



Memorandum

To: City Council Members

From: Joyce G. Braverman, Director, Planning
Kara O'Donnell, Principal Planner, Planning
Laura Englehart, Director, Economic Development

cc: David E. Weiss, Mayor
Jeri. E. Chaikin, Chief Administrative Officer

Date: September 22, 2020

Re: 2020 NOACA Transportation for Livable Communities (TLCI) Grant Program
Application for the **Lee Road Corridor Connections Action Plan**

This is a request to authorize a grant application to and to accept a grant from NOACA's Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative (TLCI) program for the **Lee Road Corridor Connections Action Plan**, a visionary reinvestment plan for the Lee Road commercial corridor. The **Lee Road Corridor Connections Action Plan** will provide detailed recommendations for transportation enhancements such as: traffic calming; access plan – including pedestrian and bike amenities within the district and connections with surrounding neighborhoods and corridors; urban design strategies to achieve a corridor transformation; an economic development and facilities strategy; and robust community engagement.

The Lee Road plan sets up investment in a part of the community that has not seen large-scale reinvestment since work was completed in 2005 at the Shaker Town Center shopping center area. Due to resident-led efforts, particularly through the Moreland Rising project, the predominantly Black residential neighborhoods adjacent to the Lee Road commercial district have become stronger and more vibrant. The City should help foster the same spirit and be intentional in creating equitable, inclusive approaches to planning and development in the neighboring commercial district. Investment and connectivity between the business district and adjacent residential neighborhoods, between businesses and residents, and between residents and potential jobs is important. Accordingly, the plan will involve diverse resident and stakeholder participation from the adjacent neighborhoods and from current business owners in the commercial corridor. The proposed plan will also satisfy a recently passed NOACA resolution calling for equity in transportation planning.

The NOACA Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative (TLCI) program provides assistance to communities and public agencies for transportation projects that strengthen community livability, including projects that enhance economic viability and quality of life. The NOACA Governing Board has allocated approximately \$500,000 of federal funds for the competitive planning grant program.

The City has completed traffic studies and plans in the Lee Road area in the past. With this grant application, the City seeks to not repeat but to build on those plans by seeking funding to complete a comprehensive, detailed plan for transforming the area into a thriving commercial district that is attractive, walkable, and bikeable. Other previously prepared studies that address portions of the Lee Road corridor are available at www.shakeronline.com/442/City-Plans-Documents:

- *Joint Facilities Vision Plan (2019)*
- *Lee Road Traffic Study & Corridor Plan (2012)*
- *Economic Development Strategy (2010)*
- *Lee/Van Aken Transit-Oriented Development Plan (2008)*
- *Strategic Investment Plan (2000)*

The **Lee Road Corridor Connections Plan** will address four critical elements:

- 1) **Urban Design and Streetscape Plan**—consider and improve the overall physical design and appearance of the corridor.
- 2) **Economic Development and Facilities Strategy**—develop a place-based economic development strategy to optimize development opportunities along the Lee Road corridor and create an environment where business can thrive; consider best use and redevelopment of public facilities along the corridor.
- 3) **Transportation Plan**—Establish a multi-faceted plan for all modes of transportation using data and information collected in previous traffic studies; study traffic calming, access management, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure; enhance connectivity between the business district and neighborhoods, businesses and residents, and between residents and jobs.
- 4) **Community and Stakeholder Engagement**—implement a robust process to gather input from residents, neighborhood associations, business owners and property owners.

Applying for TLCI grant funding this year will allow the City to complete advanced planning now in order to pave the way for implementation funding and meet the expected 2025 construction year. The City has requested implementation funding from NOACA for road resurfacing, a multipurpose path and streetscape in funding year 2025. The plan would also prepare us to request State capital funds and other grant sources in 2022-24. The plan and funding strategy uses the same techniques as other successful projects, most recently the Chagrin/Warrensville intersection reconfiguration and public improvements in the Van Aken district.

The City will request a \$100,000 grant from NOACA. This competitive application does not require a match however, city participation is encouraged. Based on past TLCI grant awards, a city match of \$25,000 is proposed to achieve a budget of \$125,000. This will support a targeted plan that will address all aspects of transportation and redevelopment for the Lee Road Corridor and work with the community to craft this vision. The match funds will come from the available balance in the capital fund. The grant application and supporting legislation are due on October 16, 2020.

The City has previously received TLCI grants for the *Van Aken District Connections Plan*; *Lee/Van Aken Transit-Oriented Development Plan (2007)*; the *Warrensville-Van Aken Transit-Oriented Development Plan (2008)*; and the *Warrensville/Van Aken Intermodal Transit Center Plan (2009)* and the *Lee Road Traffic Study & Corridor Plan (2011)*.

The Planning and Economic Development Departments presented the project to the Neighborhood Revitalization and Development Committee on September 9, 2020. The committee discussed that the plan will incorporate a key initiative of the Forward Together Vision Plan and study public facilities along Lee Road. The committee also supported stronger neighborhood connections and neighborhood and stakeholder engagement. Discussion points also included how this plan is needed to assemble multiple implementation grants and funding sources, which was the strategy used for the Van Aken District redevelopment.

The Planning and Economic Development Departments also presented the project to the Finance Committee on September 21, 2020. The committee commented on the plan serving as the first step toward achieving funding to implement the plan. The committee also discussed the need to coordinate with Lee Road in Cleveland to achieve one corridor and to link to jobs for minorities in Cleveland. It was also stressed that support from outside agencies is helpful for state capital requests.

Recommendation. We recommend approval and authorization to submit a grant application to and to accept a grant from NOACA's Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative (TLCI) program for the **Lee Road Corridor Connections Action Plan**, a visionary transportation and reinvestment plan for the Lee Road commercial corridor, in the amount of \$100,000 with a grant match of \$25,000 for a total project cost of \$125,000. We request that this item be passed on first reading and as an emergency in order to meet the grant deadline of October 16, 2020.

ORDINANCE NO.

BY:

Authorizing the City's application for and acceptance of a grant of \$100,000 from the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency's ("NOACA") Transportation for Livable Communities ("TLCI") program for support in funding a Lee Road Corridor Connections Actions Plan, and declaring an emergency.

WHEREAS, the City's Director of Planning has recommended that the City apply to the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) under the Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative (TLCI) for support in funding a Lee Road Corridor Connections Actions Plan in the total amount of ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$100,000); and

WHEREAS, if awarded the NOACA funds, the City will provide a 25% match in the total amount of TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$25,000), to enhance the City's application and the Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, by the Council of the City of Shaker Heights, State of Ohio:

Section 1. This Council hereby authorizes the Mayor, to apply for and accept a grant from the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, Transportation for Livable Communities Program, in a total amount of ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$100,000) to fund a Lee Road Corridor Actions Plan, and hereby authorizes the Mayor to accept any related grant awards for the purposes set forth in the authorized grant application.

Section 2. The Mayor is hereby authorized and directed to work cooperatively with NOACA, abide by all NOACA polices, and to enter into such agreements with NOACA and other agencies as may be necessary for the application for and receipt of NOACA grant funds and related funding, as provided by law. Said agreements shall be in the form as approved by the Director of Law.

Section 3. This ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, safety and welfare for the reason that it is necessary in the current operation of the City, and in order to meet the grant deadline of October 16, 2020, and, therefore, this ordinance shall take effect immediately upon its enactment and approval by the Mayor.

Enacted

Approved this _____ day of _____, 2020.

DAVID E. WEISS, Mayor

Attest:

JERI E. CHAIKIN
Clerk of Council

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