



SHAKER HEIGHTS

For Immediate Release

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VAN AKEN DISTRICT TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD) PHASE ONE: FINAL PIECE FALLS INTO PLACE

\$4.4M Award Completes Roadway Project Funding

SHAKER HEIGHTS (February 9, 2012) – Decades of dreaming, years of planning, months of collaborative effort among national and local agencies, and countless hours of hard work by Shaker Heights officials have resulted in the completion of funding, in the amount of \$18.5M, for the first stage of redevelopment of the Van Aken district: the reconfiguration of the Warrensville/Van Aken intersection.

The last piece of funding was secured at the end of January when the District One Public Works Integrating Committee accepted the staff recommendation and approved a grant of \$4.4M.

The City leveraged its own investment of \$2.3M into an extraordinary patchwork of funding from sources sold on the City's conviction that a transit-oriented redevelopment will transform the district into a vibrant, mixed use downtown destination. Assembling the six layers of funding was achieved through the cooperation of Shaker Heights and the Cuyahoga County Department of Public Works, with the support of Senator Sherrod Brown and Representative Marcia Fudge. Other funding sources include:

- \$4M Ohio Department of Transportation
- \$7M Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency
- \$500K Federal 2010 Appropriation
- \$500K Federal Highway Administration
- \$500K Cuyahoga County Department of Public Works

Plans for the Van Aken district began to take shape in 2000 with the creation of the City's [Strategic Investment Plan](#), an effort led by Urban Design Associates (UDA) of Pittsburgh. The plan engaged hundreds of residents and developed a shopping list of initiatives, with the vision of a pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use downtown on a network of urban streets. In 2008, the City crafted the [Warrensville/Van Aken Transit-Oriented Development Plan](#) with the consultant team of The Planning Partnership and URS. The Transit-Oriented Development Plan implements the earlier vision to revitalize the area into a vibrant mixed-use district through:

- Reconfiguration of the intersection from six legs to four legs;
- Creation of infill development parcels for private sector investment;
- Extension of the rapid transit line through the intersection;
- Construction of a new, end-of-the-line Intermodal Transit Center; and
- Development of 500 housing units, 160,000 square feet of retail, 250,000 square feet of office and community green space.

The road reconfiguration is the first step in realizing this vision. In late 2013, Shaker residents and business owners can expect to see the first changes planned for the Van Aken district. The intersection, where six roads now converge, has long been the bane of area drivers and pedestrians. The reconfiguration will create a standard four-way intersection, reducing wait times, confusion and congestion, and improving safety.

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To achieve improvements to the intersection, construction will entail the relocation of Northfield Road to the south and closing Van Aken Boulevard at Farnsleigh. Also planned in the first phase are upgrades to roads, transit access, pedestrian

facilities, and streetscapes, including tree planting. Prominent crosswalks will improve the pedestrian experience, making a once dangerous intersection easy to navigate and facilitating easy access to all corners of the district.

The City's recently adopted Economic Development and Marketing plans further map out a strategy for attracting businesses and developers to the new Van Aken district. Resolving the problematic intersection has long been viewed as the critical first step toward creation of a new development in Shaker Heights – one in which residential, retail, and office space will generate new jobs and new sources of revenue. Future phases of the redevelopment include a .3 mile extension of the RTA Blue Line through the intersection to the Intermodal Transit Center, a \$36.6M project which will position the area as a transportation hub. Greater Cleveland RTA (GCRTA) recently completed the study for the [Blue Line Corridor Extension](#).

Shaker's historic past as one of the first transit-oriented communities built around two light rail lines comes full circle with this first step toward a transit-oriented redevelopment of the Van Aken district.

For additional information, please contact Planning Director Joyce Braverman at 216-491-1432. Low resolution art attached. For a high resolution version of the image, please contact Ms. Braverman.

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About the City of Shaker Heights:

Just eight miles from downtown Cleveland, Shaker Heights is a tranquil, yet cosmopolitan and distinctive first-ring suburb of 28,000 residents. Developed in the Garden City style (1905-1935) as one of the country's first planned, transit-oriented communities, Shaker Heights is linked to downtown by two GCRTA rapid transit lines. Every home in the City is a 10-15 minute walk from a transit station. It has a national reputation for excellent schools, extraordinary natural beauty, architecturally exquisite homes and superior city services. Shaker Heights is Cleveland's premier suburb – with tree-lined neighborhoods and miles of sidewalks that invite residents to stroll, chat with each other, and stay for a lifetime! Visit shakeronline.com for more information.