes - July 9, 2025

Documents:

[DRAFT - NEDC-MINUTES 7-09-2025.PDF](#)

2. Minutes - August 13, 2025

Documents:

[DRAFT 2026-08-13.PDF](#)

3. Economic Development Priorities - Presentation

Documents:

[NED COMMITTEE PRESENTATION - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES 01-14-2026.PDF](#)

4. Fourth Amendment to Development and Use Agreement for the Van Aken District

Documents:

[2026-01-08 MEMO - AMENDMENT TO EXTEND OPTION TO PURCHASE CORNER PROPERTY-LE.PDF](#)



# SHAKER HEIGHTS

Neighborhood & Economic Development Committee Minutes  
Wednesday, July 9, 2025  
6:00 P.M. **DRAFT**

Members Present: Ifeolu Claytor, Council Member  
Kim Bixenstine, Council Member  
Anne Williams, Council Member  
Dr. Donna Whyte, Committee Member  
Benjamin Woodcock, Committee Member

Others Present: David E. Weiss, Mayor  
Jeri Chaikin, CAO  
Laura Englehart, Economic Development Director  
Kyle Krewson, Director of Building & Housing

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Ifeolu Claytor at 6:03 p.m.

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## Approval of the June 11, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Ifeolu Claytor, Chair:

Our first item is minutes. Were there any questions that folks had for last month?

Anne Williams, Council Member:

I'll move approval.

Kim Bixenstine, Council Member:

I'll second.

Ifeolu Claytor, Chair:

We have a motion from Councilwoman Williams and a second. All in favor, please signify by saying aye.

Group:

Aye. Aye.

### **CITY OF SHAKER HEIGHTS**

3400 Lee Road Shaker Heights, Ohio 44120 P 216.491.1400 F 216.491.1465 Ohio Relay Service 711  
**shakeronline.com www.shaker.life**

Ifeolu Claytor, Chair:  
All opposed? Please signify by saying nay. The ayes have it.

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### **Executive Session**

Ifeolu Claytor, Chair:  
Do I hear a motion to go to executive session?

Dr. Donna Whyte, Cmte. Member:  
So moved.

Kim Bixenstine, Council Member:  
Second.

Ifeolu Claytor, Chair:  
Thank you. All in favor, please say aye.

Group:  
Aye. Aye.

Ifeolu Claytor, Chair:  
All opposed?

William Gruber, Law Dept. Director:  
I'm sorry. You have to take a roll call vote.

### **Roll Call Commences, all were in favor**

Ifeolu Claytor, Chair:  
The motion has passed.

Kyle Krewson, Director Bldg. & Housing:

I am going to move us into the backstage feature. There will be a message displayed for any attendees if they were to join the webinar as it stays live, they'll have a message saying the host will be back shortly. We'll have our discussion, no votes will be made in executive session. We'll then all move back into the webinar and continue the rest of the meeting as usual. Your screen will say, entering backstage, and you'll jump backstage. Everybody should pop back up backstage. Bear with me, one moment.

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**Recommendation to Amend SMCI Contract for Protective Pedestrian Canopy at the Lee Scottsdale Building – 3756 Lee Road**

Ifeolu Claytor, Chair:

We concluded our executive session. Director Krewson, are you next?

Kyle Krewson, Director Bldg. & Housing:

That's correct. This item before you is a request for a recommendation to Council to amend the contract with SMCI for the protective pedestrian canopy at the Lee Scottsdale Building, 3756 Lee Road. We are requesting that the contract be increased from \$110,000 to \$150,000 to cover the purchase of the pre-engineered protective pedestrian canopy in the amount of \$37,985.12 as well as the maintenance traffic signage of \$400. And then the ongoing rental of the perimeter fencing at \$3,500 per six months. This contract amendment would allow that rental to continue for a period of three and a half years. Just some background, as you're all aware, the property was declared a public nuisance in September of 2024. There're some masonry elements that became detached from the building and fell to the concrete below, the City did cite the owner.

Due to inaction by the owner the City did intervene by installing a protective pedestrian barrier at the recommendation of the City's engineer. The engineer came up with a design for the barrier, and the City engineer, GPD, has been engaged for the purposes of conducting an assessment of the building. They have determined that the assessment is not finalized. They still need to do some exploratory demolition work just to confirm what's causing the masonry failure. That work is ongoing. Meanwhile, they did determine that catastrophic failure is likely not imminent. The contractor, during the course of their investigation from a lift, they were looking on the north side of the building and there was a number of cases where they could take and remove bricks from the building with their hands no tools.

There is a continued ongoing risk to the pedestrians below. The reality is that that protective canopy and barrier fence do need to remain in place until permanent repairs can be completed. SMCI did say we can purchase the protective pedestrian canopy. Currently, we continue an ongoing rental at \$275 per day. The breakeven point is roughly five months. Given that repairs likely wouldn't even commence for at least five months, it's the most economic benefit to purchase that protective pedestrian canopy. The owner is ultimately responsible for these costs.

We are billing the owner our actual cost plus the 22% administrative fee. his approach is the most economical solution and the least costly burden on the owner. We are not purchasing the fence at this point. The SMCI subcontract the fence through a subcontractor that does not sell the fence, only rental, that's why we're continuing to rent the fence. It is a relatively minor cost, comparatively speaking. We are comfortable with that ongoing perimeter fence rental. We are requesting that the NEDC recommend to Council amending the contact with SMCI to a new total of \$150,000, this being the most economical solution for the property owner. Your recommendation is crucial for us

to uphold our commitment to community, for community safety and financial accountability. I'll entertain any discussion.

Ifeolu Claytor, Chair:

Do we have any questions from committee? Seeing none, do I have a motion?

Kim Bixenstine, Council Member:

Moved,

Ifeolu Claytor, Chair:

Moved by Councilman Kim Bixenstine and second from Dr. Donna Whyte. All in favor please signify by saying aye.

Group:

Aye. Aye.

Ifeolu Claytor, Chair:

All please signify by saying nay. The ayes have it. Thank you.

Dr. Donna Whyte, Cmte. Member:

I would just like to make a comment that I really appreciate the City taking this action to protect whomever may pass by the building so that we can keep everybody safe. This building is in my neighborhood. I see so many developments that are occurring in the neighborhood, this is really another way to just say thank you.

Ifeolu Claytor, Chair:

Absolutely. I feel good as a neighbor as well. Are there other questions or comments before we proceed to our last item on the agenda this evening? Seeing none, I'm looking over to Director Englehart.

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**Request to Approve a Forgivable Vision Loan Agreement with RDL Architects to Build Out New Office Space and Allow the Firm to Return to Shaker Heights**

Laura Englehart, Economic Development Director:

Thank you so much, Councilman, and good evening. I am here this evening to request that this Committee recommend Council approval of a Vision Loan in the amount of \$225,000 for RDL Architects to help fill a financing gap and assist in the build out of their new offices. They intend to move into the new Arcadia mixed use redevelopment project that is the project currently under construction at Warrensville Center Road and Farnsleigh. RDL is entering into a 10-year lease to occupy the second-floor office space in that project. They are also the architect of record for the

project. They've been involved in the project since it was proposed back in 2021. However, today's current economic conditions are incredibly different than they were back when the project was initiated. As you might expect, rising costs and continuing market uncertainty have created a financing gap in connection with the lease and build out of their offices.

Importantly for us and for the city, RDL already outgrew its office space in Shaker and they actually moved out of Shaker Heights in 2023. At this time, Shaker is no longer benefiting from any income tax revenue that RDL generates. We are eager to see them move back into the community. Our vision loan program that the City created many years ago was designed exactly for this type of situation. There is a lot more information in the memo about the program, including a little bit of data. I won't go into the details unless you have questions. In short, the vision loan program is designed to help professional office businesses expand or relocate in Shaker Heights. We do that by making an investment from the City's economic development and housing reserve fund into the build out of new office space for that professional business.

The City recoups its investment through the new income taxes that the business generates. In this situation, we are projecting that if the City makes an investment of \$225,000 in a vision loan to RDL to help them move back into Shaker Heights, we anticipate we will get all of that investment back in just two years of income taxes being paid to the City because they intend to sign a 10 year lease. They're going to continue to generate new tax revenue for the City long after the City would realize a return on its investment. There're also additional benefits to us in ensuring that they return to Shaker. First, locating at Arcadia really does ensure the long-term success of that project, and continuing to add density and vibrancy to the greater Van Aken District only continues to make that area more successful. I'm happy to answer any questions. The specific request is so that RDL can return to Shaker Heights. I'm requesting this Committee to recommend Council approval of a Vision Loan in the amount of \$225,000 for the build out of new offices for RDL Architects. Does anyone have any questions?

Kim Bixenstine, Council Member:

Thank you. Director Englehart. I'm very supportive of having RDL continue with the Arcadia project and I recognize how important they are to that project and I'm very supportive of the project. I just was a little unclear from the memo and from your oral report, are they threatening that they would not move forward if we don't give them this extra incentive? I am just not quite clear on that.

Laura Englehart, Economic Development Director:

My immediate reaction is absolutely not. We have a very great partnership with RDL. They have been very open with us. I've had lots of conversations with them over the years. This request did not surprise me because of the current economic conditions and because of that partnership we have shared with RDL over the years, they are definitely not threatening anything. However, the economic realities are that they have other options that may be less expensive. They do not want to pursue them. They would like to come to this project. There is a pretty significant gap. They are putting in significantly more money as well than they originally intended. And the developer also increased its tenant allowance so that this is truly a three-legged partnership in everybody working to make sure that the project can come to fruition and get our vision loan back to Shaker.

Kim Bixenstine, Council Member:

And in the original agreement with them, who bore the risk of changing economic circumstances that would be less favorable. Was it the City, them, or is it a shared risk?

Laura Englehart, Economic Development Director:

There was not a direct signed agreement with RDL for this project until they are entering into a lease to sign with the developer directly.

Kim Bixenstine, Council Member:

Thank you. That helps.

Dr. Donna Whyte, Cmte. Member:

This seems like a win-win to me. Again, RDL was in the Moreland area for a number of years. We know that they're not far in all of the development that they've done in Shaker. It's really very welcoming just to know that they'll come back to Shaker.

Benjamin Woodcock, Cmte. Member:

Will other potential tenants have the same opportunity through a vision loan if they so choose to move into this project at some point?

Laura Englehart, Economic Development Director:

That's a great question. Thank you for asking. RDL Architects will be taking the entirety of the office space in this mixed-use project. Our vision loans generally assist professional office tenants because they will generate significantly more income tax generally compared to retail, for example. The other commercial spaces in the project that will be ground floor retail typically, and I say typically because it could potentially be different, but they don't tend to generate the same payroll and income tax that this program is available for. However, the Economic Development Department has other incentives that we may help incoming retail ground floor tenants if needed to fill a gap or make sure that they're able to do their own build out. We have a separate small business program that is jointly funded with the County that may come into play in those situations. We also have a storefront program that could be available for signage. The direct answer to your question is it's unlikely that a vision loan would come into play on this project, but there could potentially be other discussions we have to support ground floor tenants.

Benjamin Woodcock, Cmte. Member:

Thank you.

Anne Williams, Council Member:

Thank you for this presentation. I think it's been a little while since we've seen a Vision Loan application. I want to say over the years these have been so valuable. I think these have worked out to be a very good program in supporting our businesses. And as noted in the memo, there's been great success with the payback. And I'm not always a huge fan or proponent of tax incentives for our commercial developments, but this is one area that I really appreciate this program and, in this case, given the scope of the project, this is a very modest amount in my perspective and clearly with

their income tax. Coming back to Shaker Heights, I agree with Dr. Whyte, this is a win-win situation. I want to say thank you for bringing this forward. I think it's a great idea.

Ifeolu Claytor, Chair:

Any other comments or questions? Hearing none, taking a motion to approve.

Dr. Donna Whyte, Cmte. Member:

Moved.

Kim Bixenstine, Council Member:

Second.

Ifeolu Claytor, Chair:

The motion was from Anne Williams, Council Member. And second from council Kim Bixenstine, Council Member. All in favor indicate by saying aye.

Group:

Aye.

Ifeolu Claytor, Chair:

All opposed please signify by saying nay. Hearing none, the ayes have it. That was the last item of business that we have this evening before us, thank you all for your time this evening.

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:34 p.m. The next meeting will be August 13, 2025.

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Ifeolu Claytor, Chair  
Neighborhood & Economic Development Committee



**Application to Acquire Five (5) City-Owned Vacant Parcels for Construction of Single-Family Infill Projects**

Ifeolu Claytor:

We will receive those as information in the absence of quorum, and move forward to our next agenda item.

Kyle Krewson:

Ms. Thomas will be presenting that this evening.

Ifeolu Claytor:

Go ahead and proceed Ms. Thomas.

Sharra Thomas:

Thank you. Good evening everyone. I would like to present one application that has been received for our infill development program. This application came in from K&W Ohio Construction, we have Mr. Alabsi in attendance. I believe Jesse Carver is also in attendance, as well as their architect they will be working with for this project, Gabrielle Rivera. What I would like to present this evening is the opportunity for K&W Ohio Construction to acquire five city owned vacant lots in order to complete five infill development projects of single-family homes.

I will give Mr. Alabsi a chance to speak a little bit about himself this evening about his background. I did include in the memo his past experience with the City of Shaker Heights as he did complete an intensive waterproofing project through the Shaker Heights Community Center and Library in the mid 2000's. I also included a little more information on what brought K&W Ohio Construction to the City of Shaker Heights. Would Mr. Alabsi or Mr. Carver give some more information as to why you are interested in the City of Shaker Heights for your next infill project?

Waleed Alabsi:

I'll give you a little bit background about me; my name Waleed Alabsi. I own K&W Ohio Construction, LLC. We used to own Zebco Excavating in 2000. We did a lot of projects around the Cleveland area. We did work for the CMHA for Cleveland Housing Network. We completed over 200 houses for the city of Cleveland. We do a lot of high-end homes. We own a showroom in Willoughby Hills on S.O.M. Center Road. We do a lot of high-end kitchens. We do remodeling and restoring houses and buildings. We did some work for Shaker Heights before, and we did the community center. We did all the foundation work for the City of Shaker community center. Thank you for the opportunity to give us a chance to start working with you and do more work with you. The City of Shaker is a beautiful city. The city's architecture and design may never be done again, that's sad because everything costs money. I've been doing this business for 30 years. I've been doing it very successfully. I have done work before in many places. I like what I do, and hopefully we could get some houses started with you and invest our own money to the City of Shaker Heights.

Thank you for the opportunity to give us the chance to do the work. Any question for me, I'm here for you.

Sharra Thomas:

Thank you, Mr. Alabsi. As I stated, the application was submitted to obtain five vacant parcels. As you can see in your memo, I linked the actual vacant parcels they are requesting. There are two located on Colwyn Road, located in our CRA transit village area, as well as the two Sutton Road parcels. The last is on Hildana, and that is actually in our southern Moreland CRA area. We did have a preliminary meeting with myself, Dan Feinstein, Mr. Alabsi, and Mr. Carver, to discuss some plans they presented. There were some things that needed to be added and changed. As far as the final design and layout for these properties, those are in the making.

The basic design build will be single family homes. They will have a basement. They did present a possible ranch style build that will be reviewed for location. That is a possibility, but it is basically a colonial and or bungalow style they are proposing. It will be three to four bedrooms, two and a half baths, detached two car garages, and full basements. As stated, those final design and layout will be determined and approved later as they move through the process of approval. They are looking to sell these properties that will be built on spec. The price point will range from \$339,000 to \$379,000, which is right in line with what we are basically seeing as a sales point for our current running new construction infill projects under our current developers.

Of the five lots that they are interested, there are no current plans as far as city projected projects, nor are they under review for any side lot acquisition. Once we've changed our policy for what constitutes the eligibility as a side lot for a neighboring resident to acquire. What I would like to bring special attention and light on, K&W Ohio Construction is very aware, we went into a detailed discussion regarding the requirement of a landscape plan. They are aware of the City of Shaker Heights requirements and higher standards as it relates to the retention of our tree landscapes. If there is a need to remove a tree for example, in the middle of a vacant parcel, they are aware the landscape plan will be presented to the Planning Department must lay out detail if that tree needs to be replaced, and if there are additional trees that are either damaged or in need of replacement it will be their responsibility to replace those trees specifically as it relates to the curb line. Outside of the trees and landscape plan, I went into detail in the memo on the northern block of Hildana to bring attention to the upcoming projects that will be taking place on that block. As stated in the memo, currently there are two construction projects under GLH that are moving forward this year. They have stated those projects will be completed near the end of 2025. I do want to be transparent to show all construction that will take place on that northern block between Chagrin and Hampstead. As stated, GLH has the two closest to Hampstead, I'm now referencing the map I provided in my memo. The four green boxes are reserve lots for the upcoming infill projects for YRM construction, who are currently working on a neighboring street, Pennington. He has reserved those four of the eight for his 2026 plan. The one blue block is KNez, currently 3558 Hildana under construction with a buyer, set to be completed in 2025. That would be an additional eight new construction on the northern block of Hildana near the end of 2026, or early 2027.

We are requesting this evening is recommendation of approval. The developers have stated they are looking from six months from execution date, understanding that they must still receive the City approvals through the Planning Commission, Architectural Board of Review, as well as follow all Ohio building codes, to move forward to acquire the requested five city owned vacant lot parcels for a dollar to move toward a new infill development project within, not only the southern Moreland area, but also our transit village CRA area. Currently, although the map was not provided, the transit CRA area only has the MEWS development going on at this time. There are no other current under construction projects underway in that transit village area.

At this time, I would like to open up for any questions. I've never attended when it wasn't a quorum, I will give it to you Mr. Claytor. Do I request an approval or what is my next step?

Ifeolu Claytor:

We can't formally give approval because we don't have a quorum. Our minutes can reflect that the Committee is in support or is not. That's how we can proceed.

Sharra Thomas:  
Okay, thank you.

Ifeolu Claytor:

It might have to go to finance because we're selling something. Is that proper Kyle?

Sharra Thomas:  
Correct.

Ifeolu Claytor:

It will still go to another Council committee that hopefully will have quorum and will be able to vote to move forward to Council. I believe even if it doesn't have a quorum in Finance, which I don't know if that ever happens, Council, I believe, can still consider and move forward on this proposition from the administration.

Sharra Thomas:

At this time, I will request and open the floor for questions, as well as for approval for K&W Ohio Construction to enter a D&U with the City of Shaker Heights to acquire five vacant parcels for \$1 to infill develop five single family homes, one within Southern Moreland, and four within Transit Village of the Moreland neighborhood.

Ifeolu Claytor:

Thank you, Ms. Thomas. I have a few questions but would like to open up to my fellow council people who are here this evening and allow you all to ask your questions first. Councilwoman Bixenstine.

Kim Bixenstine:

Thank you Chair Claytor. I'm supportive and I'm just wondering, it was a little unclear, is the design for all five of the proposed homes the same or will there be different designs depending on the location?

Waleed Alabsi:

The design for the houses, they're not going to be the same. You can't make copy houses on the same street. We are going to make them look great for the city. And they will look very good for a long time. It will match the structure of the other houses and give them a different look for all of them. I could even do a different layout inside to make the houses look unique, I am not copying and pasting designs.

Kim Bixenstine:

Thank you.

Sharra Thomas:

I would also like to add to that. In our meeting with Mr. Feinstein, Dan did inform K&W that the houses must be unique and not look identical. Shaker Heights is not a cookie cutter community.

Waleed Alabsi:

We are not going to that.

Kim Bixenstine:

Thank you.

Ifeolu Claytor:

I'm curious what our communication to residents in the neighborhood looks like? Particularly as a lot of construction and abutting neighborhoods, curious about what that conversation has been. How and if residents have given input on the amount of construction so far, if it's been distracting, if there's a way that we can mitigate that. And another, is there coordination on timing with these projects? I recognize they are different owners and different developers, I'm curious about this timing to make it more convenient for residents who live in this neighborhood.

Sharra Thomas:

Thank you Chair. We did do a pre-construction meeting notification letter. The letter went out to the entire northern block of Hildana. Our requirement is really five to the left, five to the right, five to the rear. But being that the number of projects that will possibly take place specifically this block, I did do the entire northern block of Hildana to notify them of not only this meeting, but the upcoming finance meeting, the council meeting for public comment, and also provide information for not only myself, but also Theo, to provide a platform to give feedback of any concern with the upcoming projects. That letter was also provided to the residents on Colwyn and Sutton. For the Hildana Block there will be a street meeting that will take place.

Not only does YRM has those parcels under reserve, but this K&W proposal as well will be a component of that street meeting. Not only will the residents be fully aware of what's to come, they will also have the opportunity to meet the developers that will be on their block providing the new housing in their neighborhood. We are always working directly with the Economic Development department; they will provide outreach that is required in order for us to get those residents informed. We want to be as transparent as possible so we are not causing any additional concern. The purpose of our infill projects is to revitalize the streets that unfortunately were hit hard by demolitions due to the housing crisis to bring back these vacant parcels as well as adding to our Shaker base, not only tax base, but our residents to build back up the streets that have kind of this jagged look and feel because of the missing housing. A notification was mailed out to all of the neighboring residents, not only on Colwyn and Sutton, but specifically a lot of detail was sent for Hildana. Being that there will be multiple projects on that block, a street meeting will take place before YRM, K&W Ohio, before they even break ground. As stated GLH and Knez, those projects are currently underway.

Kyle Krewson

If I can expand on that. As Ms. Thomas explained, we do take a comprehensive approach in our communication strategy with residents before imminent construction. We typically will send out a letter as well notifying neighbors, that letter comes from Ms. Thomas and she's the primary point of contact during construction. There generally are issues, whether it's noise, debris, deliveries, concerns, she will be the interface for the residents to mitigate any of those concerns and work for the developer directly to make sure that they're adhering to the standards that our residents have come to expect.

Ifeolu Claytor:

Wonderful. Two more quick questions. I'm curious if there were developers who were interested, and I recognize that our goal is to have a developer, if we're doing the program where we are working with developers to revitalize our neighborhoods and replenish our housing stock. I know that the goal is to also have the new homes be owner occupied. I'm curious if our processing or ordinances allow for the possibility of a two-family home to be built with the intent being one of the floors being owner occupied? If we've been approached for any proposals that include those?

Kyle Krewson:

I can speak to that. We would entertain a proposal that would seek a two-family home that's owner occupied. However, our current CRA, our tax abatement doesn't allow for that to get tax abatement. They could build it, they would just wouldn't get that tax abatement. That being said, that is one of the things that we are looking at. We hope to be bringing forward to Council soon in this Committee soon. That changes our CRA programs, that is one of the things that we're looking at including. One of the proposals that we're including would be allowing for a two-family with an owner occupant to qualify for a CRA. So that's something we're exploring and actively considering. We haven't had any proposals seeking that. I think probably principally because our tax abatement policy doesn't apply in those situations so we aren't getting that sort of interest from developers. Certainly, changes to that policy would kind of change that calculation for many developers.

Ifeolu Claytor:

Understood, and my last question for the administration, Director Krewson and Ms. Thomas. I'm curious what this process would look like if an individual owner resident or hopefully soon to be resident, wanted to initiate this process that wasn't a developer, if I want to buy a lot in one of these neighborhoods and work with the developer to build a home in this neighborhood, I'm curious what that process would look like if there's a shorthand version that can be given.

Kyle Krewson:

There's a couple. Folks approach us from time to time, sometimes we connect them with a developer builder who already has gone through the approval process and has the lots reserved. We make that connection and it moves forward in that way. Other times they will build themselves on a lot. We've had one such instance on Hildana. The owner occupant that built specifically on a city lot, worked with a builder to build on a lot. But she approached the city, our contract was with her. She then contracted with her own builder to build a house to her specifications. Either approach works, we have a precedent for either direction, working with what the developer already has, a reserved a lot, or approaching us with a lot specifically in mind.

Ifeolu Claytor:

Wonderful. Are there other questions from the Committee that is present? Even though we cannot take a vote because we are without a quorum, I'm curious, are my colleagues that are here in theory supportive of this? Of this moving forward to the Finance Committee to Council?

Group:

Yes. Yes.

Ifeolu Claytor:

Wonderful. I want that to be reflected in the minutes even though we are unable to vote this evening. We will receive all this as information and assuming this moves forward, we wish you the best of luck. Mr. Alabsi.

Ifeolu Claytor:

I believe that is our last item of business this evening. If there are no other matters to come before the Committee we will adjourn. Thank you all so much. Have a great evening.

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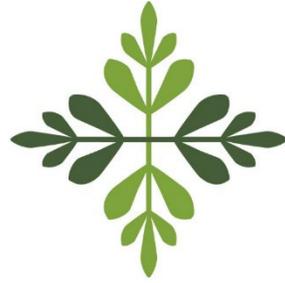
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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:37 p.m. The next meeting will be September 10, 2025.

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Ifeolu Claytor, Chair  
Neighborhood & Economic Development Committee



## SHAKER HEIGHTS

# Department of Economic Development

## SUMMARY OF PRIORITIES AND GOALS

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NEIGHBORHOOD AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

JANUARY 14, 2026

# Economic Development Priorities

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- Business Growth and Support
  - Attraction, Retention, Expansion
  - Business support services
- Long-Term Commercial District Planning & Redevelopment
  - Partnership with Shaker Heights Development Corp (SHDC)
- Community Development
  - Home Repair Grant Programs
  - Community Network Building in Moreland; Neighborhood Engagement

# Approach is Grounded in Long-Term Planning

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## Strategic Investment Plan (2000)

- Identified commercial areas as problem areas lacking character and quality seen in neighborhoods
- Recommended offering vibrant mix of quality commercial businesses to serve all economic groups and creating a wide range of well-maintained housing accessible to a variety of household types

## Economic Development Plan (2010)

- Update to Strategic Investment Plan; restated commitment to commercial development
- Key Findings: diversify the City's tax base; establish business-proactive policies; develop quality office space; provide incentives to improve commercial property and attract targeted businesses; generate density required to support amenities (restaurants and retail)

## Lee Road Action Plan (2023)

- Recommends investments and development on Lee Road south of Van Aken Blvd. into Cleveland
- Community-driven vision to comprehensively transform the area into a thriving commercial district that is attractive, walkable, bikeable, and transit-friendly

# How Economic Development Meets City Goals

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- **Superior Response & Service Delivery:** “Deliver outstanding services including... commercial development...”
- **Financial Health & Sustainability:** Includes goal to “increase the tax base by maintaining and increasing high quality housing and commercial development.”
- **Quality Housing:** “Invest in both new and existing housing to ensure that a diversity of high-quality and well-maintained housing types are available to residents. Encourage both reinvestment in older housing and the growth of additional attractive housing types to meet the needs and desires of current and future residents across a wide spectrum.”
- **Economic Development:** “Develop and maintain vibrant commercial districts through public/private partnerships and other innovative approaches.”
- We prioritize **Greenspaces & Public Spaces** in commercial district development, and we promote **Environmental Sustainability** with the business community and in development.

# Business Growth and Support

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- Attract new businesses to the City of Shaker Heights
- Retain existing businesses and encourage business expansions
- Provide targeted business and development incentives
- Engage and establish positive working relationships with local businesses
  - Serve as City liaison to businesses; help businesses navigate City processes
  - Connect Shaker businesses to available regional support and resources
  - Respond to inquiries from current and prospective business
  - Engage Shaker businesses in events and initiatives to promote business vitality in the City
- Storytelling and marketing
  - Shop Shaker – “buy local” campaign
  - Monthly Business News to all Shaker businesses
  - Quarterly Community Economic Development Update e-newsletter to the community

# Retention, Expansion & Attraction Tools

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- Vision Fund – Forgivable Loan Program
- Shaker Partnership Program (for tenant improvements)
- Storefront Renovation Program
- Development Incentives:
  - Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
  - Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) - Tax Abatement
  - Urban Renewal District (725)

# Economic Development By the Numbers

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315

businesses operate  
in Shaker Heights

17      \$4.1M  
loans      invested

Shaker Partnership  
Program

24      \$466K  
projects      invested

Storefront Renovation

18      \$1.9M  
projects      loaned

Vision Loans

# Vision Fund – Forgivable Loan Program

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- Forgivable loan program targeted to established, growing businesses and high tech earlier stage businesses that are ready to move into office space in Shaker Heights
- Targeted to industries identified in Economic Development Plan – Healthcare, IT, Professional Services, Engineering and Design
- Funds can be use for tenant improvements and equipment purchases
- Amount of loan and portion forgiven is based on income/payroll taxes collected over the term
- Businesses commit to keep their operations in the City of Shaker Heights for at least double the amount of time it takes to pay back the loan via income tax receipts

**18**

**Total Vision Loans**

**\$1.9M**

**Loaned**

**\$1.7M**

**Repaid**

**2**

**Active Loans**

# Shaker Partnership Program

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- Funded by Cuyahoga County and City's Economic Development & Housing Fund
- City and County jointly contribute equity toward a commercial buildout to enable a business to open or expand
- Typical Structure:
  - Business contributes a minimum 10% equity toward a private loan
  - City and County contribute up to 15% as equity (no repayment if income tax targets met)
  - A private loan encompasses 75% of the total project
  - Business enters into agreement with the City; length of agreement aligns with lease term; claw back language requires repayment if business closes before end of term
- Business is required to work with a Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

# Shaker Partnership Program Funding Summary

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County Round	Year Started	Amount Committed	Notes
Round 1	2014	City and Cuyahoga County each committed \$250,000	Pilot program in Cleveland and Shaker Heights only
Round 2	2017	No new funds	City assisted with best practices in expansion to Cleveland Heights, Maple Heights, Fairview Park and Lakewood
Round 3	2019	County contributed \$150,000 and City contributed \$50,000	In Round 3, the County provided additional funding for Shaker Heights, Lakewood and Cleveland Heights

A total of \$200,654 currently remains available to award.

# Shaker Partnership Program 10-year Loan Summary; 2015-2025

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**17**

Total Shaker  
Partnership Loans

**12**

Loans to MBE/FBE  
owned businesses

**\$499,346**

Invested by  
City and County

**\$4.1M**

Estimated total  
project investment

**4**

Active, open Shaker  
Partnership Loans

**109**

Estimated full time  
jobs created

**\$448K**

Average annual  
payroll

# Storefront Renovation Program

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- Purpose/Goals:
  - Improve the appearance of commercial districts
  - Support property and business owner efforts to improve building exteriors
  - Encourage improved design and better quality signage in commercial districts
  - Attract, retain and support locally-owned businesses
- Signage Only: rebate up to 50% of project cost, not to exceed \$3,000
- Full Façade: rebate up to 50% of total project cost, not to exceed \$15,000

**24**

Total completed storefronts

**\$130K**

City investment in storefront rebates

**\$466K**

Total exterior investments

**5**

Projects active or in the pipeline

BEFORE



3700 Lee Road

AFTER



Before



After



3620 Lee Road

Before



As Designed



After



Scorpacciata Pasta Co.  
13051 Larchmere Blvd.

# Commercial District Redevelopment

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## Commercial Districts:

1. Chagrin-Lee (Shaker Towne Center, Lee Road, Chagrin Blvd.)
2. Greater Van Aken District (including District South and Bloc at Almar)
3. Larchmere (shared with Cleveland)
4. Fairmount Circle (shared with University Heights)

## Focus:

- Comprehensive revitalization, grounded in long-term planning
- Placemaking and Vibrancy
- Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)
- Available Properties – for lease or sale

# Lee Road Action Plan

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Complete Streets Public Infrastructure Improvements: \$30M

Generating Excitement: Annual Chagrin-Lee Fest; Murals; Storefront Reno

Business Retention, Expansion & Attraction

Development Opportunities; Partnership with SHDC

- Neighborhood Center (bus depot relocation)
- Southern Gateway (at Scottsdale)

# Van Aken District Phased Development



## Phase 1 Mixed-Use

100,000 SF retail; 60,000 SF office; 103 apartment units

Opened in 2019

RAYE: 227 units; opened end of 2024

Arcadia: 141 units; 2nd floor office; ground floor retail; under construction

RTA Improvements

Future Phase: NW corner of Chagrin and Warrensville

# Home Repair Grants & Assistance

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- Grant Programs

Exterior Maintenance Grant	up to \$3,500 to correct cited violations
Senior Emergency Safety Grant	up to \$700 for emergency repairs and/or accessibility improvements for homeowners age 62+
Paint Program	free paint to correct exterior painting violations
Moreland Model Block (MMB)	up to \$3,500 for improvements visible from the street; Moreland residents only

- To be eligible, homeowners must be:
  - Owner-occupants
  - Current on property taxes or on approved payment plan
  - Earn less than or equal to 100% Area Median Income (not required for MMB)
  - Contribute at least a 10% match

# Before



# After



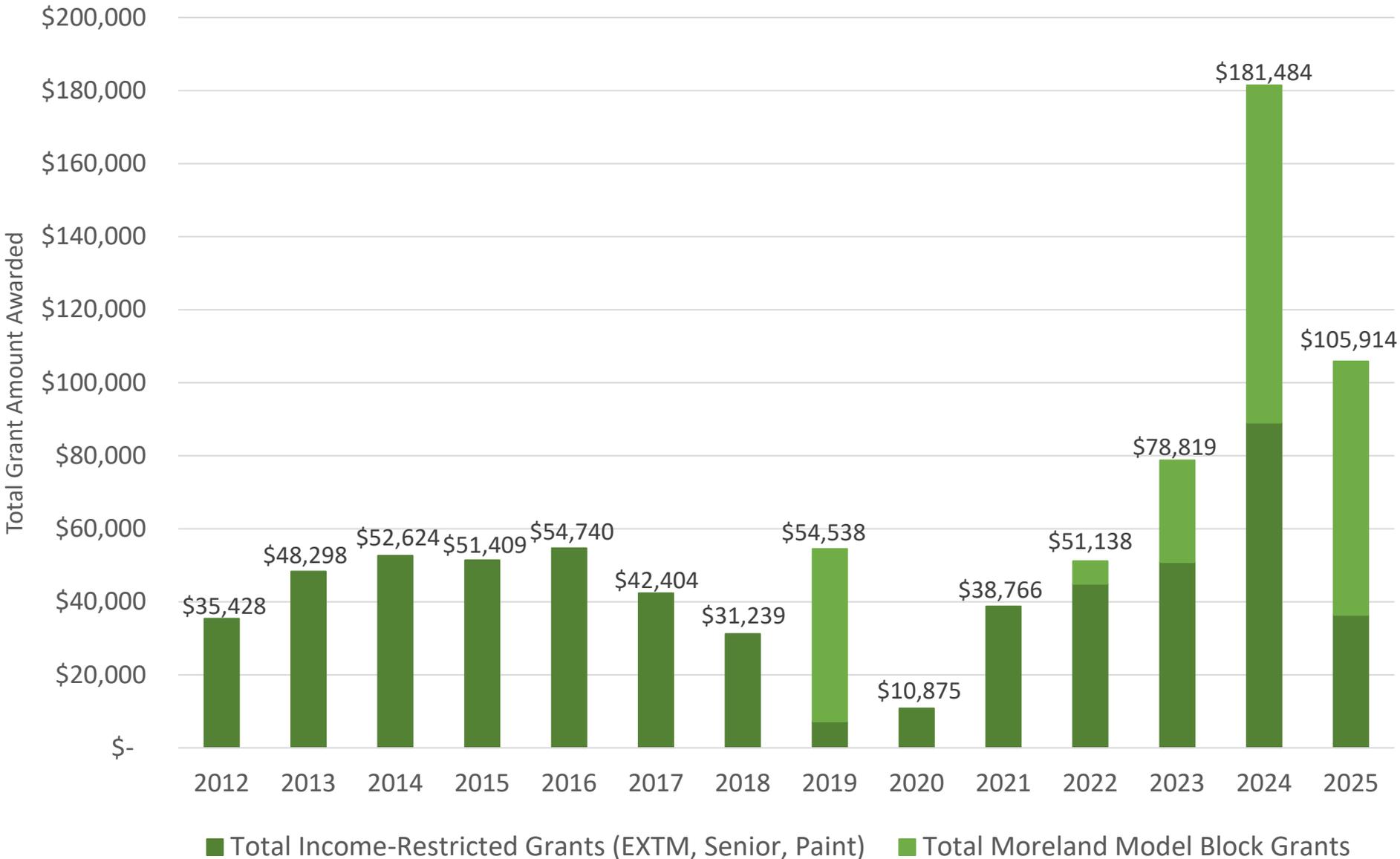
# Before/During



# After



# Home Repair Grant Awards (2012-2025)



*Neighborhoods inspected:*

- 2012 Fernway; Onaway
- 2013 None
- 2014 Moreland; Boulevard
- 2015 Lomond; Sussex
- 2016 Malvern; Ludlow
- 2017 Mercer
- 2018 None
- 2019 Fernway; Onaway
- 2020 None
- 2021 Moreland; Boulevard
- 2022 Lomond; Sussex
- 2023 Malvern; Ludlow
- 2024 Mercer
- 2025 Mercer continued

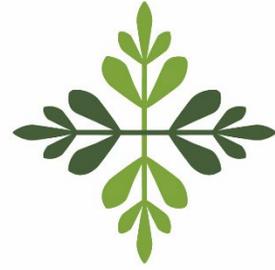
*Notes:*

- Historically, \$50,000 available annually for home repair grants. Increased to \$100,000 in 2019. Increased to \$150,000 in 2024.
- Moreland Model Block piloted in 2019; paused 2020-2021
- All grants paused in 2020 due to pandemic
- 2025 data is through Nov. 2025

# Moreland Neighbor Network Support

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- Community Network Building
- Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)
- Began as part of comprehensive approach to reinvesting in Moreland after the foreclosure crisis
  - In 2025, we celebrated 10 years of network building in Moreland.
  - Welcoming and belonging. Pride in Neighborhood and Place.
- 2026 priorities: Launch Moreland Mini-Grant Pilot; continue Leadership Development; ongoing networking building & coaching



SHAKER HEIGHTS

Questions?

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# SHAKER HEIGHTS

## Memorandum

To: Members of the Neighborhood and Economic Development Committee  
From: Laura E. Englehart, Director of Economic Development  
cc: David E. Weiss, Mayor  
Matthew Carroll, Chief Administration Officer  
William Gruber, Director of Law  
Date: January 8, 2026  
Re: Fourth Amendment to Development & Use Agreement for the Van Aken District

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The Economic Development Department requests a recommendation from this committee for Council to approve a fourth amendment to the Development & Use Agreement (D&U) between the City and the developer of the Van Aken District. This amendment would:

- (1) extend the developer's exclusive purchase option on the development site at the northwest corner of Chagrin Blvd. and Warrensville Center Road (the "Corner Property") through August 10, 2029 (the current end of the developer's right of first refusal period);
- (2) remove any and all right of first refusal;
- (3) upon exercise of the purchase option, require the developer to pay a purchase price of \$140,420.81 (which is equal to half the City's cost of moving an existing CEI line out of the Corner Property); and
- (4) extend the developer's obligation to provide a plan for Shaker Plaza through August 10, 2030, two years after the current end of the right of first refusal period.

As you know, the phased Van Aken District development was thoughtfully planned with significant community engagement over many years. Phased development remains in progress.

- The first phase of new development officially opened in 2019 with 100,000 square feet of retail, 60,000 square feet of office space, and 103 apartments all centered around a public park and immediately adjacent to the blue line rapid transit station.
- The second phase of development, called the RAYE, opened in early 2025 with 228 luxury apartment units, bringing a new housing option to Shaker, creating significant activity on a long-vacant parking lot, and adding density to further the success of the greater Van Aken District. The significantly larger scale and iconic design of the RAYE, combined with the effects of the global health pandemic, led to design and construction timelines that went beyond those anticipated in the original D&U.
- Simultaneously, the City moved forward and selected another development partner via a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process for a third phase of development on the long-vacant former Qua Buick site, 3393 Warrensville Center Road. Construction of the Arcadia mixed-use development project will house 141 apartments (including 25 units set aside for households earning 80-100% of Area Median Income), second floor office space

that will house RDL Architects, and first floor retail wrapping a ground-level parking garage. Construction began in the second quarter of 2025. It is slated for completion by early 2027.

- The Corner Property has long been slated to be a future phase of development. Under the original D&U, this site was originally planned to include additional mixed-use development featuring an office tower with active ground floor uses and more parking. Despite some economic recovery after significant pandemic-driven market disruptions, today's market conditions and office environment will still not support construction of a new office tower. Additional time is needed to evaluate development options and plans for this site. Furthermore, extended timelines for the two prior phases have also lengthened the time horizon for development of the Corner Property.
- Future development phases may also include reinvestment in or redevelopment of Shaker Plaza (which is owned by the developer of the Van Aken District) as well as additional prospective sites east of Warrensville and south of Chagrin.

The Van Aken District developer's exclusive option to develop the Corner Property recently expired and the developer currently holds a Right of First Refusal (ROFR) for the site. During this ROFR period, through August 10, 2029, the City would not likely be able to successfully market the site and work with a new developer to purchase and develop the Corner Property while being required to offer the same development option to our current developer partner. We also continue to have a good working relationship and positive conversations about future District development with our long-term partners at the Van Aken District.

For these reasons, the Economic Development Department recommends a fourth amendment to the D&U to extend the Van Aken District developer's exclusive purchase option through August 10, 2029 (the end of current right of first refusal period) and to remove all rights of first refusal. Additionally, the purchase price for exercising the option would increase from \$100 under the current D&U to \$140,420.81 to help the City recoup its costs to move a CEI line located within the Corner Property. Finally, to better align with this new phased development timeline, the proposed fourth amendment to the D&U would also extend the timeline for the developer to provide a future plan for reinvestment in and redevelopment of Shaker Plaza to August 10, 2030.

The Economic Development Department requests a recommendation from this committee for Council to approve a fourth amendment to the Development & Use Agreement (D&U) as described above.