



# SHAKER HEIGHTS

**SAFETY AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MINUTES  
FRIDAY, MAY 7, 2021  
8:00 AM  
VIA ZOOM MEETING**

Members Present: Robert Zimmerman, Council Chairperson  
Sean Malone, Council Member  
Earl Williams, Council Member  
Jonathan Hren, Citizen Member  
James Sammon, Citizen Member  
Patricia Speese, Director Public Works  
Jeffrey DeMuth, Chief of Police  
Patrick Sweeney, Chief of Fire

Others Present: David E. Weiss, Mayor  
Jeri Chaikin, Chief Administrative Officer  
Joyce Braverman, Director of Planning  
Kara O'Donnell, Principal Planner  
Marilyn Kertis, Recording Assistant

The meeting was called to order by Council Chair Robert Zimmerman at 8:03 AM.

**APPROVAL OF APRIL 2, 2021 MEETING MINUTES**

Council Chair Zimmerman asked if there were any questions, changes or additions to the April 2, 2021, Safety and Public Works Committee minutes. There being none, a motion was made by Citizen Member Hren, it was seconded, and the minutes were approved.

**REQUEST TO AUTHORIZE A GRANT APPLICATION TO, AND TO ACCEPT A GRANT FROM, THE NORTHEAST OHIO AREAWIDE COORDINATING AGENCY (NOACA) CONGESTION MITIGATION AND AIR QUALITY PROGRAM (CMAQ) FOR TWO GRANT APPLICATIONS: (1) LEE ROAD SIGNALIZATION AND (2) LEE ROAD MULTIPURPOSE PATH.**

**Kara Hamley O'Donnell, Principal Planner**

The Planning Department is requesting to authorize a grant application to, and to accept a grant from, the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ) for two grant applications. The first is for Lee Road Signalization and the second is for a Lee Road Multipurpose Path. NOACA has \$32 million in the CMAQ funds for state fiscal year 2025-26 to improve air quality and reduce traffic congestion.

These two projects are foreseen as part of the Lee Road Corridor Action Plan. The plan is to start this year and it will be a community-driven, visionary, targeted reinvestment plan for Lee Road. The

Planning Department will look at the commercial corridor and craft a long-term vision for Lee Road and address all aspects of transportation and redevelopment along that corridor.

The plan will have four major elements that include: (1) Urban Design and Streetscape Plan, (2) Economic Development and Facilities Strategy, (3) Transportation Plan, and (4) Community and Stakeholder Engagement. That will set up a reinvestment in a part of the community that hasn't seen large-scale reinvestment since 2005 when the Shaker Town Center proposal was implemented. To embark on the year-long planning process, it's also important for the Planning Department to start thinking about how to fund the implementation of that plan. They will use a similar funding strategy that was used on similar, successful projects like the Chagrin Boulevard and Warrensville Center Road intersection and reconfiguration as well as public improvements in the Van Aken District. The two applications that are being submitted are for funding for 2025-2026.

The first is the Lee Road Signalization project which is for 10 signalized intersections along Lee Road that will be upgraded to address timing which will result in better traffic movement. Likely improvements include upgraded controllers, cameras, countdown pedestrian signals, and communication devices. The estimated cost, including engineering, Construction Management Construction Inspection (CMCI), and construction is \$1.83 million. The Planning Department will submit a grant for \$1.21 million. If granted, a 21% local match is required which will result in an additional commitment of \$626,152 from the City General Capital Fund.

The second is the Lee Road Multipurpose Path which will improve pedestrian and cyclist safety and improve the aesthetics along the road in the Lee Road commercial district south of Chagrin Boulevard. Through other funding applications, they will be recommended for \$1.8 million from NOACA'S Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), however, this is sufficient only to construct streetscape improvements on one side of Lee Road. The CMAQ funding will allow comprehensive improvements on both sides which is critical for the transformation of the corridor. The estimated project cost, including engineering, CMCI, and construction is \$2.4 million. The Planning Department will submit a CMAQ grant application for \$1.58 million. If granted, a local 21% match is required which results in an additional commitment of \$820,000 from the City General Capital Fund.

The Planning Department is recommending approval and authorization to submit a grant application to, and accept a grant from, the NOACA Congestion and Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program for the Lee Road Signalization which is a \$1.21 million grant with a local match of \$626,152 and the Lee Road Multipurpose Path which is a \$1.58 million grant with an \$820,000 local match. If awarded, the City match will be appropriated in 2025 and 2026. Grant applications and supporting legislation are due to NOACA on May 26, 2021. Grant recipients will be notified of awards in the fall of 2021.

Council Chair Zimmerman noted that it was a really good presentation and opened up the meeting for questions. Director Braverman added a comment indicating the actual road resurfacing and reconstruction repair does come through another grant through NOACA that will be part of their long-range plan that will be presented next month to their board, so this project couples with other funding.

Council Chair Zimmerman asked if, based on past performance and knowledge about other cities and what would be in the queue, would the grant likely get approved? Director Braverman indicated that they would likely be funded for the Lee Road Multipurpose Path. Typically this money has been funded for signalization. NOACA in the last few years, says they will upgrade controllers and communications but are not going to do new arms and things like that. NOACA encouraged the Planning Department to submit both applications but likely only one (1) would be funded.

Citizen Member Hren had a question about the signalization portion and wanted to know if the project included all new components such as mast arms and so forth? Director Braverman indicated that it does not include new mast arms but does include new controllers and new communications cameras for traffic control. The current mast arms were installed in 2005 and are still in good shape.

Citizen Member Hren asked if there were plans for a future road diet and/or additional bike lanes on Lee Road, and how would that come into play? Director Braverman indicated that was the plan. The money that the Planning Department is looking at for 2025 from NOACA would implement the road diet and bike lanes, as they were able to do bike shoulders north of City Hall on Lee Road and south of Chagrin Boulevard. NOACA rejected the engineering plans when the Planning Department engineered bike lanes which is why they are looking for an off-road path in that area because they can't do a sufficient one in the road.

Mayor Weiss indicated that this is one piece or two pieces, of a lot of things that the City hopes to bring before the Committee and ultimately before City Council as part of the Lee Road Corridor redevelopment and there will be further discussion about planning the funding for the overall plan. He likened the project to the Van Aken District as it took years and years to put together all of the pieces and it looks as though that is what the hopes are for this project.

Mayor Weiss commented that when Director Braverman told him they were discussing this project for the 2025 and 2026 season, he was eager to get going, but the reality is that all these pieces need to come together which is what Director Braverman and Principal Planner O'Donnell are very good at. There are some components they will get and some they won't get, but will just keep plugging away until there is enough to move forward on the project. Mayor Weiss further stated that the administration and City Council are very committed, not just for the corridor itself, but for the impact that it will have on the neighborhoods on either side, and are very excited about the project.

Council Chair Zimmerman commented that it was good to hear that because what the Mayor gave the Committee was the context, and felt that was very important. He further commented that Director Braverman was planning for the 2025 and 2026 season--that is what a Planning Director does is plan and hopefully, everything will come through the way they like it and expect. He commented that the analogy regarding the Van Aken District was a fair one with important similarities, but some different challenges.

Council Member Malone indicated that he also appreciated Mayor Weiss' comments regarding the analogy to the Van Aken District. He felt confident that the City will have the same level of

commitment to see this project through, although, frustrating to think it's not until 2025 and 2026. He recalled that in 2013 or 2014, the City was doing the studies for the Lee Road diet and had funding lined up at the time. He asked if someone could comment about the history of the past road diet. He also recalled that the City was held back to work on Lee Road because of gas line repairs. He questioned if they would be given clearance this time and would it be different from the past and would the City be able to move forward with the funds.

Director Braverman indicated the Planning Department was still going to implement the road diet north of City Hall as well as part of the south where it will be one lane in each direction with a center turn lane and greater detail will be given next week. The traffic study is not being redone as the prior one is still valid which NOACA has agreed on. Engineering plans were done for the corridor, however, south of City Hall, engineering plans were submitted to ODOT, who asked for more transition room for the intersections south of City Hall before the bike lane started and when it ended. They struck down the bike lane to something that wasn't usable south of Chagrin Boulevard. They only had a small piece of funding, \$170,000 to do that. They worked with director Speese on the quality of the road which had been deteriorating and didn't feel safe placing a bike shoulder or bike lane on the road as the asphalt was crumbling, therefore, the City had to give the money back. This time they are planning for an off-road path south of Chagrin Boulevard, a separated path that won't be in the road. It will be separated in some manner that hasn't been designed or envisioned yet. It will not be part of the traffic pattern and will also be coupled with reconstruction and repair of the road so the road starts off in good condition.

Council Member Malone further commented that Director Braverman and Principal Planner O'Donnell will be discussing this further with City Council and commented that his understanding was that the Planning Department did not receive a grant that they were hoping to receive for the overall planning of Lee Road that was mentioned. He questioned whether the Planning Department was going to ask for funding for that and asked Director Braverman if she could talk generally about when she hoped to start, hopefully as soon as possible, and what it would entail in terms of public input and hiring a consultant and things like that.

Director Braverman indicated that it would start as soon as possible and that would be the discussion with City Council on Monday night. The Planning Department will do an RFP to search for a consultant. They have been working on this RFP for about a year and have been working on the consultant list. They are honing in on a group of consultants that they feel they could team up with to provide the type of plan they are looking for. It's a physical plan, an urban design plan, and also an economic development strategy. There are some transportation issues such as access management on Lee Road with the myriad of curb cuts that have been a really hard problem to solve over the decades. They are committed to solving these issues with this plan. Another major component will be community engagement. Through economic development and Colin Compton's work, they have made a lot of in-roads in the neighborhood in terms of different types of community engagement to make sure that the corridor serves and connects to the neighborhood.

Council Member Malone had one last question and asked for a rough timeline and if the study process being contemplated would be finished in 2021 with a report from the consultant. Director Braverman indicated that a rough estimate is that it would be a year-long process finishing up in 2022.

Council Chair Zimmerman asked if there were any additional questions and thanked Director Braverman for a good analysis. There being none, he asked for a motion to approve the grant request. A motion was made by Council Member Malone, it was seconded, and approved.

There being no further business for the Safety and Public Works Committee, Council Chair Zimmerman adjourned the meeting at 8:21 a.m.

Respectfully,

Robert Zimmerman | MTK  
Robert Zimmerman, Council Chairperson  
Safety and Public Works Committee