

**Special Council Meeting; Joint Council/City Planning Commission Work Session; City Planning Commission Meeting
April 14, 2008**

Participants: Mayor E. Leiken; Council members N. Moore, J. Brady, A. Foster, B. Gleisser, L. Ruffner, E. Williams Jr., R. Zimmerman

City Planning Commission members: Mayor Leiken; Council member B. Gleisser; citizen members K. Madison and D. Bergholz. **Absent:** D. Hartt, citizen member

Staff present: J. Chaikin, CAO; J. Braverman, director of Planning and Development; D. Feinstein, senior planner; W. Gruber, assistant director of Law; M. Gavin-Wagner, director of Human Resources

Others present: J. Calibreese, CEO, RTA; R. Merrill, The Planning Partnership; S. Thorburn, URS

Special Council Meeting

At 7:05 p.m. Mayor Leiken called to order a special meeting in response to a situation of financial emergency by proposing a classification and pay plan for certain city positions and establishing compensation for various city employee positions. Stating the City's goal of maintaining a reserve cushion of 15 to 20 percent after implementation of wage increases, he announced a 2 percent COLA (a reduction from 3 percent in the Cost of Living Adjustment) for non-bargaining employees retroactive to April 1. Given the revenue loss from such factors as a property tax reassessment, a reduction in revenues from the state and lower investment returns, the mayor stressed the need to reduce spending and seek ways to increase income, especially through economic development. Council then approved motions by the director of Human Resources to declare an emergency and adopt the proposed classification and pay plans.

Joint Council/City Planning Commission Work Session

The session began at 7:40 p.m. with a review by the director of Planning and Development of the goal of the Warrensville/Van Aken/Chagrin Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Plan & Traffic Study: "to reduce traffic congestion...at the intersection while creating redevelopment parcels and streets which help create a sense of place." The consultant team of The Planning Partnership/URS prepared the draft plan for implementing this phase of the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) adopted in the year 2000. Over 250 residents participated in a series of three public workshops discussing it.

Quoting from the Planning Director's summary: "Key elements of the proposed draft plan include:

- Changing the 6-leg intersection at Chagrin and Warrensville into a standard 4-leg intersection
- Reconfiguring Van Aken to extend straight east between Farnsleigh and Warrensville
- Reconfiguring Northfield to connect with Warrensville south of Chagrin, near the post office
- Maintaining the rapid transit line in its current diagonal configuration with an extension to a new transit/bus terminal near the University Hospitals Administrative building
- Creation of new redevelopment parcels for housing, retail and office uses"

Mr. Merrill and Mr. Thorburn of the project consultant team led a discussion of plan details and purpose. New development is expected in retail, office, housing and community uses in the Lomond/Winslow area, which will be designed to be pedestrian-friendly. Van Aken will be reconfigured to extend straight east between Farnsleigh and Warrensville. Northfield will no longer intersect Chagrin, but will connect with Warrensville at a point near the post office. A new rapid transit/bus terminal will be located near the UH administrative building.

The cost estimate for implementation of this plan is \$12-20 million for roads and utilities and \$47-50 million for transit restructuring, with an expected 5- to 10-year time frame for securing the funding from a variety of federal, state and local sources.

Following the presentation, Mr. Gleisser spoke enthusiastically about the plan but wondered whether the necessary funding could be obtained. Mr. Calabrese, RTA CEO, replied that a key factor would be the expected increase in ridership.

Mayor Leiken concluded the work session by pointing out that Shaker Heights had been founded by people with vision, the Van Sweringen brothers, and despite the present weak economic conditions, this might well be the time to undertake this challenging redevelopment.

City Planning Commission

Members of the City Planning Commission then approved the redevelopment plan and sent it on to Council for consideration at its April 28 meeting.

The meeting ended at 8:35 p.m.

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