

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
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Mayor

January 29, 2016

Shaker Heights has faced many challenges in the last fifty years. There has been a significant economic decline in the Greater Cleveland region. Fifty years ago, Cleveland was the nation's eighth largest city and a major corporate headquarters. Since that time, Cleveland's population has shrunk by more than 50% and its economic strength has also been reduced. The loss of economic activity in our region has led to a regional population loss and a lesser demand for our homes and for our communities. Like other inner ring suburbs, Shaker Heights has been impacted by this decline. The challenges have been further exacerbated by a movement of a greater portion of our regional population to the outer ring suburbs and outside of the county.

We, like other cities, have also been adversely impacted by actions of the state government in the last several years including repeal of the estate tax and the loss of 60% of our Local Government Fund, both of which had provided major support to Shaker.

Fortunately, Shaker continues to be a very strong and desirable community despite all of the above. Moreover, to overcome the challenges noted above, City Council and the Administration have developed an aggressive and optimistic program to assure that Shaker is a vibrant, attractive 21<sup>st</sup> Century community, regardless of what happens around us. Our goals are the following:

- A. High Quality, High Functioning Neighborhoods
- B. An Attractive Desirable Quality of Life
- C. Vibrant Commercial and Retail Development
- D. Effective Cost-Efficient Government

A. High Quality, High Functioning Neighborhoods

In 2015, we developed a Strategic Housing and Neighborhood Plan which seeks to:

1. Attract new residents to Shaker, increase demand for houses and increase property values
2. Preserve existing high quality housing stock
3. Increase cohesiveness, desirability, attractiveness and stability in the neighborhoods.

In the past year, under this plan, we have worked to increase cohesiveness in the neighborhoods, starting with a program in the Moreland area called *Moreland Rising*. Pursuant to this program, we have conducted all of the following:

- a. A workshop to help residents attract neighborhood grants and home improvement grants
- b. Free tax preparation
- c. A program to create growing and create businesses
- d. A neighbor night
- e. A regular newsletter

In addition, we have undertaken a major study of the possibility of introducing high speed fiber into Shaker's neighborhoods conducted by Design Nine.

The Transit Village project, which encompasses townhomes at Van Aken and Onaway, has moved forward with the signing of a development and use agreement with the developer, Vintage Development Group, which is the same firm that developed the very successful Battery Park project in the Detroit-Shoreway area. Further, boundary changes which were essential to the project have been agreed to between the City of Cleveland and Shaker, incorporating a portion of Cleveland into Shaker Heights.

Avalon Station II, a townhouse project at Van Aken and Avalon, is proceeding with a letter of intent having been signed with the developer.

The new Van Aken District is also to have a significant residential component with residential development over retail and commercial. A term sheet has been signed with the developer RMS which also calls for a phase two which would involve the construction of luxury apartments on the Farnsleigh parking lot currently owned by the City.

## B. Attractive Desirable Quality of Life

### 1. Van Aken District

In the past year, our Van Aken developer, RMS, has signed a master lease for Shaker Plaza which is the shopping area where Walgreen's is located. This is an extremely positive development for the City, because the prior owner of the space was seeking to sell and was not making any re-investment in the area. As a result of the master lease, RMS will be moving tenants from the Van Aken Center which is being redeveloped to the Shaker Plaza area including, among others, Subway, Frames

Unlimited, Pearl of the Orient, and D.O. Sommers. RMS will also be actively leasing space and building a road connecting the Van Aken Center to Shaker Plaza.

In addition, RMS has secured a critical \$4.3M loan from the County for Van Aken redevelopment and the following tenants have been announced for the Van Aken Center Redevelopment:

- (1) Shinola
- (2) Luna Bakery
- (3) Mitchell's Ice Cream
- (4) Rising Star Coffee
- (5) Restore Pressed Juices

A food hall, similar in nature to the West Side Market but on a smaller scale, has been announced for the Van Aken development. This past summer, RMS ran several large Beergarden events on the Van Aken property which generated an enormous turnout of Shaker residents. Demolition of the old Qua Buick dealership property site has been completed with County money and Fresh Market has committed to move to that site. Le Chaperon Rouge, a high-scale preschool center, has also committed to be a part of the development.

## 2. Lakes to Lakes Trail

The Lakes to Lakes Trail, going from the Shaker Lakes to Lake Erie, has been completed with the Shaker portion being done in the past year.

## 3. Bike Trails

New bike trails are being created along Lee Road where there will be a conversion of the traffic to a single lane of cars with a lane for bikes.

## 4. Infrastructure needs

The Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS) finally prevailed in its case seeking a court order verifying the legitimacy of its Stormwater management program. As a result of this court decision, the Sewer District will be dredging Shaker's lakes and repairing Shaker's dams, saving our City \$4.3M which is the projected cost of that project.

In addition, Council is considering, and hopefully will adopt, a Strategic Infrastructure Investment Plan over the next few years, significantly improving the condition of our streets, rebuilding curbs and strengthening our sewers.

### C. Vibrant Commercial and Retail Development

Much of our effort in the past year has gone into the Van Aken development but in addition to Van Aken, the following new business developments have occurred.

- Juma Gallery Café and façade remodeling – renovations to second floor for office and other use
- Protem Healthcare, 3535 Lee Road
- J. Pistone – opening in Tower East
- Marc Anthony Spa – Shaker Plaza
- Hibachi Grill – Shaker Town Center
- Dawn Cook Interior Design – Almar Strip
- Blue Lens
- Holzheimer Interiors – Larchmere
- David Leopold & Associates – Tower East
- Second Story Productions – Tower East
- Partnership with The Small Business Administration

Further, in the past few years, we have created the Shaker Heights Development Corporation (SHDC), which is working actively to revitalize Lee Road.

### D. Efficient, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Government

We have worked hard to increase operational efficiency and lower costs. Our 2015 operating costs were about a million dollars less than our 2008 operating costs. In addition, we have worked in the past several years to make efforts to regionalize services to save costs and improve service delivery, including the following:

- Combined Fire Dispatch with University Heights and Cleveland Heights
- Water Line Maintenance to Cleveland
- Sewer Maintenance to County
- Combined SWAT squad with 5 communities
- Efforts to merge Fire Departments

Finally, we are today working on the creation of a new Joint Regional Dispatch Center with Cleveland Heights, Shaker, South Euclid and University Heights which will provide police and fire dispatch services in one location for four communities.

We believe that Shaker has a bright and exciting future. We are determined to adapt successfully to the changes that have occurred in the past and to those that will occur in the future in order to be an attractive, desirable and highly successful community in which to live and do business in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.