



City of Shaker Heights

# LEE ROAD ACTION PLAN



SHAKER  
HEIGHTS

March 21, 2023

Prepared by





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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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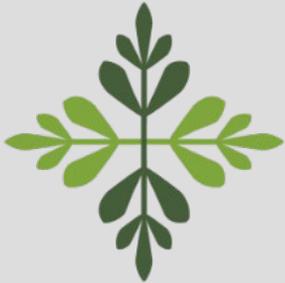
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#### **Business Focus Group**

The 166 business and property owners along the corridor were invited to participate as part of the Business Focus Group, allowing them to have a direct voice in plan development.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**The City of Shaker Heights has developed a visionary reinvestment plan for the Lee Road commercial corridor. Under the City's Lee Road Action Plan, the ¾-mile Lee Road corridor south of Van Aken Boulevard will be transformed into a thriving commercial district that is attractive, walkable, and bikeable.**

Development of the Lee Road Action Plan, its conclusions, and recommendations are based on a collaborative effort of City leaders, residents, businesses, and regional representatives. It reflects considerations of transportation, urban design, land use, and economic development.

The desired outcomes and community benefits are:

- Raising the quality, character, and design of the commercial area to match the level of Shaker's residential neighborhoods
- Creating opportunities for future economic development, including improving the business experience, creating jobs, and increasing the tax base
- Establishing positive perceptions about the commercial district
- Improving automobile travel, bicycle infrastructure, and pedestrian access, safety, and comfort
- Bettering access to and from businesses (defined as access management)
- Renovating the streetscape according to a comprehensive plan
- Connecting to adjacent residential neighborhoods and transit hubs
- Providing opportunities to collaborate with the city of Cleveland where business districts connect



## Background, Purpose & Goals

As a first step in drafting the Lee Road Action Plan, residents, businesses, and property owners collaborated with the City in identifying a vision and goals for the district.

### VISION

The City of Shaker Heights, in partnership with the community, envisions a Lee Road commercial district that is commercially vibrant, aesthetically attractive, equitable, sustainable, safe, connected, and accessible to all. Successfully integrate transportation, land use, economic development and an engaged community in development of the District.

### GOALS

- Reimagine Lee Road between Van Aken Boulevard and Walden Avenue
- Bring a fresh perspective to an aging corridor
- Create an environment in which businesses can prosper
- Effectively engage residents, businesses and property owners using a variety of tactics
- Identify solutions that are both creative and practical
- Enhance placemaking through public infrastructure
- Undertake a comprehensive, inclusive planning process, memorialized in the Lee Road Action Plan

## Existing Conditions

Understanding the existing conditions set the baseline for the plan and helped identify steps to achieve the project vision and goals. Existing conditions include features and characteristics related to transportation, urban design, and land use. This includes motorized and

non-motorized transportation, transit, and parking. Economic and market conditions are addressed in Chapter 3, Market Study & Economic Analysis.

Lee Road (CR-8) is classified as a major arterial. It is one of three north-south roads that connect through Shaker Heights to communities to the north and south. It serves as a truck route connection to I-480. Lee Road is a five-lane road between Van Aken Boulevard and Lomond Boulevard, with on-street parking between Library drive and Van Aken. South of Lomond, Lee Road is a four-lane roadway with two northbound and two southbound travel lanes. On-street parking is available south of Scottsdale Boulevard in Cleveland. The posted speed limit is 25 mph.

Today, vehicular traffic dominates Lee Road, with minimal focus on pedestrian and cyclist comfort. There is no designated bicycle infrastructure. Pedestrians use the continuous sidewalks along the east and west sides of Lee. The sidewalks between Lomond and Scottsdale are relatively narrow (5 feet); they are set back from the street with



*Figure 1: Lee Road at Library Drive intersection*



**Figure 2: Lee Road south of Lomond**

street trees, creating desirable character. However, the sidewalks abut off-street parking lots for many businesses along the east side of Lee Road between Lomond and Walden, resulting in unsafe and uncomfortable pedestrian conditions.

Project area transit service includes RTA bus route 40 (north-south on Lee), east-west transit service via the Blue Line light rail at Van Aken, and RTA bus route 14/14A on Chagrin.

The majority of parking along the corridor is provided by privately owned off-street parking lots. Most parking between Lomond and Scottsdale is limited to small lots on individual parcels accessed by separate driveways for each parcel. This causes challenges for vehicles entering and exiting business parking lots and is a traffic safety concern. As mentioned above, parking is often not buffered from the public sidewalk, resulting in an unsafe and uncomfortable pedestrian experience.

Urban design and development vary along the corridor. Civic and retail uses dominate the segment between Van Aken and Chagrin. South of Chagrin, the corridor is predominantly lined with small, one- to two-story commercial buildings.

## Market Study & Economic Analysis

The market study and economic analysis formed the baseline upon which the Lee Road Action Plan is built. The market study evaluated the presence of residential, retail, office, and other uses and how these uses expect to evolve with changes to Lee Road. The economic analysis identified trends specific to the Shaker Heights market and how such trends translate into opportunities for Lee Road.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Office**
  - ▷ Leverage short-term demand for Class B and Class C office space on Lee Road
  - ▷ Add Class A office space citywide and attract and encourage the development of supportive businesses
- **Residential**
  - ▷ Offer right-size housing options
    - *Provide step-up housing options*
    - *Accommodate mixed incomes*
    - *Cater to desired occupations*
  - ▷ Conduct housing study to match available inventory to step-up/step-down housing price options
- **Retail**
  - ▷ Program Lee Road with retail that draws consumer spending potential from the entire City and nearby communities
  - ▷ Emphasize a mixture of brands that allows for price-point flexibility



## Community Engagement

Community engagement was integrated into each phase of the planning process. Community perspectives and ideas shaped the plan, from defining the vision and goals through concept development and refinement to drafting of this Lee Road Action Plan. Community participation was accomplished through multiple levels of engagement and a variety of outreach tools. Each phase of the planning process included engagement, which solicited input from:

- Stakeholder Committee
- Business & Property Owner Focus Group
- Institutional Stakeholder Group
- General Public

The plan was developed in three phases, as outlined below. Each phase included engagement methods targeted at reaching a broad cross-section of the community and achieving the desired outcomes. A total of 687 residents, business owners, and property owners participated in the three phases of plan development via virtual meetings, in-person meetings, tours, and surveys. Nearly 2,400 respondents participated in online polls and a survey.

- **Phase 1: Initiate & Understand.** Understand the existing conditions and establish the vision and goals for the Lee Road Action Plan to transform the project area.
- **Phase 2: Shape.** Present potential concepts for Lee Road, including aspects related to transportation, urban design and land use, as well as ideas and potential opportunities for redevelopment. Community input from this phase was instrumental in shaping the plan.
- **Phase 3: Define.** During Phase 3, community reactions to the draft plan were solicited, documented, and integrated into the final plan.



*Figure 3: Phase 2 Public Meeting, Concept Development*



*Figure 4: Biking & Walking Tour (July 20, 2022)*



Figure 5: Lee Road Action Plan Concept

## Action Plan

The Lee Road Action Plan concept recommends targeted strategies to improve transportation, urban design, land use, and economic development on Lee Road (Figure 5). This illustrative plan represents best practices in transportation, urban design, and land use. The proposed initiatives included in the plan are listed in Figure 6 and shown in Figure 7. The plan transforms Lee Road from an arterial focused on moving cars through the district to a more balanced roadway that calms traffic and integrates and prioritizes other modes of transportation. Roadway

reconfiguration creates character for the Lee Road commercial district, calms traffic, adds bicycle infrastructure, and enhances the pedestrian experience. Improved public realm treatments, shared parking, an expanded Chelton Park and better pedestrian connections to the adjoining residential neighborhoods will bring vitality to Lee Road.

The Action Plan includes potential to increase the mixture of uses in the commercial district and to provide the

community with greater access to services, public and private amenities, and shared resources. The economic and market analyses support these land use recommendations. The recommended economic development strategies will help achieve desired business and redevelopment outcomes in the commercial district.

## PROPOSED INITIATIVES

1. Lee Road Reconfiguration
2. The Neighborhood Center
3. The Southern Gateway
4. Van Aken-Lee to Chagrín-Lee Improvements
5. Kenyon Intersection Improvements
6. Shared Parking & Access
7. Infill Development

Figure 6: Lee Road Action Plan Proposed Initiatives

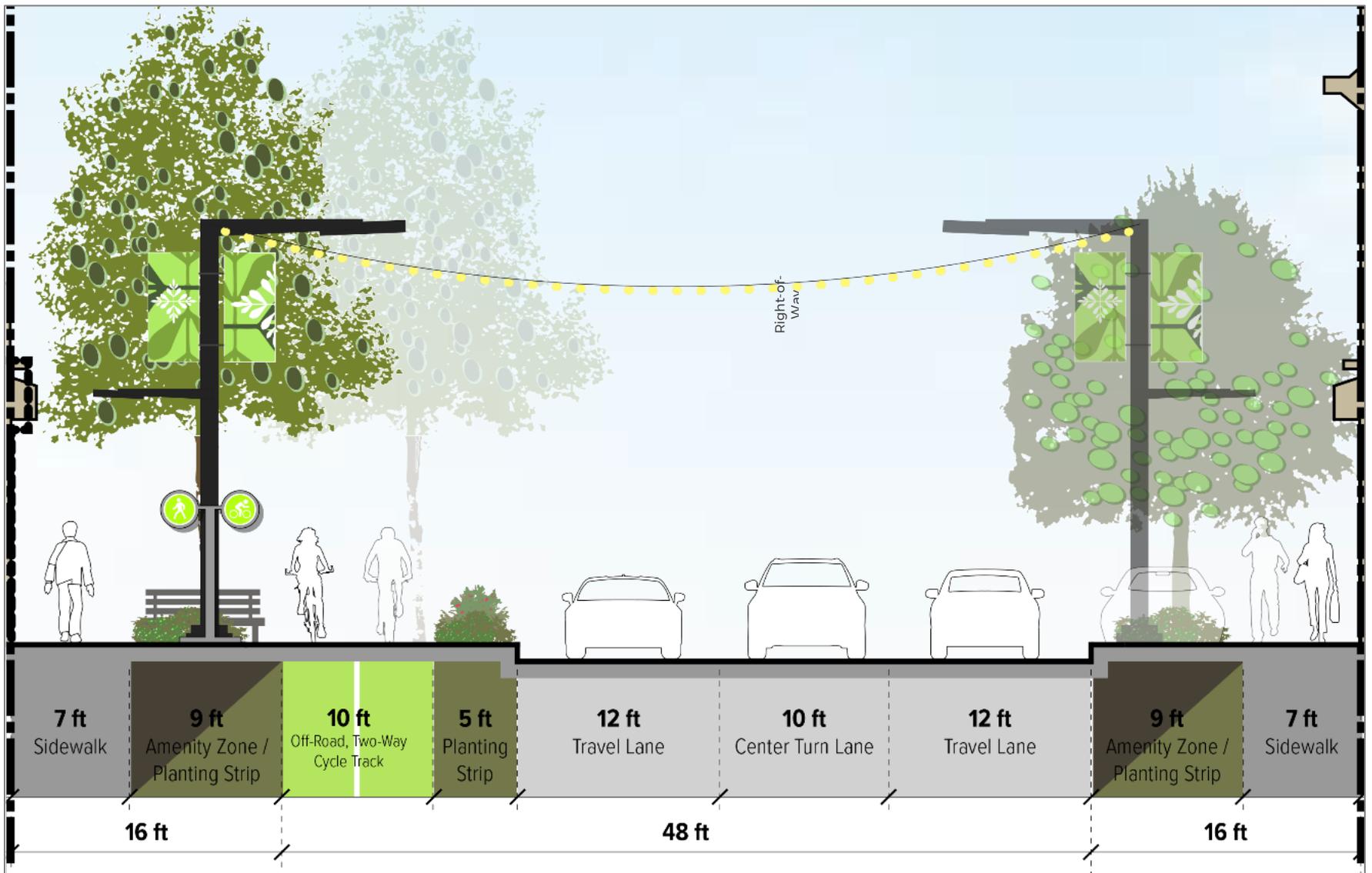


Figure 7: Proposed cross-section of Lee Road between Scottsdale & Lomond, looking north

## PROPOSED INITIATIVES

Seven proposed initiatives support the realization of the vision and goals of the Action Plan (Figure 6 and **Figure 55 on p.67**). These initiatives facilitate phased implementation of the plan.

- 1 The Lee Road Reconfiguration** initiative features a “road diet” that changes Lee Road south of Chagrin from the existing four-lanes to one lane in each direction with a center turn lane. The Lee Road-Road Diet Evaluation (Appendix G) assessed traffic operations and found that this conversion is feasible. The roadway reconfiguration also includes the addition of median sections, creation of a sidewalk-level two-way bikeway (cycle track), improved sidewalks, streetscape, pedestrian crossings and amenities, and integration of potential shared parking opportunities.

The new street configuration will calm traffic and increase safety for all modes of transportation, both motorized vehicles and non-motorized travelers (i.e., bicycles and pedestrians). It will create a sense of place and character that will help to build interest and excitement for existing businesses and potential future development in the area. The south end of Lee Road will transition smoothly from Shaker Heights into Cleveland between Scottsdale and Walden. Shaker Heights and Cleveland will continue to coordinate the integration of this roadway reconfiguration initiative across municipal boundaries. At the north end of the corridor, the planned roadway reconfiguration will transition to a planned road diet north of Van Aken Boulevard to the Shaker Heights-Cleveland Heights border, where a three-lane roadway configuration is already in place. A cross-section of the roadway reconfiguration between Chagrin and Scottsdale is illustrated in Figure 7.

- 2 The Neighborhood Center** is a major focus for redevelopment located at the heart of the project area on Lee Road. Establishing the Neighborhood Center requires relocating the existing school bus depot. Relocating the Shaker Schools bus depot was first proposed



**Figure 8: Rendering of the Neighborhood Center**

as part of *A Vision for Community Facilities*, a City, schools, and library vision plan adopted in 2019. The Neighborhood Center will be developed with new uses that will transform both sides of Lee Road into an active community hub built around an improved and expanded Chelton Park. Illustrated in Figure 8, the portion of Lee Road between Hampstead and Nicholas will transition from predominantly single-story commercial uses and under-utilized public land into a mixed-use center with three- and four-story buildings, additional neighborhood amenities, and new public spaces unique to the businesses and residents that call Lee Road home.

- 3 The Southern Gateway** initiative includes fostering redevelopment opportunities and strengthening connections between Shaker Heights and the City of Cleveland, as well as streetscape enhancements that will be incorporated as part of the Lee Road Reconfiguration initiative. The gateway strategy is intended to build on existing resources such as the historic Lee-Scottsdale building and successful area businesses. It will create a focal point where Shaker Heights and Cleveland meet (Figure 9).



Figure 9: Rendering of the Southern Gateway

- 4 **Van Aken-Lee & Chagrin-Lee Improvements** are proposed in the area surrounding the Van Aken-Lee and Chagrin-Lee intersections, which is well-developed. There are opportunities to integrate new civic uses desired by the community as well as potential infill development. This includes a new mixed-use/indoor recreation facility with basketball and the addition of a relocated and improved outdoor playground near the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Community Building and the Shaker Heights Public Library.
- 5 **Kenyon Intersection Improvements** will convert the Kenyon leg of the Chagrin-Lee intersection from two-way to one-way inbound (Figure 10). This modification to traffic operations will reduce the width of Kenyon, providing opportunities to improve pedestrian accommodations and public spaces while retaining necessary access to adjacent businesses. It is also expected to improve traffic safety and the efficiency of traffic operations at the intersection.
- 6 **Shared Parking & Access.** Many existing properties (businesses and buildings) have their own driveways and parking areas. This causes challenges entering and exiting parking lots, negative



Figure 10: Concept plan for Kenyon intersection

impacts to pedestrian safety and comfort, and cramped, substandard parking for many businesses. The proposed shared parking concept is expected to create more parking spaces with standardized layouts. Consolidating driveways will facilitate safer, more efficient traffic flow, improve the pedestrian experience, and create streetscape opportunities. There are no anticipated negative impacts to existing buildings or businesses. Shared parking will be implemented in locations where business and property owners agree to the concept and the layout.

- 7 Infill Development.** The plan identifies potential infill development sites in underutilized areas. Opportunities for these sites are dependent upon property owner and developer interest. The City will coordinate actions related to potential infill development and will move forward with proposals as opportunities arise.

## Implementation

Plan recommendations are grounded in economic and market analyses, set forth in Chapter 3. Further, public infrastructure investment combined with other City-supported and coordinated programs and initiatives will drive accompanying private investment.

### FOUNDATIONS | KEYS TO SUCCESS

Implementing the plan hinges on four keys to success listed below:

- 1. Lee Road Reconfiguration.** See Proposed Initiative #1 outlined above and described in further detail in Chapter 5, Action Plan.
- 2. The Neighborhood Center and relocating the Shaker Schools bus depot.** See Proposed Initiative #2 outlined above and described in further detail in Chapter 5, Action Plan.
- 3. Economic development strategies.** To successfully achieve desired business and redevelopment outcomes in the Lee Road commercial district – including creating a Neighborhood Center, Southern Gateway and



Figure 11: Overview of Action Plan recommendations & key takeaways

capitalizing on potential infill opportunities – the Lee Road Action Plan recommends targeted economic development strategies, including community and business programming, policy considerations, and the use of development financing and incentive tools to effectively deploy resources to the redevelopment on Lee Road. See further detail in the last section of Chapter 5, Action Plan.

- 4. **Regional collaboration.** Continued coordination with local businesses, property owners, residents, institutions, and local and regional partners will be important for plan implementation and transformation. Involved agencies will include the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA), Cuyahoga County, Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA), Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority, Shaker Heights Development Corporation (SHDC), and the cities of Cleveland and Cleveland Heights.

## STRATEGIC FIRST ACTIONS

The City of Shaker Heights and its partners should take strategic initial actions to begin to advance the plan and to continue building excitement within the community:

- **Transportation**
  - ▷ Conduct a Chagrin-Lee intersection safety study
  - ▷ Complete design and engineering for reconfiguring Lee Road
  - ▷ Seek additional implementation grants
- **Urban Design / Land Use**
  - ▷ Conduct a Shaker Schools bus depot relocation feasibility study
  - ▷ Consider zoning and land use changes
  - ▷ Develop shared parking and access plans
  - ▷ Conduct a housing study
- **Economic Development**
  - ▷ Support business programming, in coordination with SHDC, including:

- *Entrepreneurship support*
- *Business attraction, retention, and expansion strategies*
- *Business visibility strategies*

- ▷ Collaborate with SHDC to establish a Business Improvement District (BID)
  - ▷ Prioritize land assembly and control via the Shaker Lee Development Fund
  - ▷ Amend the City’s existing 725 Urban Renewal District to exclude Lee Road properties so that other incentives may be leveraged
  - ▷ Conduct required studies and establish new Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) Districts in the commercial district
  - ▷ Obtain historic designation for historic properties
  - ▷ Evaluate whether a New Community Authority would effectively assist in development
  - ▷ Develop commercial district marketing and promotion strategy, in collaboration with SHDC
- **General**
    - ▷ Regional collaboration and coordination
    - ▷ Commercial code enforcement strategy/policy

## GENERATING EXCITEMENT & COLLABORATION

A series of small projects implemented in key locations can generate excitement and result in high impact. These projects help sustain momentum while engineering and reconstruction of transportation-related improvements are advancing. Examples include:

- Public art projects
- Food, retail and entertainment pop-ups
- Programming
- Prioritize storefront renovation on Lee Road



# 1. A VISION FOR LEE ROAD: BACKGROUND, PURPOSE & GOALS

## Background & Purpose

The Lee Road Action Plan is a visionary reinvestment plan that builds on previous planning efforts to transform the area into a thriving commercial district that is attractive, walkable, and bikeable. The plan examines a variety of themes to transform the Lee Road corridor and is built upon three key components:

- **Transportation**
- **Urban design and land use**
- **Economic development**

## OUTCOMES & COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Improvements to Lee Road are intended to benefit both businesses and residents. A place-based economic development strategy and reinvestment plan, combined with transportation, urban design, and land use strategies, will support additional investment and improvements by current property owners. A revitalized streetscape will attract new property owners and businesses and result in quality-of-life improvements. New economic development will create a stronger non-residential tax base and a stronger and healthier city.

Desired outcomes and benefits are:

- Raising the quality, character, and design of the commercial area to the level of Shaker Heights' residential neighborhoods
- Creating opportunities for future economic development, including improving the business experience, creating jobs, and increasing the tax base
- Establishing positive perceptions about the commercial district
- Improving automobile travel, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian access, safety, and comfort
- Improving access to and from businesses (access management)



- Renovating the streetscape according to a comprehensive plan
- Connecting to adjacent residential neighborhoods and transit hubs
- Providing opportunities to collaborate with the city of Cleveland where business districts connect

## CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

The corridor's unique nature presents challenges and opportunities:

- **Challenges**
  - ▶ **Car-dominated corridor** does not provide bicycle infrastructure and is unwelcoming and unsafe for pedestrians.
  - ▶ **Shallow lot depth** is a consistent issue on the east side as well as the west side south of Hampstead. This presents access and development challenges. Some uses and site configurations may better fit within existing parcel depths than others.
  - ▶ **Commercial vacancies and tax-delinquent properties**
  - ▶ **Some current uses** do not enhance corridor character, connectivity, and livability. The plan identifies opportunities to relocate public facilities that conflict with project goals.
  - ▶ **Long north-south blocks** result in long, circuitous trips between Lee Road and adjacent neighborhoods. The plan investigates opportunities to provide more pedestrian connections between the neighborhoods and the commercial district.
  - ▶ **Neighborhood connections, access, and integration** are lacking.
  - ▶ **The Chagrin-Lee-Kenyon intersection** is a high crash location. The results of the county crash analysis (Appendix G) are integrated into the plan's safety-related improvements.
  - ▶ **Parking/access management** (vehicle access for businesses) is a challenge, resulting from multiple small properties that line the east side of Lee Road, each with its own driveway.



**Figure 12: Existing Lee Road Corridor**

One project objective is to capitalize on the energy of Shaker Heights' Town Center to the north and Cleveland to the south, creating unified and connected commercial districts. This will be achieved by applying a cohesive approach that integrates transportation, urban design, and land use, and economic and market strategies – all while being informed by community engagement that gives a voice to residents and businesses.

*Top image: Chagrin at Lee Road*

*Bottom image: Lee Road south of Scottsdale*



- ▷ **District is outdated, visually unappealing, and unwelcoming.**
- **Opportunities**
  - ▷ **Commercial vacancies and tax-delinquent properties** present opportunities for business growth, potential lot consolidation, and redevelopment.
  - ▷ **Relocation of public facilities** would provide a chance to rethink best uses for Lee Road properties.
  - ▷ **Market opportunities** identified through economic and market analyses provide both regional economic considerations and corridor-specific insights that inform plan development.
  - ▷ **Better pedestrian connections, access, and integration** between the adjacent neighborhoods and Lee Road are possible with a reconfiguration of the corridor.
  - ▷ **Transit connections, access, and integration** to the Blue Line rapid transit and Chagrin and Lee bus lines could be improved and create potential for Transit Oriented Development.
  - ▷ **Strong neighborhoods** bring energy and commitment, as do partner organizations like the Shaker Heights Development Corporation (SHDC). Business and resident involvement during the planning process helped ensure the plan aligns with community objectives. Building on these partnerships will be instrumental in plan implementation.
  - ▷ **Reconfiguration of Kenyon intersection** would increase pedestrian and vehicular safety.
  - ▷ **Parking/access management solutions** are possible through land use and transportation improvements.
  - ▷ **Coordination with regional partners** like the city of Cleveland, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA), Cuyahoga County, and Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) can offer continued partnership benefits and advance

plan recommendations. These partners have been supportive participants in the Lee Road Action Plan process.

- ▷ **Cleveland’s plans and studies** will be coordinated with this plan. **Cleveland’s Vision Zero**, an ongoing effort to eliminate serious injuries and deaths from crashes on Cleveland roads, lends itself to partnering efforts between Cleveland and Shaker Heights along Lee Road ([www.visionzero.org](http://www.visionzero.org)). For example, the Vision Zero plan identified Lee Road between Throckley Avenue and Miles Avenue as a top fatal or serious crash segment. Additionally, the road is due for repaving in the coming years. Rather than simply resurface the street and restripe it in its existing configuration, Cleveland performed a detailed crash analysis to inform potential redesigns that will be coordinated with Shaker Heights.

## Project Vision & Goals

The City convened and engaged a Stakeholder Group, Business & Property Owner Focus Group, and the greater community to develop the vision and goals for Lee Road. The results are grounded in the City’s expected outcomes and community benefits and are supported by the community.

### VISION STATEMENT

**The City of Shaker Heights, in partnership with the community, envisions a Lee Road commercial district that is commercially vibrant, aesthetically attractive, equitable, sustainable, safe, connected, and accessible to all.**

**Successfully integrate transportation, land use, economic development and an engaged community in development of the District.**



## GOALS

- Reimagine Lee Road south of Van Aken Boulevard
- Bring a fresh perspective to an aging corridor
- Create an environment in which businesses can prosper
- Effectively engage residents, businesses, and property owners using a variety of tactics
- Identify solutions that are both creative and practical
- Enhance placemaking through public infrastructure
- Undertake a comprehensive, inclusive planning process, memorialized in the Lee Road Action Plan

## Plan Development Process

The plan development process (Figure 13) first examined existing conditions, challenges, and opportunities, which became the foundation for concept development, refinement of those ideas, and Lee Road Action Plan recommendations. Community engagement took place during each project phase to ensure the plan effectively reflects community needs and preferences and is supported by residents, business and property owners, and community partners.



Figure 13: Plan Development Process



## Relevant Studies

The commercial area at Lee Road and Chagrin Boulevard was identified as one of two areas most in need of improvement in the City's [Strategic Investment Plan](#) (2000), which has guided the City's economic development efforts over the past two decades. That plan calls for revitalizing Lee Road by establishing the Shaker Heights character at the gateways to the city, including the southern gateway addressed in the Lee Road Action Plan.

The *Strategic Investment Plan* also noted that the original city designers were mostly concerned with connecting Shaker Heights residents to downtown Cleveland, ignoring the need for major north-south streets. As a result, the three north-south corridors (Lee, Warrensville Center, and Green Roads) carry significant volumes of traffic. Furthermore, the commercial streets are described as "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." In addition to high traffic volume and lack of character, no accommodations currently exist for bicyclists.

The [Economic Development Strategy for Shaker Heights, Ohio—Strategic Investment Plan Update](#), adopted in November 2010, calls for a commitment to placemaking in and around commercial districts, attracting new businesses and making Shaker Heights a destination of choice for office workers, and improving access to retailers and restaurants by a variety of modalities.

In 2012, the City adopted the [Lee Road Traffic Study & Corridor Plan](#) which recommended reconfiguration of Lee Road as a three-lane roadway with bike shoulders from City Hall northward and bike lanes between Lomond and Scottsdale, with sharrows – marked lanes to be shared by vehicle and bicycle traffic – between City Hall and Lomond. It also recommended signal phasing and timing modifications. Based on

the recommendations of the 2012 plan, the City obtained grant funds and completed engineering to implement the three-lane road configuration and bike lanes. The project was never implemented as the grant covered road striping only and not resurfacing. Other factors included increased costs, deteriorating road surface, and stringent state requirements.

The City supports the lane reconfiguration recommendations from the 2012 plan. The Lee Road Action Plan reevaluates the road configuration south of Van Aken and integrates the proposed lane changes north of Van Aken from the 2012 plan.

Previous studies relevant to development of the Lee Road Action Plan are available at [Planning Documents | Shaker Heights, OH \(shakeronline.com\)](#).

- [A Vision for Community Facilities- Forward Together, Shaping a strategy for Shaker's facilities: city, schools, library](#) (2019). The City, schools, and library worked on a vision plan. It included all school buildings and facilities, one library building, and three select city buildings.
- [Lee Road Traffic Study & Corridor Plan](#) (2012)
- [Economic Development Strategy for Shaker Heights, Ohio—Strategic Investment Plan Update](#) (2010)
- [Lee/Van Aken Transit-Oriented Development Plan, Volume 1 & Volume 2](#) (2007)
- [Strategic Investment Plan](#) (2000)
- [Ward 1 Master Plan, Cleveland, Ohio](#) (2014) [www.shakeronline.com/Ward1](http://www.shakeronline.com/Ward1)



## 2. EXISTING CONDITIONS & BEST PRACTICES

### Introduction

Before initiating plan development, it was important to understand the existing conditions on Lee Road within the study area. This chapter documents features and characteristics of current transportation, urban design, land use conditions, and summarizes best practices. Economic and market analysis information (including data on existing business conditions) is reviewed in Chapter 3, Market Study & Economic Analysis.

### Roadway/Traffic

Lee Road (CR-8) is classified as a major arterial. It is one of three north-south roads that connect through Shaker Heights to communities to the north and south. It serves as a truck route connection to I-480. The project area extends from Van Aken in Shaker Heights south to Walden Road in Cleveland, roughly  $\frac{3}{4}$  miles in length, with nine signalized intersections:

1. Van Aken West
2. Van Aken East
3. Library drive
4. Chagrin
5. Lomond
6. Scottsdale
7. Invermere
8. Throckley
9. Walden

The project area includes two unsignalized intersections, Hampstead and Nicholas, and both are located between the Lomond and Scottsdale intersections. Lee Road is configured as a five-lane road between Van Aken and Lomond, with on-street parking between Library drive and Van Aken. This configuration accommodates two northbound and two southbound travel lanes with designated left turn lanes at intersections. South of Lomond, Lee Road is a four-lane roadway with two northbound and two southbound travel lanes. On-street parking is available south of Scottsdale. The posted speed limit is 25 mph.



To determine the feasibility of a border-to-border road diet, traffic volume and turning movement counts were collected on Tuesday, May 17, 2022, at locations from Shaker Boulevard to Scottsdale Boulevard. Applying a growth rate of 0.5%, these counts were used to project 2027 opening year and 2047 design year traffic volume. The projected volumes used in the capacity analysis are shown in Table 1. The traffic analysis is in Appendix G.

SEGMENT	2027 ADT	2047 ADT
North of Van Aken Blvd	17,120	19,260
Van Aken to Chagrin	20,220	22,750
Chagrin to Lomond	20,860	23,480
Lomond to Scottsdale	20,360	22,900
South of Scottsdale	21,140	23,770

**Table 1. Lee Road Capacity Analysis Average Daily Traffic**

In addition, a crash analysis was commissioned on behalf of the City of Shaker Heights and the Cuyahoga County Department of Public Works. The Crash Data Analysis Memorandum (Appendix G) analyzed Lee Road crash data from 2018 to 2020 between Walden Avenue in the city of Cleveland north to Fairmount Boulevard in the city of

Converting a roadway from four travel lanes to two travel lanes plus a center turn lane (road diet) where traffic volumes allow it can improve traffic safety while maintaining through traffic operations. Preliminary traffic capacity analysis indicates that implementing a road diet on Lee Road from Shaker Heights' northern border to Walden is feasible.

Cleveland Heights. There were 415 crashes in the study period. Predominantly occurring at intersections (80%), the most prevalent crashes were rear end, left turn, sideswipe-passing, and angle crashes. The Chagrin-Lee intersection saw the most crashes for an intersection in the study area. The crash analysis recommended conducting a stand-alone safety study of the Chagrin-Lee intersection.

**Best Practice**  
**ODOT MULTIMODAL DESIGN GUIDE**

Published in 2022, the Ohio Department of Transportation's Multimodal Design Guide serves as the primary source for planners and designers implementing pedestrian and bicycle facilities in ODOT rights-of-way and as part of the Local Let Process. By providing comprehensive state-of-the-practice design guidance, the Guide aligns with ODOT's current vision, mission, and goals related to walking and bicycling. It advances the Department's overall mission of improving safety across the state; it aligns with ODOT's *Walk.Bike.Ohio* vision of making active transportation a safe, convenient, and accessible transportation option for everyone; and it supports the Strategic Highway Safety Plan's goal of achieving zero deaths on Ohio's roadways.

The design guidance provided in this document should be incorporated into the corridor design for the Lee Road reconfiguration initiative.



## Bicycles

There is no designated bicycle infrastructure, often referred to as “bicycle facilities,” along Lee Road in Shaker Heights. The City plans to simultaneously implement a border-to-border road diet, including converting Lee Road north of City Hall and the Police Station to a three-lane road with wide shoulders to accommodate in-road bicycle travel (as documented in the 2012 [Lee Road Traffic Study & Corridor Plan](#)). One project goal for the Lee Road Action Plan is to provide new

bicycle infrastructure that accommodates all ages and abilities along Lee Road through the project area (Van Aken to Walden), which will transition to in-road bicycle infrastructure north of the project area and Cleveland’s bicycle infrastructure to the south. Currently, Lee Road prioritizes travel by motor vehicles. A variety of bicycle accommodations connected along the corridor would enhance bicycle travel. Some physically separated bikeways (Figure 14) accommodate all ages and abilities while in-road bikeways with higher levels of stress for bicyclists (Figure 15). In general, bicycle infrastructure for all



**Figure 14: Examples of physically separated bikeways (l-r: multiuse trail, two-way cycle track, one-way cycle track)**

Source: NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide



**Figure 15: Examples of in-road bikeways (l-r: bike lanes, parking adjacent bike lanes, sharrow)**

Source: NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide



ages and abilities provides physical separation between the bicycle facility and motor vehicles.

- **Physically Separated Bikeway Facilities.** (Figure 14) This would meet the community preference to provide an all ages and abilities bikeway.
  - ▷ Multiuse trail
  - ▷ Two-way cycle track
  - ▷ One-way cycle track
- **In-Road Bikeway Facilities.** (Figure 15) These do not meet the community preference to provide an all ages and abilities bikeway.

- ▷ Bike lanes
- ▷ Buffered bike lanes
- ▷ Sharrows (shared lane markings)

## Pedestrians

Pedestrian features along Lee Road consist of continuous sidewalks along the east and west sides of the road. The sidewalks between Lomond and Scottsdale are relatively narrow at 5 feet. They are set back from the street with street trees, creating desirable character. However, the east sidewalk between Lomond and Scottsdale abuts

### Best Practice

#### ALL AGES & ABILITIES BICYCLE FACILITIES

The All Ages & Abilities Bike Facilities Criteria is a national and international best practice that should be adopted for all bicycle facility designs and network implementations.

**All Ages & Abilities Bike Facilities are safe, comfortable, and equitable.**

Building bicycle infrastructure that meets these criteria is an essential strategy for cities seeking to improve traffic safety, reduce congestion, improve air quality and public health, provide better and more equitable access to jobs and opportunities, and bolster local economies.

Streets that are safe and comfortable for all ages and abilities bicycling are critical for urban mobility.

*~ NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide*

### Best Practice

#### SUPPORTING WALKABILITY

Where walkability is desired, particularly in urban areas, it is best practice to provide crosswalks on all approaches of signalized intersections. Missing crosswalks can cause pedestrians to have to cross an extra one or two crosswalks to reach their desired destination. This increases pedestrian exposure to motor vehicles as well as lengthening their travel path, resulting in negative impacts to pedestrian safety, access, and comfort.

Where signalized intersections are distant from areas where pedestrian destinations are across a street, consideration should be given to providing a mid-block crossing with treatments to enhance pedestrian crossing safety. Such enhancements could include median sections, signage, rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB), and/or pedestrian hybrid beacons.



multiple private off-street parking lots, resulting in an uncomfortable and unsafe pedestrian experience.

The orientation of the street grid results in a long block between Lomond and Scottsdale, limiting the opportunities for residents of the Lomond neighborhood (east of Lee) to access Lee Road. It is a bit easier for the Moreland neighborhood residents (west of Lee) to access the corridor via Hampstead and Nicholas, although it is difficult to cross the street as these intersections are not signalized.

The ODOT Multimodal Design Guide provides information on pedestrian crossing difficulty by measuring how often motor vehicles yield to pedestrians at uncontrolled crossings (i.e., mid-block). on roadways with varying travel lanes and speed limits. Figure 16 indicates a median yield rate of about 15% on four-lane roads with speeds of 21-30 mph. This represents the conditions on Lee Road between Lomond and Walden, and the low yield rate conveys the importance of providing some level of protection for a mid-block pedestrian crossing on Lee Road. Based on this data, a reconfigured Lee Road might expect yield rates at midblock crossings to increase from 15% to 32%.

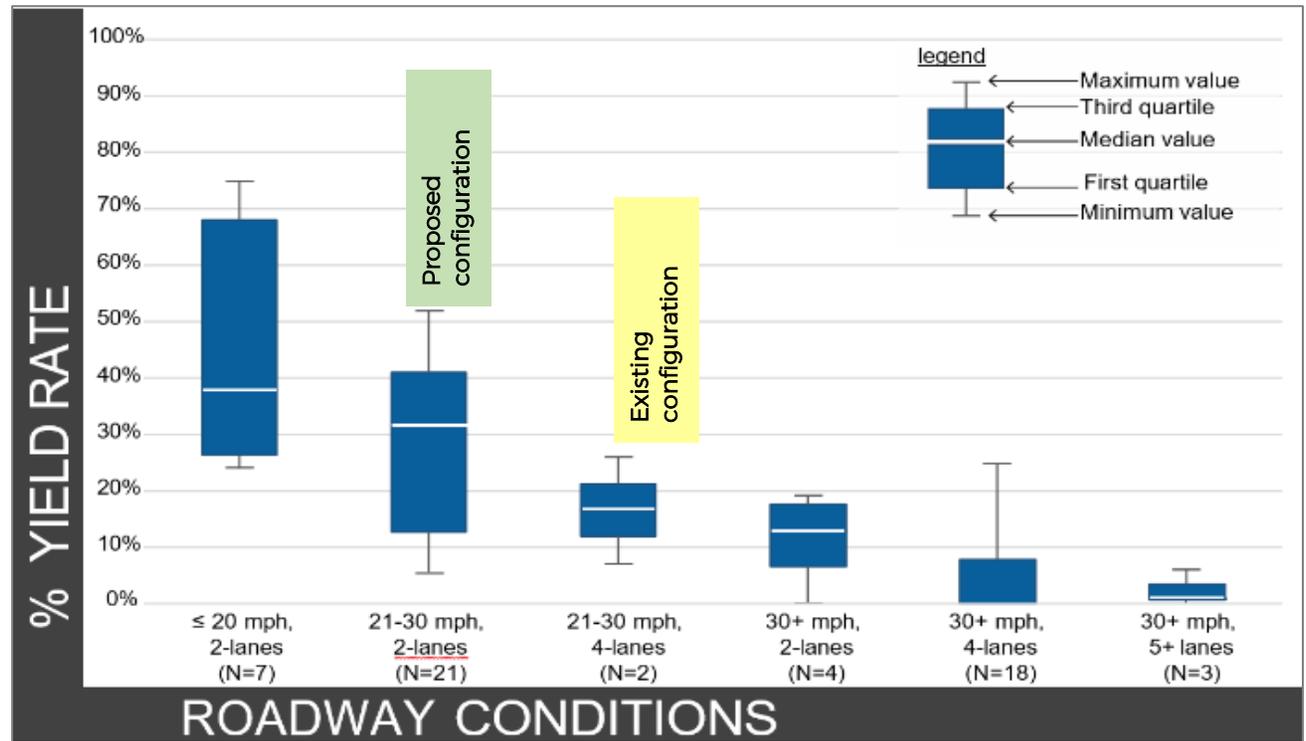


Figure 16: Motorists yielding at uncontrolled crossings based on roadway characteristics (N = number of observed sites)

Source: ODOT Multimodal Design Guide

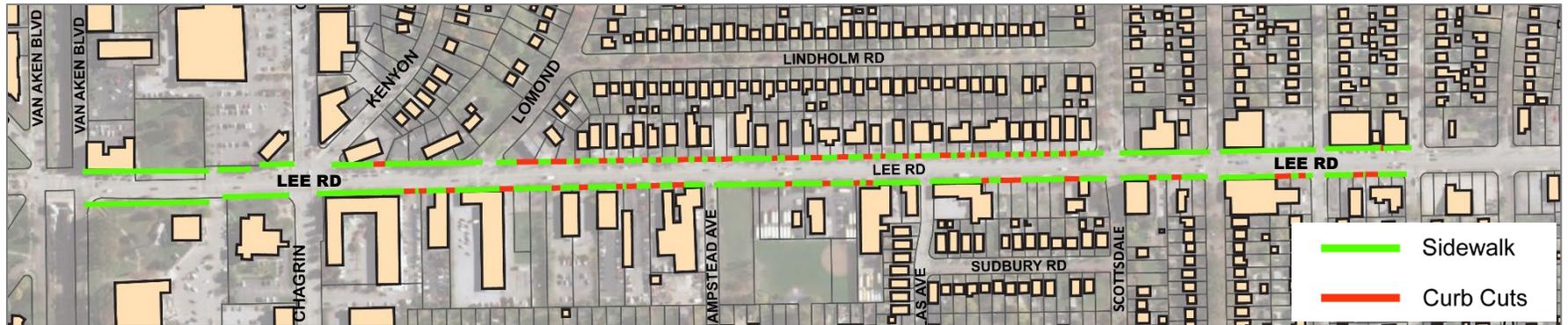


Figure 17: Lee Road existing curb cuts

## Transit

Transit service for the Lee Road corridor includes bus and rail, as listed below. Transit waiting environments vary along the corridor. The most robust waiting environment is RTA’s Lee-Van Aken Station. Bus stops located between Van Aken and Chagrin have bus shelters. Bus stops south of Lomond are typically signed, without shelters. The Hampstead bus stop has seating but no shelter.

- **Route 40** provides north-south bus service on Lee Road between Bratenahl and Southgate Transit Center, running at 30-minute intervals.
- **Route 14/14A** provides east-west bus service between downtown Cleveland and the Van Aken District, running at 15-minute (or better) intervals.
- **Blue Line** light rail service connects to downtown Cleveland and the Van Aken District, running at 30-minute intervals.

## Curb Cuts

Curb cuts create conflict points between pedestrians on sidewalks and vehicles entering and exiting driveways. Table 2 identifies the number and percentage of curb cuts on each side of Lee within the study area. Figure 17 illustrates curb cut locations; it is evident that the number and frequency of curb cuts along the east side of Lee between Lomond and Scottsdale have a much greater impact on pedestrians than other parts of the corridor. Figure 18 shows driveway impacts.

	West side	East side
Number of curb cuts	23	31
Length of curb cuts	710'	797'
Sidewalk length	3800'	3795'
% of curb cut	18.7%	21%

Table 2. Lee Road existing curb cuts



## Parking

Most of the parking along the corridor is provided via off-street parking lots. Most parking between Lomond and Scottsdale is limited to small lots on individual parcels accessed by separate driveways for each parcel. This causes access management challenges along the corridor (see Best Practices at right). Parking is often not buffered from the public sidewalk (Figure 18).



**Figure 18: Parking and driveway impacts to sidewalks  
Lee Road between Lomond and Scottsdale**

### Best Practice

#### ACCESS MANAGEMENT

Access management is a strategy for managing the type of development along and physical connections to transportation corridors by regulating the frequency or location of access points along roadways. Access points range from interchanges and intersecting streets to driveways and curb cuts.

Minimizing the number of driveways and creating opportunities for shared parking will improve both pedestrian and vehicle safety by reducing the number of potential conflict points, reinforcing more predictable driver behaviors, and improving overall corridor organization.

## Corridor Segments

The Lee Road project area is subdivided into segments (Table 3). Aspects of each segment’s characteristics, existing challenges and potential opportunities are summarized in the sections below.

Segment	Curb to Curb Width
Van Aken - Library - Chagrin	
Van Aken to Library	72'
Library to Chagrin	60'
Chagrin - Lomond	60'
Lomond - Scottsdale	48'
Scottsdale - Walden	48'

**Table 3. Lee Road Curb-to-Curb Widths**



**Figure 19: Lee Road: Van Aken - Library - Chagrin**

### **VAN AKEN - LIBRARY - CHAGRIN**

The east side of Lee between Van Aken and Chagrin consists of ground level retail uses within the Shaker Towne Centre shopping center and the historic Kingsbury Building with the Warrensville West Cemetery between them. The west side of Lee features predominantly civic uses with the Shaker Heights Public Library and Stephanie Tubbs Jones Community Building and park space. The five-lane roadway is configured with two travel lanes in each direction plus left turn lanes. On-street parking is available between the Van Aken East and Library drive intersections. Previous studies have shown that the existing roadway configuration is needed to accommodate the traffic volume on this segment, including through traffic and left turn volumes.

Lee Road crosses the RTA light rail tracks via a six-lane bridge between the signalized intersections at Van Aken East and Van Aken West. The current signal phasing and timing (split phased east-west) was implemented in 2018 to mitigate crashes. According to City staff, the changes have been effective in reducing crashes. The northbound lane alignment is offset due to the constrained lane widths across the RTA bridge and accommodating both northbound and southbound left turn lanes at the Van Aken intersection. The library access drive intersection lacks a crosswalk on the south leg of the intersection. This is a challenge cited by residents of Library Courts, senior apartments, which is located south of the library. There is no bicycle infrastructure but there is potential for an off-road bikeway and improved signalization.

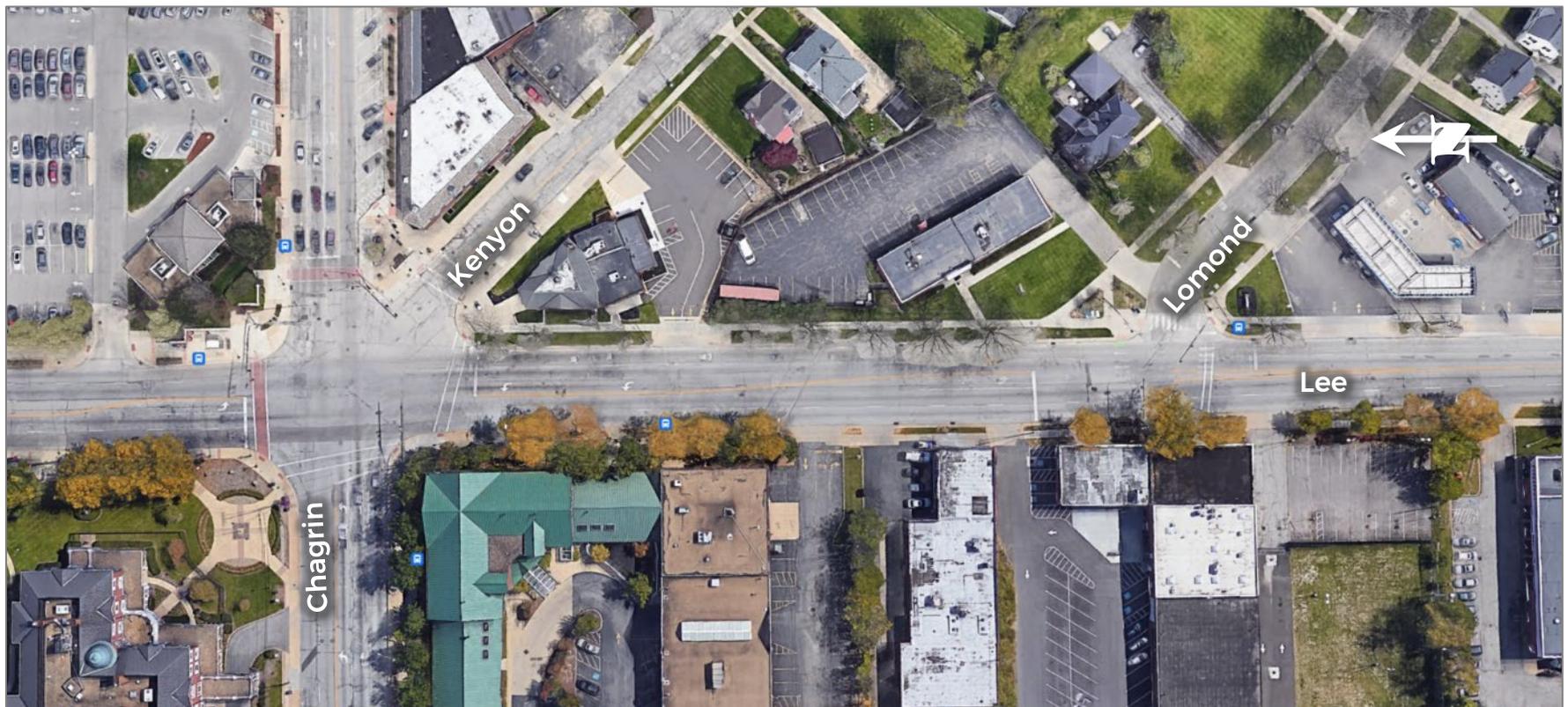


## CHAGRIN - LOMOND

The Chagrin intersection is large due to its configuration with five-legs. As a result, pedestrian crossings are long and challenging, and signal operations are constrained.

Reconfiguration of the Kenyon leg of the intersection has the potential to improve overall intersection operations, safety, and the pedestrian experience.

This segment of Lee Road transitions from the busy Shaker Towne Centre shopping center to a commercial district that consists of small lots with predominantly single-story commercial uses accessed by individual driveways. There is no bicycle infrastructure. This segment and connection to the Lomond neighborhood could be improved with bike infrastructure and better pedestrian amenities like widened sidewalks and enhanced pedestrian crossings at the Lomond intersection.



**Figure 20: Lee Road: Chagrin - Lomond**



## LOMOND - SCOTTSDALE

This segment is characterized by predominantly free-standing one- and two-story buildings with individual parking lots lining the east and west sides of Lee. Lot depths on the east side are shallow. It is important to maintain access to the existing businesses. There may be opportunities for access management improvements such as implementation of shared parking and driveway consolidation, to the extent that it's feasible for current property owners and businesses. The pedestrian realm between Lomond and Scottsdale is not inviting – the sidewalks are narrow and the many driveways along both east and west sides create potential conflict points between motor vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians. There is no bike infrastructure.

Shared parking could improve the pedestrian environment, as would widening the sidewalk and creating public gathering spaces. Enhanced transit waiting environments that provide protection and amenities would also improve the pedestrian experience. Pedestrian connectivity would be enhanced with provision of a mid-block crossing between the Lomond and Scottsdale intersections, along with pedestrian paths to the adjacent residential neighborhoods. The addition of bike infrastructure would provide safe travel for cyclists of all abilities. Chelton Park, a significant community asset, is blocked from Lee Road by the Shaker Heights school bus depot. The 2019 [Vision of Community Facilities – Forward Together](#) set forth a key initiative to study Lee Road facilities – including the school district bus

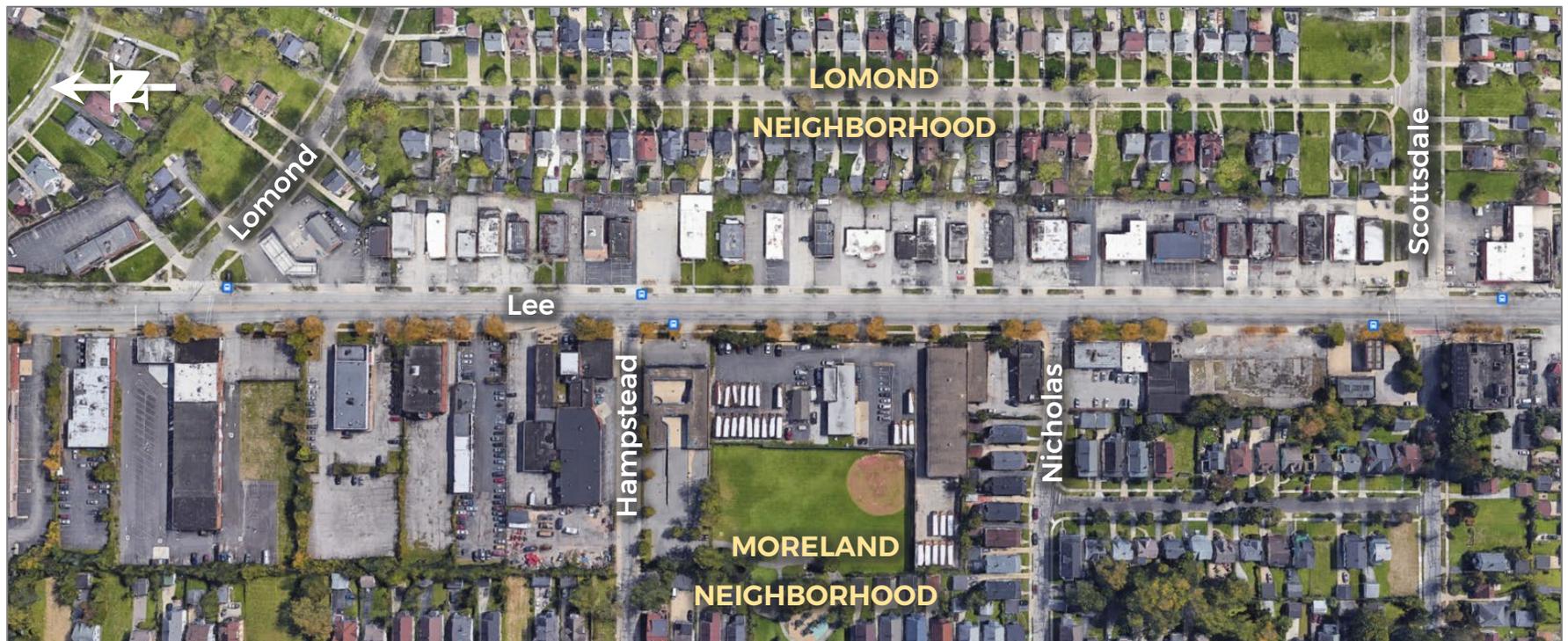


Figure 21: Lee Road: Lomond --Scottsdale



depot – to focus on the best and highest use of the land. The Lee Road Action Plan recommends moving the school bus depot to create a mixed-use Neighborhood Center. This would provide significant opportunities for redevelopment, improved public spaces, and pedestrian connections between Chelton Park and Lee Road.

### Best Practice

#### INTEGRATING TRANSPORTATION & URBAN DESIGN

It is important to employ urban design and streetscape strategies that work in unison with transportation infrastructure. Land use recommendations and site layouts that are informed by market analysis will ensure livability and long-term vitality.

## SCOTTSDALE-WALDEN

The Scottsdale-Walden segment represents the transition between Shaker Heights and Cleveland. The intersections are signalized, and they are located close together so pedestrian crossings are easier in this segment than in the others. However, the pedestrian experience is uncomfortable – cars regularly park randomly on the sidewalk, treating the area as on-street parking and encroaching on the pedestrian realm. There is no bike infrastructure. This segment needs better organization and definition to facilitate safe and comfortable pedestrian and bicyclist travel. A mix of buildings and businesses are present, some with their own parking lots and others that rely on the haphazard on-street parking.

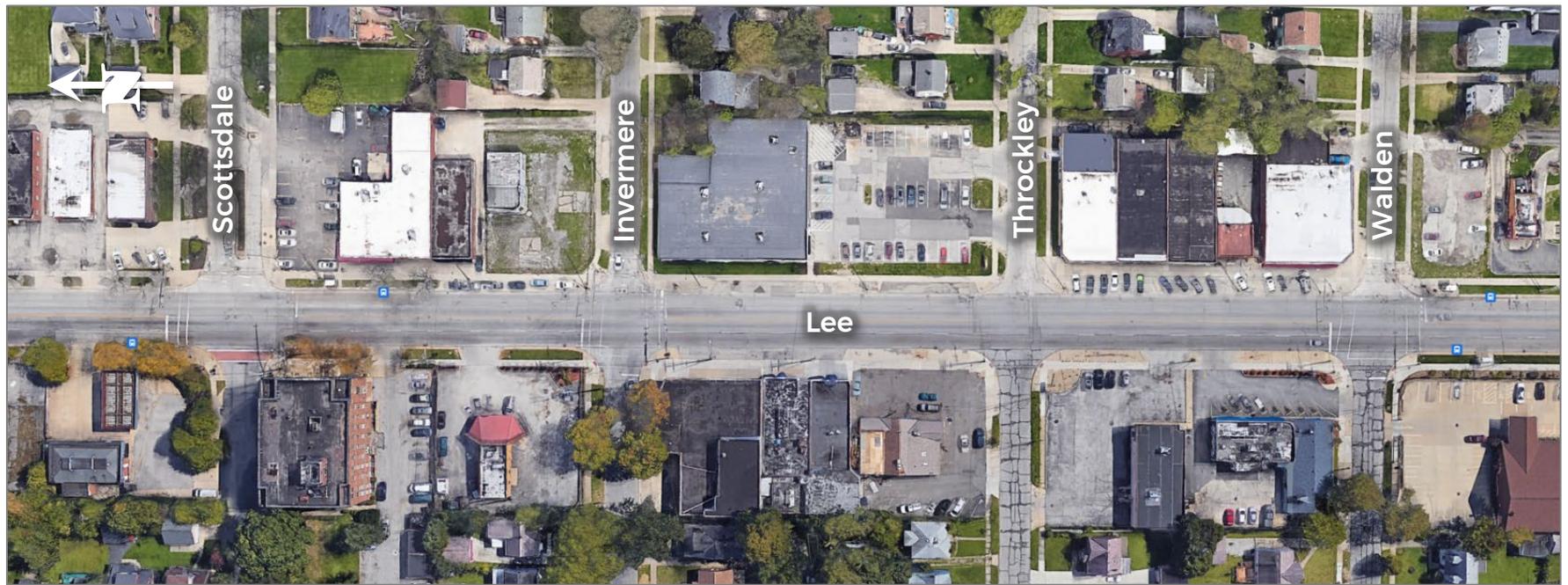


Figure 22: Lee Road: Scottsdale - Walden



## 3. MARKET STUDY & ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

### Introduction

The Lee Road Action Plan is grounded in a citywide Market Study and an Economic Analysis. The Market Study evaluates the presence of residential, retail, and office uses and how such uses expect to evolve on Lee Road. The Economic Analysis identifies trends for growth and decline that define the trajectory of the Shaker Heights market and how such trends translate into opportunities for Lee Road. This analysis also includes updates to the City's 2010 [Economic Development Strategy—Strategic Investment Plan Update](#), including an evaluation of which strategies and goals should be maintained and recommendations for new approaches and strategies. Supporting documentation is included in Appendices B, C, D, and E.

The methodology employed in analyzing the market and local economy includes a mixture of data sources, both publicly available and privately subscribed, and such sources vary by land use category and economic topic. In preparing this study, the team reviewed information from publicly available and proprietary sources, including JobsOhio, the State of Ohio, the City of Shaker Heights, U.S. Census, information from the Cuyahoga County Fiscal Officer, Implan, PolicyMap, and other sources.

It is worth acknowledging the impacts associated with the COVID-19 pandemic in connection with conducting these analyses. The pandemic rendered 2021-2022 as a most unique and peculiar time to analyze markets and economies. Anticipated short-and-long-term impacts will need to be monitored closely, as more certainty will be gained from post-pandemic best practices.

### Updates to 2010 Economic Development Strategy

In November 2010, the City of Shaker Heights completed a citywide [Economic Development Strategy, Shaker—Strategic Investment Plan Update](#). The status of the 2010 recommendations and implemented actions are summarized below.

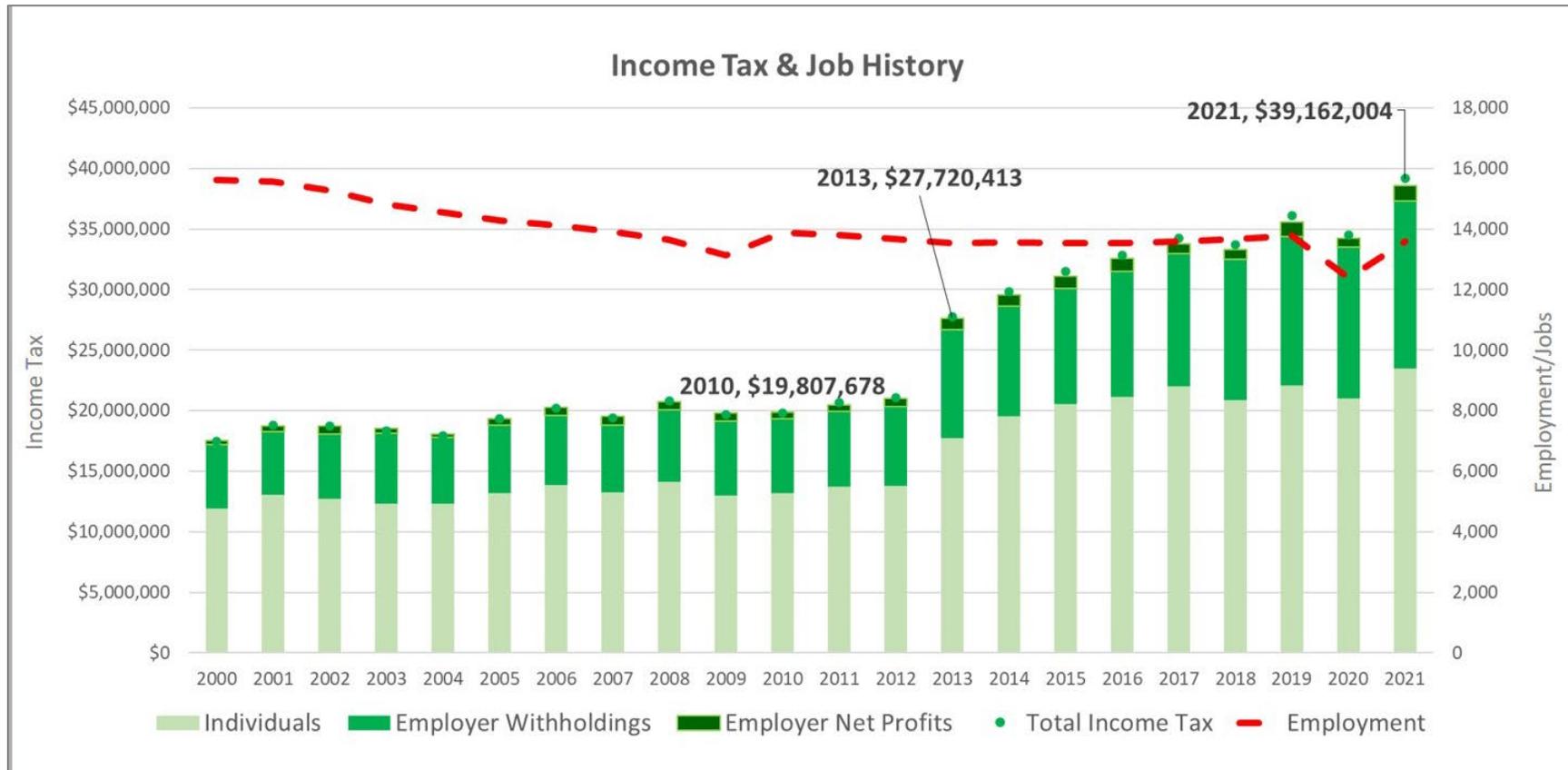


Figure 23: Shaker Heights income tax and job history

Sources: City of Shaker Heights Finance Department & American Community Survey census data

### 2010 RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLEMENTED ACTIONS

- **2010 recommendation:** Shaker Heights needs to generate more income tax to maintain long-term economic strength.

**Progress:** In 2012, Shaker Heights residents approved an increase in the local income tax rate from 1.75% to 2.25% to offset cuts in state aid, including the loss of the estate tax. Since 2013, income tax

revenue has increased by 46%. Income tax revenue in 2010 (the baseline of the original 2010 strategy) was approximately \$19.8 million; income tax revenue in 2013 (after the rate increase) was more than \$27.7 million; and income tax revenue in 2022 is projected to exceed \$40.6 million. Significantly, the City is seeing continued growth in the percentage of income tax revenue generated from employer withholdings with a decreasing



percentage generated from individual income taxes. In 2013, the City collected 64% of its income tax revenue from individuals, 32% from employer withholdings, and 3% from employer net profits. Projections for 2022 include individual income tax dropping to 57% of the total, employer withholdings generating 39% of income tax revenue, and employer net profits generating 4% of total income tax revenue (Figure 23).

The City has experienced this revenue growth while the overall number of people who work in Shaker Heights has declined over the same period. Further, from 2016-2020, the city witnessed a 116% growth in employees earning over \$40,000 annually, compared to 16.6% at the county level and 19.87% at the state level. Approximately 8.1% of City residents are also employed within the City. Work-from-home withholdings rules and changes are still evolving and will impact overall income tax receipts and employment trends moving forward.

- **2010 recommendation: Shaker Heights needs more pro-business policies, including competitive commercial tax rates.**

*Progress:* Shaker Heights, like many communities, has faced challenges related to state funding and macroeconomic issues that may have created barriers to larger scale commercial tax rate reform. However, the City has developed new, proactive business incentive programming that is thoughtful and risk averse, including a Forgivable Vision Loan Program, SBA Partnership Loan Program, and Storefront Renovation Program. The loan programs are grounded in income tax metrics to ensure direct return-on-investment (ROI), and clawback provisions for departing businesses are in place with lengthy terms to ensure businesses are anchored in the City. When combined with traditional municipal finance and property tools, these incentives create strong options for businesses.

- **2010 recommendation: Shaker Heights lacks quality office space and needs to develop or redevelop office property to attract jobs.**

*Progress:* The City partnered with a local developer to construct 64,000 SF of Class A office space at the Van Aken District, which is now fully occupied and currently represents 5.8% of the total office market in the city. (Total office space in the city is approximately 1.1 million SF). The City should work to add additional Class A office space to the marketplace. Office space classifications are defined in the following sections.

- **2010 recommendation: Financial support to commercial property owners to modernize their facilities combined with business-segment specific incentives will be the optimal methods to correct market imbalances.**

*Progress:* An analysis of over eight peer cities (selected based on median household income, growth in self-employment income, and population) and best practices from larger cities both inside and outside Ohio suggests a number of methods and best practices to modernize and expand the toolbox. See Appendix D for details.

## CURRENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

In response to findings from the 2010 Economic Development Strategy, the City created a number of economic development incentive programs to accompany its typical City mix of public finance tools (i.e. Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) tax abatements, loans, and rebates). Below is an overview of each program based on the following key elements of an incentive program: Goal, Amount, Budget, Use, and Clawback (e.g., return of City funds in the event of default).

- **Forgivable Vision Loan Program**

- **Goal:** Diversify tax base; attract, retain, and grow business; strengthen commercial building stock.



- ▶ **Amount:** Up to 50% of new income taxes collected by the City during loan payback period (3–5-year period).
- ▶ **Budget:** Funds may be available in the City’s Economic Development and Housing Reserve Fund, as approved by Council.
- ▶ **Use:** Tenant improvements, equipment, and capital.
- ▶ **Clawback:** The City may require repayment of unforgiven loan proceeds if operations are not maintained for two times the loan term.
- **SBA Shaker Partnership Loan Program**
  - ▶ **Goal:** Support business expansion by offering a forgivable loan to be used as a business’ equity contribution in seeking a traditional bank loan.
  - ▶ **Amount:** Up to 15% equity contribution (7.5% City, 7.5% county), based on the business’ income tax generation.
  - ▶ **Budget:** Round 1: \$500,000 (county contributed \$250,000); Round 2: \$200,000 (county contributed \$150,000).
  - ▶ **Use:** Equity in a bank loan for fixed assets (non-working capital).
  - ▶ **Clawback:** Loan amount is not forgiven if performance goals are not met.
- **Storefront Renovation Program**
  - ▶ **Goal:** Improve appearance of commercial districts; support property and business owners’ efforts to improve exteriors; contribute to economic growth.
  - ▶ **Amount:** 1) Signage only: rebate of up to 50% of the cost of signage, with City grant capped at \$3,000; 2) Full façade: rebate of up to 50% of project costs, with City grant capped at \$15,000.
  - ▶ **Budget:** \$50,000 in annual Economic Development Department operating budget, plus \$24,500 to pay for design specialist.
  - ▶ **Use:** Rebate for costs incurred for business signage and exterior façade improvements.
  - ▶ **Clawback:** None, rebate is awarded or not awarded based on completion of project.

## RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS

Based on the review of the 2010 Economic Development Strategy and the progress made on those goals, the City should maintain the following strategies and goals and further advance or improve them as noted:

- The City should maintain a focus on generating income tax; however, it needs to diversify the strategy to more than just adding jobs. The City should focus on attracting higher-paying jobs and housing that caters to desired and emerging occupations.
- The City continues to be on the cutting edge in incentive and business programming. It is important that the City maintains this objective with an emphasis on supporting commercial property owners, business tenants, and business districts, as outlined in the 2010 Economic Development Strategy.
- The City has addressed its objective to increase quality office space with the development of Phase 1 of the Van Aken District. The City should continue to promote the development of additional Class A Office space in the city.
- The City has created a number of programs to accomplish its objective to support commercial property investments and provide business-segment specific incentives, including the Forgivable Vision Loan Program, the SBA Partnership Loan Program, and the Storefront Renovation Program. These incentives should continue to be modernized to capitalize on trends and changes to the external environment.



## Market Study

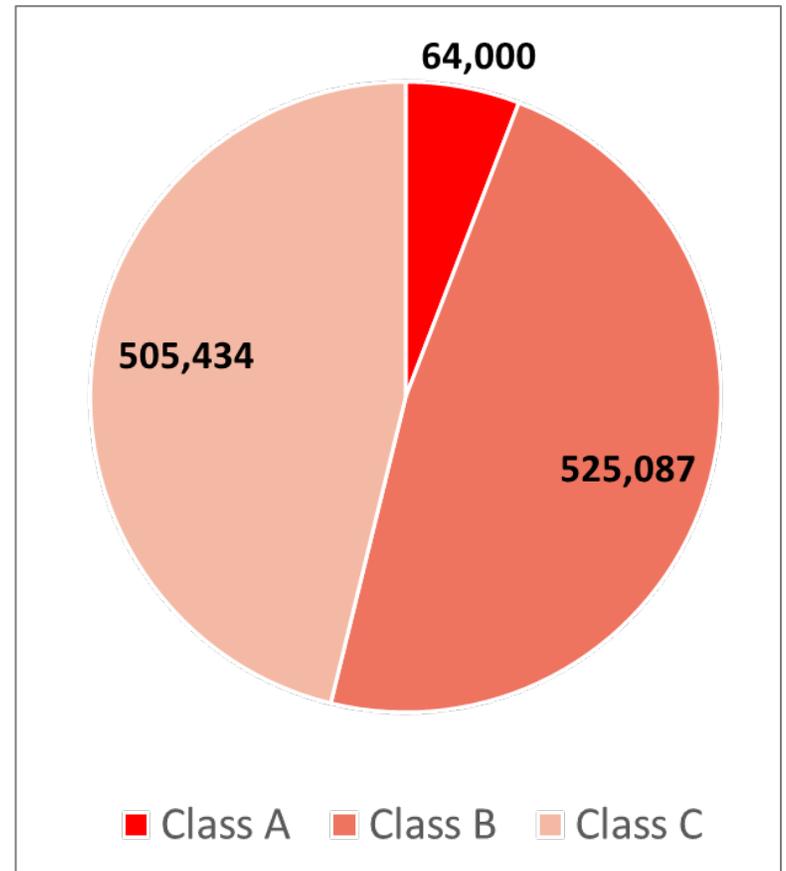
This market study evaluates the presence of residential, retail, and office uses and how such uses might be expected to evolve on Lee Road. Existing conditions related to the Shaker Heights market are summarized below.

### OFFICE MARKET

The current Shaker Heights office market contains a total of 1,094,521 SF, consisting almost entirely of Class B and Class C office space. Only 64,000 SF of office space in the city is Class A office space, or 5.8% of the total. See Figure 24.

### HOW IS OFFICE SPACE CLASSIFIED?

- Class A**  
 Class A describes an office building with rents in the top 30 to 40% of the marketplace. Class A buildings are well-located in major employment centers and typically have good transit, vehicular, and pedestrian access. Additionally, they are located adjacent to or in proximity to a high number of retail establishments and business-oriented or fast casual restaurants. Building services consist of above-average upkeep and management.
- Class B**  
 Class B is defined as an office building with rents between those of Class A and Class C buildings. Class B buildings are in good to fair locations in major employment centers and have good to fair transit, vehicular, and pedestrian access. They are located adjacent to or in proximity to a moderate number of retail establishments and business-oriented or fast casual restaurants. Building services consist of average upkeep and management.
- Class C**  
 Class C is defined as an office building with rents in the bottom 10% of the marketplace. Class C buildings are in less-desirable locations



**Figure 24: Shaker Heights office square footage by class**  
Source: Cuyahoga County Fiscal Office

relative to the needs of major tenant sectors in the marketplace. They can be older, neglected buildings in good locations or moderate-level buildings in poor locations, so transit, vehicular, and pedestrian access may vary. Typically, fewer amenities and restaurants are found in or near these buildings, and they are usually of moderate to low quality. Building services consist of below-average upkeep and management.



## SHAKER HEIGHTS OFFICE SPACE

According to January 2022 data from the Cuyahoga County Fiscal Officer, there is approximately 57,600 SF of office space available for lease citywide. A total of only 5.2% office space available for lease is low, which indicates that the demand for office space in the City is high. Further, the office space that is currently available in Shaker Heights is not top-quality space. Class A office space comprises less than 6% of the office space citywide. The City's planning approach should emphasize building more Class A office space, as such space will likely house entities who will pay higher wages, generating higher income tax revenues to the City.

## REGIONAL OFFICE TRENDS

JLL, a commercial real estate services firm, provided the JLL Cleveland Office Market Data for the 2nd Quarter of 2022, as summarized in Figure 25. Office tenants are showing a preference for quality space, with increased demand for Class A space. Vacancy rates have remained stable for Class B and Class C space, based on factors like affordability and office uncertainty resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Submarket/ Class	Total Inventory SF	Net Absorption 2022 YTD	Availability Rate	"Vacancy Rate"	Avg. Asking Lease Rate
<b>Urban</b>					
A		44,381	20%	15%	\$24.93
B		-26,366	25%	19%	\$18.86
C		N/A	25%	17%	\$13.97
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>23%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>\$19.45</b>
<b>Suburban</b>					
A		80,462	13%	9%	\$23.61
B		71,408	14%	14%	\$18.30
C		N/A	16%	14%	\$13.65
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>14%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>\$20.24</b>
<b>Total</b>					
A		124,843	17%	12%	\$21.72
B		45,402	17%	16%	\$16.24
C		N/A	18%	15%	\$13.73
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>17%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>\$18.08</b>

**Figure 25: Regional office trends, 2022 Q2**

Source: JLL Cleveland Office Market Data, submarket including Greater Cleveland Region



### VACANCY TRENDS

As shown in Figure 26, vacant office space in Shaker Heights had generally been higher than vacant office space in its neighboring communities from 2014-2021. This changed during the second quarter of 2021, as the vacancy rate for office space is comparable to or better than neighboring jurisdictions.

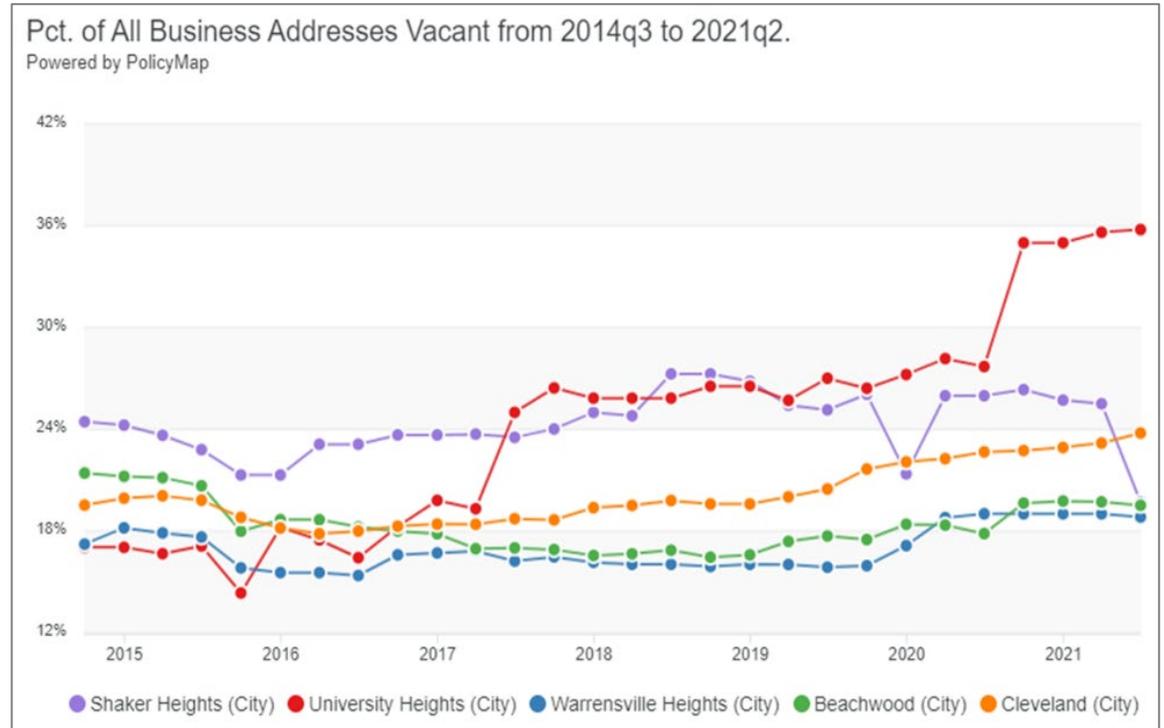


Figure 26: Vacant business addresses (2014 Q3-2021 Q2)

Source: PolicyMap



## RESIDENTIAL MARKET

Figure 27 shows the demand for rental housing within the City of Shaker Heights is generally rising, and the population of those owning their own homes is dropping. These changes are most dramatic in the 45-54 age group, where there is a rather large drop in homeowners in that age demographic, and a steep rise in the population of renters in that same demographic.

### Resident Mobility

Analysis of geographic mobility of current residents illustrated a number of key trends for residents living in both renter- and owner-occupied housing units. From 2018-2019 (omitting the pandemic year of 2020), the following notable changes occurred:

- ▶ *Biggest Gains (2018-2019)*
  1. Owners moving in from a different state
  2. Renters moving from a different state
  3. Owners moving from a different county within the state
  4. Renters
- ▶ *Biggest Losses (2018-2019)*
  1. Homeowners moving from abroad
  2. Renters moving from a different county within the state
  3. Homeowners living in same home
- ▶ *Five-year Trends*
  1. Decrease in those staying put
  2. Increase in relocations within county (driven by renters)
  3. Increase in homeowners moving from another Ohio county
  4. Increase in both owners and renters moving from a state outside Ohio

Age	Owners			Renters		
	Homeowners	5-yr Change	Gain/Loss	Renters	5-yr Change	Gain/Loss
15-24	14	-66.7%	-28	300	14.1%	37
25-34	536	-7.4%	-43	830	-1.0%	-8
35-44	1,320	8.3%	101	833	1.7%	14
45-54	1,359	-13.6%	-213	853	40.5%	246
55-64	1,517	-5.0%	-79	560	-24.5%	-182
65+	2,196	1.4%	30	1187	65.0%	468

Age	% of Total	5-yr Change	Median Age <b>40</b> 5-years Ago <b>41</b>
21-24	2.99%	-17.99%	
25-34	11.07%	-0.96%	
35-44	13.49%	-2.66%	
45-54	12.87%	-8.73%	
55-64	12.35%	-12.71%	
65+	18.98%	14.99%	

Figure 27: Homeowner and renter changes by age group (2019)

Source: Cuyahoga County Fiscal Office



SHAKER HEIGHTS UNIT INVENTORY	Occupied housing units	Percent occupied housing units	Owner-occupied housing units	Percent owner-occupied housing units	Renter-occupied housing units	Percent renter-occupied housing units
Occupied housing units	11,505	11,505	6,942	6,942	4,563	4,563
UNITS IN STRUCTURE						
1, detached	6,346	55.20%	5,745	82.80%	601	13.20%
1, attached	444	3.90%	292	4.20%	152	3.30%
2 apartments	959	8.30%	290	4.20%	669	14.70%
3 or 4 apartments	243	2.10%	52	0.70%	191	4.20%
5 to 9 apartments	672	5.80%	50	0.70%	622	13.60%
10 or more apartments	2,841	24.70%	513	7.40%	2,328	51.00%
Mobile home or other type of housing	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT						
2014 or later	28	0.20%	13	0.20%	15	0.30%
2010 to 2013	29	0.30%	10	0.10%	19	0.40%
2000 to 2009	207	1.80%	168	2.40%	39	0.90%
1980 to 1999	357	3.10%	67	1.00%	290	6.40%
1960 to 1979	1,632	14.20%	598	8.60%	1,034	22.70%
1940 to 1959	4,299	37.40%	2,574	37.10%	1,725	37.80%
1939 or earlier	4,953	43.10%	3,512	50.60%	1,441	31.60%

**Figure 28: Physical unit inventory of Shaker Heights residences**

Source American Community Survey 2020

▪ **Housing Inventory**

The housing stock in the City is comprised largely of older homes, with 80% of the housing stock built more than 60 years ago, and 95% of the housing stock built more than 40 years ago. The bulk of owner-occupied units are in standalone homes (single-family), and the bulk of rentals are found in larger, multi-tenant buildings. While

the City of Shaker Heights is actively encouraging new construction of single-family homes on vacant residential lots caused by the 2008 housing crisis, significant investment in new housing in Shaker Heights has not been made since the 1970s.



Renter Income Brackets	Renters	% of Total Renters	Low End Spectrum Rents	High End Spectrum Rents	High End Salary Spectrum	Units in Range	Price Point Deficit	Price Point Surplus
<\$15,000	192	4.7%	\$83	\$312	\$14,999	122	70	0
\$15,000 to \$24,999	516	12.6%	\$312	\$521	\$24,999	254	262	0
\$25,000 to \$34,999	526	12.8%	\$521	\$729	\$34,999	452	74	0
\$35,000 to \$49,999	922	22.5%	\$729	\$1,042	\$49,999	1359	0	437
\$50,000 to \$74,999	811	19.8%	\$1,042	\$1,562	\$74,999	1744	0	933
\$75,000 to \$99,999	405	9.9%	\$1,562	\$2,083	\$99,999	253	152	0
\$100,000 to \$149,999	325	7.9%	\$2,083	\$3,125	\$149,999	276	49	0
\$150,000 or more	398	9.7%	\$3,125	\$5,208	\$250,000	23	375	0

Homes Value	Homes in Value Category	Est. Mortgage	Salary Needed	Earners in Bracket	Product Deficit	Product Surplus
\$60,000	430	\$258	\$12,368	161	-	269
\$80,000	266	\$344	\$16,491	82	-	184
\$100,000	217	\$429	\$20,614	401	184	0
\$200,000	1,854	\$859	\$41,228	488	-	1,366
\$300,000	1,728	\$1,288	\$61,842	711	-	1,017
\$400,000	959	\$1,718	\$82,456	641	-	318
\$750,000	1,228	\$3,221	\$154,605	1,384	156	0
\$750,000+	186	\$3,865	\$185,526	2,172	1,986	0
\$1,000,000+	74	\$4,295	\$206,140	864	790	0

**Figure 29: Shaker Heights residential price point mismatches**

Source: American Community Survey, 2020 (calculations by Ice Miller)

▪ **Price Point Mismatches**

Figure 29 shows single-family homes and multifamily unit counts by monthly rent/mortgage, compared to households within a certain income bracket. A **price point deficit** means that there are more households in a certain income range than units available to them at a desirable price point (desirable price points mean the household will not pay more than 25% of income toward the rent/mortgage cost). A **price point surplus** means that there are

more units at a desirable price point than households that would desire such a price point. For rental units, there is an approximate 406-unit deficit of units with monthly rents less than \$729 per month and a 576-unit deficit of units priced at \$1,562 and above. For owner-occupied homes, there is an approximate 2,932-unit deficit of units at price points of \$750,000 or higher and a 184-unit deficit between \$80,000-\$100,000.



## Economic Analysis

The following Economic Analysis identifies trends for growth and decline to help define the trajectory of the Shaker Heights market and how such trends translate into opportunities for Lee Road.

### GROWTH ANALYSIS

Several aspects related to economic growth in the City are summarized below. See supporting figures in Appendix E.

#### Occupational & Industry Growth

Shaker Heights has experienced strong job growth in residents in business/financial occupations (4.2%), computer and mathematical occupations (40.5%), and architecture and engineering services. Further, educational institutions within a 25-mile radius are graduating 3,095 health professionals, 2,878 business/management professionals, and 1,165 engineering professionals annually into the marketplace.

#### Self-Employment Income Growth

Shaker Heights resident self-employment income has risen 150.5% over the last five years, representing a strong capacity for entrepreneurship and small business formation opportunities.

#### Consumer Expenditures

Shaker Heights residents spend at a higher rate on a per household basis compared to the county and state averages. Average consumer expenditure per household is:

- ▷ **Shaker Heights: \$73,600** (varies along Lee Road: \$54,200 - \$75,300 per household)
- ▷ County: \$56,600
- ▷ State: \$59,400

#### External Environment Analysis / Current Trends

A PEST (Political-Economic-Sociocultural-Technological) analysis is a good way to keep City leadership aware of key trends that might

influence policies in the present and future. The City administration should formally analyze the political, economic, sociocultural, and technological trends of the external market to ensure the plan is agile and reactive to market forces. Below is a current analysis of such trends currently impacting markets and economics.

#### Political

- ▷ Federal and state funds geared toward infrastructure, brownfield development and demolition, mixed-use development, and transportation continue to be made available at a rapid rate, creating a need for ongoing monitoring of opportunities.
- ▷ Over the next two years a stabilization of office use is expected as we emerge from the pandemic. It is important to engage with brokers and consultants to understand this potential shift.

#### Economic

- ▷ Trends such as labor shortages, materials costs, and interest rate hikes will continue to strain developers. It is important to be adaptive to these realities.
- ▷ In 2012, the State of Ohio's venture capital (VC) network raised \$63.9 million in venture capital funds. In 2019, Ohio raised \$894 million in VC funds, a 1,298% increase. Ohio is one of many states that has put the tools and talent in place to ramp up its VC ecosystem, while benefitting from a shift in where VC dollars are originating and where they are being invested in companies. Venture capital has historically been dominated by investment activity in California, Massachusetts, and New York. From 2004 to 2019, these states managed approximately 77.45% of U.S. Assets Under Management (AUM) and raised 80% of the total U.S. VC dollars. However, an analysis of recent trends shows that the growth of venture activity is slowing or decreasing in both the dollar amount AUM and capital raised in these states, and the market share of these activities is shifting toward states in between the coasts, creating an opportunity for Ohio. Ohio witnessed the seventh highest percentage change in venture



capital dollars raised from 2016-2019. New York came in at 12th with moderate growth, while California (18th) and Massachusetts (14th) witnessed a decrease in dollars raised during the period.

#### Sociocultural

- ▶ A year after the COVID-19 pandemic began, economists and other observers took note of a rising job quit rate, as measured by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) program. JOLTS recorded a seasonally adjusted quit rate of 2.4% in the second month of the program's existence (January 2001), and although this level was matched at other times, it was not surpassed until March 2021, when the quit rate reached 2.5%. This new record was quickly eclipsed in April 2021, when the quit rate stood at 2.8%; the current record is 3.0%, first reached in November 2021 and matched in December 2021. The rise in the quit rate has been called the "Great Resignation," with many articles in the popular press speculating about why individuals have become more willing to leave their current employers. Highest quit rates took place in the following industries: accommodation and food services (6.9%), retail trade (4.4%), professional and business services (3.7%), arts, entertainment, and recreation (3.7%), and healthcare and social assistance (3%). For non-retail jobs, experts say employers can offer more accommodating work arrangements, including remote work, hybrid work, and flexible schedules to better accommodate existing employees or take advantage of the Great Resignation.
- ▶ Matt Kunkel, in the February 16, 2022 issue of [Governance](#) HR Compliance identified a study, also reported by [New York Times](#), that a majority of MBA students would accept a lower salary to work for an environmentally responsible company. Nearly half of the employees polled in another recent survey would willingly reduce their pay in exchange for their company engaging in better data privacy practices. Mr. Kunkel goes on

to state that by 2025, millennials may comprise 75% of the world's workforce. In the [2021 Deloitte Millennial and Gen Z Survey](#), workers cited their beliefs that while businesses should consider stakeholder interests and profits, employers tend to prioritize the bottom line above all else, including personnel, society, and the environment. Prioritizing profits, the survey found, at least at the end of the pandemic, does not increase loyalty among employees. The Deloitte Survey also found that only 47% believe that businesses are having a positive impact on society, a 19% decline from 2017. Sustainable communities attract sustainable companies, and the City should prioritize environmental sustainability to attract and become home to the future of the region's workforce.

- ▶ Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) goals can allow for greater labor force participation and competition. Further, cities with DEI goals have shown to have a lower rate of income inequality. Based on the GINI Index, a federal metric that scores income inequality, the City has one of the higher rates of income inequality in the state at 0.53 (a score of 0 represents perfect income equality and 1 represents perfect inequality). The Ohio rate is 0.46 and the Cuyahoga County rate is 0.51.

#### Technological

- ▶ The Lee Road corridor is adequately served with residential fiber, also referred to as a broadband connection, to the end-user at advertised speeds of 1,000 mbps or higher. Further, there are three high-speed providers serving the corridor, allowing for choice for residents. However, this is data reported to the Federal Communications Commission by providers, and it may be worthwhile to create a resident survey on broadband speeds and capacity. Further, providing free Wi-Fi in public spaces can help maximize broadband access.
- ▶ The City should consider analyzing smart infrastructure investments as a way to drive community participation, inform policy decisions through data collection, and provide real time



transportation solutions. Smart infrastructure can be employed to enhance transportation and mobility by using technology. Systems can monitor, measure, analyze, communicate and act based on data collected by sensors. An example of smart infrastructure investments includes traffic lights changing according to cyclist movements, or real-time arrival times provided to riders in transit.

### ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Figure 30 shows the uses of the existing commercial space on Lee Road. It indicates that uses of the majority of the available commercial space on Lee Road is inconsistent with the desire to increase income tax revenues, with very few office buildings or medical office buildings available.

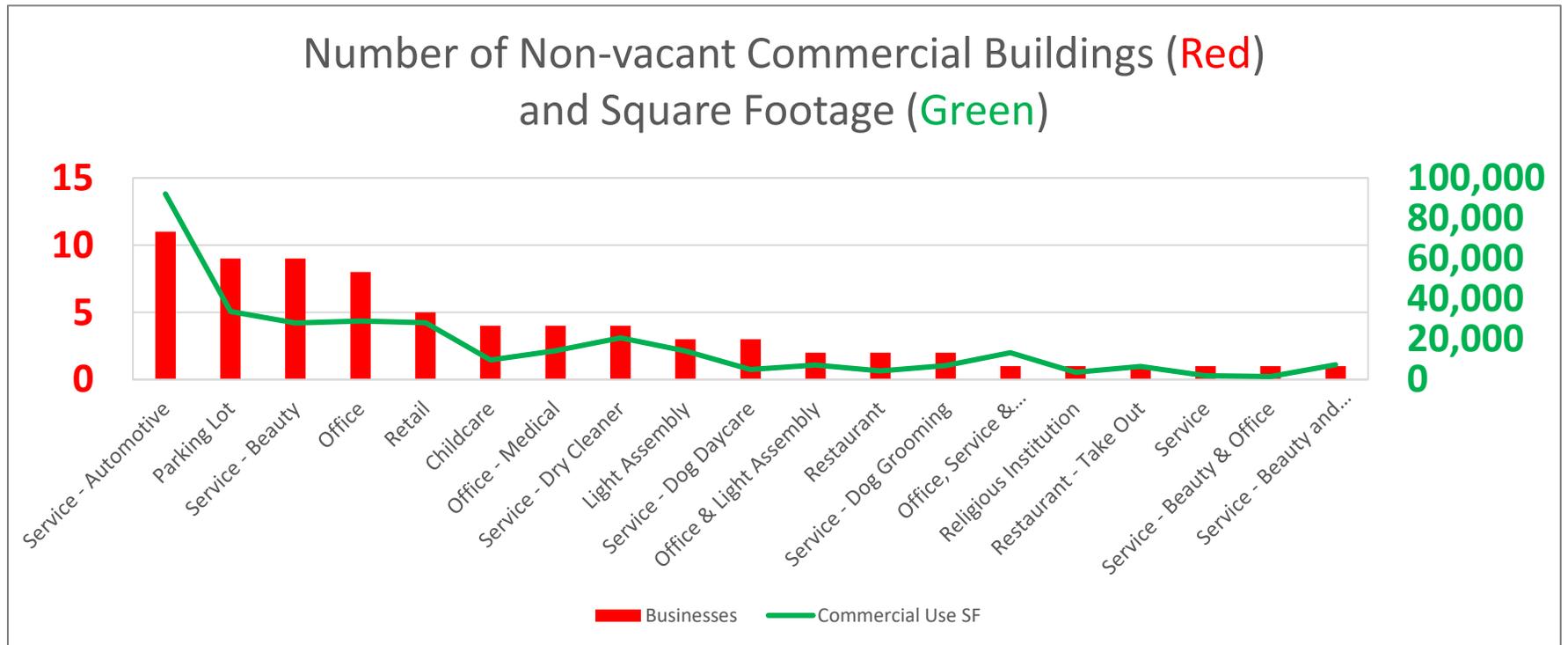


Figure 30: Commercial buildings & square footage on Lee Road (2019)

Source: Cuyahoga County Fiscal Office

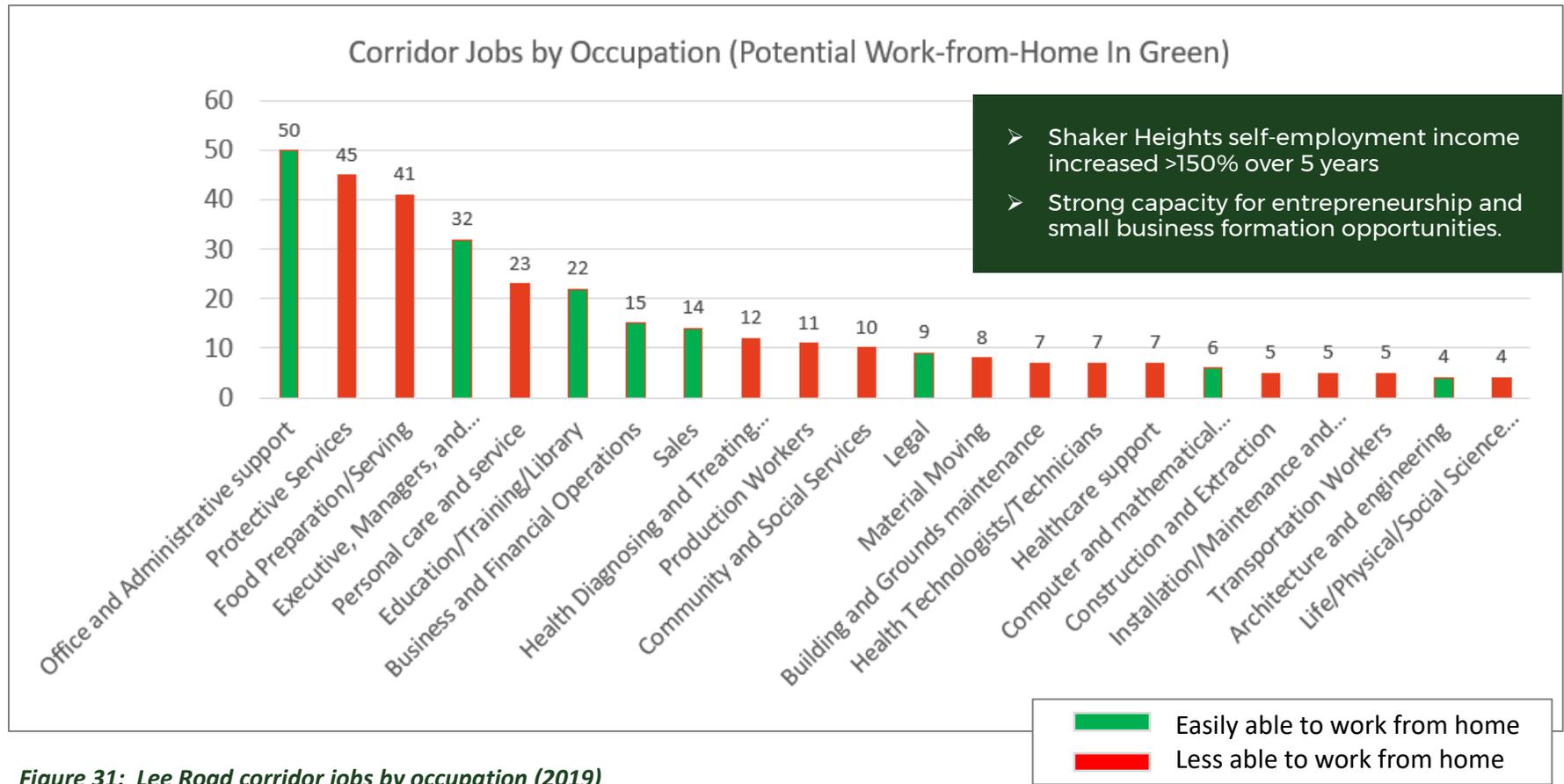


Figure 31: Lee Road corridor jobs by occupation (2019)

Sources: Implan & census data

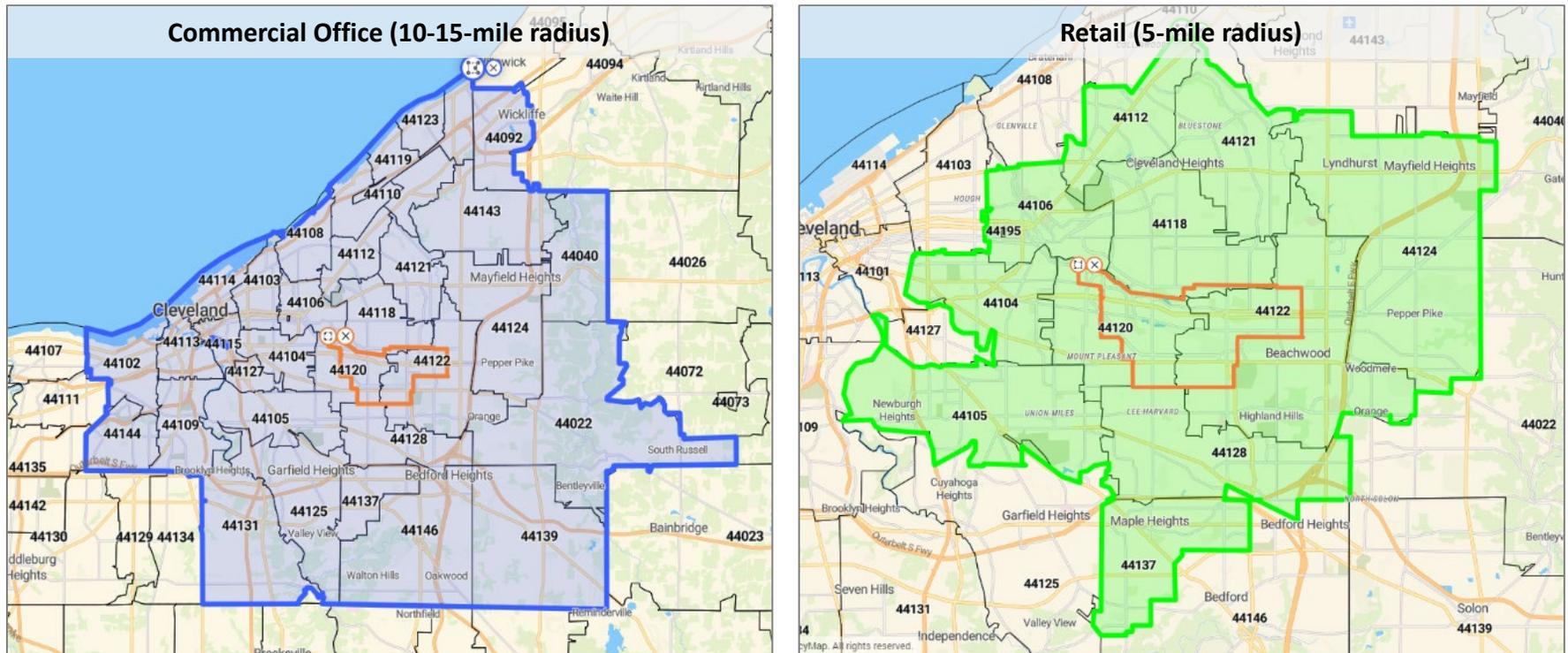
## JOBS & LOCATION FLEXIBILITY

Figure 32 shows that many highly paid occupations – for example executives, managers, and legal professionals – have the ability to work from home. While the City should prioritize locating employment in the Lee Road commercial district, the City should also benefit from work-from-home trends, as many of the individuals working from home

previously were working in other jurisdictions where they were not fully subject to the City’s income tax.

## OPPORTUNITY AND DEMAND ANALYSIS: RETAIL & COMMERCIAL SALES POTENTIAL

In addition to an analysis of existing physical inventories of land use, an economic analysis of commodities evaluated unmet sales demand.



**Figure 33: Commercial office and retail market areas**

Households, institutions/governments, and the private sector have purchasing needs that can be met locally. Figure 33 shows local market areas in which there is available demand for products, and consequently, the potential for local businesses to address that demand. In industries or areas of business in which less than 60% of the demand is met by local supply, there is an opportunity for new or growing local businesses to supply those products or services. Shaker Heights experiences unmet demand from government and households.

retail is focused on particular niches, including full-service restaurants, bars, general merchandise and more. Commercial sales potential is strong in many industries, including but not limited to advertising and technology, where there is a robust market for services that are not currently being provided locally. Supporting figures and tables are provided in Appendix E.

In general, an evaluation of retail sales potential shows some opportunity to create additional retail in the City, provided that such



## Key Takeaways

The recommendations listed below are applicable on a citywide basis. Corridor-specific recommendations are listed in the *Lee Road Opportunities* section below and are discussed in Chapter 5, Action Plan.

### OFFICE MARKET

- **Short-term demand for Class B and Class C office space** has increased coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Demand for Class A office space** is strong. Prioritize adding more Class A office space.
  - ▷ Van Aken District Phase 1 currently houses the City's only Class A office space. Its 64,000 SF represents 5.8% of the citywide 1.1M SF total office space. An estimated 100,000 SF of new Class A office space may be added in future phases at the Van Aken District; need anchor tenant to spur initial construction.
- **Demand for these identified office uses** (business, government, household):
  - ▷ advertising, public relations & related services, computer systems design, office administrative services, software publishers, funds/trusts & other financial services, educational services.

### RESIDENTIAL – OWN

- **Sufficient single-family homes under \$80,000 and \$200,000-\$400,000**
- **Shortage of single-family homes \$80,000-\$100,000 and over \$750,000**

- **Shortage of higher-value homes** may mean:
  - ▷ Homeowners accumulated savings/wealth on original home and prefer to remain in place
  - ▷ Homeowners looking to upgrade may not have preferred step-up housing options.

### RESIDENTIAL - RENT

- **Decrease in homeownership for ages 15-24, 25-34, and 45-55**
- **Sufficient rental housing units within rent ranges of \$729-\$1,562/month**
- **Shortage of rental housing units below \$729 and above \$1,562/month**
  - ▷ Van Aken District Phase 2 adds 225 units at \$1500+/month

### RETAIL

- City's **\$73,500 annual expenditure per household** among highest consumer expenditure rates in region
  - ▷ County average is \$56,600
  - ▷ Varies along Lee Road: \$54,200 - \$75,300 per household
- **Numerous commodities needed** to meet local demand
- **50,000-80,000 SF of retail needed** in the city and could be accommodated along Lee Road corridor
- **Commodities currently not meeting area demand:** arcade/amusements, car wash, clothing and accessories, drinking places (bars), full-service restaurants, furniture, general merchandise, home improvement, personal care services, pharmacy



## LEE ROAD OPPORTUNITIES

The points below summarize the recommendations for the Lee Road corridor. They are described in greater detail in Chapter 5, Action Plan.

- With a changing site location landscape and lack of available large-scale office space, the City should **emphasize homegrown business and entrepreneurship opportunities**. This emphasis should include mobilizing the staff of the City's Economic Development Department and Shaker Heights Development Corporation (SHDC) to integrate with regional entrepreneurial networks, as well as creating a task force to spearhead this initiative. The City should actively endeavor to create maker spaces and to leverage and expand the Van Aken Entrepreneurial Initiatives to support entrepreneurs citywide, including on Lee Road.
- The City should **endeavor to create office space and attract talent**. This means aligning economic incentives like grants, Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and tax abatements to encourage the development of Class A office space and the businesses that support such space. The City should seek to attract long-term, high-quality tenants, like headquarters (large and small), that will contribute to the vibrancy and health of the community. In the meantime, the City can continue to ride the wave of Class B and Class C price point demand. Overall, the City should maintain a diversity and balanced mix of office price points.
- To create more activity and to attract talent, the City should employ **grant and other incentive programs to encourage retail and sit-down restaurants** in the Lee Road commercial district.
- Evolve **economic incentive packages to a partnership model** that meets business demand and development needs while driving public policy outcomes. For example, potential public policy benefits may include requirements for the developer to: include rental residential units at desired price points, require commercial tenant participation in Shaker entrepreneurship network initiatives or research and development activities, participate in a Business Improvement District (BID), hire disadvantaged candidates or contract with minority- or woman-owned vendors, meet energy efficiency goals, make school payments, and more.
- Consider using tools like **Business Improvement Districts and New Community Authorities** to help generate funds for redevelopment and investment in the community. Such tools can even be used to reach across the line to Cleveland if a regional solution is desired.
- Use **development incentives** to provide funding for public infrastructure and to promote public policy goals like affordable housing, energy efficiency, and mixed-use, transit-oriented development.



## 4. ENGAGEMENT

The plan development process was designed to incorporate community perspectives and ideas from the start, beginning with defining vision and goals and continuing through concept development, refinement, and drafting of the final plan. Public outreach was a high priority and effectively integrated into each phase of the plan. This was accomplished through multiple levels of engagement and a variety of outreach tools. This chapter summarizes the engagement approach and the community input for each phase. Additional information is provided in Appendix A, including meeting attendance information, presentations, and the online survey.



*Figure 34: Engagement Phases*

### Avenues of Engagement

Public engagement drove plan development throughout the three-phase process:

- **Phase 1: Initiate & Understand.** Understand the existing conditions and establish the vision and goals for the Lee Road Action Plan to transform the project area.



- **Phase 2: Shape.** Present potential concepts for Lee Road, including aspects related to transportation, urban design and land use, as well as ideas and potential opportunities for redevelopment. Community input from this phase was instrumental in shaping the plan.
- **Phase 3: Define.** During Phase 3, community reactions to the draft plan were solicited, documented, and integrated into the final plan.

The Project Team led these engagement efforts that were a combination of in-person and virtual meetings, polls, and surveys that engaged residents, business owners, property owners, the Shaker Heights Development Corporation (SHDC), Shaker Heights and regional institutions, and others.

## PUBLIC

A variety of outreach methods were employed during each phase of the planning process to understand community concerns, solicit ideas and feedback, and generate support for the plan. All together, the public engagement efforts reached 687 citizens through in-person and virtual meetings and almost 2,400 citizens through virtual engagement. These efforts included traditional public outreach methods listed below:

- Social Media Polling Questions  
March-April 2022
- Public Meeting #1 (virtual)  
February 24, 2022
- Public Meeting #2 (in-person)  
June 15, 2022
- Public Meeting #2 (virtual)  
June 22, 2022

- Public Survey (MetroQuest survey)  
June 15- July 27, 2022
- Public Meeting #3 (open house at the Dealership)  
November 10, 2022

In addition to these traditional public meetings and open house, City staff worked with individual residents, business owners, and property owners. They organized and attended multiple small get-togethers in the Chagrin-Lee commercial district and surrounding neighborhoods to gather additional feedback, including meetings with the following groups and businesses, which together engaged with 174 people:

- Moreland Community Neighborhood Night
- Master Marr's Taekwon-do students
- Library Courts senior apartment community
- Walking tours led by Shaker Heights Development Corporation (SHDC)
- FASS Real Estate business discussion
- Lindholm neighbors
- Kenyon business conversations, plus a survey conducted by Shaker Heights Animal Hospital of its clients
- Lee Road bike & walking tour with Bike Cleveland
- Making Our Own Spaces (MOOS) youth engagement
- Ciclovía community bicycling event

## STAKEHOLDER GROUP

The Stakeholder Group consisted of 22 representatives from area businesses, property owners, residents, SHDC, and others. This group provided strategic oversight for plan development. The Project Team met with the Stakeholder Group during each phase of the planning process.



## BUSINESS & PROPERTY OWNER FOCUS GROUP

The City invited 166 business owners and property owners to participate in this focus group. Meetings facilitated specific and clear understanding of their needs and resulted in integrating their perspectives into plan development. The Project Team met with a Business & Property Owner Focus Group during each phase of the planning process. In addition, City staff and SHDC staff met with businesses one-on-one and in small groups to facilitate in-depth communications and understanding throughout plan development.

## INSTITUTIONAL STAKEHOLDER GROUP

City staff met with 15 representatives from agencies and institutions who will be involved in advancing the Lee Road Action Plan. City of Shaker Heights Planning and Economic Development staff met with the Institutional Stakeholder Group during each phase of the planning process. In addition, City staff conducted regular calls to ensure coordination and collaboration throughout plan development. These meetings and conversations facilitated a clear understanding of their needs, integration of their perspectives, and stressed the importance of coordination across city boundaries.

The Institutional Stakeholder Group consisted of members of the City of Shaker Heights Planning, Police, Fire, and Public Works departments, SHDC, Shaker Heights Public Library, Shaker Heights School District, City of Cleveland Planning and Capital Projects departments, Cleveland City Council, Cuyahoga County Department of Public Works, Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA), Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA), Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), Cleveland Neighborhood Progress, Harvard Community Services Center, and Bike Cleveland. In addition, City Council was provided an updated presentation during each phase of the planning process.

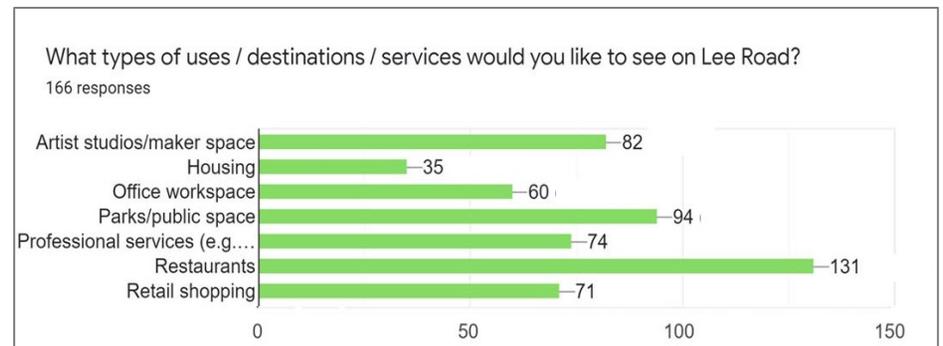
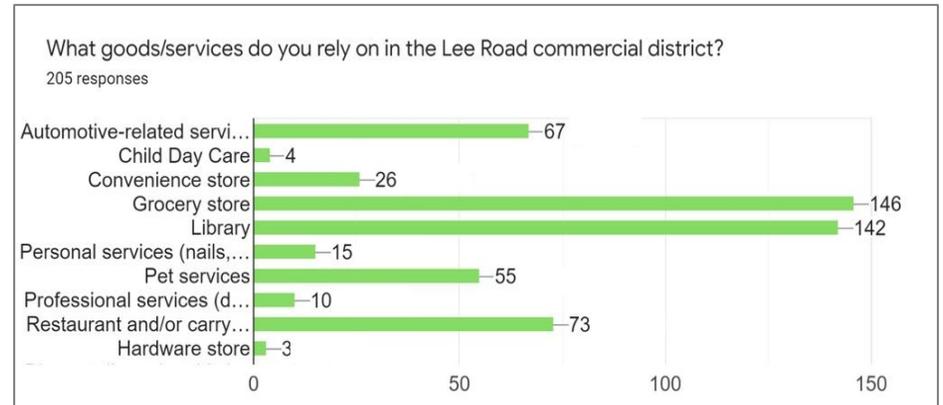
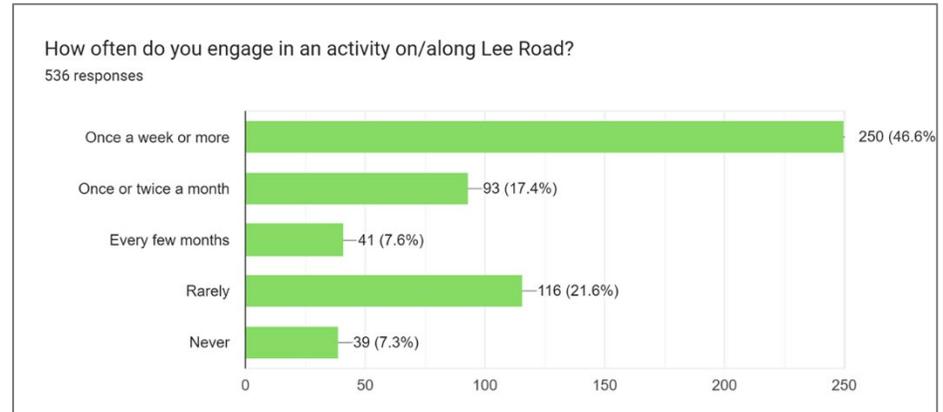


Figure 35: Facebook Polling Responses





## PHASE 1 COMMUNITY INPUT

Participants in the meetings and online polling were asked to provide their input on various aspects of the Lee Road corridor. Below are the most common responses. Full responses are in Appendix A.

- **Challenges**
  - ▷ Traffic/car-centric
  - ▷ Outdated, visually unappealing, and unwelcoming
  - ▷ Lack of interest in businesses
  - ▷ Poor lighting
- **Opportunities**
  - ▷ Desire for family-friendly businesses
  - ▷ Welcoming public space
  - ▷ Reinvent like Van Aken (but not a replica, so it fits within the context of the surrounding neighborhoods)
  - ▷ Bring in more businesses
  - ▷ Welcoming for pedestrians, bicyclists, business owners and patrons, and those from outside the community
- **Preserve**
  - ▷ Existing businesses
  - ▷ Overhead mid-block twinkle lights
  - ▷ Trees
- **Development Preference(s)**
  - ▷ Multi-use
  - ▷ Taller buildings
  - ▷ First floor retail
- **Desired public infrastructure**
  - ▷ Improve roadway safety
  - ▷ Narrow Lee Road

- ▷ Move to shared parking
- ▷ Improve access to Chelton Park

- **Transform**
  - ▷ Restaurants and cafes
  - ▷ Multi-family housing
  - ▷ Welcoming public spaces
  - ▷ Family-friendly spaces
  - ▷ Gathering spaces

Following Phase 1 outreach, the Project Team developed a variety of concepts and strategies for transportation, urban design and land use, and development, built from community input. These were then shared with the community in Phase 2: Shape.

## Phase 2: Shape

### PURPOSE

In Phase 2, the Project Team shared potential concepts for Lee Road with the community, focusing on transportation, urban design and land use, and potential opportunities for redevelopment. Three different concepts for development density along Lee Road were created based on the economic analysis and Phase 1 community input results. Those three concepts – Modern Main Street, Neighborhood Center, and Density Driven Development – are summarized on the following pages. Community input solicited in Phase 2 was used to create the final plan in Phase 3.



## MODERN MAIN STREET

- Traditional walkable main street
- Smaller scale, infill redevelopment
  - 1-2 story commercial uses
- Road diet with on-street parking
- No bicycle infrastructure added

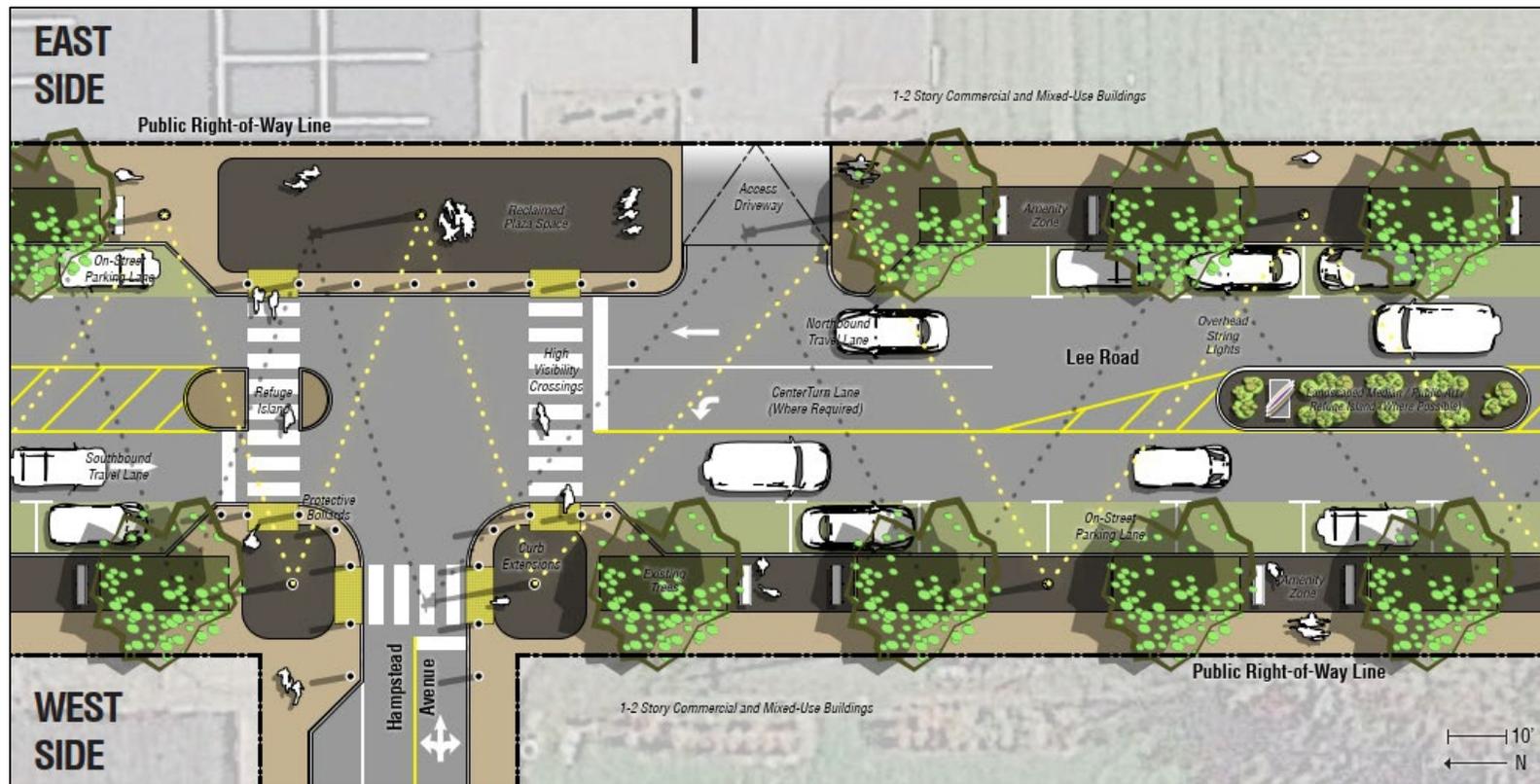


Figure 37: Modern Main Street Typical Block



Figure 38: Modern Main Street Typical Section



## NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

- Create central core mixed-use area
  - ▷ Expand community services
  - ▷ Retail
  - ▷ Activity center
- Redevelopment of bus depot
  - ▷ Expand Chelton Park
  - ▷ Public parking area
- Road diet with two-way bike path

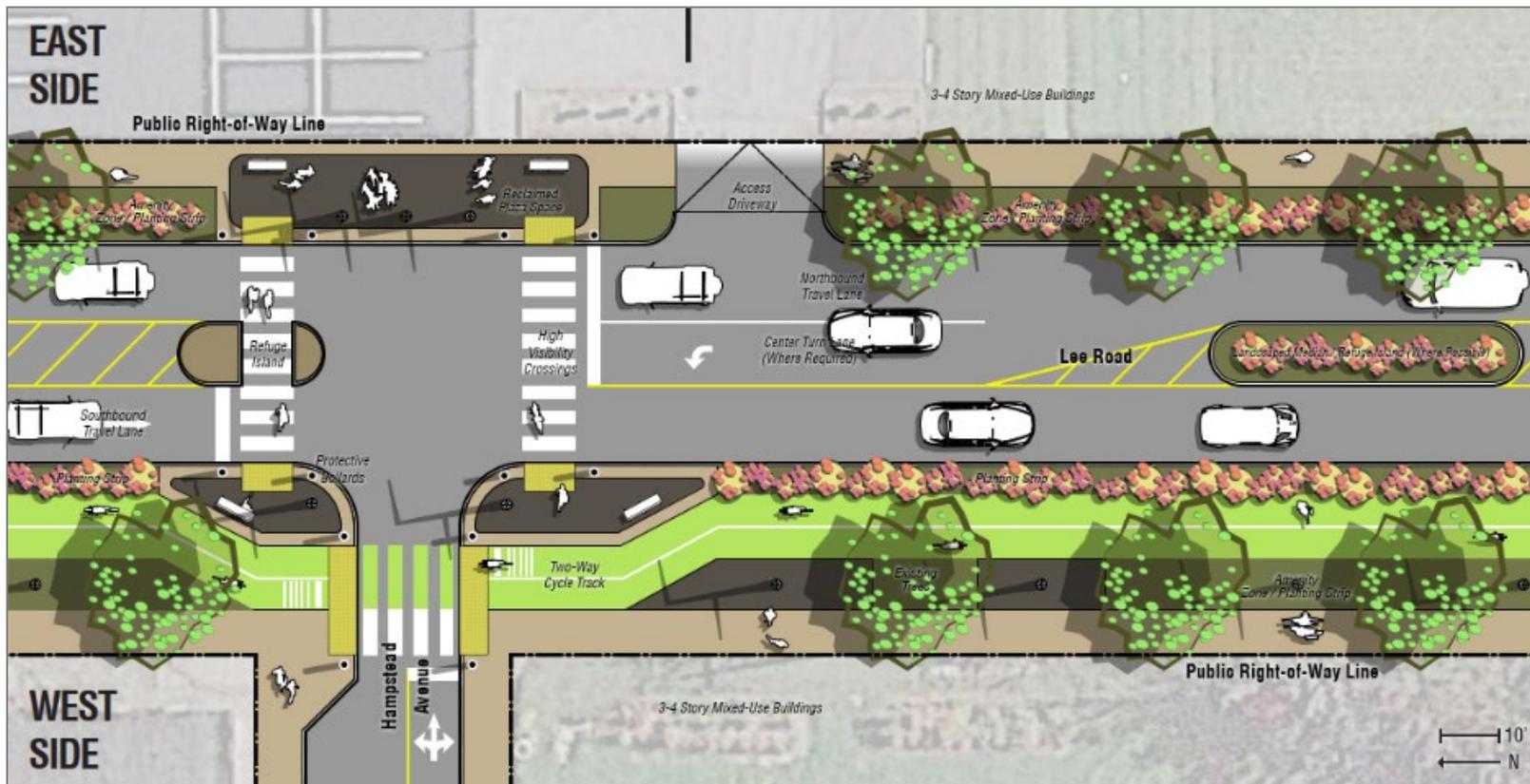


Figure 39: Neighborhood Center Typical Block



Figure 40: Neighborhood Center Typical Section



## DENSITY-DRIVEN TRANSFORMATION

- High-density mixed-use district
- 5+ story mixed-use district
- Road diet with one-way bike lanes

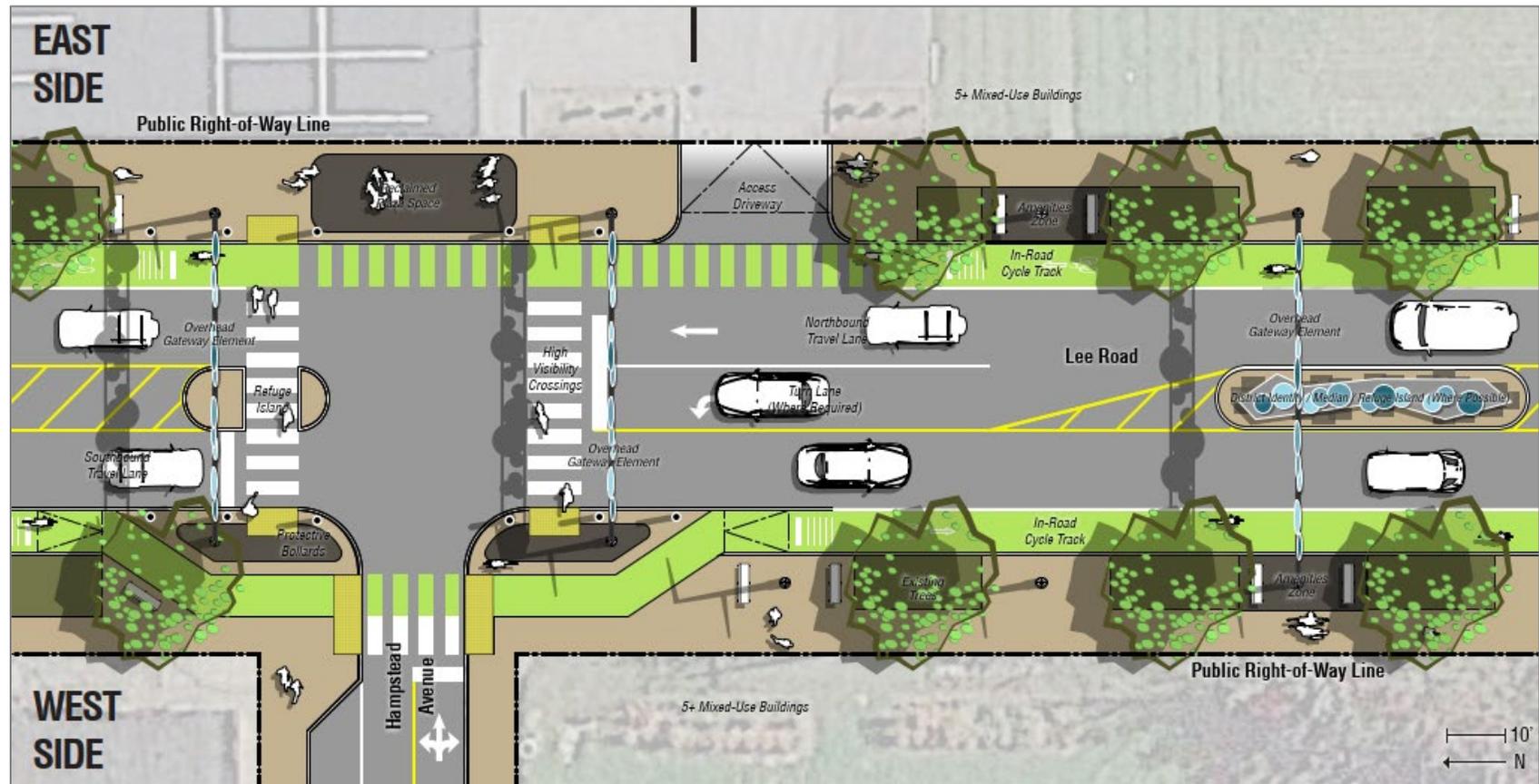


Figure 41: Density-Driven Transformation Typical Block



Figure 42: Density-Driven Transformation Typical Section



## PHASE 2 OUTREACH METHODS

Phase 2 employed multiple outreach methods, providing community members with a variety of ways to get involved and provide their thoughts and ideas. In these meetings, participants reviewed and weighed in on the three potential concepts, providing feedback on what they wanted and did not want in their community.

- **Formal Meetings**
  - ▷ Stakeholder Focus Group #2, June 14, 2022
  - ▷ Business Focus Group #2, June 15, 2022
  - ▷ Public Meeting #2 (in person), June 15, 2022
  - ▷ Council Update #2, June 21, 2022
  - ▷ Public Meeting #2 (virtual), June 22, 2022
  - ▷ Institutional Stakeholder Meeting #2, August 9, 2022
- **Informal/Small Group Meetings.** Multiple additional meetings were held in the commercial district and surrounding neighborhoods to gather additional feedback. Refer to Appendix A for comprehensive list.
  - ▷ Making Our Own Spaces (MOOS) youth engagement
  - ▷ Ciclovía community bicycling event
  - ▷ FASS Real Estate business luncheon
  - ▷ Moreland Neighborhood Night
  - ▷ Library Courts senior apartments
  - ▷ Kenyon business conversations
  - ▷ Lindholm neighborhood meeting
  - ▷ SHDC-led walking tours
- **Bike/Walk Tour.** Hosted by City staff from Shaker Heights and Cleveland and supported by Bike Cleveland, the biking/walking tour was broadly advertised and open to all interested members of the community and region to provide a deeper level of engagement through firsthand experience along the street. The goal was to build excitement and support for the project and obtain ideas and feedback.

- **Visual Preference Boards.** A series of boards with visual preference surveys conveying potential concepts and elements were used during Phase 2 and were displayed at the public meeting, informal/small group meetings and gatherings, and the Shaker Heights Library. Dots were provided to participants to convey their opinions on each board. Questions are provided on the next page and complete records of input and results are in Appendix A.



Figure 43: Visual preference boards – parking preferences



Figure 44: Stakeholder meeting – Phase 2



The visual preference boards provided an additional avenue for participants to indicate their preferences for different treatments or enhancements being considered along the corridor. Full details can be found in Appendix A.

The most popular public realm improvements were sidewalks, seating, additional amenities, and plantings between the sidewalks and street. Most respondents favored median sections as the preferred roadway reconfiguration and selected an off-road trail as the preferred bicycle infrastructure.

Shared surface lots and shared parking structure(s) were the preferred parking accommodation.

For the corridor elements, an overwhelming number of respondents preferred:

- ▷ Corridor gateways
- ▷ Expand Chelton Park
- ▷ Expand neighborhood connections
- ▷ Curb Extensions
- ▷ Mid-block pedestrian crossings

Participants also preferred full or partial closure of Kenyon at the Kenyon-Chagrin-Lee intersection.

- **MetroQuest Survey.** This interactive online survey received 457 responses, reaching well beyond the limits of the engagement meetings, making it possible for more community members and users of the corridor to provide their input. The charts on this page detail some of the question responses that formed the action plan. The majority of respondents preferred the Modern Main Street followed by Neighborhood Center. Restaurants/retail, outdoor recreation/parks/public space, indoor recreation/entertainment, and multi-family housing were the preferred land uses. Additionally, more than half of the

participants preferred an off-road bike path with others preferring in-road separated bike facilities. Detailed survey results and input are provided in Appendix A.

Survey respondents were asked to allocate a budget of \$160 between six different investment areas. Figure 46 illustrates how they chose to allocate public investment resources.

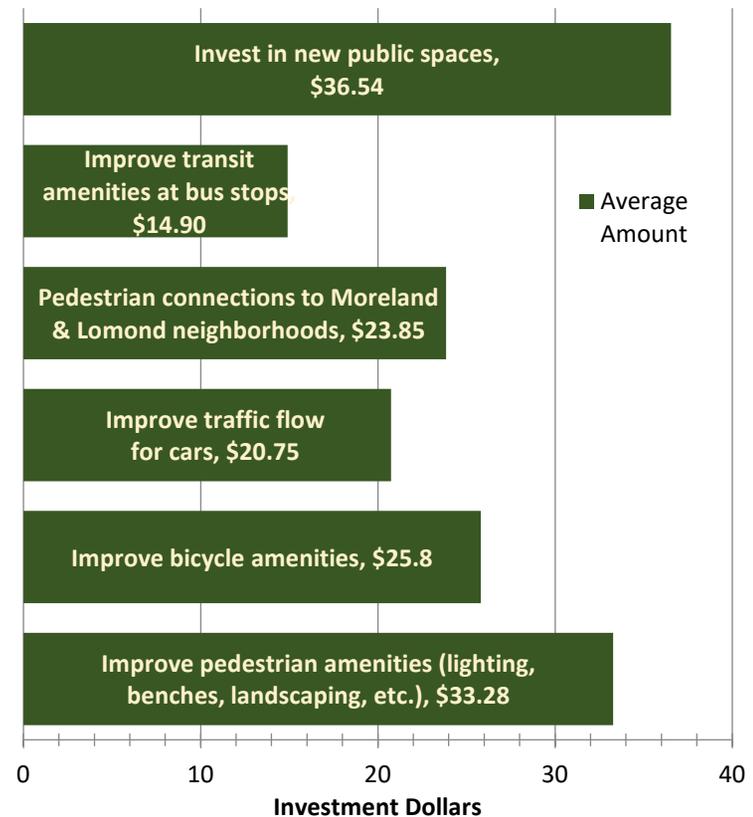


Figure 45: Infrastructure investment priorities from online survey



Figure 46: Concepts for development density along Lee Road



## PHASE 2 COMMUNITY INPUT

Participants were asked to consider the three concepts (Modern Main Street, Neighborhood Center, Density-Driven Transformation) and to look at them with a mix-and-match approach (Figure 46). The community generally preferred the Neighborhood Center and Modern Main Street concepts, and the results of the Phase 2 engagement provided the following overall community preferences:

- Road diet with targeted refuge islands and improved bike/ped infrastructure
- Protected bike infrastructure, off-road
- Improved public realm (lighting, sidewalks, seating, placemaking/amenities)
- Full- to partial-closure of Kenyon Road
- Expanded Chelton Park with added recreation and other amenities (outdoor dining, food truck, etc.)
- Targeted neighborhood connections for pedestrians
- Increased community space (indoor and outdoor)
- Two- to four-story infill redevelopment

Following Phase 2 outreach, the Project Team prepared a draft plan, incorporating the community's preferences for the transportation and development-related aspects of the Lee Road Action Plan.

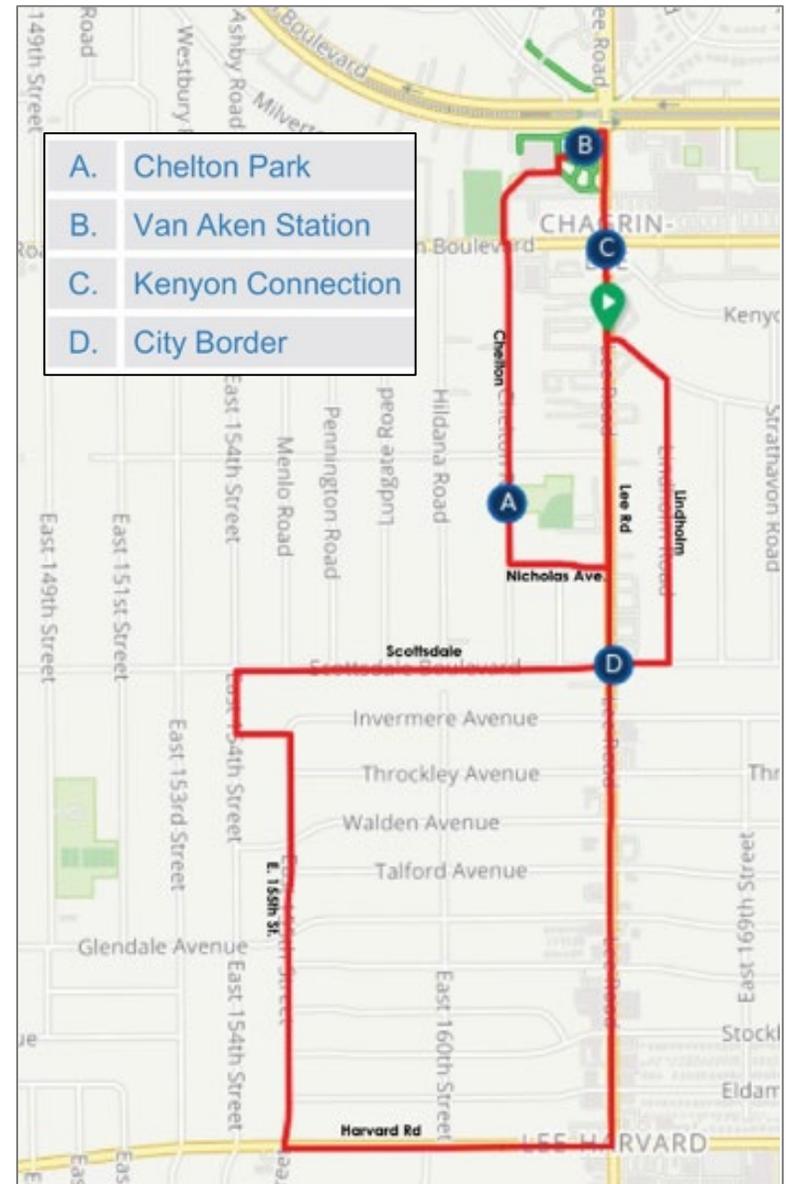


Figure 47: Bike tour route



## Phase 3: Define

### PURPOSE

Informed by the community priorities and preferences identified in Phase 2, the Project Team drafted a redevelopment plan for Lee Road. The draft plan was then presented to the community during Phase 3, and reactions to the plan were solicited and documented.

### PHASE 3 OUTREACH METHODS

During this phase, the project team held formal meetings stakeholders and a public open house, providing an opportunity for community members to review the draft plan and make comments. A large site plan, detail drawings, and renderings were shared.

- **Formal Meetings**
  - Stakeholder Focus Group #3, November 8, 2022
  - Business Focus Group #3, November 10, 2022
  - Public Open House #3 (in-person), November 10, 2022
  - Institutional Stakeholder Meeting #3, November 17, 2022
  - Council/Planning Commission Update #3, February 13, 2023



*Figure 48: Public open house*

*Figure 49: Public open house – Action Plan board*





### PHASE 3 COMMUNITY INPUT

The results of the Phase 3 engagement indicated widespread community support for the Lee Road Action Plan concepts and strategies. Overall, comments and feedback were positive with questions focused on the implementation timeline of various aspects of the plan. Key takeaways include incorporating pedestrian safety in all roadway improvements and continued neighborhood inclusion throughout the implementation. The post-its and comments cards (Figures 50-51) collected during the open house are included in Appendix A.



Figure 50: Public open house post-its



Figure 51: Public open house post-its



## Summary of Community Preferences

The overarching purpose of the engagement program was to solicit community input to inform plan development and to build excitement for the plan. Community input for key aspects gathered over all three phases of input into the plan are summarized below.

### DEVELOPMENT TYPE & DENSITY

Phase 2 presented three types of potential development:

- **Modern Main Street**
- **Neighborhood Center**
- **Density Driven Development**

Community feedback indicated a preference for a blending of Modern Main Street and Neighborhood Center concepts with new development nodes, the Neighborhood Center and the Southern Gateway. Those features include:

- **Traditional walkable main street**
- **Smaller scale, infill redevelopment, 2-4 stories**

### TRANSPORTATION

The community supports reconfiguration of Lee Road to one travel lane in each direction plus a center turn lane. Other transportation features the community prefers are listed below.

- **Public Realm Treatments**
  - ▷ Median sections
  - ▷ Off-road trail (bike infrastructure)
- **Enhanced mid-block pedestrian crossing**
- **Reconfiguration of the Kenyon leg of the Chagrin-Lee intersection**

### URBAN DESIGN & LAND USE

Community preferences for public realm treatments and enhancements include:

- **Public Realm**
  - ▷ Sidewalks and seating
  - ▷ Amenity zone
  - ▷ Lighting
  - ▷ Sustainable stormwater management
  - ▷ Bus stops
  - ▷ Public art
  - ▷ Pedestrian connections to neighborhoods
  - ▷ Minimize impact to trees; plant new trees
- **Shared Parking (surface and structure)**
- **Expand Chelton Park**
- **Expand recreation near Stephanie Tubbs Jones Community Building**
- **Trail connections to Moreland and Lomond**



## 5. ACTION PLAN

### Overview

This Lee Road Action Plan reimagines Lee Road south of Van Aken to create a district that is commercially vibrant, aesthetically attractive, equitable, sustainable, safe, connected, and accessible to all. Plan elements and recommendations emerged from collaborative community engagement (discussed in Chapter 4) and seek to improve transportation, urban design, land use, and economic development on Lee Road.

Transportation improvements will transform the character and quality of Lee Road from an arterial focused on moving cars through the district to a slower, more balanced roadway that integrates and prioritizes other modes of transportation like bicycles and pedestrians. This transformation will be driven by a roadway reconfiguration that will establish a new character for Lee Road and will support more walkable development, allow for an increased mixture-of-uses within the area, and provide the community with greater access to services, public amenities, and shared resources. This will begin by reconfiguring Lee Road to a three-lane roadway with improvements for bicycle and pedestrian travel as well as public realm enhancements such as streetscape improvements. The new street configuration will slow traffic and increase safety for all modes of transportation throughout the corridor as well as create a sense of place and character that will help to build interest and excitement for existing businesses and potential future development in the area.

A central feature of the plan is a new Neighborhood Center that will serve as a hub for activity and a new “heart” of the community. Lee Road between Hampstead and Nicholas will transition from predominantly single-story commercial uses and underutilized public land into a mixed-use center that will provide neighborhood amenities, expand Chelton Park, and create a space unique to the businesses and residents that call Lee Road and its adjacent neighborhoods home.

Additional recommended initiatives include a new Southern Gateway, improvements to the civic areas at Van Aken-Lee, reconfiguration of the Kenyon leg of the Chagrin-Lee intersection, shared parking and access strategies, and infill development opportunities. Discussion of each proposed initiative includes a description of the multi-modal transportation improvements, streetscape and public space improvements, and urban design and development improvements, with detail specific to each initiative in each of these categories. Finally, this plan recommends targeted economic development strategies to successfully achieve desired business and redevelopment outcomes in the Lee Road commercial district.



Figure 52: Overview of Action Plan recommendations & key takeaways

## Lee Road Economic & Market Analysis

This Action Plan is built upon the results and recommendations of the market study and economic analysis. The market study analyzed the presence of residential, retail, office, and other uses and how such uses expect to evolve with changes to Lee Road. The economic analysis determined the trends that define the trajectory of the Shaker Heights market and how such trends translate into opportunities for Lee Road. The citywide recommendations resulting from the economic and market analyses are summarized in Chapter 3. Recommendations that are specific to Lee Road are again listed below and discussed in detail at the end of this chapter.

### OFFICE

- **Leverage short-term demand** for Class B and Class C office space on Lee Road.
- **Add Class A office space citywide**, including on Lee Road, and attract and encourage the development of supportive businesses.

### RESIDENTIAL

- **Offer right-size housing options.**
  - ▷ Provide step-up housing options.
  - ▷ Accommodate mixed incomes.
  - ▷ Cater to desired occupations.



- **Conduct housing study** to match available inventory to step-up/step-down housing price options.

## RETAIL

- **Program Lee Road** with retail that draws consumer spending potential from the entire City and nearby communities.
- **Emphasize a mixture of brands** that allows for price-point flexibility.

Appendices supporting the economic and market analysis as well as the economic development recommendation:

Appendix B: Economic Development Playbook

Appendix C: ROI Examples

Appendix D: Economic Development Case Studies

Appendix E: Market & Economic Development Supplemental Information

## Lee Road Action Plan Concept

The Lee Road Action Plan Concept (Figure 53) illustrates the recommended improvements and potential development opportunities in the project area along Lee Road that will facilitate the desired transformation set forth in the project vision and goals, and as described in the overview. This illustrative plan represents best practices in transportation, urban design, and land use. The improvements begin with implementation of a road diet between Chagrin and Walden. This **reconfiguration from a four-lane roadway to a three-lane roadway** (one lane in each direction with a center turn lane and raised median sections) will calm traffic and improve traffic safety for drivers (especially left-turning vehicles), pedestrians, and bicyclists. Reconstruction of Lee also includes **reconfiguration of the Kenyon leg of the Chagrin-Lee intersection** (inbound-only) and a new **separate, elevated two-way cycle track** along the west side of Lee. This continuous bikeway will connect City Hall and the RTA Lee-Van

Aken Station on the north end of the project area through to the city of Cleveland on the south end. The roadway reconfiguration will include **streetscape enhancements, transformation of the public realm**, and the addition of a **new mid-block crossing** of Lee Road in the Neighborhood Center. The roadway reconfiguration will facilitate the establishment of a **new Neighborhood Center** located between Hampstead and Nicholas, including the site of the existing Shaker Schools bus depot, which the plan recommends relocating.

Recommended land uses for the Neighborhood Center include **mixed-use residential, retail, and office uses**, as well as an **expanded and improved Chelton Park** with direct pedestrian connections to Lee and Hampstead, which will improve community access to the park. The plan also includes a pedestrian path to the Lomond neighborhood. There are multiple opportunities for **infill development**, which will be coordinated with the needs and desires of private property owners. The intent is for new development to integrate with existing businesses. Opportunities for these sites are dependent upon property owner and developer interest. **Shared parking and access strategies** will be employed for existing businesses on the east side of Lee Road both north and south of the new Neighborhood Center.

The City will work with property owners to maximize the benefits associated with shared parking opportunities. Shared parking is expected to optimize parking capacity, consolidate driveways and improve business access, circulation, and parking layout, and enhance pedestrian safety. It will be implemented in locations where business and property owners agree to the concept and the layout. At the northern end of the project area, the civic area will be enhanced with new **mixed-use indoor recreation** and a relocated **playground**. The **new Southern Gateway**, centered around the Scottsdale intersection, will create another opportunity for mixed-use redevelopment and is a priority focus area within the district.



Figure 53: Lee Road Action Plan Concept

## Recommendations

Development of plan recommendations was based on community needs and preferences identified through robust engagement meetings and activities. The Project Team analyzed recommendations related to transportation to verify the feasibility of the road diet conversion. A traffic memo documenting the traffic analysis is provided in Appendix G. Recommendations related to land use and development are supported by the economic and market analyses conducted as part of this plan, as documented in Chapter 3. The recommendations are grouped in a series of Proposed Initiatives. Each initiative includes a description of the multi-modal transportation improvements, streetscape and public space improvements, and urban design and development improvements, with details specific to each project. The initiatives are summarized below.

To successfully achieve desired business and redevelopment outcomes in the Lee Road commercial district, this plan recommends targeted economic development strategies, including community and business programming, policy considerations, and the use of development financing and incentive tools to effectively deploy resources to the redevelopment on Lee Road.

### MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

Proposed new roadway reconfiguration and non-motorized facilities within the corridor area, including infrastructure features and facilities:

- Roadway reconfiguration (road diet)
- Separated bikeway
- Widened sidewalks

- Enhanced pedestrian crossings
- Medians/pedestrian refuge areas
- Enhanced bus stops

### STREETSCAPE & PUBLIC SPACE IMPROVEMENTS

Proposed new features and amenities for an improved streetscape along with new and expanded public parks or plazas:

- Outdoor dining and seating areas
- Hardscaped plazas and street spaces
- Park improvements, opportunities, and potential upgrades
- Gateway strategies

- Public art or features
- Landscaping enhancements

## URBAN DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENTS

Proposed new urban design and potential redevelopment along Lee Road:

- Development character
- Proposed land uses
- Proposed targeted locations for infill and redevelopment
- Building height ranges and setbacks
- Parking and access methods
- Active frontage

### PROPOSED INITIATIVES

1. Lee Road Reconfiguration
2. The Neighborhood Center
3. The Southern Gateway
4. Van Aken-Lee to Chagrin-Lee improvements
5. Kenyon Intersection Improvements
6. Shared Parking & Access
7. Infill Development

*Figure 54: Lee Road Action Plan Proposed Initiatives*

## Proposed Initiatives

The Proposed Initiatives, detailed below, aim to realize the project vision and goals, incorporate plan recommendations, and facilitate phased implementation. As the City works to advance the initiatives and implement the overall Lee Road Action Plan, it is important to continue to incorporate community feedback as each initiative moves forward. Although the initiatives described herein (Figures 54-55) are not intended to occur specifically in the order listed, completion of the Lee Road Reconfiguration (rebuilding and reconfiguring Lee Road) is critical to realize sooner than other initiatives, as is a major public investment that demonstrates the City’s commitment and will set the tone for all other initiatives moving forward. The reconfiguration will have a significant positive impact on the opportunities along Lee Road.

### 1 LEE ROAD RECONFIGURATION (ROAD DIET)

This initiative reconfigures Lee Road with the intent to extend south of Shaker Heights into the city of Cleveland. Reconstruction and reconfiguration of Lee Road will improve access, safety, and comfort for all users, add bicycle infrastructure and connections, and enhance the corridor streetscape. The roadway cross-section (Figure 56) illustrates the design concept for Lee Road. Specific aspects are detailed below.

- **Roadway Reconfiguration (Road Diet)**  
The road diet will change the configuration of Lee from a four-lane roadway with two travel lanes in each direction to a three-lane road with two 12-foot travel lanes (one in each direction), a 10-foot center turn lane, and center medians (Figure 56) to improve travel safety and efficiency. The transition begins south of the Chagrin-Lee intersection. Analysis of traffic operations with updated traffic volumes shows that this conversion is feasible (Appendix G). The new roadway reconfiguration south of Chagrin will also be coordinated with and complemented by a road diet north of Van Aken with a three-lane roadway and bike shoulders, as recommended in the City’s 2012 Lee Road Traffic Study & Corridor Plan (discussed in Chapter 1).



**Figure 55: Proposed Initiatives along Lee Road**

▪ **Multi-Modal Transportation Improvements (Bicycle/Pedestrian/Transit Infrastructure)**

These improvements will provide infrastructure and enhancements for bicycles, pedestrians, and transit. The west curb will be shifted as part of the roadway reconfiguration, providing additional space between the curb and right-of-way line. This reclaimed space allows for construction of a 10-foot wide, two-way, sidewalk level bikeway (cycle track), the type of bicycle infrastructure that the community preferred, as identified during the engagement process (Figure 57). Coordination with RTA is required for appropriate integration of bus stops and transit amenities. The cycle track will run along the west side of Lee Road from Van Aken and Shaker Heights City Hall at the north, through the proposed Neighborhood Center and into Cleveland, with current project limits at Walden in Cleveland. At the north end, the cycle track will connect with the future wide shoulders that will be created with the road diet conversion between Van Aken and the north city boundary at North Park. The

transition from the cycle track to wide shoulders will be accomplished via an existing crosswalk at the north end of the existing median by City Hall and the Police Department. This configuration will replicate the configuration of Lee Road in Cleveland Heights north of its border with Shaker Heights to create a seamless transition. The specific geometrics and level of crossing enhancements will be determined as part of roadway design and engineering. The south end of the project area transitions into Cleveland, and Shaker Heights staff and administration will continue to collaborate with the city of Cleveland to integrate seamless bicycle improvements and transitions into Cleveland’s planned Lee Road improvement project. In addition, pedestrian accommodations on both sides of Lee Road will be improved with seven-foot-wide sidewalks and enhanced transit amenities at existing RTA bus stops. The bus stop enhancements will be finalized during design and are expected to include shelters, seating areas, signage, and other amenities.

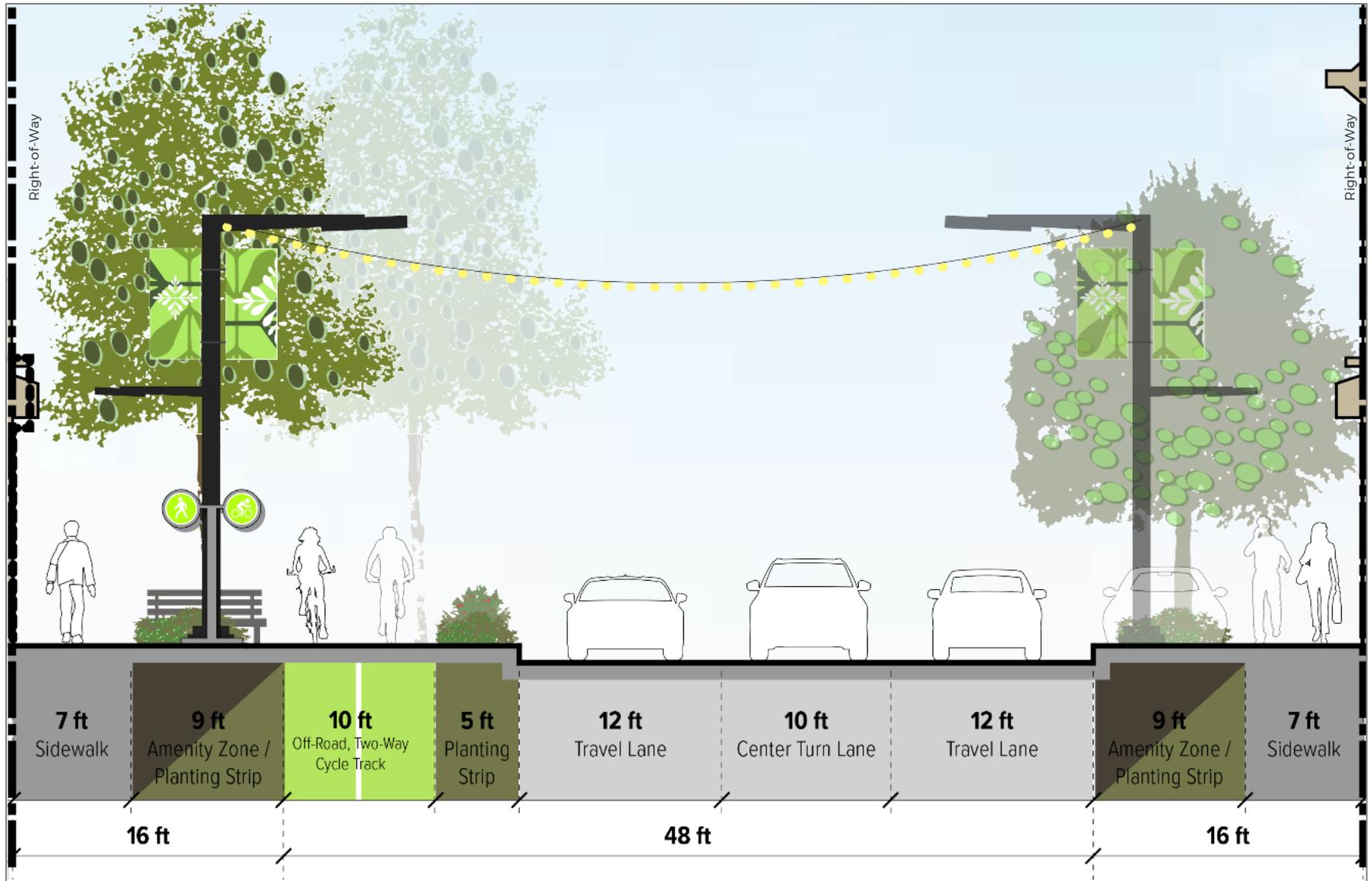


Figure 56: Proposed cross-section of Lee Road between Scottsdale & Lomond, looking north

- **Streetscapes & Public Space Improvements**

South of Van Aken, a new Lee Road streetscape will include new sidewalks along its entire length with targeted specialty paving and areas for seating, lighting, landscaping, public art, branding, signage, trash cans, and other pedestrian and bicycle amenities. New raised median sections in the roadway will include low-level landscaping and pedestrian refuge areas relative to east-west crosswalks. Median locations and dimensions will be finalized during design and engineering, including appropriately accommodating left turns and accounting for anticipated new shared parking along the east side of Lee. Where possible, the existing tree canopy will be preserved, and new trees will be planted to complete the streetscape. Overhead lighting and pedestrian scale lighting will be included to enhance the street character and the pedestrian experience. A variety of new public spaces are identified and will be detailed in each project. Kenyon intersection improvements at the Chagrin-Lee intersection will improve the safety of drivers and pedestrians traveling through the intersection.

- **Urban Design & Development Improvements**

The road diet will also facilitate the transition from more auto-centric uses to more walkable uses along Lee Road, such as mixed-use residential and/or office with ground floor retail. These new land uses will create new character, increase the number of residents in the area, and bring in new employees that will demand retail and other services. New uses and amenities will also attract people from throughout Shaker Heights and nearby communities, beyond the immediate neighborhoods. Based on context and community input, recommended building heights will vary along the corridor from two to four stories, and new building setbacks will create a street wall to build unique character. Height should be sensitive to the area, and where possible, height transitions should be used to blend into the neighborhoods. The parking strategy is to build private spaces into each new development, consolidate individual business parking lots into shared lots, and provide public parking lots to serve visitors.



Figure 57: Neighborhood Center concept plan

## 2 THE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

The proposed Neighborhood Center (Figures 57 and 58) is a major focus for redevelopment located at the heart of the project area on Lee Road. To accomplish this redevelopment, the existing Shaker Schools bus depot will need to be relocated, in accordance with the key initiatives proposed in the 2019 *A Vision for Community Facilities* report which called for studying Lee Road facilities, including the bus depot. The site



**Figure 58: Rendering of the Neighborhood Center**  
*Looking north on the east side of Lee Road, with Chelton Park on the left*

will be redeveloped with new uses that will transform both sides of Lee Road into an active gathering space that is built around an improved and expanded Chelton Park. The new cycle track and enhanced sidewalks along Lee Road will link north-south and a new east-west path connection will be established through Chelton Park and connect to the Moreland and Lomond neighborhoods for bicycle and pedestrian travel.

The Neighborhood Center will serve as a central hub of the community moving forward.

- **Multi-Modal Transportation Improvements**  
 In addition to the new Lee Road cycle track and widened sidewalks that will provide comfortable bicycle and walking access for

residents and visitors from the north and south, the Neighborhood Center will include several east-west transportation improvements for bicycles and pedestrians. An enhanced mid-block crosswalk across Lee Road will improve safe pedestrian circulation. To the west, a new pedestrian path will provide an enhanced connection to the Moreland neighborhood, and in the future – should land become available – the pedestrian connection may continue to the east to improve connectivity for the Lomond neighborhood.

▪ **Streetscapes & Public Space Improvements**

Streetscapes within the Neighborhood Center will focus on creating a unique and lively character that fits with the history of the area, meets the desires of residents and business owners, and effectively integrates new developments with existing businesses. Widened sidewalks and the proposed streetscape improvements will enhance the pedestrian experience.

Public space improvements in the Neighborhood Center will focus on preserving the existing tree canopy where possible and planting new trees to fill out the canopy over time. New pedestrian-scale lighting will make the pedestrian realm feel safe while also providing an opportunity for branding for the district. Seating areas and outdoor dining areas will soften the frontage of new developments and create a welcoming sense of community. Other features should include benches, trash cans, bike racks, protective bollards, landscaping, and public art where possible. The raised median sections within the Neighborhood Center should become a hallmark of the area, including landscaping and traffic calming features that will create a sense of place in the new district. The Neighborhood Center will include a new east-west mid-block crosswalk with safety enhancements, bollards, and landscaping to reinforce the presence of Chelton Park on Lee Road.

A major component of the new Neighborhood Center is the renovation and expansion of Chelton Park to better connect the park and the Moreland neighborhood to Lee Road and create more

welcoming public space for the Shaker Heights community (Figure 59). Key strategies for these improvements include:

- ▶ A new eastern entrance to the park that will create a public presence along Lee Road, including a hardscaped public plaza, a nature playscape area, park and information signage, and outdoor seating areas.
- ▶ Improvements to the existing field, including updates to the playing surface, seating areas, and a new public surface parking lot.
- ▶ Updates to the existing playground, including play equipment, seating areas, landscaping, and other child- and family-focused activities.
- ▶ A new dedicated area for food trucks and an access driveway along Hampstead to create a stronger entrance to the northern part of the park, where there will also be a proposed outdoor theater for community events, picnic area, and open space for seating, exercising, and special community events.
- ▶ The addition of new paths to better link the Moreland and Lomond neighborhoods to Chelton Park as well as the development along Lee Road. These paths will provide access to passive recreation and landscaped areas nestled within the new tree canopy.

The City will continue to incorporate community feedback – particularly from Moreland residents – in developing a future design and plan for renovation and expansion of Chelton Park.

▪ **Urban Design & Development Improvements**

The new Neighborhood Center offers the opportunity to establish a special place for the community, including new uses and developments that will reinforce the area as a community hub and “heart” for the surrounding neighborhoods and the entire Shaker Heights community. Proposed uses include new construction of ground floor retail and active commercial uses above, including new

residential and office, that will help foster activity during both the daytime and nighttime. These new uses will reinforce the livability and liveliness of the area. Retail and commercial uses should include family-friendly businesses and neighborhood services. New ground floor uses might include small businesses that serve residents. It is important that these ground floor uses have transparent and open facades with building frontage that is welcoming, well-lit, and engages the street.

Upper floor residential uses might include market rate and affordable for-sale units and rental apartments. Office uses on upper floors may be larger businesses that bring more employment opportunities and bring daytime life to the Neighborhood Center.

Building heights within the Neighborhood Center should range from three to four stories. Heights of new buildings should be sensitive to the adjacent neighborhoods and may provide upper-floor setbacks along both sides of Lee Road. A cross-section of the Neighborhood Center is shown in Figure 61.

The proposed uses for the Neighborhood Center and the entire project area are based on community input and are grounded in the economic and market analysis results (Figure 61). The Market Study & Economic Analysis are in Chapter 3.

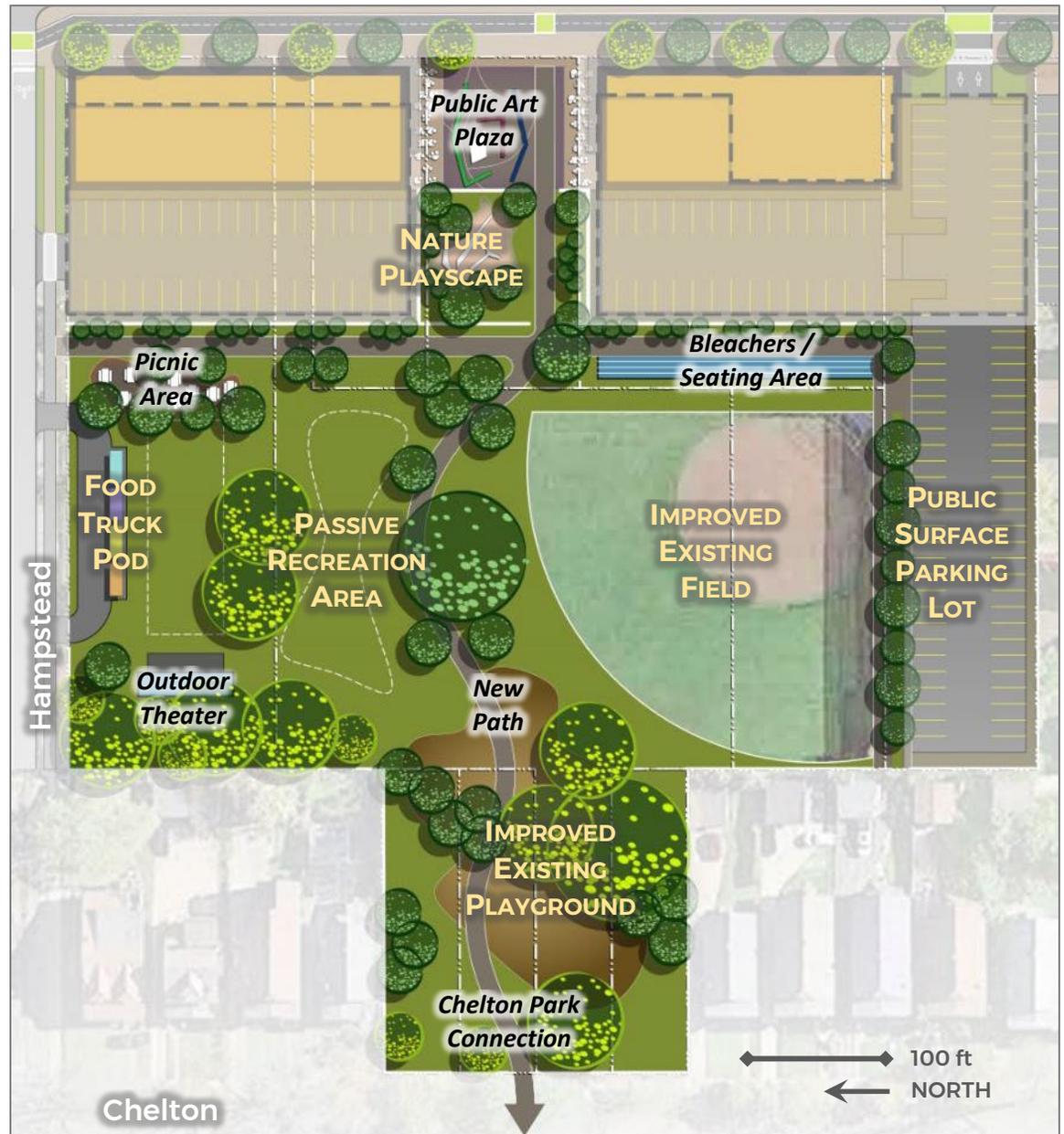


Figure 59: Concept plan for Chelton Park improvements



**Figure 60: Cross-section of Neighborhood Center**

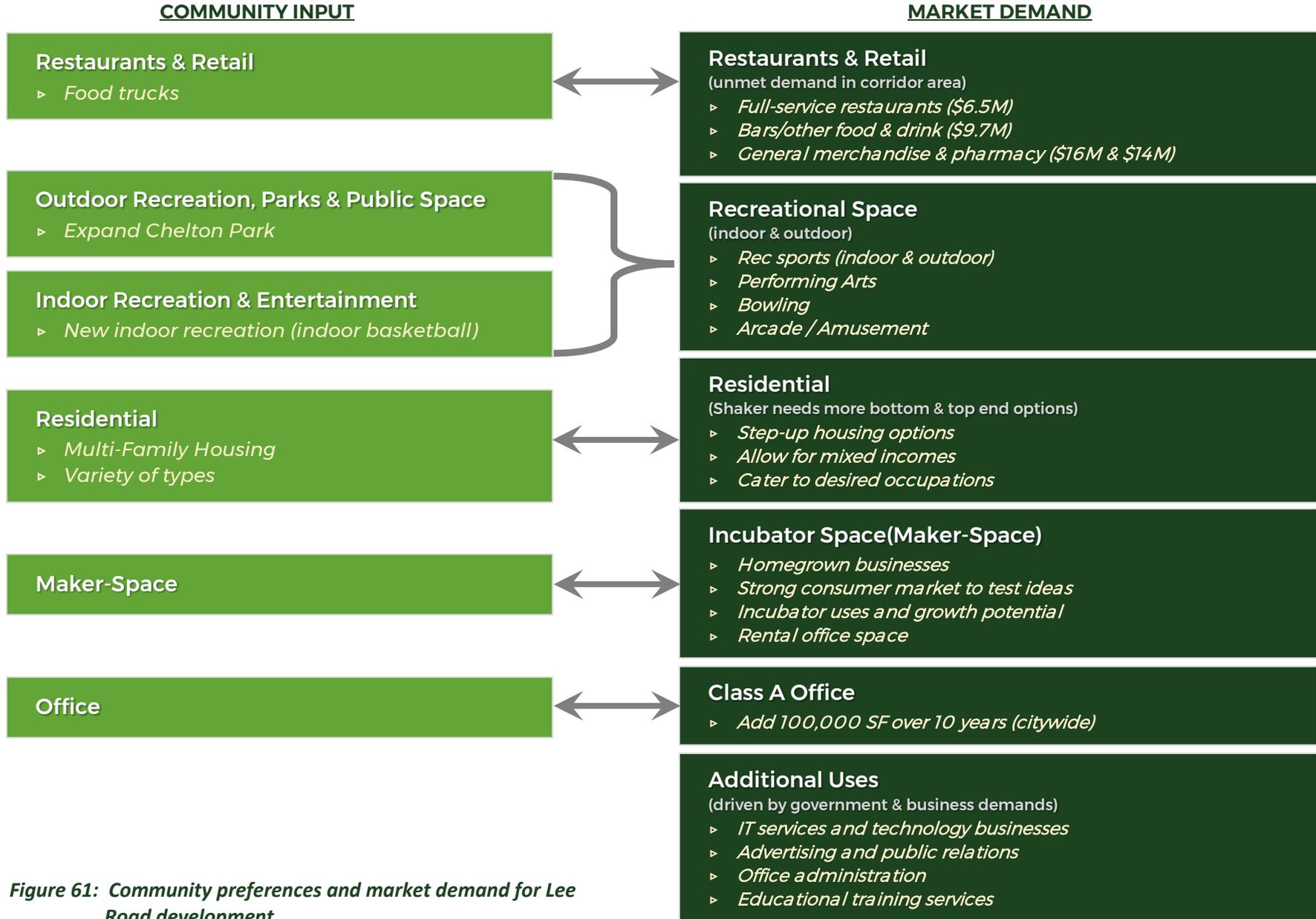


Figure 61: Community preferences and market demand for Lee Road development

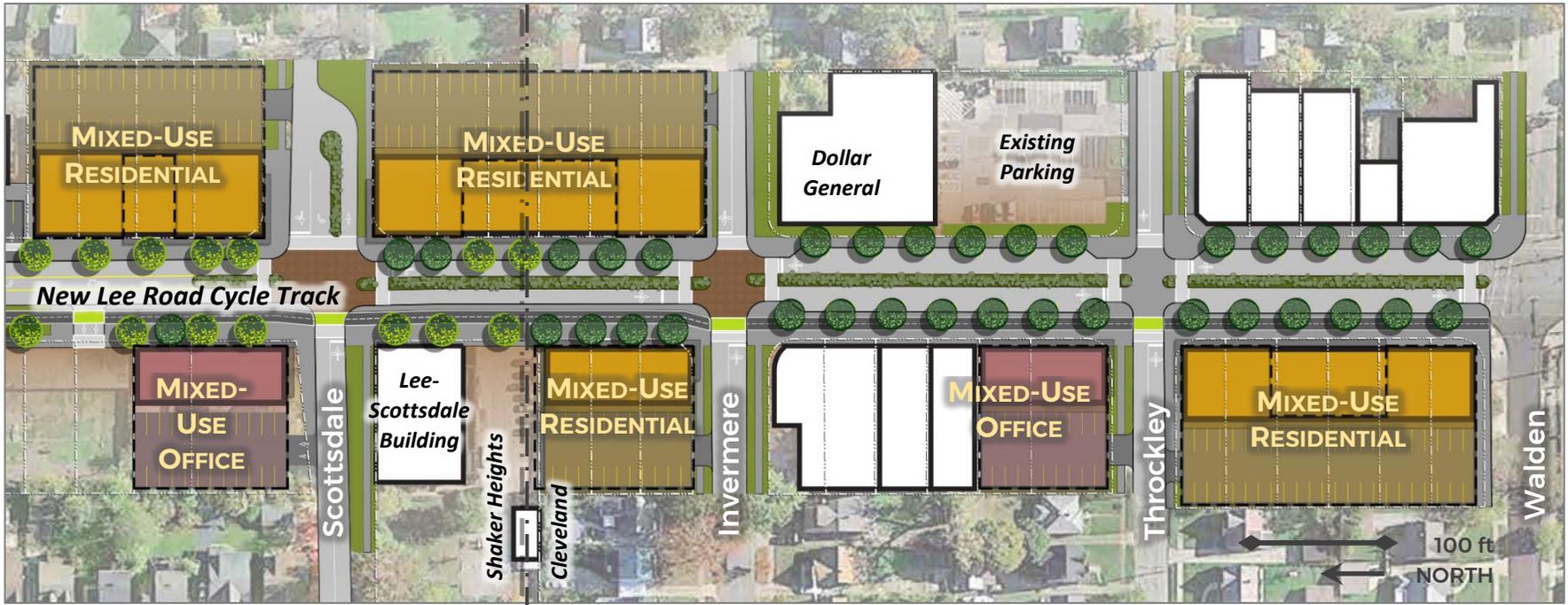


**Figure 62: Rendering of the Southern Gateway**  
*Southwest corner of Lee-Scottsdale looking northeast*

### **3 THE SOUTHERN GATEWAY**

The Southern Gateway (Figures 62 and 63) will create new opportunities for development that seamlessly transition between Shaker Heights and Cleveland. The Southern Gateway includes fostering redevelopment and strengthening

connections between Shaker Heights and the city of Cleveland, as well as streetscape enhancements incorporated as part of the Lee Road Reconfiguration. The gateway strategy is intended to build on existing resources such as the historic Lee-Scottsdale building and successful area businesses.



**Figure 63: Concept Plan for the Southern Gateway**

▪ **Multi-Modal Transportation Improvements**

In addition to the reconfiguration of Lee Road and addition of the new cycle track, this initiative includes the recommendation to raise the entire Lee-Scottsdale intersection to be flush with the level of the sidewalk, including all pedestrian crossings. This pedestrian safety improvement helps ensure that drivers will slow down and encourages vehicles to yield to pedestrians and bicyclists. The raised intersection approach will provide a safe environment for all modes of transportation while also creating a signature entrance for the area and connection between Shaker Heights and Cleveland.

▪ **Streetscapes & Public Space Improvements**

In addition to improvements included in the Lee Road Reconfiguration, more distinctive sidewalks, specialty paving in

targeted locations, branding, and amenities should be included. Lighting, street trees, and branding should be extended south along Lee Road to create a more cohesive streetscape experience between Scottsdale Boulevard and Walden Avenue and potentially farther south.

▪ **Urban Design & Development Improvements**

The Southern Gateway provides an opportunity to integrate new development alongside existing successful businesses. The concept envisions revitalization of the historic Lee-Scottsdale Building along with potential new buildings that include mixed-use office and mixed-use residential. The Southern Gateway will reinforce and link the Neighborhood Center with the area south in Cleveland.

Development guidelines should align with the Neighborhood Center, including residential and office over retail and uses that will generate activity during daytime and nighttime. Retail and commercial uses should include family-friendly businesses as well as neighborhood services. New ground floor uses should serve the community as well as have transparent and open facades with building frontage that is welcoming, well-lit, and engages the street. Upper floor residential uses could include market rate and affordable for-sale condominiums and rental apartments. Office uses on upper floors may be larger businesses that bring employment opportunities and daytime life to the Southern Gateway.

Building heights within the Southern Gateway should range from three to four stories. Heights of new buildings should be sensitive to the adjacent buildings as well as neighborhoods and upper-floor setbacks along both sides of Lee Road.

The proposed programming for the Southern Gateway is based on community input and is grounded in the economic and market analysis. The Market Study & Economic Analysis are in Chapter 3.

#### 4 VAN AKEN-LEE TO CHAGRIN-LEE IMPROVEMENTS

The area surrounding the Van Aken-Lee intersection and south to the Chagrin-Lee intersection is well-developed. However, there are opportunities to integrate new civic uses desired by the community as well as potential infill development (Figure 64).

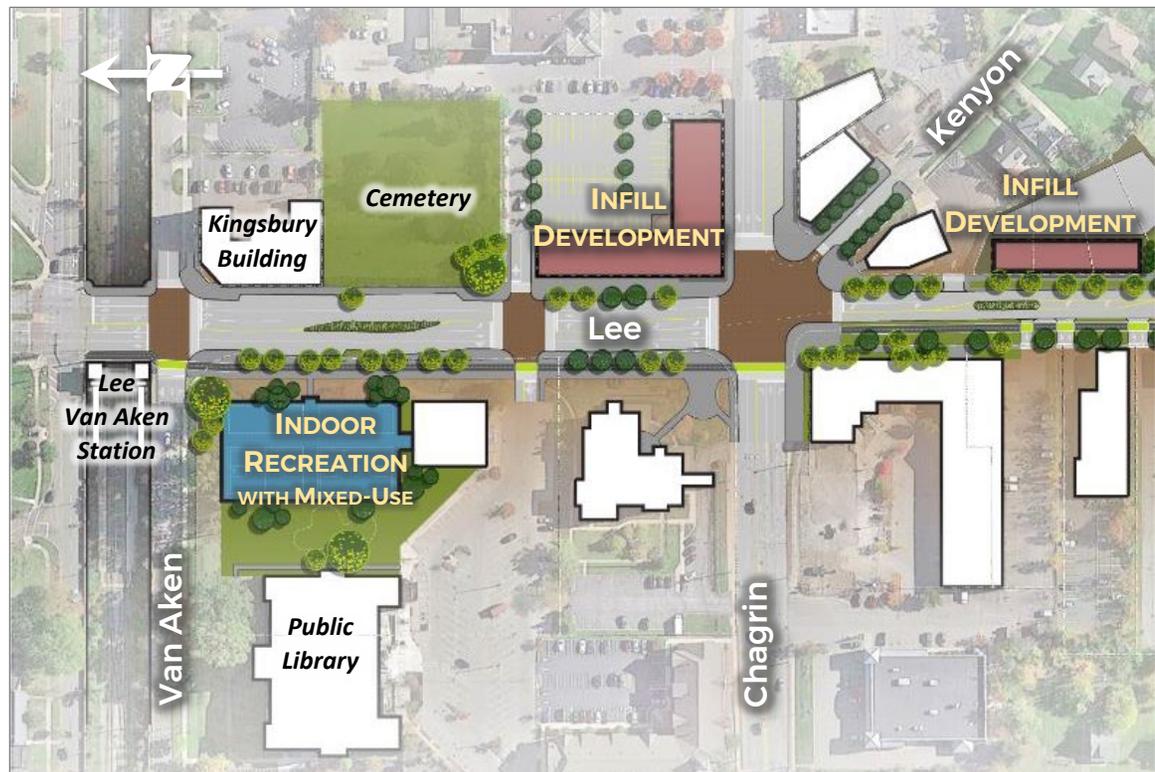


Figure 64: Concept Plan for Van Aken-Lee to Chagrin-Lee

- Multi-Modal Transportation Improvements**  
 Roadway operations will remain unchanged due to the volume of traffic in this segment. However, the design process should examine the Van Aken-Lee intersection to consider northbound lane alignment improvement across Van Aken East. The cycle track runs along the west side of Lee Road. Sidewalk enhancements on this segment include improved streetscape and enhanced pedestrian crossings at signalized intersections. Adding a new crosswalk on the south side of the Lee-Library Drive intersection (crossing Lee) is recommended. These improvements will improve walkability.

Reconfiguring the Kenyon leg of the Chagrin-Lee intersection provides multiple benefits to the area and is discussed in the next section.

- **Streetscapes & Public Space Improvements**  
In addition to improvements included in the Lee Road Reconfiguration, distinctive sidewalks, specialty paving, branding, amenities and public art should be included. Maintaining and adding street trees will reinforce a cohesive streetscape experience.
- **Urban Design & Development Improvements**  
There is an opportunity to address identified community needs in the civic area on the west side of Lee. The existing park space at the southwest corner of Van Aken and Lee is underutilized and could be repurposed with the addition of indoor recreation space (specifically basketball) along with a relocated playground between the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Community Building and the Shaker Heights Public Library. Mixed-use development could be considered in this area.

There is also potential for infill development on the former PNC Bank site, located on the northeast corner of the Chagrin-Lee intersection. A new building that is oriented toward Lee and/or Chagrin would make better use of the site, including allowing for a safer and more efficient parking lot layout. This opportunity is dependent upon property owner and developer interest.

## 5 KENYON INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

The current configuration of the Chagrin-Lee intersection is large and carries a significant volume of vehicles on both Lee and Chagrin. The Kenyon leg of the intersection provides access to the businesses along the south side of Chagrin as well as entry into the Lomond neighborhood. The intersection size and amount of pavement makes it challenging for pedestrians to cross. This initiative converts the Kenyon leg of the Chagrin-Lee intersection from two-way to one-way inbound (Figure 65). Community input strongly favored complete or partial



Figure 65: Concept Plan for Kenyon at Chagrin-Lee

closure of Kenyon to improve pedestrian crossings and provide public space enhancements. Through meetings with impacted businesses and analysis of intersection geometrics, the plan recommends conversion of Kenyon to one-way inbound. This will provide opportunities to improve pedestrian accommodations and public space, including plazas and outdoor dining, while retaining necessary access to adjacent businesses.

- **Multi-Modal Transportation Improvements**  
Transportation changes are centered on changing Kenyon from two-way to one-way traffic operations. Significant improvements associated with the reconfiguration of Lee are enhanced pedestrian treatments (shorter crosswalks, wider sidewalks) and expanded

## KENYON INTERSECTION RECONFIGURATION FEATURES & BENEFITS

### INTERSECTION

- Convert to one-way inbound
- Reduce pedestrian crossing distance at Kenyon
- Simplify signal operations

### EAST SIDE

- Expand existing plaza
- Add outdoor dining area

### WEST SIDE

- Create new public plaza
- Provide on-street parking

public spaces. Conversion of Kenyon will have the added benefit of improving the efficiency of traffic operations at the Chagrin-Lee intersection.

#### ▪ **Streetscapes & Public Space Improvements**

Removal of the outbound travel lane provides space for public uses, including an enhanced plaza on the east side of Kenyon and a new plaza on the west side, along with opportunities for significant streetscape enhancements and outdoor dining. On-street parking will shift from the east side to the west side, due to traffic operations.

#### ▪ **Urban Design & Development Improvements**

There are no recommended changes to land use, however, the reconfiguration of Kenyon is developed in a manner that accommodates and enhances the area for nearby businesses impacted by the changes.

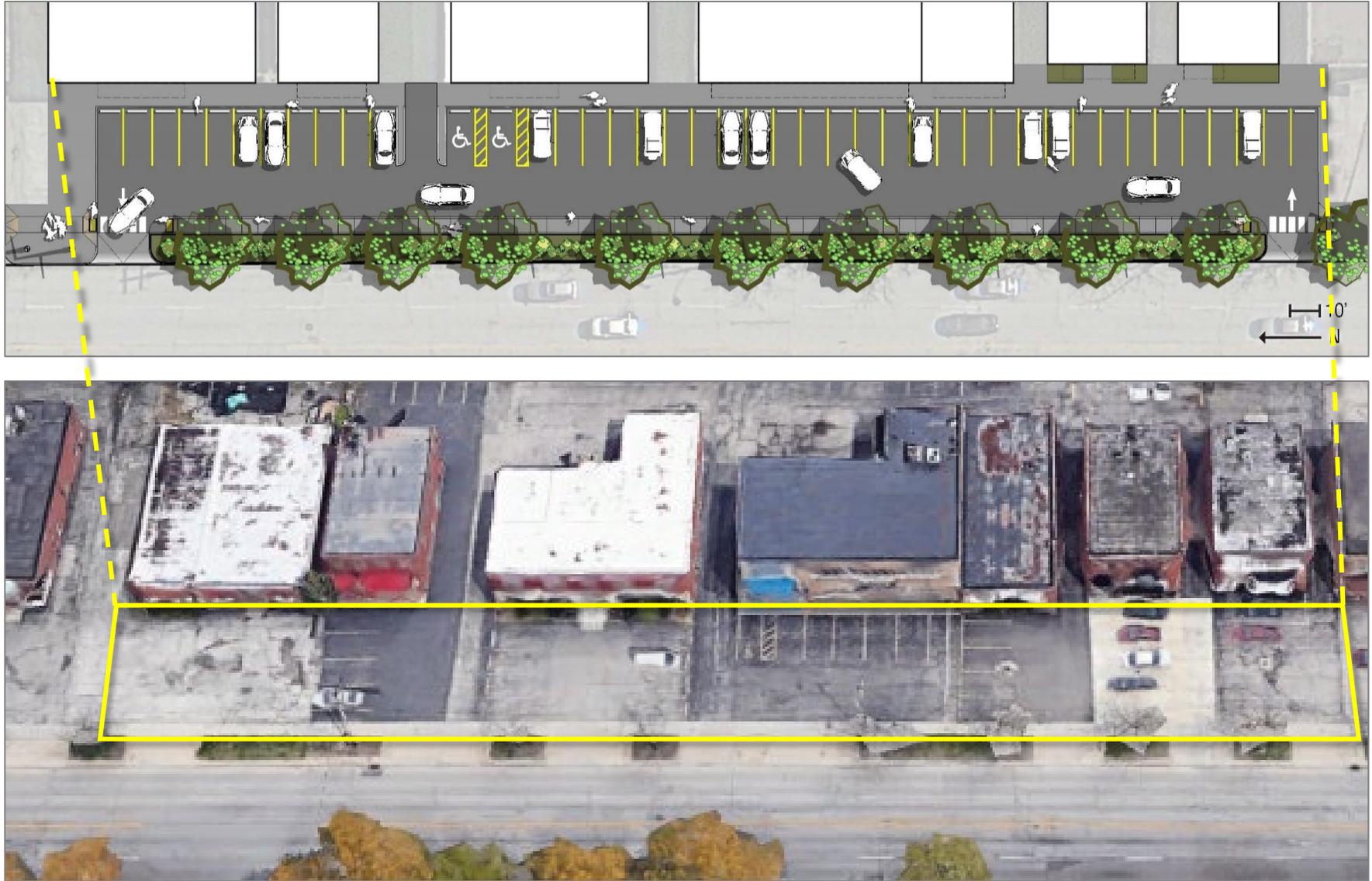
## 6 SHARED PARKING & ACCESS

Each existing building has its own driveway(s), resulting in a predominance of pavement with limited streetscape. It causes challenges for vehicles entering and exiting driveways (access management), traffic safety issues, and negative impacts to pedestrian safety and comfort. In addition, parking for many businesses is cramped, with small parking spaces and substandard driveway widths. At times, cars are parked across drive aisles or on the sidewalk.

As illustrated in Figure 66, the proposed shared parking concept allows for driveway consolidation along with shared access to parking. Shared parking will better organize access to businesses with fewer curb cuts, improved access and circulation, safer traffic flow, and enhanced pedestrian safety and comfort. This provides the opportunity to implement access management best practices.

Shared parking is also expected to create more parking spaces and a parking layout that complies with preferred design standards and ADA accessibility requirements. Fewer places for cars to enter and exit will improve the pedestrian experience and create opportunities for streetscape enhancements. There are no anticipated negative impacts to existing buildings.

Shared parking can be considered at various locations along Lee. City staff will work with the businesses and property owners to determine where shared parking is feasible for the existing land uses. Shared parking will be implemented in locations where business and property owners agree to the concept and the layout.



**Figure 66: Shared Parking Concept (proposed above, existing below)**

## 7 INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Potential infill development sites are dependent upon property owner and developer interest. The City and its partners will coordinate actions related to potential infill development and will move forward with plans as feasible and appropriate in the project area.

Infill development should leverage the benefits associated with the Lee Road Reconfiguration and should be sensitive to adjacent building heights and neighborhoods.

### ▪ Northeast Quadrant at Chagrin-Lee

The existing single-story building, which is currently unoccupied, is oriented at an angle to the adjacent roads. This results in an underutilized site with an inefficient parking layout. A potential new building could be aligned along Lee, Chagrin or both streets, activating the street and providing the opportunity to improve parking efficiency. The height and use(s) of the future building should align with the area and should not create parking demand that exceeds capacity (Figure 67).

### ▪ Northeast Quadrant at Lomond-Lee

This grouping of parcels presents a potential opportunity for redevelopment. Again, the existing building is oriented at an angle to the adjacent roads. A new building(s) could be oriented to Lee to better engage the street and more efficiently utilize the site. Development on this site should recognize its context adjacent to residences in the Lomond neighborhood and integrate appropriate building height, style, and uses. This location also presents a potential opportunity for rear parking and potential shared parking with adjacent businesses (Figure 68).



Figure 67: Infill at Northeast Quadrant at Chagrin-Lee



Figure 68: Infill at Northeast Quadrant at Lomond-Lee



**Figure 69: Infill at Southwest Quadrant at Lomond-Lee**

- Southwest Quadrant at Lomond-Lee**  
 The underutilized lot located south of The Dealership (3558 Lee Road, Shaker Heights) represents a potential redevelopment site. Future uses, building height, setback and site layout should reflect the character of the surrounding area. This site also creates an opportunity to leverage or spin out activity from The Dealership (3558 Lee), a fully occupied small office and co-working space and the home of the Shaker Heights Development Corporation (SHDC) (Figure 69).

## Economic Development Recommendations

To achieve desired business and redevelopment outcomes in the Lee Road commercial district, the Lee Road Action Plan recommends the following targeted economic development strategies:

- Community programming**, such as maximizing public policy benefits in property tax incentive policies, exploring community partnerships with developers and/or newly attracted large businesses, and establishing a Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA);
- Infrastructure programming**, such as partnering with SHDC to establish a Business Improvement District and removing Lee Road from the existing Urban Renewal District;
- Business Programming**, including promoting entrepreneurship, business attraction, business retention and expansion (BRE), and implementing visibility strategies as well as improving existing business incentives, including bonuses for minority and women-owned businesses;
- Using development financing and incentive tools** to effectively deploy resources for Lee Road redevelopment when needed, particularly as required to attract new construction and projects that will create the new Neighborhood Center, establish the Southern Gateway, and allow for potential infill opportunities; and
- Public policy considerations**, such as land assembly and commercial code enforcement.

Each of these strategies is discussed in detail below. Also see:

Appendix B: Economic Development Playbook

Appendix C: ROI Examples

Appendix D: Economic Development Case Studies

Appendix E: Market & Economic Development Supplemental Information

## COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

### ▪ Maximize Public Policy Benefits in Property Tax Incentive Policies

**Background:** The City of Shaker Heights has historically approved property tax incentives for development projects only when necessary for the project to occur. This is commonly known as the “but for” test, such that without the incentive, the project would not have occurred. To date, the City’s rationale for awarding a commercial property tax incentive (such as Tax Increment Financing - TIF or a commercial tax abatement) has sought largely to grow the commercial tax base by creating new jobs and new tax revenue to the City and Shaker Schools. The City should continue to require developers to meet the “but for” test and to require job and/or tax revenue creation in its property tax incentive policies. Now, the City should also expand its goals for such property tax incentive programs to include solutions for additional community needs and priorities. This recommendation should be applied citywide, and not solely for Lee Road development.

**Recommendation:** Establish a commercial (including multifamily residential) tax abatement and TIF policy that provides abatements or subsidies in exchange for public policy benefits. Developers or companies may have the potential to "buy out" of requirements by contributing to a community development fund dedicated to Lee Road initiatives or other community need. Examples of potential public policy benefits may include:

- 1) Requiring school payments and/or participation in school initiatives;
- 2) Filling gaps in housing types and incorporating rental residential units at desired price points;
- 3) Requiring commercial tenants to participate in Shaker entrepreneurship network initiatives or conduct research and development activities;

- 4) Securing participation in a Business Improvement District (BID) (discussed below);
- 5) Obtaining a commitment to hire disadvantaged candidates and/or contract with minority- or woman-owned vendors;
- 6) Improving energy efficiency;
- 7) Incorporating community spaces into private developments;
- 8) Requiring community partnership agreements as discussed in the next section; and/or
- 9) Obtaining a commitment to join a new community authority (NCA) (discussed below).

As part of this policy, the City should consider establishing a Community Reinvestment Area (“CRA”) and TIF District for the Chagrin-Lee commercial district. This would enable the City to provide incentives to obtain desired development. See the Development Incentives section below (p. 95) for a more detailed discussion of the circumstances in which it is appropriate to use a CRA or to use a TIF.

**Justification:** Incentives should have a clear goal and be tied to public policy benefits in addition to creating new jobs and public revenue. The City of Columbus and the City of Cincinnati are two examples of municipalities using a progressive CRA policy to advance public policy goals.

In the City of Columbus, residential developments receiving tax abatements must incorporate at least 20% affordable units into a multi-family development project (Columbus defines “affordable” as rents that are affordable to those making 60-80% of Area Median Income). Developers can "buy out" of the requirement by paying a per-unit fee that is deposited in a community development fund geared to improve affordability in neighborhoods of need. Further, the terms of the abatement are based on the distress criteria of the

census tract, which include poverty, median household income growth, population growth, median rent growth, mortgage foreclosure rate, and housing vacancy rate.

In Cincinnati, tax abatements are given more favorable terms for incorporating LEED certification standards into the development.

- **Require Community Partnerships**

**Recommendation:** All economic incentive agreements involving the use of tax abatements, tax increment financing (TIF), or other City revenues should require a community partnership agreement with the prospective beneficiary, typically a developer or a larger business new to Shaker. In such a community partnership, the developer or business will commit not only to creating new jobs in the City, as is traditional, but will also contribute to community causes or initiatives, either financially, through targeted programming, or otherwise. Examples of possible contributions include investing (either in upfront cash or by assessment) in public park improvements, planting trees, participating in career technical education programming with local schools, contributing to regional workforce development programs, and providing direct services to a targeted population. These suggestions are not intended to be exhaustive and are likely to change over time, depending on circumstances. Note that the City should consider applying this requirement, if adopted, throughout the City, not simply in connection with the Lee Road redevelopment.

**Justification:** Incentives viewed through the lens of a public-private partnership create greater public trust and are viewed with less skepticism if a community partnership is cultivated as a requirement of the deal. This does not have to be a large financial commitment, but rather the commitment to partner with an identified local organization. For example, Ohio Health and Huntington Bank in Columbus both received jobs-based grants from the city in exchange for, in addition to job and investment commitments, launching programs that improved neighborhoods. Huntington committed to

bring 1,000 jobs to the City of Columbus and to launch community lending programs. Ohio Health committed to provide community-based health and wellness programs to improve neighborhoods.

- **Consider Establishing a DORA for the Lee Road Corridor**

**Recommendation:** Consider establishing a Lee Road Designated Outdoor Refreshment Areas (DORA) if deemed appropriate after the land use review. A DORA is a specifically designated area that allows patrons over the age of 21 to purchase alcoholic beverages from an establishment and carry them within the boundaries of the DORA.

**Justification:** Currently a successful DORA exists within the Van Aken District. Municipal corporations with populations of less than 50,000 may establish up to three DORAs. A DORA can enhance sales and visibility to businesses engaged in alcohol sales and will generally promote outdoor pedestrian activity and event capacity.

## INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMMING

- **Establish a Business Improvement District**

**Recommendation:** The City should partner with the Shaker Heights Development Corporation (SHDC) and work with business owners in the Chagrin-Lee commercial district to establish a Special Improvement District (SID) – also commonly referred to as a Business Improvement District (BID), which would create a funding source for uniform enhancements to the commercial district. To establish a BID, property owners owning 60% of the front footage or 75% of the area within the proposed BID must sign a petition that is subsequently presented to City Council for approval.

**Justification:** A BID allows business and property owners to collaborate and to agree to the levy of special assessments on their properties to be used to fund public improvements and public services such as beautification projects, litter removal, or support

for community activities, like street markets. BIDs are excellent ways to continue to enhance the physical conditions, health, safety, and welfare in a commercial district with a streamlined investment plan. It is a way to provide extra funding for needed services.

- **Remove Lee Road south of Chagrin from the City’s Urban Renewal TIF District**

**Recommendation:** Council should amend the City’s legislation that established its Urban Renewal TIF District (the “Urban Renewal District”) to remove properties on Lee Road south of Chagrin. The City currently utilizes an urban renewal TIF established under Chapter 725 of the Ohio Revised Code. The City issued general obligation bonds maturing in 2031 that are paid from such TIF revenues, to the extent such revenues are available. To date, TIF revenues derived from the Urban Renewal District have been insufficient to pay debt service on those general obligation bonds and have required subsidy from the City’s general fund. However, due to recent new developments in the Urban Renewal District, the City estimates that revenues will fully cover annual debt service in approximately 2025.

Although there has been some new development in the northern part of the Urban Renewal District, Lee Road properties south of Chagrin have seen no new development. Because those properties are located within the Urban Renewal District, the City cannot use additional or different development finance tools to help redevelop them. The inability to use targeted property tax incentives in private developments may have contributed to a lack of investment and dearth of development on Lee Road. The City can create additional opportunities for development by removing those properties from the Urban Renewal District and instead establishing commercial CRA and TIF Districts as described above.

**Justification:** The current Urban Renewal District contains Lee Road properties that are not currently contributing to bond repayment. Removing these properties from the Urban Renewal District would permit the City to provide more tailored incentives and to dedicate

revenues from those properties to obligations directly related to development or to improvements to the Lee Road commercial district.

- **Investigate establishing a New Community Authority (NCA)**

**Recommendation:** City officials should consider whether a New Community Authority (NCA) could be a useful tool for development or redevelopment on Lee Road. An NCA is a political subdivision that is formed under authority of Chapter 349 of the Ohio Revised Code pursuant to a petition filed by a “developer” (as defined in Section 349.01 of the Ohio Revised Code). NCAs have the power to levy charges known as “community development charges” on properties within the district. These charges can be based on assessed valuation, economic activity within the territory of the NCA (e.g., retail sales or lodging) on a per-lot basis or using other criteria. These charges can be imposed as an extra charge to pay costs of community facilities or to support community activities (e.g. commercial, governmental, recreational, educational, industrial, residential, and/or research activities). The creation of an NCA is subject to approval of a petition by City Council. NCAs have a board comprised of a majority of members appointed by the City. The powers of an NCA include cooperation with municipalities.

A City may act as a “developer” to create an NCA if it owns or otherwise controls property within a proposed district or if it would have the right to acquire that property by eminent domain. Any NCA established in the Lee Road commercial district covering existing properties would need to be agreed to by the owners of the properties to be included in the new community district unless the City could establish, through a blight study, that it would have the right to acquire those properties by eminent domain if it chose to do so. Before proceeding with a blight study to gauge the properties’ suitability for eminent domain acquisition, the City should consult with legal counsel or consider alternative paths for including properties within NCA.

Establishing an NCA for development at the bus depot site is easier as the City would have site control. That NCA could be expanded over time to include additional properties if the City chooses to bring property owners into the NCA voluntarily.

Note that community development charges are often combined with abatements or other revenues to provide a source of funding for improvements or activities when other taxes may be reduced or diverted, or, in the case of charges levied based on sales, to provide a source of additional funding. As community development charges levied by an NCA, like charges levied by a City pursuant to a BID, are charges on real property, BIDs and NCAs are rarely used simultaneously. NCAs are a more powerful tool than BIDs, as their duration is limited only by the provisions of the petition, the NCA has more flexibility to levy charges (it can levy charges for example, based on retail sales), and the use of the charges is more flexible.

**Justification:** NCAs can cross municipal boundaries. An NCA is a tool that could assist in the holistic development of Lee Road in Shaker Heights and in the city of Cleveland and provide for the pooling and application of NCA revenues throughout the properties within the NCA. This would be challenging and complicated, but it is legally possible.

NCAs have been a tool for transformative development in Central Ohio for the past 20 years, more often than not, on greenfield sites (e.g., the city of New Albany). Their ability to supplement and secure sources of revenue as well as their flexibility make them an excellent development finance tool. Their utility in redevelopment has yet to be proven, primarily because of challenges surrounding site control. Further exploration of the costs and benefits of an NCA on Lee Road is warranted.

The most common structure for NCA usage is a tax abatement coupled with a fixed NCA charge. This provides a benefit to the property owner while also providing a fixed charge for public

improvements. Assuming that there is minimal private business use, such charges can be used in connection with tax-exempt financing.

## BUSINESS PROGRAMMING

### ▪ Promote Entrepreneurship

#### ▸ Integrate City staff into existing regional entrepreneurial ecosystem

The City of Shaker Heights is in exclusive company as it pertains to investments, resident spending, and self-employment income, with a strong potential for both investor activity and entrepreneurial interest. The 44120 zip code is one of only five zip codes in Ohio with an average capital gain of \$60,000 or higher on IRS personal income tax returns, and its 44122 zip code is one of only 12 zip codes with an average capital gain of \$47,000 or higher on IRS personal income tax returns. Furthermore, over the last five years the City has experienced 18.7% in per capita income growth and 16% in household income growth. Over that same period, the City is one of only a very few Ohio municipalities that has experienced self-employment income growth of 150% or higher. Moreover, the City's average household expenditure rate is in the highest bracket (over \$73,000 annually) in the state.

This convergence of factors offers the City a unique opportunity to take advantage of the entrepreneurial talent and energy present in the City. We recommend a strategy that builds on these assets and leads to entrepreneurial growth within the City. Such a strategy should foster: (1) a local coalition that advocates for and maintains the City's interests; and (2) a regional network that includes or has access to the "three I's" of entrepreneurial channels: industry, institutions, and individuals.

**Recommendation:** City Economic Development staff, coordinated with SHDC, should be better integrated into the

regional entrepreneurial ecosystem, including collaboration with JumpStart, MAGNET, Greater Cleveland Partnership, the Cleveland Innovation Project, area incubators and accelerators, university innovation and entrepreneurship centers, the Northeast Ohio Startup Network, and more.

▶ *Create an Entrepreneurship Task Force*

To maintain momentum and help evaluate how best to support entrepreneurs in Shaker Heights, the City should provide a structure that can build bridges between government and the private sector, enabling both to be nimble in responding to and taking advantage of trends as they occur.

**Recommendation:** Consider creating a Shaker Heights Entrepreneurship Task Force to help define and collaborate on approaches and strategies that can leverage Shaker’s entrepreneurial talent and energy. This Task Force should include a cross-section of partners from government, education, finance, technical assistance providers, and seasoned entrepreneurs. The Task Force should provide reports at least annually to City Council.

▶ *Leverage and expand the Van Aken District entrepreneurial initiatives*

Just as important as creating a regional network is the creation of local spaces where entrepreneurs can thrive.

**Recommendation:** The City should leverage and expand the Van Aken District Entrepreneurial Initiatives to be citywide with the goal of encouraging entrepreneurship outside of traditional incubators. The community should create additional spaces along Lee Road that connect to this citywide entrepreneurial initiative, including additional maker spaces, common areas for mobile and pop-up locations, and free Wi-Fi locations.

▪ **Business Attraction**

▶ *Prioritize office and talent attraction*

In addition to building more Class A office space and renovating Class B and C space, the City should pursue targeted industries for tenant attraction opportunities. Many of these tenants, to the extent they employ a high number of workers in management, financial services, engineering, and technology will have average salaries well above the mean \$53,000 annual wage for Ohio workers, all of whom will pay income tax to the City.

In terms of the regional talent pipeline, there are 12,000 graduates annually within a 25-mile radius receiving Associates, Bachelors, Masters or Ph.D. degrees in health professions, liberal arts, education, performing arts, social science, business, engineering and computer sciences professions, among others. Higher paying graduate degrees include health professions (3,095), business, management (2,878) engineering (1,165) and computer science (400).

Accordingly, the Economic Development Department’s attraction strategy should focus on two key pillars: (1) creation of office space; and (2) talent attraction, which includes housing for relocating talent.

**Recommendation:** The City should work with office brokers and landlords to ensure that available space can be marketed with economic development incentives and financing opportunities. In the case of existing space, the City should continue to tailor incentives towards tenants (in the form of, for example, training grants or income tax incentives). In the case of newly built space, the City should continue to tailor incentives towards landlords and building owners (in the form of TIFs, property tax abatements, or other pre-construction grants). The overarching

goal is to secure high-value tenants in quality office space under long-term leases.

**Recommendation:** Amenities are critical to attracting new Class A office space. The City should promote and further develop community amenities on Lee Road that make office space desirable (for example restaurants, retail, and open space). In addition, the City should consider incentives that would provide high quality rental housing for workers in the office spaces as well as in the supporting amenities.

**Recommendation:** Tenant/business attraction strategies should focus on industries that have unmet county or local demand by businesses, institutions, and governments. The City and SHDC should coordinate with TeamNEO and office brokers to get in front of these industries through associations, conferences, etc. Based on the market study and economic analysis, targeted office users should include (but not be limited to) advertising/public relations/related services, computer systems design, facilities and building management, banks and financial services, office support services, and corporate headquarters.

▶ *Create a retail/restaurant catalyzation program*

To create more activity on Lee Road, especially to develop Class A office space and attract talent, meeting demand for capacity-building uses such as restaurant and retail will be critical. The City of Romeoville, IL and the Village of Wheeling, IL both run grant programs geared towards increasing dining, shopping, and entertainment. In Romeoville, this grant is for new establishments locating in that city, including full-service sit-down restaurants, grocery stores, and stores for clothing and apparel, furniture, home improvement, specialty retail, retail entertainment, and sporting goods. Romeoville has similar characteristics to Shaker Heights related to population, self-employment income growth, and median household income. Wheeling has two versions of its program, one geared for sit-

down restaurants and another for food and beverage, retail, and shopping centers.

**Recommendation:** Subject to the conclusions of the land use study, in an effort to attract and increase new dining, shopping, and entertainment options to Lee Road, the City could consider establishing a restaurant and retail catalyzation grant program. The amounts awarded would be decided on a case-by-case basis on the order received, available funds, eligibility, and City approval. Such funding could be appropriated by the City on an annual basis. Should the City determine to establish a New Community Authority, funds derived from its community development charges could conceivably be used for such a program. Alternatively, Vision Fund program dollars from a Downtown Redevelopment District and Innovation District (discussed below) could conceivably be used for restaurant incubation.

▪ **Promote Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E)**

A fundamental tenet of economic development is that it is always less costly and time intensive to retain and expand existing businesses than to recruit new ones. The City's business retention and expansion strategy should continue to emphasize working with the businesses that have already chosen to invest in the community and seeking their input in meeting challenges and promoting new growth. The specific strategies selected should be identified by the businesses themselves. Creating a process for input and strategy development with these groups allows for a greater understanding of business needs and a greater likelihood of successful, sustainable long-term outcomes.

**Recommendation:** Host business roundtables or focus groups for businesses to provide input on BR&E strategy. Business visitations by City/SHDC representatives should include overviews of City, county and state incentive opportunities, insights on new growth

and development in the City, planned investments, or anything else that illustrates a potential value to businesses.

**Recommendation:** Implement a business visitation strategy that clearly demonstrates the City's value proposition to the business. This strategy should be led by the City's Economic Development Department and coordinated with SHDC and local business and community leaders.

Information and data provided by local business can provide insights to City leadership into strategies that will assist in local business retention and expansion as well as attraction.

**Recommendation:** Consider investing in economic development software – for example BluDot, UrbanLogiq, or Implan – that will assist the City in engaging and retaining businesses and helping them to remain competitive.

**Recommendation:** In addition to the annual Shaker Heights Business Appreciation Mixer (SH-BAM) co-hosted by the City, SHDC, and Heights Hillcrest Chamber of Commerce, consider hosting large-scale BR&E informational events such as a business walk or economic forecast breakfast. Special events serve as another way to bring the business community together. This is a practice commonly used by Ohio communities including, for example, the cities of Bexley, Whitehall, Gahanna, and Toledo, and it is commonly used by regional economic development organizations.

▪ **Modify and improve existing business incentive programs**

The City should consider a number of modifications to its forgivable loan programs to make them more competitive.

▶ Consider less aggressive repayment requirements

Clawbacks – or required repayments of incentives – have become an emerging discussion point for site selectors in initial relocation and site selection conversations with companies. In most circumstances, site selectors research incentives on a local government website before a company or its representative will pick up the phone to call a local government. Private companies (and their investors) value, above all else, certainty. Thus, companies view clawbacks as a risk, and as such do not classify the benefit of the incentive dollar in the same manner as an incentive without clawback, which many communities offer.

That said, clawbacks are a responsible public policy tool to ensure a company is committed beyond its benefit term. In 2009, the State of Ohio reduced the clawback period of its long-standing Job Creation Tax Credit program after it conducted an in-depth study and survey of businesses. It found that the program was not competitive nor business-friendly due to its aggressive clawback provisions. It maintained the clawback as a public policy tool but changed the clawback period from two times the term of the benefit period to the benefit period plus three years.

**Recommendation:** Clawback and repayment periods should be reduced from twice the term of the loan to the repayment period plus three years.

▶ Expand eligible uses for City's loan and grant programs

The City's forgivable Vision Loan program closely follows the jobs-based grant or jobs-based tax credit model used by many Ohio municipalities. Worthington, Ohio's Venture Grant follows a similar model, in which incentives are paid upfront and based on the future income taxes generated by the project. However, the grant is not limited in how it is used, as it is simply an exchange for jobs and payroll (and the indirect benefits of such activity).

**Recommendation:** The City currently limits use of its business loan and grant programs to buildout and tenant improvements. The City should consider broadening the eligible costs payable under such programs to include activities supporting the Lee Road Action Plan. For instance, businesses may have the option to dedicate a portion of loans or grant proceeds to working capital or payroll of new or retained employees. (Note that the use of *loan* proceeds for working capital is problematic under the Ohio Constitution).

Additionally, in the case of loans, the City could encourage borrowers to ensure that they are fully reviewing their expenses, so that capital expenses are not improperly classified as working capital expenses for purposes of determining eligible expenses. Alternatively, the program could offer a municipal income tax credit alternative with longer terms and higher percentage of income taxes for businesses on Lee Road. The use of tax credit funds, if made in the form of a grant, is not subject to the restrictions on use of funds imposed by the Ohio Constitution.

▷ *Adjust reliance on income tax generation*

Participation in SBA 7a or SBA 504 loans comes with a heavy compliance burden to borrowers. Prospective loan terms are reviewed in many cases by a private lender and a Small Business Development Center in addition to the City. Rather than basing borrower compliance on an income tax metric, the City could consider including a provision that noncompliance is triggered by a default on the private loan, rather than a lack of income tax generation, at least in the case of Lee Road businesses. As the nature of small business return on investment is more heavily determined by sales and neighborhood vitality, job and payroll metrics may carry little public policy return on investment relative to the administrative burden.

**Recommendation:** Consider removing or reducing the income tax requirement of the SBA Partnership Program.

▷ *Improve marketing of the City's SBA Partnership Program*

Since the inception of the City's SBA Partnership Program in 2014 through December 2022, 13 projects have been awarded a total of \$436,346 in forgivable loan proceeds. A review of Small Business Association Data shows that from 2016-2021, 22 SBA 7a loans and zero SBA 504 loans were utilized in Shaker Heights. For comparison, neighboring municipalities have seen more 7a loans on a per capita basis than Shaker Heights. This includes University Heights (18 7a loans), Cleveland Heights (49), Lyndhurst (36) and Beachwood (56), and each municipality also had at least one 504 loan transaction during the same period. It is possible that increased marketing of SBA programs in general could create more borrowing activity in Shaker Heights and increase use of the SBA Partnership Program.

**Recommendation:** Market the SBA Partnership Program as a retention tool for existing businesses. City staff should also continue to visit bank branch managers with a regional SBA representative to increase awareness of the City's program.

▷ *Emphasize Visibility of Businesses*

Businesses on Lee Road noted that business visibility is a challenge.

**Recommendation:** The City established a Storefront Renovation Rebate Program that provides funding for signage and façade improvements. Signage and façade improvements are limited to 50% of the project cost up to \$3,000 and \$15,000, respectively. The availability of this program should be emphasized on Lee Road, and City staff should proactively work with existing and new businesses to encourage and implement storefront improvement projects. Further, it may be legally

feasible to use TIF Funds or BID assessments to complement façade improvements.

- **Establish business incentive bonuses to promote and support Minority- and Women-Owned Businesses**

- *Adjust programs to encourage MBE/WBE Businesses*

While the City has awarded many loans and grants to minority-owned or women-owned businesses (MBE/WBE), there is not currently a policy to apply incentive bonuses to MBE/WBEs. If the City wants to encourage investment by MBE/WBE businesses, their underrepresentation should weigh in favor of proactively offering more favorable terms. Some Ohio precedent for this approach exists, as the Ohio Job Creation Tax Credit program considers "the specific percentage of disadvantaged persons and minorities the taxpayer is agreeing to hire for the project (OAC 122:7-1-06)" in determining tax credit award terms for companies seeking state assistance through the program. The City of Denver Microlending Program includes required characteristics for a borrower – factors include minority or woman ownership, multi-generational ownership, and low-to-moderate income as existing or aspiring entrepreneurs.

**Recommendation:** Bonuses (in the form of better loan terms) should be awarded to minority-owned and women-owned businesses.

## DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

- **Create TIF and CRA Districts for Lee Road**

As noted above under Community Programming, establishing one or more TIF Districts and a commercial Community Reinvestment Area for the Lee Road commercial district are critical steps in the renewal and revitalization of Lee Road. The CRA incentive is best

directed towards residential (both single-family and multifamily housing) and perhaps, in the case of the Shaker Schools bus depot relocation, new development. The TIF incentive is a tool well-suited to provide funding for either public infrastructure or private redevelopment and commercial improvements. TIF and CRA incentives may be combined, where appropriate, with the other incentives described in this report to provide funding for projects when necessary.

In the right circumstances, the City should use TIF powers under Section 5709.41 of the Ohio Revised Code, which permits TIF revenues to be used for any purpose designated by the City. These dollars are frequently provided to property owners to assist in financing improvements. Such an incentive could be particularly valuable to the City in incentivizing the private sector to construct multifamily workforce housing, as the return of TIF payments to the property owner can somewhat mitigate the burden of holding rents at a lower level than the rest of the market.

**Recommendation:** Encourage the use of 5709.40 and .41 TIFs and CRAs within the Lee Road commercial district to encourage mixed-use development, including multifamily housing, office and ground floor commercial spaces.

- **Increase use of Commercial PACE Financing**

Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing is a tool that helps property owners finance the costs of energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements. The property owner obtains a private loan to pay for improvements to the property, and the private loan is repaid by a voluntary special assessment on the real estate tax bill. The energy improvements made to the property result in energy savings, meeting the dual goals of environmental sustainability and economic development.

PACE financing has no cost to the City. The property owner's obligations related to PACE financing are off-balance sheet, cannot

be accelerated, and are passed on to subsequent property owners. It is an excellent tool to enable eligible business borrowers to reduce debt and enhance equity.

PACE has been used historically for commercial applications; it is increasingly being used in the context of multi-family residential construction, rehabilitation, and redevelopment. This recommendation is limited to increasing the use of commercial PACE financing (which includes multifamily) and this plan has not analyzed residential applications.

The City is part of the Northeast Ohio Advanced Energy District (AED), an Energy Special Improvement District, which has the ability to undertake PACE financing.

**Recommendation:** The City should more actively encourage and engage with business and property owners to introduce the concept of PACE financing. The City’s Economic Development Director sits on the board of the AED, and the City approved its first commercial PACE project in 2022. However, awareness of this tool is low. As private investment is spurred by the public investment on Lee Road, developers, businesses and property owners making improvements on Lee Road should be aware that the City supports PACE financing as a development tool.

- **Leverage the opportunity to use New Markets Tax Credits to redevelop eligible properties.**

The census tract west of Lee Road and south of Chagrin (Census Tract 1836.03) is designated as a Severe Distress tract for purposes of the federal New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC). NMTCs can be a powerful tool to help fund mixed-use and office development projects on the west side of the Lee Road commercial district. NMTCs provide roughly 20% of project costs to a developer or property owner that can be pledged as equity to a loan that pays for project costs. It is worth noting that NMTCs have a requirement that 20% of units in a mixed-use multifamily development are affordable

to those making 80% of area median income and are rent-restricted accordingly. Any project funded with NMTCs must have at least a 20% commercial component.

**Recommendation:** Engage with regional/local Certified Development Entities (CDEs) to market NMTCs as an opportunity for developers. NMTCs should be offered to any eligible project as it comes from federal investment at no cost to the City.

- **Encourage use of port authority financing tools**

Port authorities have a number of powers that can be helpful in financing projects. They can provide conduit lease financing, which exempts the construction materials used in development projects from sales and use taxes. In addition, the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority operates an investment-grade pooled bond fund that can provide long-term financing at fixed rates (in some cases, the fund can take the place of bank financing). Port authorities can also finance public infrastructure and other facilities related to economic development by aggregating payments in lieu of taxes, community development charges, and other non-tax revenues, either within or outside of the pooled fund.

Port authorities can also enable the City to finance public improvements without incurring general obligation debt. The Columbus-Franklin County Finance Authority and the Delaware County Finance Authority have used their powers to fund public infrastructure for municipalities, townships, and counties with a combination of TIF revenues and community development charges.

**Recommendation:** Create a partnership with the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority that would enable the City to utilize port authority funding for selected improvements on Lee Road without the incurrence of general obligation debt and that would enable developers and other businesses to save money on projects through the exclusion of sales taxes.

- **Explore Downtown Redevelopment Districts and Innovation Districts**

Downtown Redevelopment Districts and Innovation Districts (collectively DRD/IDs) are a tool similar to TIFs with enhanced eligible uses. These enhanced uses include, in addition to public infrastructure, the ability to contribute to a Special Improvement District, rehabilitate historic structures, and provide grants and loans to businesses. DRD/IDs may include up to 10 acres. The City of Canton utilizes a DRD for its Downtown Innovation District and Business Incubator, while the City of Columbus passed a 30-year DRD/ID in connection with the rehabilitation of an historic building into a Fresh Foods market and a business incubator focusing on local engagement with the school district.

**Recommendation 1:** Examine the establishment of a Downtown Redevelopment District (DRD) or Innovation District (ID) in eligible areas of the Lee Road commercial district. This would complement a Business Improvement District with modernized funding for technology and business incubation. Establishing a DRD/ID requires an investment or renovation of a property that is on a national, state, or local historic registry. On Lee Road in the project area, that could include the Kingsbury Building at the Van Aken-Lee intersection and the Lee-Scottsdale Building at the Southern Gateway.

**Recommendation 2:** If the City pursues a DRD/ID, create a “Vision Fund Modernization Program” funded through the creation of a DRD/ID, which will provide loans to businesses. Additionally, the City would need to obtain historic designations so that at least one historic property can be included in the DRD (the Lee-Scottsdale Building appears to already qualify).

## **POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

In implementing these economic development recommendations, the City will always keep public policy considerations at the forefront, including the importance of engaging with the community. Some relevant considerations include:

- **Land assembly**

Many local governments, when faced with challenges of poor property maintenance and vacancy, have found that it is desirable to begin to acquire properties when they become available because having such control will enable the local government to dictate the uses going forward. This has been done to great effect in the cities of Cleveland (e.g., the Gateway Project) and Columbus (Columbus Commons), as well as by The Ohio State University around its campus. Additionally, many of the tools that are available to the City, for example New Community Authorities (NCAs), require or benefit from site control.

However, land assembly requires time, effort, and expense and needs to be justified with a vision of the desired outcome. It is also challenging to build support for spending public dollars to acquire private properties for future private development.

The City has already been working in close partnership with SHDC to establish a community-based development fund with a primary goal to redevelop and revitalize underutilized properties in the Lee Road commercial district – including acquisition and land assembly. The Shaker Lee Development Fund – referred to as The Fund – is now operational and is currently raising funds until its offering period closes in November 2023. The Fund's purpose is to provide an opportunity for the Shaker community to take an active funding role in the development of Lee Road. The City's Economic Development Director holds a non-voting seat on the Fund's board. The City should continue to collaborate with SHDC and the Fund to leverage

and coordinate Fund activity with Lee Road Action Plan recommendations as appropriate.

- **Commercial code enforcement**

Some of the costs associated with incentivizing redevelopment can be mitigated by strengthening code enforcement (citing for poor property conditions such as broken windows, deteriorated parking lots, unsafe building conditions, etc.). The City should ensure that all commercial property owners are living up to their obligations and not neglecting their properties, which is deleterious to the community.

- **Vacant properties**

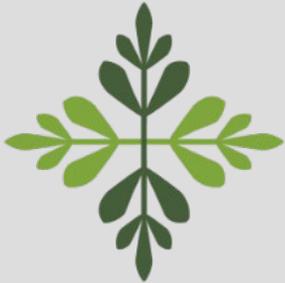
Vacant and tax delinquent properties represent both an opportunity and a challenge. The Cuyahoga County Land Reutilization Corporation (CCLRC) offers programs to acquire and rehabilitate properties that have outstanding tax liabilities. The City is already working in close collaboration with CCLRC when needed.

- **Transit Oriented Development (TOD)**

One of the City's greatest assets is its rail system, and Lee Road includes the Blue Line Rapid Transit (at both Van Aken and Shaker Boulevard.) as well as two major bus lines (on Lee and on Chagrin). In revitalizing Lee Road, the City should continue to be mindful of the advantages transit affords and should emphasize creating a thriving mixed-use community. Transit-oriented, mixed-use communities are where innovation thrives and can anchor the type of office buildings and amenities that will transform Lee Road and benefit everyone in the City.

- **Return on Investment (ROI)**

As a policy, in addition to securing community programming and community benefits as discussed above, the City should consider its financial return on investment (ROI) when providing incentives for redevelopment on Lee Road. ROI examples developed for the proposed Neighborhood Center and Southern Gateway developments are included in Appendix C.



## 6. IMPLEMENTATION

The Lee Road Action Plan makes recommendations that are rooted in the economic and market analyses and supported by the project stakeholders, businesses, property owners, and residents and overall community. Working together with our partners and stakeholders will put the city in the best position to achieve the envisioned transformation.

There are four foundational keys to success for the Lee Road Action Plan:

1. **Lee Road Reconfiguration,**
2. **The Neighborhood Center and relocating the Shaker Schools bus depot,**
3. **Economic development strategies, and**
4. **Regional collaboration.**

Lee Road Reconfiguration includes reconstruction and modification of the roadway, a new bikeway, and pedestrian improvements. Relocating the Shaker Schools Bus Depot will make way for the new Neighborhood Center and Chelton Park expansion.

There is strong evidence throughout the country that public infrastructure investment drives accompanying private investment and economic development. The Lee Road Reconfiguration, in conjunction with implementing city economic development strategies, will drive private investment to Lee Road. Many development aspects of the Lee Road Action Plan will be phased based on owner interest, market demand, land acquisition, and developer interest. To attract development interest, it is important that the Lee Road Reconfiguration move forward to demonstrate public commitment and investment in the corridor.

Coordination with local and regional partners is critical for implementation of the Lee Road Action Plan. Involved regional partners should include the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA), Cuyahoga County, ODOT, Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA), the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority, Shaker Heights Development Corporation (SHDC) and the cities of Cleveland and Cleveland Heights. These project partners can advance the plan through engineering, including environmental studies and road plans, and through construction.



The following general guidelines can be used to help Shaker Heights and its stakeholders prioritize and implement plan recommendations:

- Understand and focus on community interests and priorities
- Prioritize actions with significant and catalytic impact
- Take advantage of “low-hanging fruit” – do the easy, low-cost projects first
- Partner with stakeholder organizations to maximize and leverage opportunities
- Initiate planning for larger, transformational projects to capitalize on funding opportunities when they arise

## Foundations | Keys to Success

### LEE ROAD RECONFIGURATION

The Lee Road Reconfiguration will incorporate multiple identified improvements, as it will be most cost-effective and will minimize rework along the corridor. The project may include:

- **Roadway**
  - ▷ Reconstruction/reconfiguration of Lee Road to implement the agreed-upon “road diet”
  - ▷ Raised median sections
  - ▷ Kenyon intersection modification
  - ▷ Signal modifications (pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular)
  - ▷ Enhanced crosswalks at signalized intersections, including new ADA-compliant ramps
  - ▷ New crosswalk crossing Lee at Lee/Library Drive intersection
  - ▷ Mid-block pedestrian crossing at Neighborhood Center
  - ▷ Lane realignment at Van Aken-Lee intersection
  - ▷ Shared parking and driveway consolidation

- ▷ Driveway apron reconstruction/removal
- ▷ Stormwater drainage including sustainability features

- **Public Realm**

- ▷ Two-way raised cycle track
- ▷ Sidewalk enhancements
- ▷ Streetscape (pavers, benches, lights)
- ▷ Landscape (trees, grass, plantings)
- ▷ Sustainable stormwater management treatments

- **Utilities**

- ▷ Roadway lighting
- ▷ Pedestrian lighting
- ▷ Underground utility investigations
- ▷ Assessment of overhead utilities

Some aspects of the Lee Road Reconfiguration identified above need to be further evaluated during the design phase to determine how, or if, they can be integrated into the project, including:

- **Shared parking and driveway consolidation.** This will require coordination with business and property owners to determine where parking can be consolidated and where access driveways will be located.
- **Lane realignment at Van Aken-Lee intersection.** This includes realignment of lanes to minimize northbound lane offset and assessment of need for the eastbound right turn lane.
- **Underground utility investigations.** A study of underground utilities provides an opportunity for that work to be completed with minimal additional disruption to the community. Coordination with utility companies will be required.
  - ▷ Public Utilities: Storm sewer, sanitary sewer, water
  - ▷ Private Utilities: Gas, telecom, electric



- **Overhead utilities investigations.** The relocation of overhead utilities to below grade is desired by the community but is cost prohibitive. A less costly alternative is relocating overhead utilities to the rear property lines. Undergrounding utilities or relocating utilities to the rear property lines may be considered.

## THE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER AND RELOCATING THE SHAKER SCHOOLS BUS DEPOT

Relocation of the Shaker Schools bus depot will require coordination between the City of Shaker Heights and the Shaker Heights City School District to determine the feasibility of relocation, including timeline, cost, and the new location. This project is a critical path issue and should be prioritized.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

To successfully achieve desired business and redevelopment outcomes in the Lee Road commercial district, the Lee Road Action Plan recommends targeted economic development strategies, including community and business programming, policy considerations, and the use of development financing and incentive tools to effectively deploy resources to redevelopment on Lee Road, as detailed in the last section of Chapter 5, Action Plan.

## REGIONAL COLLABORATION

Continued coordination with local businesses, property owners, residents, institutions, and local and regional partners will be important for plan implementation and transformation. The cities of Shaker Heights and Cleveland have coordinated with each other and with agencies that will support the advancement of the initiatives identified in the Lee Road Action Plan. Local and regional agency coordination includes NOACA, Cuyahoga County, ODOT, GCRTA, Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority, Shaker Heights Development Corporation (SHDC), and the cities of Cleveland and Cleveland Heights.

## Proposed Initiatives

The Lee Road Action Plan's physical redevelopment is comprised of seven key initiatives identified below and detailed in Chapter 5, Action Plan.

1. Lee Road Reconfiguration Project
2. The Neighborhood Center
3. The Southern Gateway
4. Van Aken-Lee to Chagrin-Lee Improvements
5. Kenyon intersection improvements
6. Shared parking & access
7. Infill development

## Additional Studies & Plans

A variety of supplemental plans and studies to support advancement of Lee Road Action Plan should be considered.

- **Shaker Schools bus depot relocation feasibility study**
- **Chagrin-Lee intersection safety study**
- **Citywide recreation plan**
- **Chelton Park plan**
- **Housing study**
- **Marketing & promotion strategy, in collaboration with SHDC**
- **Required studies for Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and Community Reinvestment Area (CRA)**
- **Zoning, Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Zoning, and Land Use Updates**



## Strategic First Actions – Lee Road Action Plan

The City of Shaker Heights and its partners should take some initial actions to begin to advance the plan and to continue building excitement within the community. Suggested first actions include:

### TRANSPORTATION

- **Chagrin-Lee intersection safety study.** Analysis of this intersection will support optimization of intersection operations and safety, along with a clear understanding of the traffic impacts and benefits associated with the recommended reconfiguration of Kenyon. It is also necessary to complete this study to secure additional project funding.
- **Lee Road design & engineering.** Preparation of design and construction documents is the next step required to advance the reconstruction of Lee Road. The project should consider, and incorporate as feasible, the recommendations documented in Chapter 5, Action Plan.
- **Seek additional implementation grants.** The City should continue to pursue additional potential external funding opportunities to support funding for the various aspects of the Lee Road Reconfiguration.

### URBAN DESIGN / LAND USE

- **Shaker Schools bus depot relocation feasibility study.** Coordinate with Shaker Schools to assess relocation of the facility and develop plan and schedule that aligns with overall plan implementation.
- **Zoning & land use.** Review proposed land uses relative to current zoning. Determine where zoning changes are needed to support recommended land uses. Include signage and support for TOD development through density, setbacks, height, and permitted uses.

- **Shared parking & access.** Develop a strategy and coordinate with business and property owners to understand and implement potential opportunities for shared parking and consolidation of access driveways. Coordinate with the Lee Road Reconfiguration.
- **Housing study.** Conduct study to determine demand for various types of residences in adjacent neighborhoods and along Lee Road, including high density residential options.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Action Plan recommends a number of economic development strategies, and the City should prioritize the following as first steps:

- **Support business programming,** in coordination with SHDC, including:
  - ▷ Entrepreneurship support
  - ▷ Business attraction, retention and expansion strategies
  - ▷ Business visibility strategies
- **Establish a Business Improvement District (BID),** in collaboration with SHDC
- **Prioritize land assembly and control** via the Shaker Lee Development Fund
- **Amend the City's existing 725 Urban Renewal District** to exclude Lee Road properties so that other incentives may be leveraged
- **Conduct required studies** and establish new **Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and Community Reinvestment Area (CRA)** districts in the commercial district
- **Obtain historic designation** for historic properties
- **Evaluate New Community Authority** to determine if it would effectively assist in development
- **Develop a marketing & promotion strategy** for the commercial district, in collaboration with SHDC



## GENERAL

- **Regional collaboration and coordination.** Continue to advance coordination with the city of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, NOACA, ODOT, and GCRTA.
- **Commercial code enforcement strategy/policy.** To support the Lee Road Action Plan, the City should review and update its commercial code enforcement efforts to ensure commercial property owners are living up to their obligations and not neglecting their properties.

## Generating Excitement & Collaboration

A series of small projects implemented in key locations can generate excitement and result in high impact. These projects will help sustain momentum while engineering and reconstruction of transportation-related improvements are advancing. Examples include:

- **Public art projects.** These projects could include murals, decorative crosswalks, utility box art, and pop-up events focused around the arts.
- **Food, retail, and entertainment pop-ups.** Including food trucks, farmers markets, makers markets, and other potential gathering opportunities.
- **Programming.** Leverage existing neighborhood energy with joint resident-commercial programming in the district.
- **Prioritize storefront renovation on Lee Road.** Improve building conditions and enhance business visibility (signage, banners, etc.), complementing branding and leveraging marketing.

## Funding

The current funding plan, as developed by the City of Shaker Heights, is shown in Table 4. It reflects funding for Lee Road Reconfiguration. The project may be eligible for other grants such as OPWA (Ohio Public Works Association) or similar for elements such as stormwater management and/or utilities projects.

ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION BUDGET	\$25.3M
<b>Secured Grants</b>	<b>\$16.32 M</b>
NOACA TIP (Transportation Improvement Program)	\$12.92 M
HSIP (ODOT Highway Safety Improvement Program)	\$ 1.80 M
Cuyahoga County ARPA	\$ 1.00 M
CMAQ (NOACA Congestion Mitigation Air Quality)	\$ 0.60 M
<b>Estimated City Match</b>	<b>\$ 7.95 M</b>

**Table 4. Lee Road Reconfiguration Project Funding**