West 25th Street Corridor Initiative

Project Description

The West 25th Street Corridor is home to influential economic drivers including the MetroHealth System as well as regional attractions including the West Side Market and Metroparks Zoo, several of which are planning expansions and capital improvements projects in the near future, creating a strategic opportunity to ensure the revitalization of the corridor and adjacent neighborhoods.

The MetroHealth System is the largest employer on the West side of Cleveland with 5,000 jobs at the main campus on Scranton Road and 800 jobs at the south campus on Pearl Road. MetroHealth is currently planning a multi-million dollar capital improvements project. MetroHealth is a primary anchor for the Corridor, a five-mile stretch extending from the Shoreway on the north to Brookpark Road on the south. The Corridor is also home to Lutheran Hospital, employing over 800 at its Ohio City location. MetroHealth and Lutheran make the Corridor the second largest cluster of health care in the region.

The Corridor’s other major employers include Voss Industries, Nestlé’s L.J. Minor Factory, the Great Lakes Brewing Company, and the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo and Administrative offices, employing approximately 980 employees combined. All three private companies are currently considering expansion opportunities.

The Corridor boasts regional attractions including the West Side Market and the Metroparks Zoo. The Market draws over a million shoppers annually and has been designated as one of America’s Top Ten destinations for “foodies” by The Food Network. A year-long celebration is underway for the Market’s 100th Anniversary in 2012, creating a buzz of activity, including the redesign of Market Square Park, located at the corner of West 25th Street and Lorain Avenue. The Park’s redesign project is slated for a 2011 completion made possible with $1.5 million in funding from the City of Cleveland and includes improvements to the RTA waiting area – the second highest used public transit waiting area only surpassed by Public Square – as well as plans for new and improved public programming, including the Open Air at Market Square events hosted by Ohio City Incorporated (formerly Ohio City Near West Development).

The Cleveland Metroparks Zoo’s annual attendance exceeds 1.4 million. In fact, the Zoo’s annual attendance has surpassed 1 million for 18 consecutive years, making it Northeast Ohio’s No. 1 year-round attraction. In May 2011, the Zoo opened its new African Elephant Crossing, a $25 million capital project, the largest project since the opening of The RainForest in 1992.

The West 25th Street Corridor is also part of the Ohio & Erie Canalway: America’s Byway, which celebrated the 10th anniversary of its designation as part of the National Scenic Byways Program and underwent a rebranding and signage project in 2010.

The Corridor has excellent public transportation and accessibility. The West 25th Street bus route has been identified by RTA as one of nine primary transit corridors for sustained investment. In addition, interchanges on I-71 and I-90 with close access to I-77, I-490, and I-480 make the Corridor easily accessible throughout the region.
Goals and Objectives

The objective of the West 25th Street Corridor Initiative is to sustain the area’s assets while catalyzing the revitalization of the corridor and adjacent neighborhoods. This initiative is designed to include both physical improvements as well as a community wealth-building component, capitalizing on the expansions and capital improvement projects being undertaken by various key stakeholders. The ultimate goal of the initiative is to create a cohesive vision for the corridor along with a clear and prioritized implementation strategy.

Specific goals of the West 25th Street Corridor Initiative, include, but are not limited to:

- Develop programs and projects that revitalize the neighborhoods adjacent to MetroHealth that includes linking residents to workforce opportunities, linking employees to neighborhood housing, and developing and promoting local retail.
- Engage with the City of Cleveland Service Department for the planning and implementation of the repaving of West 25th Street in 2012 and exploration of the feasibility of decreasing visible utility lines along the Corridor.
- Promote Towpath Trail connectors and signage along the corridor.
- Work with the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority to develop a bus-only lane along West 25th Street and ensure an ongoing commitment for maintained and improved Transit Waiting Environments and the West 25th Street bus route and its connectors.
- Advocate for the Ohio Department of Transportation’s maintenance, repair and improvement to the I-90 and I-71 interchanges and overpasses.

Methodology, Deliverables and Timeline

An Advisory Committee has been formed to act as the advisory team to direct and oversee the initiative. The Advisory Committee is comprised of representatives of key stakeholders and anchor institutions along the corridor as follows:

Co-Chairs:
- John Corlett, VP Government Relations/Community Affairs, MetroHealth System
- Chris Warren, Chief of Regional Development, City of Cleveland
- Joel Ratner, President and CEO, Neighborhood Progress

Economic Drivers:
- Cleveland Metroparks
- Deaconess Foundation
- L.J. Minor/Nestle
- Lutheran Hospital
- MetroHealth System
- Voss Industries
- West Side Market

Government Partners:
- City of Cleveland: Mayor Frank Jackson, Regional Development Chief Chris Warren, City Planning Director Bob Brown, City Economic Development Director Tracey Nichols
- City Council members: Joe Cimperman, Kevin Kelley and Brian Cummins
Cuyahoga County Executive: Deputy Chief of Staff for Economic Development Nate Kelly
Cuyahoga County Council: Yvonne Conwell (District 7) and Dan Brady (District 3)
City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County Workforce Development: Larry Benders
Ohio Department of Transportation (District 12)
Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority

Community Stakeholders:
- Stockyard-Clark Fulton-Brooklyn Centre Community Development Office
- Ohio City, Inc.
- Old Brooklyn Community Development Corporation
- Tremont West Development Corporation
- Ohio Canal Corridor
- Cleveland Industrial Retention Initiative
- Northeast Ohio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Esperanza
- Community Care Network

NPI has employed Kent State University’s Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative (CUDC) and The Democracy Collaborative at the University of Maryland to support its efforts to redefine the physical landscape of the corridor and reinvest in the social capital of the residents that reside in the adjacent neighborhoods. The Consortium has also formed three subcommittees to undertake this planning initiative. The work of these subcommittees is outlined as follows:

1. **Institutional / Anchor Employer / Community Partnerships**: This subcommittee will explore wealth building opportunities through procurement, local workforce linkages, and other strategies. The Democracy Collaborative will work closely with this subcommittee to identify community wealth and asset building strategies.

2. **Real Estate Development and Land Use**: This subcommittee will identify real estate development and new business opportunities around MetroHealth and at other nodes along the West 25th Street Corridor, working closely with CUDC to develop conceptual plans, a prospective developer list and assembly strategies as needed, as well as an overall implementation strategy.

3. **Infrastructure / Public Improvements / Transit**: This subcommittee will work closely with CUDC to review existing West 25th Street Corridor infrastructure plans and develop an integrated and cohesive plan and implementation strategy that complements MetroHealth’s capital improvements as well as the expansion plans of other anchor employers and institutions.

The overall planning initiative will result in a final, detailed plan, inclusive of prioritized implementation strategies and outlining wealth-building opportunities for adjacent neighborhood residents, which will help guide current and future development initiatives along the corridor.