

Ludlow Community Beautification Project

Proposal to the
City of Shaker Heights from the
Ludlow Community Association



June, 2009

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Project Coordinating Committee:

Tom Chelimsky, Ken Kovach, and Kevin Dreyfus-Wells

Approved by the Ludlow Executive Committee on 6/13/2009

Approved the LCA membership on 6/22/2009

Purpose of the Project

Brand the Ludlow Community as a unique, historic village attractive to its residents, new and old, strengthening community connections and enhancing the value of real estate. This beautification project is part of a larger comprehensive strategy that comprises:

- This special capital beautification project
- Green housing
- Foreclosure management
- Historic district leveraging
- Funding for these improvements sourced in a private-public partnership

I. Background and Vision

A. Ludlow as an historic district.



The **LUDLOW HISTORIC DISTRICT** is listed on the National Register of Historic Places in the United States. This historic district spans both sections of the City of Cleveland and the City of Shaker Heights. In December, 1983, the Shaker Square Historic District was established and the Cleveland section of Ludlow was included in it. The Shaker Heights section of Ludlow is included in the Shaker Heights Historic District.

Please visit our website at: www.LudlowCommunity.org to learn more about the Ludlow Community Association and coming events in the community.

B. Ludlow as a successful experiment in community organization and diversification.

The LCA was established by its own residents more than 50 years ago with the purpose of creating and maintaining a community that encourages and supports a racially integrated community. Over the many years of its existence, the LCA has presented public discussions, forums, panels, lectures and published materials for the education of the general public concerning community life in multi-racial neighborhoods. It has actively engaged in maintaining high physical standards of property and homes in the community. It has successfully addressed issues of quality integrated education, abandonment of the housing market by real estate agents and companies, varying levels of disinvestment by financial institutions, and safety and security of person and property. The 50-year history of the Ludlow community and its Association has exemplified the challenges of open and integrated housing in the United States.

On a national basis, Ludlow has been cited as a major example of successful inter-racial living. A *Reader's Digest* article in 1968 referred to Ludlow as a "Lesson in Integration." In his book, *Good Neighborhood, The Challenge of Open Housing*, Morris Milgram of *Partners in Housing*, describes the role the Association played in forming The Ludlow Company to provide secondary mortgage financing and its role in establishing the Housing Office of the City of Shaker Heights to encourage white families to move into integrated areas.

- We launched the Ludlow Community into its next 50 years, with a reception and dinner honoring Founders and Past Presidents of the LCA and celebrating who we are now as neighbors in a multi-racial and multi-cultural community that encompasses both the City of Cleveland and the City of Shaker Heights.
- We produced documentary materials about the 50-year legacy of the Ludlow Community that may be useful to graduate students researching race and ethnicity, open and fair housing, and community-building in the United States.
- We involved Meghan Hayes, librarian at Shaker Heights Library (who specializes in the history of the Ludlow Community) in developing displays for our events.
- We experienced a traumatic event just a few months following the 50th anniversary celebrations. On New Year's Eve, Kevin McDermott – long-time resident was attacked and severely beaten while he went for an early evening walk. What happened after that event demonstrates the resilience of the Ludlow Community.
- The following is an excerpt from a January 2008 *New York Times* article about the event titled "A Suburb Looks Nervously at Its Urban Neighbor."

"Underneath this fear of urban decay lies the quiet thread of resentment. For many years, Shaker Heights was one of the richest cities in the United States. As presidents of Cleveland's largest companies, a few Shaker Heights citizens were bosses to generations of Clevelanders. In the middle of what the Census Bureau found in 2002 to be America's third-most-segregated urban area, Shaker Heights flouts local racial attitudes by actively encouraging integration. Of the town's 27,245 residents, 61 percent are white and 34 percent are black, according to the census. Ludlow residents understand that for a place just seven blocks across, their little neighborhood carries tremendous symbolic weight.

“People in the Cleveland area resent us because we’re a repudiation of everything they believe,” said Brian Walker, 56, who was among the first African-Americans to attend Ludlow school. “We’re proof that white people and black people can live together.” Rather than flee, Ludlow residents say they plan to stay and organize. “You can’t run forever,” said Tom Chelimsky, co-president of the Ludlow Community Association. The beating occurred on Mr. Chelimsky’s front lawn. “We’re not naïve. We’re tough, and we’re going to stand together.” Christine Branche, 80, an African-American who moved into Ludlow in 1956, said, “I’ll move from this house into an urn.” Five days after the attack, neighbors met at Ludlow school to grieve and plan a response. Another meeting is planned for this weekend. So many friends, black and white, have offered to help the McDermotts that the family will not need to cook for itself until March, Mrs. McDermott said. “I don’t know Kevin McDermott,” said Ms. Jones, the minister. “But when I see him I’m going to give him a big hug and say: ‘Your neighbors love you. We’re glad you’re here’ “

Today, Ludlow continues to stand apart as a neighborhood where growth of strong community spirit and innovative solutions have met our nation’s great challenges, including:

- maintaining the diversity of our population with a unity of spirit
- neighborhood safety in the face of nationally rising crime rates
- finding solutions to foreclosure

C. The future of Ludlow as a green intergenerational neighborhood.

Ludlow's strongest assets help form its unique character, and also contribute to a sustainable lifestyle. Within easy walking distance, residents have access to shopping, dining, schools and parks, and ample light rail and other public transportation services provide ready access to the city beyond. A mature tree canopy and pleasant sidewalks encourage walking.

These amenities are ideal for our diverse intergenerational population with residents of all ages. Services in adjacent neighborhoods that meet the needs of all residents from young children to seniors make the Ludlow neighborhood ideal to serve multiple needs.

These are the strengths our neighborhood wants to reinforce and capitalize on, making a neighborhood where people can live healthily, reducing environmental impacts and energy use, grow and learn and age in place for life long learning with the support of a strong local community.

D. Contribution of the proposed project to the overall vision.

This project is critical in addressing the curb-appeal of the Ludlow Village and communicating the distinctive character of this historic community through physical enhancements that match the strong history. They will also provide a much stronger sense of ownership to the residents with potentially great returns on the investment by fostering continued engagement of the community in neighborhood leadership.

II. Proposed Long-Term Enhancements

NOTE: Bold letters indicate source of funding from the City of Shaker Heights Capital Budget for items A. and B. (Phase One)

A. Gateways that brand Ludlow

- 1. Commission gateway sculpture from a Onaway and Van Aken location.**
 - 2. Provide gateway signs to identify the neighborhood at Onaway/Van Aken and for Southington/Van Aken intersections.**
 - 3. Erect historic marker for identification of Ludlow Historic Village.**
 - 4. Plant entry gardens at neighborhood entrances – especially Onaway/Van Aken, possibly to include Southington/Van Aken and Milverton Park pedestrian walkways.**
- [See Budget on Page 6]

B. Enhance our Open Spaces: Ludlow/Onaway median and Onaway/Ashwood Park

- 1. Selected plantings at Onaway/Ashwood Park (around the old ice rink)**
 - 2. Replace diseased ash trees on median with large trees such as sycamores, maples or locusts – to form new canopy high above the gateway at street level.**
 - 3. Include planting areas at smaller median islands.**
NOTE: Two community-implemented plantings have been completed in the spring of this year and are not included in the current budget.
 - 4. Plan future improvements at Onaway/Ashwood Park (Seating areas, gazebo, paths, and walkways, amenities for casual/non-programmed sport activities – playfield use – etc.**
- [See Budget on Page 6]

C. Improve Safety and Security

- 1. Cameras:**
 - a. Camera server for the entire neighborhood
 - b. RTA-provided cameras at Onaway and Southington stations
[Budget to be developed]
- 2. Lighting:**
 - a. Upgrade to period-appropriate energy efficient lamp posts.
[Budget to be developed]

D. Improve pedestrian safety for everyone – with special attention to needs of children and elderly residents.

- 1. Updated Paving Schedule**
- 2. New traffic calming**
 - a. Consider extending the planted median to permanently close the East 146th Street to Ludlow cut-through)
 - b. Consider mid-block “speed bumps” on Ludlow – halfway between Onaway and Southington and Southington and South Woodland.
 - c. Upgrade traffic signals to count-down cross-walk signals
 - d. Improve cross-walk identification with signage, lighting, etc.

[Budget to be developed]

III. PHASE ONE: Project Scope/Budget

A. Onaway Gateway: Entrance feature at the Onaway Boulevard median facing Van Aken Boulevard. Components may include a entrance sign identifying the Ludlow neighborhood (incorporating a unique graphic identity for our neighborhood ‘brand’), a sculpture designed and built by a local artist, and a garden of perennial plantings and shrubs using low-maintenance native plantings.

- Onaway Gateway sign: \$4,500
- Onaway Gateway sculpture: \$15,000
- Onaway Gateway garden \$4,000

B. Southington Gateway: Entrance feature at the Southington Road /Van Aken Boulevard intersection Components may include a smaller pole-mounted sign incorporating similar graphic elements used in the Onaway sign as well as plantings / hanging baskets.

- Southington Entry sign: \$1,500
- Southington plantings/baskets \$500

C. Ludlow Historic Marker: Ohio Historical Society historic marker sign, pole mounted, describing the significance of the neighborhood integration efforts started by the Ludlow Community Association in 1957. Sign to be located on the Onaway Blvd. median.

- Historic marker interp. sign \$2,500
(\$2000 + \$500 est. installation)

D. Milverton Park garden: Perennial plantings to flank the pedestrian path through Milverton Park, using low-maintenance native plantings.

- Milverton garden plantings \$2,000

E. Ludlow Community Park improvements: Perennial planting garden to mark the entrance to the community park at the corner of Onaway Boulevard and Ashwood Road , using low-maintenance native plantings.

- Park Garden \$3,000

F. Design services: Professional fees for landscape architect / graphic designer / etc. to coordinate signage design, planting design and selection for the improvements noted above..

- Landscape Architect \$4,000

TOTAL ESTIMATE OF COST: \$37,000

END