NORTHEAST OHIO
FIRST SUBURBS CONSORTIUM

First Suburbs Consortium Housing Initiative

TWO-FAMILIES

Unit Designs and Neighborhood Improvement Concepts

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Unit Designs and Neighborhood Improvement Concepts

Cleveland Heights

Shaker Heights

Lakewood

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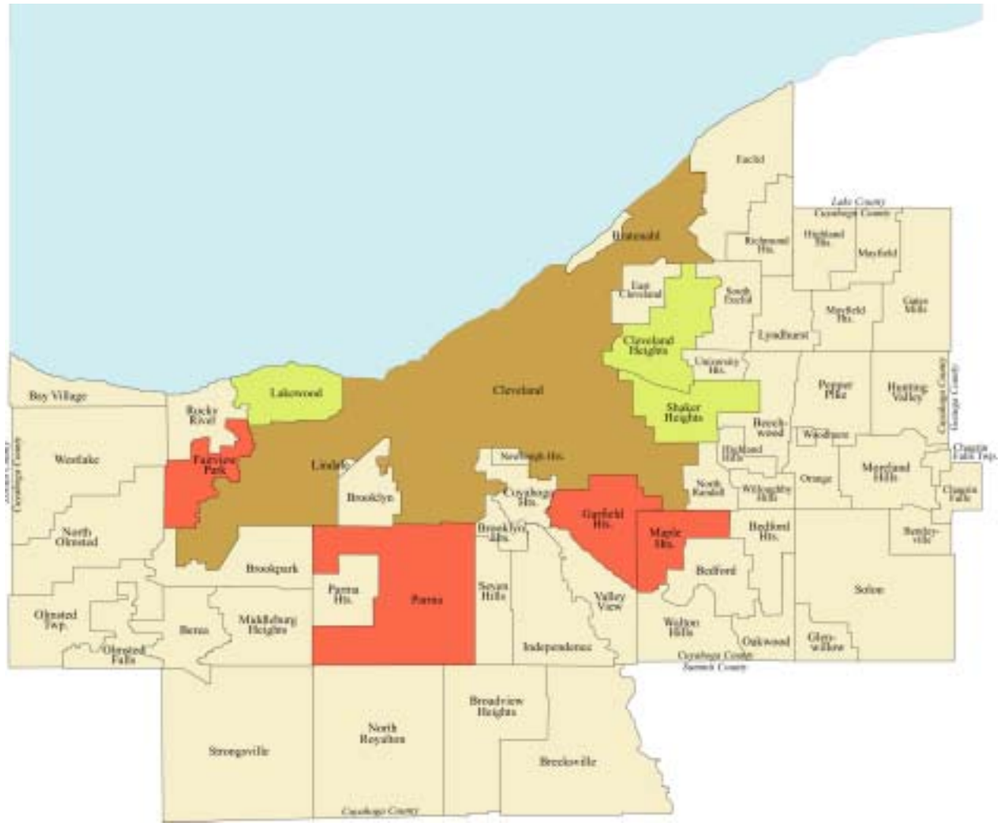


Target Neighborhoods

The target neighborhoods for the study were selected by each participating city because they have a high concentration of bungalows or two-family houses. The housing stock in the seven target neighborhoods is prototypical and the design solutions are applicable to similar houses throughout the First Suburbs.

INTRODUCTION

Project Overview

The First Suburbs Consortium Housing Initiative is an effort to strengthen the marketability and competitiveness of inner-ring residential neighborhoods. The initiative attempts to reinvent two under-performing housing types, the post-war bungalow and the two-family home, and to improve neighborhoods with concentrations of these housing types. Target neighborhoods for the initiative are located in Parma, Maple Heights, Garfield Heights, and Fairview Park (for bungalows) and Cleveland Heights, Shaker Heights, and Lakewood (for two-families). However, the results of the initiative are intended to be transferable to other communities with similar housing stock.

The Housing Initiative has four phases:

1. *National Models:* Tom Bier and the staff of the Housing Research and Policy Center at Cleveland State University looked into other initiatives throughout the country that could be models for revitalizing older suburbs and obsolete housing types.

2. *Market Study:* A market study conducted by GreatLakes CB. The market study included focus groups and a mail survey of current and former residents of the bungalow and two-family target neighborhoods in an effort to understand what attracts people to these neighborhoods, why they choose to stay, and what causes them to move. The market study also looked at what types of new households could potentially be attracted to the target neighborhoods and housing types.

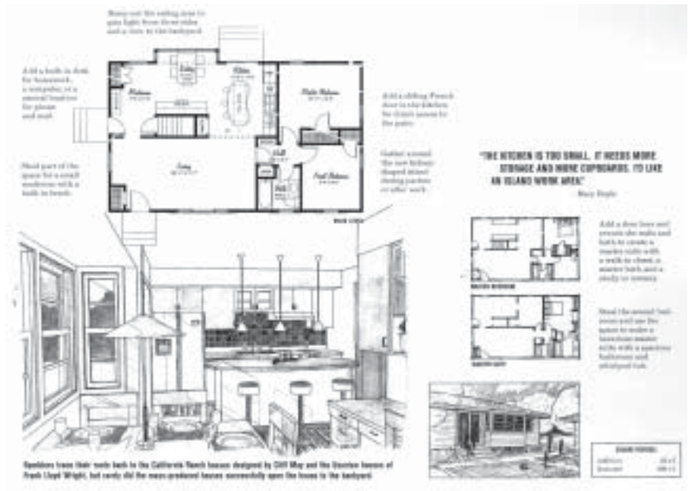


Image from *Cape Cods and Ramblers: A Remodeling Planbook for Post WWII Houses*

3. *Design Phase:* The design phase had two components—housing unit designs and neighborhood improvement concepts.

   Housing unit designs: The housing unit designs were completed by CityArchitecture, Inc. The designs were developed using prototypical bungalows and two-family homes and they demonstrate a variety of ways in which these housing types can be adapted for new households.

   Neighborhood improvement concepts: The neighborhood designs were prepared by the Urban Design Center of Northeast Ohio and provide a range of options for improving the quality of life and market appeal of the target neighborhoods.

4. *Implementation* GreatLakes CB is currently working on the implementation phase, in which the a variety of financial tools, market strategies, and technical assistance programs will be developed in an effort to bring the housing unit designs and neighborhood plans to life.

National Models

The Housing Policy Research Program at Cleveland State University conducted a national survey of current housing revitalization efforts for inner-ring suburbs. Cleveland's inner-ring is not alone in experiencing the adverse impacts of disinvestment and shifting market forces, but the First Suburbs Consortium is at the forefront of efforts to address these issues. Other areas that have begun to grapple with the problems of the inner-ring include the Delaware Valley region around Philadelphia, the Chicago metropolitan area, and the Minneapolis/St. Paul region.

In Philadelphia and Minneapolis/St. Paul, the focus has been on post-war suburbs – places that bear a clear resemblance to the four bungalow neighborhoods that are part of this study. In Chicago, a bungalow initiative is underway that focuses on pre-war bungalows. These houses were built in the first three decades of the 20th century and, in terms of architectural detailing, have much in common with the two-family homes that are part of in this study.

Revitalization efforts fall into two categories – efforts to achieve change on a regional level and local initiatives:

Regional efforts to "level the playing field":
- Regional tax base sharing, to redistribute a region's resources more equitably among individual jurisdictions.
- Linking property tax reform and school finance initiatives in an effort to overcome the funding inequities caused by over reliance on local property taxes as a souce of school funding.

Local initiatives to help inner-ring suburbs gain a competitive edge:
- Main street revitalization to improve town centers in older suburbs, including streetscape enhancements, marketing and special events, seasonal landscaping, and strong merchants' associations.
- Liveable community strategies that incorporate housing variety, street trees, pedestrian amenities, safe and comfortable sidewalks, traffic calming, and logical street networks into neighborhood revitalization plans.
- Transit oriented development.
- Financial assistance, design guidelines and technical assistance for rehabbing older housing stock.

Attempting to effect change on a regional level through tax reform is beyond the scope of this project, but many of the local efforts underway elsewhere were factored into the neighborhood design concepts (see pages 22-41). Two particularly relevant models are The Chicago Bungalow Initiative and the "Reframing the 1945-65 Suburb" initiative, conducted by the Design Center for the American Urban Landscape at the University of Minnesota.

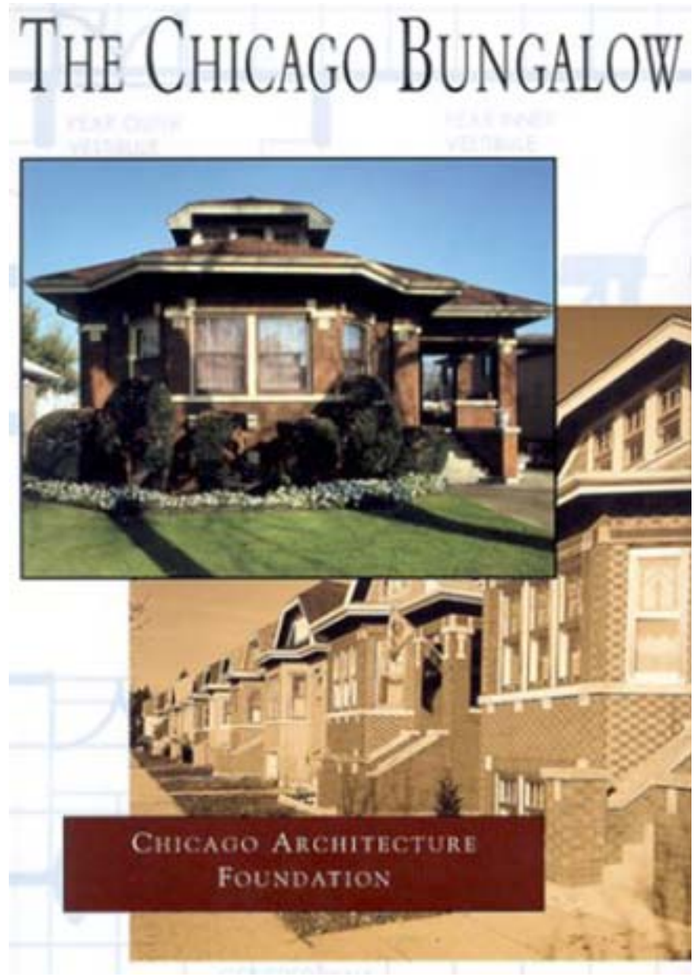
The Chicago Bungalow Initiative focuses on improving the market appeal of a specific housing type—the pre-war Chicago bungalow. There are approximately 80,000 of these houses in the Chicago area. The initiative is only available within the City of Chicago and does not extend to City's inner-ring suburban bungalow neighborhoods. It provides financial support and technical assistance to bungalow owners. The financial

tools are similar to programs currently available in Cleveland's inner-ring suburbs. There is a purchase-rehab program and a low downpayment mortgage program available to people interested in purchasing a bungalow in the City. There is a loan product that is available to everyone, regardless of income, and another (with slightly better terms) geared toward moderate income homebuyers. Everyone who uses the mortgage or purchase rehab program receives a $1,000 certificate toward the purchase of an energy-efficient appliance. The City is also in the process of developing a tax abatement program for bungalow owners who make upgrades. There are design guidelines to help people make appropriate choices when rehabbing these historic homes, as well as technical assistance with design issues, preparing plans and locating the contractors and services they need to upgrade their bungalows. Four bungalows have been remodeled using green building standards as demonstration projects.

A important aspect of the Chicago Bungalow Initiative is that it attempts to build a sense of community among bungalow owners. Owners apply for "bungalow certification," and, once their home is certified, they get a membership card, a plaque for their home, discounts for home repair products and service and access to educational programs and on-line forums. City staff help to expedite the permitting process for certified bungalow owners, and permits are free. There have been "Bungalow by bus" tours and a Bungalow Expo to promote homeownership. An important distinction between the Chicago initiative and any kind of similar effort in Cleveland's first ring is that Chicago's pre-war bungalows have significant historic and architectural character that makes them inherently appealing to prospective buyers who have the ability and the desire to invest in their rehabilitation. Also, housing in Chicago is vastly more expensive than in the Cleveland area, and the competitiveness of the real estate market has forced people to rediscover the old bungalow neighborhoods as they have been priced out of other market sectors.

Inner-ring suburbs of Minneapolis and St. Paul conducted a design initiative geared toward upgrading post-war housing stock. Similar to the First Suburbs Housing Initiative, several suburbs joined forces to produce a book of ideas for remodeling "Cape Cods" and "Ramblers," which are architecturally similar to the post-war bungalows in Cleveland's inner ring. Prototypical designs, with a wealth of creative ideas for improving the liveability of these types of homes, were compiled into a homeowner-friendly book, entitled *Cape Cods and Ramblers: A Remodeling Planbook for Post WWII Houses.* The planbook is aimed at getting homeowners excited about remodeling their existing inner-ring homes, rather than moving to a larger home in an outlying area.

Chicago Bungalow Initiative



New, expanded, and remodeled kitchens were high on the list of things people want in a two-family home.

Two-families often have small yards with wide garages and driveways; many current and former two-family residents would like a larger lot.

Synopsis of Market Study

The Market Study addressed the following questions:

- What do existing two-family residents value about their homes and what do they wish was different?
- What appeals to existing residents about their neighborhoods and what neighborhood improvements would they like to see?
- What kinds of households constitute potential new markets for the two-family target neighborhoods?
- Where do these households live now, and what changes to the housing stock and neighborhoods would attract them to two-families in the first ring suburbs?

To address these questions, existing and former residents of the target neighborhoods were surveyed and neighborhood focus groups were conducted. The study found that, in general, two-family owners in all three target areas tend to move out to newer, larger houses that are farther from the urban core. Some residents also move up to larger houses within the same community and there is some cross-migration of residents within the three cities. People moving into the two family neighborhoods tend to move from the City of Cleveland and from other nearby first ring suburbs.

Existing and former residents of all three communities had similar things to say about the good and bad qualities of two-family homes. In general, people want more space and better interior spaces. Structural maintenance was a concern, as was the exterior appearance of two-family homes. The improvements that almost everyone wanted to see were kitchen and bathroom upgrades and expansions, additional bathrooms and half-baths, air conditioning and larger yards. People also want more electrical outlets, updated wiring, more closets, family rooms and finished basements.

From a neighborhood standpoint, existing and former residents were also fairly consistent in their likes and dislikes. What attracted them to the target neighborhoods were affordable housing, good schools, good city services and neighborliness/a sense of community. When asked why they left or are considering leaving, people cited high taxes, problems with the schools, career changes and the desire for a newer house. Current and former residents want better standards for home maintenance, larger lots, less noise, less traffic, more privacy and better landscaping.

A key finding of the market study is that, for a majority of former residents, there are no improvements to either the housing stock or the neighborhood that would have caused them to stay. Many of these former residents responded that they had been happy in their first ring two-family home, but career changes, lifestyle considerations and other factors—unrelated to housing type or neighborhood features—had caused them to move. The implication of this finding is that, from a design standpoint, bringing the aesthetics and development patterns of the newer suburbs to the inner ring is not the formula for success. Even if it were physically possible to replicate a Solon neighborhood in Shaker Heights or an Avon Lake neighborhood in Lakewood, this would not entice many of the households that choose to live in outlying areas to reconsider the First Suburbs. Instead, the market study findings suggest that the First Suburbs should focus on enhancing the unique and inherently desirable characteristics of their housing stock and neighborhoods, rather than trying to change to be more like the competition at the outer ring.

The market study identified three potential market niches for two-family homes in the target neighborhood:

- Upwardly mobile single men between the ages of 25 and 35 who are currently renting within the first ring suburbs and consider the two-family to be an investment.
- Well-educated, professional single women between the ages of 25 and 35 who prefer to buy rather than rent; having a tenant is seen as a safety factor.
- Newly married couples between the ages of 25 and 40 with one or no children, likely to be first-time buyers looking to build equity.

Households in these market niches are prevalent in the target neighborhoods, indicating that existing two-family homes and current neighborhood conditions already attract these types of households. But in order to expand the appeal of the two-family neighborhoods and to attract people who are not currently looking for housing in these neighborhoods, the two-family designs and neighborhood improvement plans in the next section go beyond the scope of the market study in an effort to discover and attract potential new markets. Flexibility is the primary factor driving the designs because making the housing units and neighborhoods attractive to the broadest range of households ensures the largest possible pool of potential buyers.

Lakewood

Cleveland Heights, Shaker Heights

Neighborhood Improvement Concepts

Context affects the market value of a house. A beautifully rehabbed two-family house will still lack market appeal if the surrounding neighborhood is not attractive to prospective residents. With this in mind, the Urban Design Center looked at potential improvements for each of the three two-family target neighborhoods, including:

- encourage multi-modal streets that are safe for pedestrians and bicyclists
- discourage heavy, high speed traffic
- provide access to a network of parks, open space and natural features
- connect residents to neighborhood retail
- encourage a variety of housing types
- introduce new housing

The neighborhood design concepts range from straightforward, fairly easy to implement ideas to more ambitious undertakings. Although there was some public input into the neighborhood design process, the design concepts are not intended to represent a comprehensive plan for each neighborhood. Rather, they illustrate the principles of good neighborhood design that enhances property values and attracts and retains residents. To some degree, the neighborhood concepts are meant to be prototypical. Although the improvements are site-specific to the three neighborhoods that are the focus of this study, the basic concepts can be reinterpreted to suit two-family neighborhoods throughout the First Suburbs.

Unit Design Concepts

Two-family homes were once seen as the gateway to homeownership, as the income from renting one unit could subsidize mortgage costs for a homeowner living in the other unit. While some two-families are still occupied in this way, the more prevalent trend is for absentee owners to purchase large numbers of two-families in a neighborhood as investment properties, often leading to lower levels of home maintenance, high tenant turnover, and neighborhood instability.

In discussions with elected officials, city staff, and residents of the two-family neighborhoods, the following goals were established for improving two-family homes:

- *Reducing density:* the goal of reducing density is not about demolishing individual properties. Two-families have considerable value and should not be demolished to increase the amount of open space or parking in a neighborhood. Instead, existing houses can be reconfigured to reduce the number of occupants. A two-family can be converted to a large single family house or a house with a large owner's unit and a smaller rental unit.

- *Increasing owner-occupancy:* Two-families remain desirable as rental housing in all of the target neighborhoods. Property values and rents have been increasing. But a large concentration of rental properties can have a destabilizing influence on a neighborhood because of the transience of residents and the lack of care that some absentee owners demonstrate toward their properties.

- *Increasing flexibility:* Reconfiguring interior spaces can also make a two-family house more flexible so that it can comfortably accommodate a wider range of household and family types.

- *Preserving/enhancing architectural character:* The two-family homes in the target neighborhoods typically date from the 1920s through the 1940s. Many have retained their original architectural features, which adds to the market value of the house for some potential buyers.

The following designs are based on two-family prototypes from the three target neighborhoods. Houses similar to the prototypes occur in each of the two-family neighborhoods, and the designs, for the most part, can also be adapted to houses in other neighborhoods. The exception is some of the two-family prototypes in Shaker Heights, which are unique to that community.

The alternatives involve five different improvement strategies:

- *Enhanced double house:* minor functional changes to the lower unit, with significant expansion of the upper unit into the attic space.
- *First floor bonus room:* the lower unit is reduced to a one-bedroom suite, while the upper unit is expanded to include a "bonus room" and half-bath on the ground floor, suitable for a home office, teen or in-law suite, a family room or a guest bedroom.
- *Side-by-side conversion:* the up-and-down two-family structure is converted into two side-by-side units (appropriate only in the slightly wider two-family homes, such as the prototype in Cleveland Heights).
- *Live/work option:* the lower level is converted to a commercial suite which is leased to a separate tenant or used by the occupant of the upper-level unit.
- *Single-family conversion:* the two units are combined into a large, single family home.

An example of each of these strategies is included on the following pages. In the neighborhood chapters, the most appropriate strategies are applied to the predominant housing types represented in each neighborhood. All of the alternatives offer a range of improvements that can be implemented as a total package or in phases as the property owner's finances permit.

Existing

Gross area: 2,325 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,050 SF

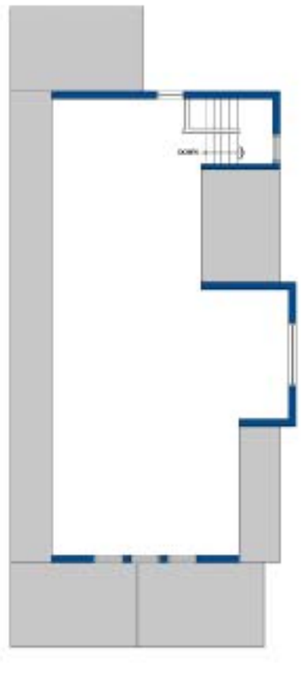
Upper unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,003 SF

Proposed

Gross area: 2,525 SF
Addition: 200 SF

Lower unit
1 bedroom, 1 bath
850 SF

Upper unit
3 bedrooms, 1-½ baths
1,528 SF



First Floor Bonus Room – Lakewood Prototype 1

The advantage of this alternative is that it creates a larger owner-occupant's unit via economical means. The first floor "bonus room" is added to the upstairs unit and can be used as a bedroom, in-law suite, teen suite or home office. The one bedroom rental unit on the first floor has potential to be used as an apartment for in-laws or an adult child.

Features include:

- new separate entry for lower unit
- new entry closet and foyer for upper unit
- open living and dining rooms on first floor – creates "great room" feel
- remodeled kitchens for both units
- addition creates larger first and second floor bedrooms
- enlarged bathroom on first floor could be handicapped-accessible
- part of first floor allotted to second floor unit as a "bonus room"
- open stair to second floor
- updated bath on second floor
- new closet and bookshelves for upper unit
- optional cathedral ceiling for upper floor unit

First Floor Bonus Room – Cleveland Heights Prototype 1

Reducing density within a two-family home can be achieved by making one of the units into a one-bedroom suite, as demonstrated in this alternative. In this case, the first floor is converted into a spacious one-bedroom apartment with its own entry, ideally suited to a single tenant or perhaps a couple without children. Part of the first floor unit gets incorporated into the upper unit in the form of a "bonus room" with its own half-bath. The bonus room could be a home office, a teen or inlaw suite, a family room, or a guest bedroom.

Features include:

- two-story rear addition, creating a larger bedroom for the upper and lower units
- new bedroom closets for both units
- new, separate entrance for lower unit
- remodeled kitchen in each unit, open to the dining room
- "bonus room" with half-bath on first floor as part of the upper level unit

Existing

Gross area: 2,081 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
966 SF

Upper unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
953 SF

Proposed

Gross area: 2,250 SF
Addition: 169 SF

Lower unit
1 bedroom, 1 bath
858 SF

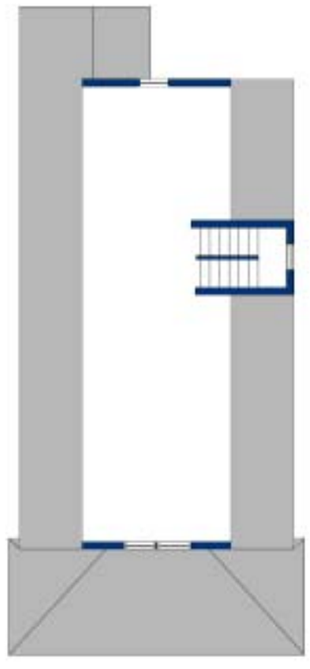
Upper unit
3 bedrooms, 1-½ bath
1,215 SF

Existing

Gross area: 2,534 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,125 SF

Upper unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,225 SF



Proposed

Gross area: 3,094 SF
Addition: 560 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,125 SF

Upper unit
3-4 bedrooms, 2 baths
1,785 SF

Enhanced Double House – Cleveland Heights Prototype 2

In this scheme, the existing rear porches are incorporated into the master bedroom for both the first and second floor units. This creates a more spacious master bedroom, a feature that the market study found to be important to existing and potential residents. The third floor is finished, creating a four bedroom, two-bath upper unit. This alternative promotes owner-occupancy by creating a large and appealing owner's unit.

Features include:

- larger master bedroom for the upper and lower floor units
- remodeled kitchens and baths for both units
- two-story dining room with skylights for the upper unit
- two additional bedrooms and a bathroom on the third floor for the upper unit

Enhanced Double House: Cleveland Heights Prototype 1

This scheme includes a rear addition and a lofted third floor. The addition creates a larger master bedroom for the upper and lower units. Lofting the third floor creates a dramatic two-story living room for the upper unit.

Features include:

- remodeled kitchens and baths in the upper and lower units
- larger bedroom closets in both units
- new rear porches for both units
- a bedroom/loft with a full bath on the third floor that is part of the upper unit

Existing

Gross area: 2,081 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
966 SF

Upper unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
953 SF

Proposed

Gross area: 2,795 SF
Addition: 714 SF

Lower unit
2 bedroom, 1 bath
1,050 SF

Upper unit
3 bedrooms, 2 baths
1,594 SF

Existing

Gross area: 3,054 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,100 SF

Upper unit
4 bedrooms, 2 baths
1,660 SF

Enhanced Double House – Shaker Heights Prototype 1

This design capitalizes on the fact that the third floor of the prototype has already been finished as living space with an existing bathroom; this space is reconfigured for greater flexibility and a more open floor plan. The redesign results in slightly less overall square footage, due to a two-story living room for the upper level unit, but the resulting living space is more open and dramatic.

Features include:

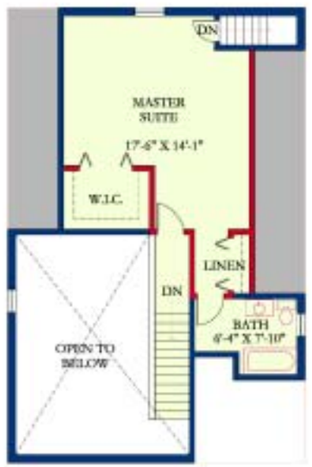
- in-suite laundry for the upper and lower units
- relocated kitchens in both units that open to the dining room
- large bedroom closet in each unit
- new entry vestibule
- new cathedral ceiling over the living room for second floor unit
- open kneewall at stair to the third floor
- new master suite with walk-in closet on third floor
- updated baths on first, second, and third floors

Proposed

Gross area: 3,000 SF
Reduction: -54 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,100 SF

Upper unit
3 bedrooms, 2 baths
1,606 SF



Enhanced Double House: Shaker Heights Prototype 2

In this alternative, the first floor unit is reconfigured as a large one bedroom unit. The square footage of the first floor unit remains the same, but two bedrooms are combined to make a large master bedroom suite with a walk-in closet. Similarly, the two bedrooms on the second floor are combined to make a master bedroom suite for the upper unit. This unit has three bedrooms total, including two on the third floor.

Features include:

- lofted third floor creates a cathedral ceiling over the dining room for the upper unit
- remodeled kitchens for both units
- remodeled bathrooms on first, second, and third floors
- new half bath for the upper unit
- additional closets in both units

Existing

Gross area: 3,114 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,080 SF

Upper unit
4 bedrooms, 2 baths
1,782 SF

Proposed

Gross area: 3,106 SF

Lower unit
1 bedroom, 1 bath
1,080 SF

Upper unit
3 bedrooms, 2-½ baths
1,774 SF

Existing

Gross area: 2,325 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,050 SF

Upper unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,003 SF

Proposed

Gross area: 3,095 s
Addition: 570 s

Lower uni
2 bedrooms, 1 batl
1,150 s

Upper uni
3 bedrooms, 2 bath
1,753 s

Enhanced Double – Finished 3rd floor

Lakewood Prototype 1

In this scheme, an addition is built on the back of the house, creating a larger master bedroom for both the upper and lower units. The third floor is finished, adding a large bedroom/loft and an additional bathroom to the upper unit.

Features include:

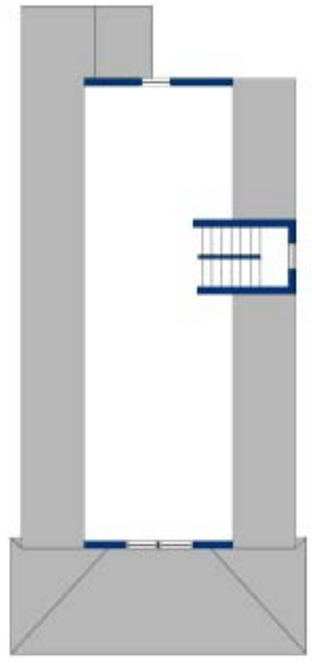
- rear addition for master bedroom on first and second floors
- remodeled kitchens on first and second floors
- pass-thru between kitchen and dining room on first and second floors
- remodeled bathrooms on first and second floor
- finished third floor with bedroom, walk-in closet, and full bath

Conversion to Side-by-Side: Cleveland Heights Prototype 2

This alternative transforms an up-and-down two-family house into a side-by side double. Although this type of conversion will be very costly, it creates a much more desirable housing unit for both owner-occupants and renters. The property could be sold as a double or as two condominiums, and there is the possibility of converting two or more two-families on adjacent lots, creating a townhouse style development.

Features include:

- rear deck for each unit
- remodeled kitchen in one unit; new kitchen in the other unit
- remodeled first and second floor baths in one unit; new first and second floor baths in the other unit
- new entry closets for each unit
- new third floor bedroom for each unit

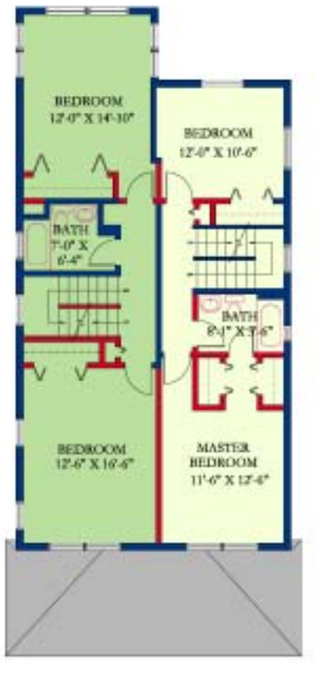


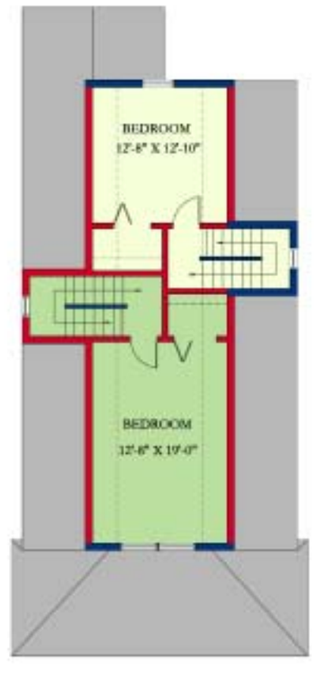
Existing

Gross area: 2,534 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,125 SF

Upper unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,225 SF





Proposed

Gross area: 3,244 SF
Addition: 710 SF

Left unit
3 bedrooms, 2 baths
1,788 SF

Right unit
3 bedrooms, 2 baths
1,456 SF

Existing

Gross area: 3,054 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,100 SF

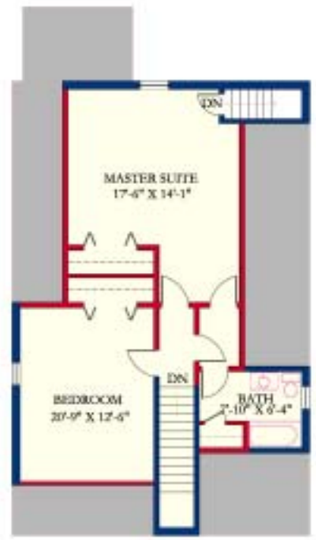
Upper unit
4 bedrooms, 2 baths
1,660 SF

Proposed

Gross area: 3,181 SF
Addition:122 SF

Lower unit
(business use)
Accessible toilet room
1,100 SF

Upper unit
(residential use)
3 bedrooms, 2 baths
1,787 SF



Live/Work Option – Shaker Heights Prototype 1

This alternative looks at converting the lower level of a two-family house to a commercial use. The potential commercial use would be more intensive than what is typically allowed for a home-based business, but limited to uses that would have minimal impact on surrounding residences. Although the market study did not identify any market demand for this type of use, an earlier study (Zimmerman-Volk Associates, 2000) indicated a market for a live/work product in the Shaker Heights target neighborhood.

Reconfiguring two-family homes for live/work purposes establishes a good transitional use between residential and commercial districts. It also reduces neighborhood density because the downstairs business would likely be most active during daytime hours while the upstairs residential use would be more active in the evenings and on weekends.

Converting part of a residence for commercial purposes raises a variety of code issues, including handicapped accessiblity and fire separation. For the purpose of this study, the design only looks at how a commercial use could be accommodated spatially within the framework of the existing two-family home. The code issues require further study in conjunction with local and state code officals.

Single-Family Conversion – Cleveland Heights Prototype 2

This alternative combines the upper and lower units into a large, single-family house. In this alternative, the second story porch could be removed, giving the house more of a single-family appearance and letting more light into the living room and loft areas.

Features include:

- a cathedral ceiling over the living room
- a large first floor bedroom
- a new rear porch
- a first floor family room or den
- a larger living room
- a renovated kitchen that is open to the dining room
- renovated bathrooms on the first and second floors

Existing

Gross area: 2,534 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,125 SF

Upper unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,225 SF

Proposed

Gross area: 2,209 SF
3 bedrooms, 2 baths
family room, loft

Existing

Gross area: 2,325 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,050 SF

Upper unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,003 SF

Proposed

Gross area: 2,150 SF

4 bedrooms, 2 baths
Family room, loft

Single-Family Conversion – Lakewood Prototype 1

In this alternative, the two-family house is converted to a large single-family. The floor plan has the flexibility to allow for a first floor bedroom or study. There are three bedrooms on the second floor and the future option of finishing off the third floor for additional bedrooms or a home office.

Features include:

- first floor bedroom/study
- first floor family room with optional deck
- two-story dining room
- breakfast nook
- new kitchen
- remodeled bathrooms on the first and second floors
- additional closet space for the upstairs bedrooms
- second floor loft/playroom
- option of eliminating the second story front porch to make the house look more like a single-family

Single-family Conversion – Cleveland Heights Prototype 1

Converting a double house to a single family would reduce density in the neighborhood, encourage owner-occupancy, and alleviate some of the parking problems commonly associated with two-families. A single family conversion would also introduce a new housing product in the neighborhood—a single family home on a small lot with a contemporary, dramatic floor plan.

Features include:

- a lofted, two-story living room
- a large dining/family room off of the living room
- a remodeled kitchen
- an optional rear deck
- one bedroom on the first floor
- two bedrooms on the second floor, including a large master bedroom with a walk-in closet
- the option of finishing the third floor as a home office or a teen suite.

Existing

Gross area: 2,081 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
966 SF

Upper unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
953 SF

Proposed

Gross area: 1,800 SF
3 bedrooms, 2 baths

Existing

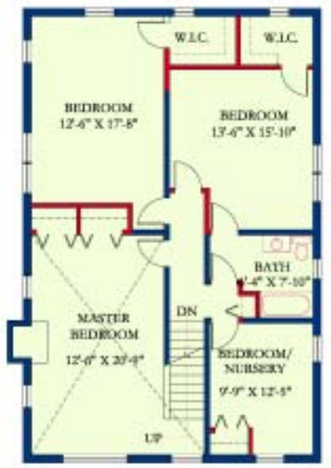
Gross area: 3,054 SF

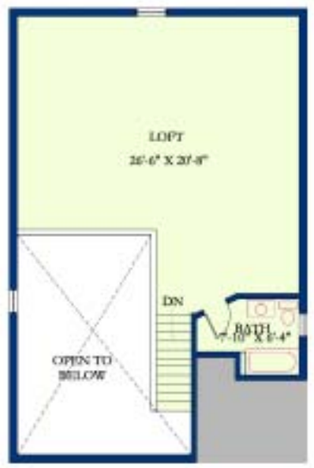
Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,100 SF

Upper unit
4 bedrooms, 2 baths
1,660 SF

Proposed

Gross area: 3,200 SF
4 bedrooms, 3 baths
Family room, study,
loft





Single-Family Conversion – Shaker Heights Prototype 1

This option takes advantage of the fact that many two-family houses in Shaker Heights were designed to look like single-families. Reconfiguring a two-family property for one household will create a more contemporary, urban alternative to traditional single family houses of this size and may be especially appealing to households without children, who may appreciate having a large house on a small, easy-to-maintain lot.

Features include:

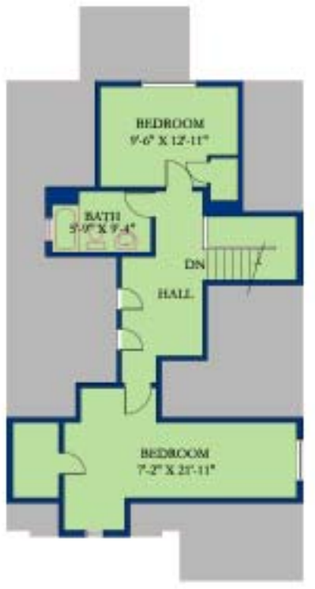
- new kitchen, open to the dining room
- first floor family room
- first floor study
- four large bedrooms on the second floor, including a master bedroom with a cathedral ceiling
- larger bedroom closets, including two walk-in closets
- remodeled bathrooms on the first, second and third floors
- third floor loft
- optional rear deck

Single-Family Conversion – Shaker Heights Prototype 2

This alternative combines the two units into a large single-family home with part of the living room as a two-story space. The design opens up the first floor for better spatial flow and increases the size of the living room, kitchen and bedrooms.

Features include:

- two-story living room
- first floor hall/study
- first floor family room
- new kitchen
- master bedroom with loft on the second floor
- larger bedroom with walk-in closet on the second floor
- larger, better proportioned bedroom on the third floor
- remodeled bathrooms on the first, second, and third floors

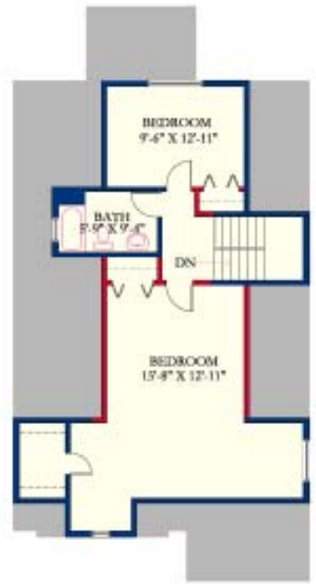


Existing

Gross area: 3,114 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,080 SF

Upper unit
4 bedrooms, 2 baths
1,782 SF



Proposed

Gross area: 3,000 SF
4 bedroom, 3 baths
Family room, loft

CLEVELAND HEIGHTS

Overview

The Cleveland Heights target neigborhood has a high concentration of two-family houses with a fairly low rate of owner-occupancy. These wood frame doubles are of a type common in many of the early suburbs and in the city of Cleveland itself. Each of the two prototype units offers a range of possible reconfigurations without substantially altering the street facades of the units.

The neighborhood is situated near three major public green spaces- Cain Park, Forest Hills Park, and Cumberland Park. Severance Town Center is immediately east of the neigborhood. There are several opportunities to enhance the physical character of the neighborhood and the quality of life for residents.

Neighborhood Improvement Concepts

Traffic Calming

“Greening” Euclid Heights Boulevard

Park Connections

New Housing

Existing

Gross area: 2,081 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
966 SF

Upper unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
953 SF

Cleveland Heights House Type 1: Enhanced Double House

This scheme includes a rear addition and a lofted third floor. The addition creates a larger master bedroom for the upper and lower units. Lofting the third floor creates a dramatic two-story living room for the upper unit.

Features include:

- remodeled kitchens and baths in the upper and lower units
- larger bedroom closets in both units
- new rear porches for both units
- a bedroom/loft with a full bath on the third floor that is part of the upper unit

Proposed

Gross area: 2,795 SF
Addition: 714 SF

Lower unit
2 bedroom, 1 bath
1,050 SF

Upper unit
3 bedrooms, 2 baths
1,594 SF

Cleveland Heights House Type 1: First Floor Bonus Room

Reducing density within a two-family home can be achieved by making one of the units into a one-bedroom suite, as demonstrated in this alternative. In this case, the first floor is converted into a spacious one-bedroom apartment with its own entry, ideally suited to a single tenant or perhaps a couple without children. Part of the first floor unit gets incorporated into the upper unit in the form of a “bonus room” with its own half-bath. The bonus room could be a home office, a teen or inlaw suite, a family room or a guest bedroom.

Features include:

- two-story rear addition, creating a larger bedroom for the upper and lower units
- new bedroom closets for both units
- new, separate entrance for lower unit
- remodeled kitchen in each unit, open to the dining room
- “bonus room” with half-bath on first floor as part of the upper level unit

Existing

Gross area: 2,081 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
966 SF

Upper unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
953 SF

Proposed

Gross area: 2,250 SF
Addition: 169 SF

Lower unit
1 bedroom, 1 bath
858 SF

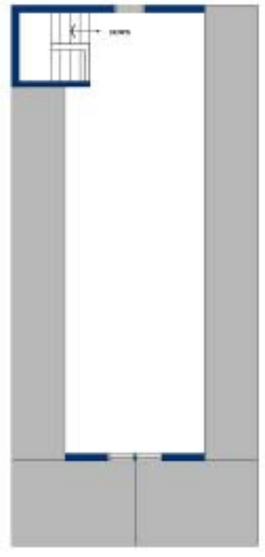
Upper unit
3 bedrooms, 1-½ bath
1,215 SF

Existing

Gross area: 2,081 SF

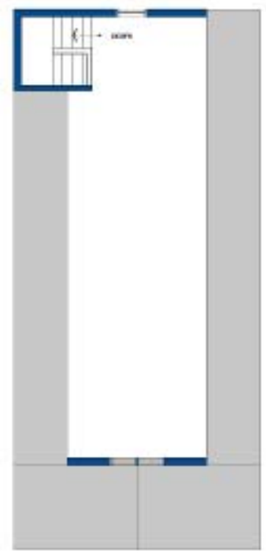
Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
966 SF

Upper unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
953 SF



Proposed

Gross area: 1,800 SF
3 bedrooms, 2 baths



Cleveland Heights House Type 1: Single-family Conversion

Converting a double house to a single family would reduce density in the neighborhood, encourage owner-occupancy, and alleviate some of the parking problems commonly associated with two-families. A single family conversion would also introduce a new housing product in the neighborhood—a single family home on a small lot with a contemporary, dramatic floor plan.

Features include:

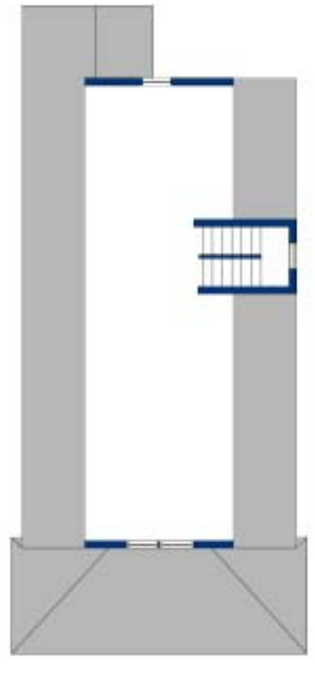
- a lofted, two-story living room
- a large dining/family room off of the living room
- a remodeled kitchen
- an optional rear deck
- one bedroom on the first floor
- two bedrooms on the second floor, including a large master bedroom with a walk-in closet
- the option of finishing the third floor as a home office or a teen suite.

Cleveland Heights House Type 2: Enhanced Double House

In this scheme, the existing rear porches are incorporated into the master bedroom for both the first and second floor units. This creates a more spacious master bedroom, a feature that the market study found to be important to existing and potential residents. In this scheme, the third floor is finished, creating a four bedroom, two-bathroom upper level unit. This alternative promotes owner-occupancy by creating a large and appealing owner's unit.

Features include:

- larger master bedroom for the upper and lower floor units
- remodeled kitchens and baths for both units
- two-story dining room with skylights for the upper unit
- two additional bedrooms and a bathroom on the third floor for the upper unit



Existing

Gross area: 2,534 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,125 SF

Upper unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,225 SF

Proposed

Gross area: 3,094 SF
Addition: 560 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,125 SF

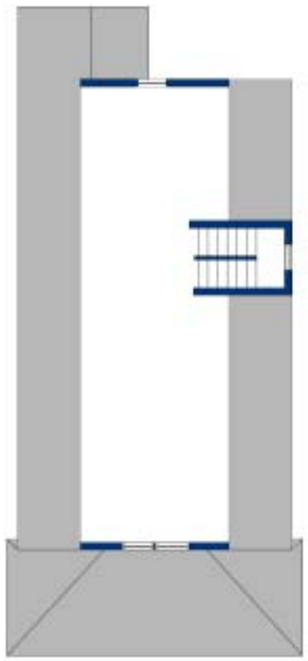
Upper unit
3-4 bedrooms, 2 baths
1,785 SF

Existing

Gross area: 2,534 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,125 SF

Upper unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,225 SF

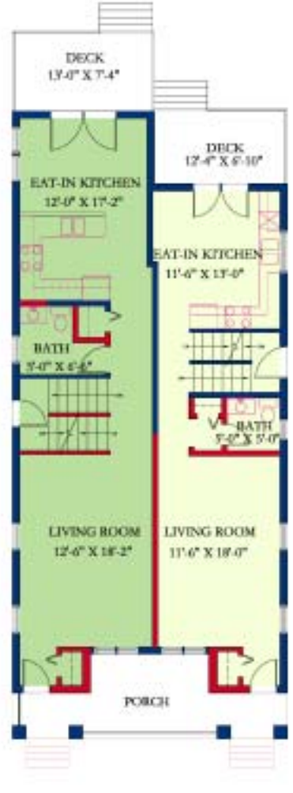


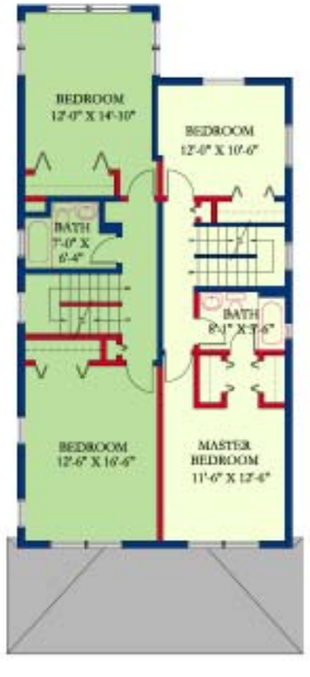
Proposed

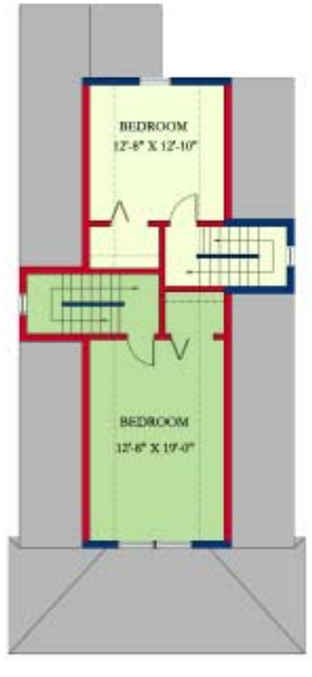
Gross area: 3,244 SF
Addition: 710 SF

Left unit
3 bedrooms, 2 baths
1,788 SF

Right unit
3 bedrooms, 2 baths
1,456 SF







Cleveland Heights House Type 2: Conversion to Side-by-Side

This alternative transforms an up-and-down two-family house into a side-by side double. Although this type of conversion will be very costly, it creates a much more desirable housing unit for both owner-occupants and renters. The property could be sold as a double or as two condominiums, and there is the possibility of converting two or more two-families on adjacent lots, creating a townhouse style development.

Features include:

- rear deck for each unit
- remodeled kitchen in one unit; new kitchen in the other unit
- remodeled first and second floor baths in one unit; new first and second floor baths in the other unit
- new entry closets for each unit
- new third floor bedroom for each unit

Cleveland Heights House Type 2: Single-family Conversion

This alternative combines the upper and lower units into a large, single-family house. In this alternative, the second story porch could be removed, giving the house more of a single-family appearance and letting more light into the living room and loft areas.

Features include:

- a cathedral ceiling over the living room
- a large first floor bedroom
- a new rear porch
- a first floor family room or den
- a larger living room
- a renovated kitchen that is open to the dining room
- renovated bathrooms on the first and second floors

Existing

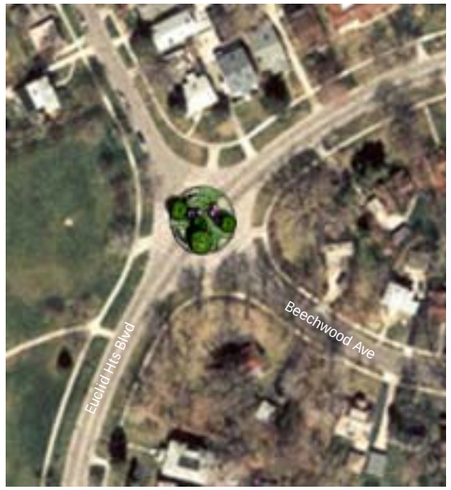
Gross area: 2,534 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,125 SF

Upper unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,225 SF

Proposed

Gross area: 2,209 SF
3 bedrooms, 2 baths
family room, loft



Concept for “greening” Euclid Heights Boulevard

Cleveland Heights Neighborhood Improvement Concepts

Traffic Calming

Due to the proximity of Severance Town Center, the neighborhood has a significant amount of high-speed cut-through traffic, particularly on Euclid Heights Boulevard. Slowing the traffic on Euclid Heights Boulevard may encourage these drivers to remain on Mayfield Road, which is the main arterial route to the shopping center. A landscaped traffic circle at the intersection of Euclid Heights Boulevard and Beechwood Avenue would slow traffic through the neighborhood. Additional traffic circles could be constructed within the neighborhood as needed for traffic calming.

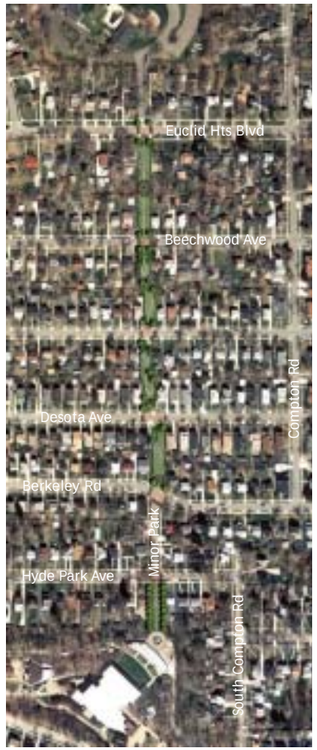
“Greening” Euclid Heights Boulevard

Even with traffic calming measures in place, Euclid Heights Boulevard will continue to be the main thoroughfare through the neighborhood. Concentrating landscaping efforts on this street will improve the perception of the neighborhood for residents and visitors. The appearance of the street would be transformed by a more dense planting of street trees along Euclid Heights Boulevard, landscaped islands, and structured plantings along the Euclid Heights edge of the Boulevard Elementary School property. Crosswalks at the intersection of Taylor Road and Euclid Heights Road would enhance the pedestrian connection from the neighborhood to Severance Town Center.

Park Connections

The neighborhood is situated amid a variety of parks and green spaces, but access from the neighborhood to these amenities is limited. Improving the connection between the neighborhood and Cain Park would benefit residents. By removing one house along Berkley Road at South Compton, a pedestrian passage could be created from the neighborhood into the northern end of Cain Park. Taking this concept one step further, a row of houses in the north/south direction could be removed, creating a green pedestrian trail that links the neighborhood to Cain Park on axis with Minor Park Road.

Internal green trail linking the neighbor-hood to Cain Park



Cleveland Heights neighborhood in green space context

Landscaped gateway to green trail

New housing on Compton Road

Additional development opportunities at Euclid Heights Boulevard and Superior Road

New Housing

New residential development would add much needed variety to the range of housing types available in the neighborhood. Most houses in the neighborhood are oriented along the east/west streets. As a result, the north/south streets tend to lack visual appeal since they are lined with the sides of houses and garages. A development parcel could be created by acquiring houses at the ends of the blocks—for example along Compton Road as shown in the figure to the right. New housing could face Compton Road, with landscaping, street paving and lighting to establish a special character for the new development. This type of development could occur on just one or two adjacent blocks, or it could span the entire width of the neighborhood as illustrated here.

Another opportunity for new housing occurs at the edge of the target neighborhood, at the intersection of Euclid Heights Boulevard and Lee Road. New townhouses have been constructed at the northeast corner of the intersection. Crosswalks, street trees, and additional housing would complete the corner and provide a strong gateway into the target neighborhood.

SHAKER HEIGHTS

Neighborhood Improvement Concepts

Neighborhood Gateways

Connections to and Through Retail Area

Street Reconfiguration

New Housing

Live/Work District

Traffic Calming on Lomond Boulevard

Links to Regional Greenspace Network

Overview

The Shaker Heights target neighborhood is directly south of the Shaker Towne Center area at Chagrin Boulevard and Lee Road. The City is a historic planned community based on the English Garden City model. The City's Housing Preservation Plan states that:

> *Shaker should reestablish the Garden City landscape framework that set it apart as a sublimely beautiful city and served as a model for planned suburbs throughout the 20th century.*

This goal underlies many of the proposed design concepts for the target neighborhood. The two-family houses are mostly colonial or tudor in style and are in keeping with the original design guidelines for Shaker Heights. Retaining the architectural character of these homes was therefore a crucial goal of the unit designs.

Existing

Gross area: 3,054 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,100 SF

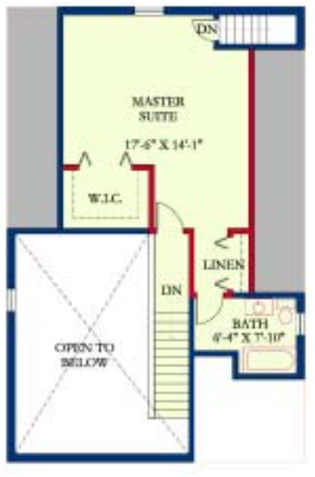
Upper unit
4 bedrooms, 2 baths
1,660 SF

Proposed

Gross area: 3,000 SF
Reduction: -54 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,100 SF

Upper unit
3 bedrooms, 2 baths
1,606 SF



Shaker Heights House Type 1: Enhanced Double House

This design capitalizes on the fact that the third floor of the prototype has already been finished as living space with an existing bathroom; this space is reconfigured for greater flexibility and a more open floor plan. The redesign results in slightly less overall square footage, due to a two-story living room for the upper level unit, but the resulting living space is more open and dramatic.

Features include:

- in-suite laundry for the upper and lower units
- relocated kitchens in both units that open to the dining room
- large bedroom closet in each unit
- new entry vestibule
- new cathedral ceiling over the living room for second floor unit
- open kneewall at stair to the third floor
- new master suite with walk-in closet on third floor
- updated baths on first, second and third floors

Shaker Heights House Type 1: Live/Work Option

This alternative looks at converting the lower level of a two-family house to a commercial use. The potential commercial use would be more intensive than what is typically allowed for a home-based business, but limited to uses that would have minimal impact on surrounding residences. Although the market study did not identify any market demand for this type of use, an earlier study (Zimmerman-Volk Associates, 2000) indicated a market for a live/work product in the Shaker Heights target neighborhood.

Reconfiguring two-family homes for live/work purposes establishes a good transitional use between residential and commercial districts. It also reduces neighborhood density because the downstairs business would likely be most active during daytime hours while the upstairs residential use would be more active in the evenings and on weekends.

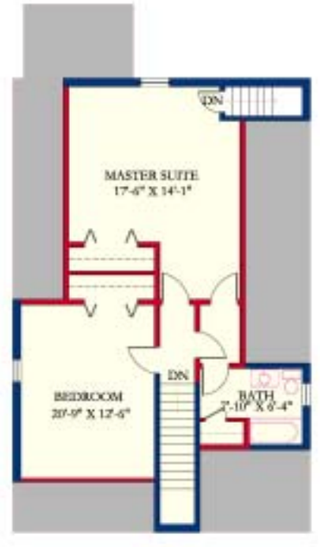
Converting part of a residence for commercial purposes raises a variety of code issues, including handicapped accessiblity and fire separation. For the purpose of this study, the design only looks at how a commercial use could be accommodated spatially within the framework of the existing two-family home. The code issues require further study in conjunction with local and state code officals.

Existing

Gross area: 3,054 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,100 SF

Upper unit
4 bedrooms, 2 baths
1,660 SF



Proposed

Gross area: 3,181 SF
Addition:122 SF

Lower unit
(business use)
Accessible toilet room
1,100 SF

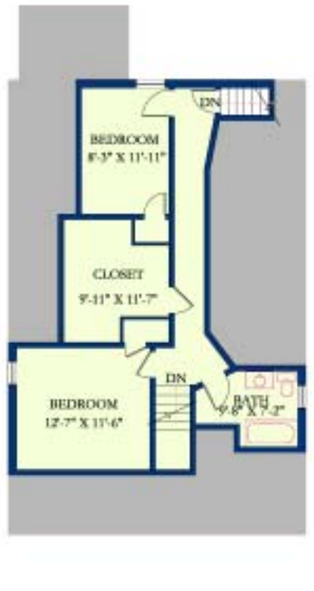
Upper unit
(residential use)
3 bedrooms, 2 baths
1,787 SF

Existing

Gross area: 3,054 SF

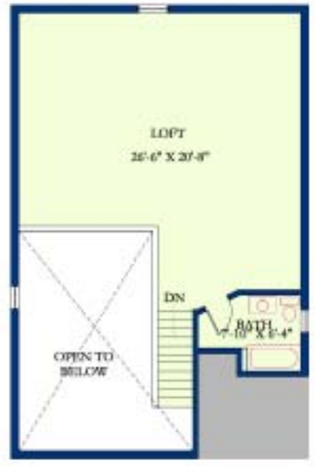
Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,100 SF

Upper unit
4 bedrooms, 2 baths
1,660 SF



Proposed

Gross area: 3,200 SF
4 bedrooms, 3 baths
Family room, study,
loft



Shaker Heights House Type 1: Single-Family Conversion

This option takes advantage of the fact that many two-family houses in Shaker Heights were designed to look like single-families. Reconfiguring a two-family property for one household will create a more contemporary, urban alternative to traditional single family houses of this size and may be especially appealing to households without children, who may appreciate having a large house on a small, easy to maintain lot.

Features include:

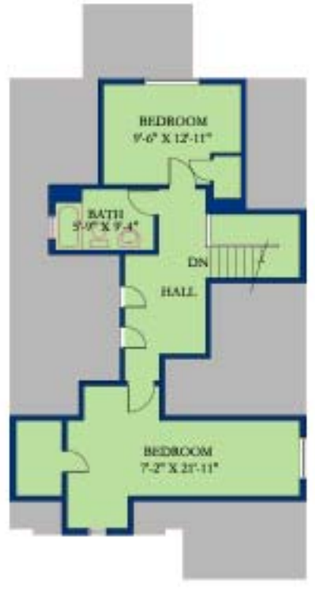
- new kitchen, open to the dining room
- first floor family room
- first floor study
- four large bedrooms on the second floor, including a master bedroom with a cathedral ceiling
- larger bedroom closets, including two walk-in closets
- remodeled bathrooms on the first, second, and third floors
- third floor loft
- optional rear deck

Shaker Heights House Type 2: Enhanced Double House

In this alternative, the first floor unit is reconfigured as a large one bedroom unit. The square footage of the first floor unit remains the same but two bedrooms are combined to make a large master bedroom suite with a walk-in closet. Similarly, the two bedrooms on the second floor are combined to make a master bedroom suite for the upper unit. This unit has three bedrooms total, including two on the third floor.

Features include:

- lofted third floor creates a cathedral ceiling over the dining room for the upper unit
- remodeled kitchens for both units
- remodeled bathrooms on first, second, and third floors
- new half bath for the upper unit
- additional closets in both units



Existing

Gross area: 3,114 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,080 SF

Upper unit
4 bedrooms, 2 baths
1,782 SF

Proposed

Gross area: 3,106 SF

Lower unit
1 bedroom, 1 bath
1,080 SF

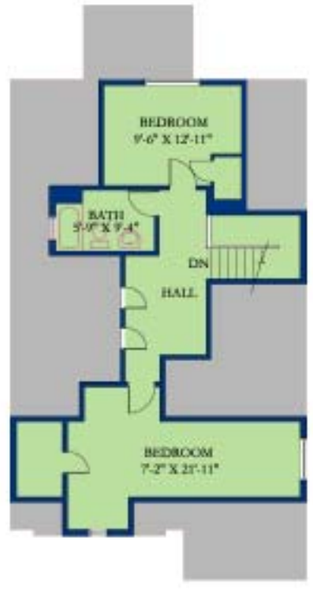
Upper unit
3 bedrooms, 2-½ baths
1,774 SF

Existing

Gross area: 3,114 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,080 SF

Upper unit
4 bedrooms, 2 baths
1,782 SF



Shaker Heights House Type 2: Single-Family Conversion

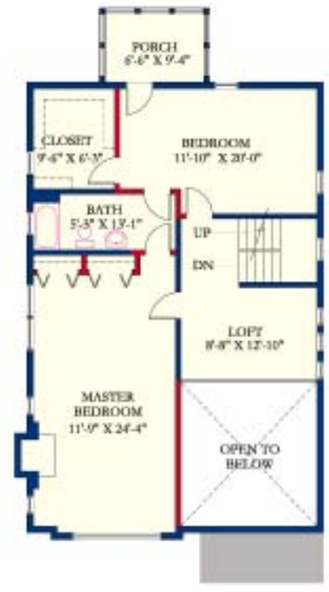
This alternative combines the two units into a large single-family home with part of the living room as a two-story space. The design opens up the first floor for better spatial flow and increases the size of the living room, kitchen, and bedrooms.

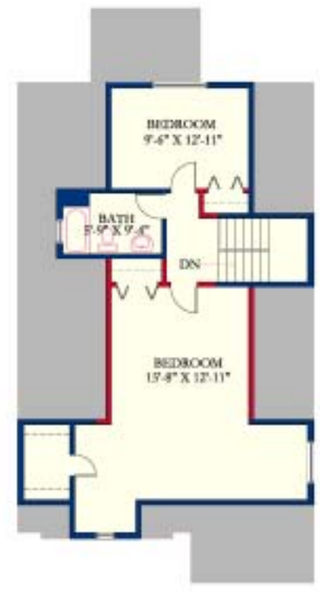
Features include:

- two-story living room
- first floor hall/study
- first floor family room
- new kitchen
- master bedroom with loft on the second floor
- larger bedroom with walk-in closet on the second floor
- larger, better proportioned bedroom on the third floor
- remodeled bathrooms on the first, second, and third floors

Proposed

Gross area: 3,000 SF
4 bedroom, 3 baths
Family room, loft





Shaker Heights
Neighborhood Improvement Concepts

Neighborhood Gateways

The main entry points to the neighborhood are at Lee Road and Chagrin Boulevard, Lee Road and Lomond Boulevard, Lee Road and Scottsdale Boulevard, and Chagrin Boulevard and Avalon Road. These intersections provide the first impression of the neighborhood and, with a consistent pattern of landscaping, they will reinforce the community's image as a garden city.

Existing city gateway at Lee Road and Scottsdale Boulevard

Concept plan for the neighborhood showing neighborhood gateways, retail connections, street reconfigurations, new housing, and traffic calming for Lomond Boulevard

Cedar shingle replacement fence

Landscape wall (Unigreen PaveStone System)

Pedestrian park between Kenyon Road and the shopping center, regraded and landscaped

Connections to and Through Retail Area

The pedestrian park between Kenyon Road and Chagrin Boulevard is a main entry point for neighborhood residents to the Shaker Towne Center area. Additional landscaping would reinforce its garden city character; the pedestrian garden framework could be extended to Lomond Boulevard via two adjacent vacant lots.

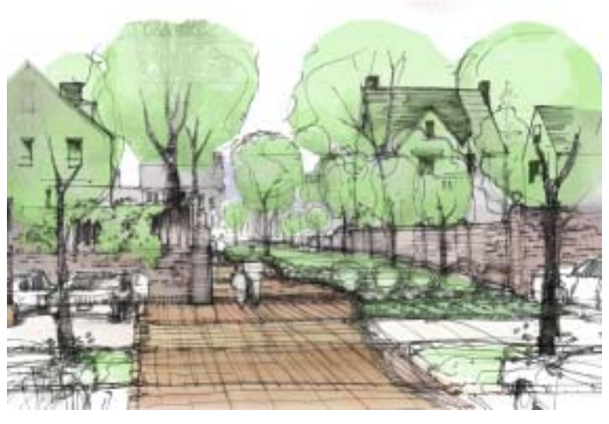
The northern edge of the existing pedestrian garden, where the park meets the shopping center parking lot, has a grade change of about four feet. Currently, there is a small flight of stairs at this intersection. Replacing the existing concrete stair and handrail with a wider stair in brick or stone would establish a more gracious and welcoming connection. The retaining wall along the southern edge of the parking lot could be replaced with a planting wall—a modular concrete system that allows evergreen plant materials to grow on the vertical surface of the wall. The fence on top of the retaining wall could also be replaced with something more attractive, possibly a cedar-shingled fence that would provide privacy to the residents whose homes abut the parking lot.

A more dramatic improvement to the park would be to regrade it with a gentle slope from Kenyon Road to the shopping center parking lot, eliminating the need for steps. Brick or stone retaining walls could be installed on both edges of the park and it could be landscaped with a pedestrian path, planters, and lighting.

A large city-owned parking lot separates the pedestrian park from the shopping center. Landscaping for the parking lot and specially paved areas for pedestrians would make it easier for pedestrians who live in the neighborhood to walk to the shopping center. The existing pedestrian passageways from the parking lot to the storefronts on Chagrin Boulevard are dark and uninviting. Additional lighting, new paving, and the removal of the overhead arches would make these passageways safer and more comfortable for pedestrians.

Pedestrian park plan

Pedestrian park section



Park landscape; pedestrian path in Bomanite

Concept plan for street reconfiguration, new housing

Opportunity for new housing development and triangular park at Avalon and Kenyon Roads

Street Reconfiguration/New Housing

New housing could potentially be accommodated in two locations in the target neighborhood. First, Kenyon Road could be reconfigured where it meets Lee Road, to simplify the intersection and create a new development site at the Chagrin/Lee intersection. Housing could then be developed by consolidating several parcels adjacent to the existing shopping center. Second, housing could be developed at the western end of Kenyon Road, by reconfiguring the street around a new triangular park. Both options are shown in the concept plan to the left.

Live/Work District

Adapting the two-family houses closest to the Shaker Towne Center shopping district for live/work would create an ideal transitional use between the retail and residential areas, provided that the “work” uses would be limited to businesses that did not have an adverse impact on neighboring residents. Businesses operating in two-families would add life to the neighborhood during the day and create additional demand for copy centers, office supply stores, coffee shops, and restaurants in the adjacent shopping area. Businesses operating in two-families on Kenyon Road and Chagrin Boulevard could use the city-owned parking lot to accommodate their vistors and employees.

Closing Kenyon Road; creating a pedestrian passage into the neighborhood from the corner of Chagrin and Lee

Closing Kenyon Road for a new commercial building at the corner of Chagrin and Lee

Vegetated swale for Lomond Boulevard

Traffic Calming on Lomond Boulevard

Reducing the speed of traffic has a positive effect on residential property values. Traffic circles at key intersections along Lomond Boulevard would help to slow traffic while providing an opportunity to add landscaping along the street. A more dramatic way to slow traffic and increase greenery would be to transform the street into a vegetated swale. A swale would be similar in appearance to a landscaped median strip down the center of the boulevard, except that it would provide an alternative form of stormwater management that utilizes natural processes as a means of collecting, filtering, and storing water. Unlike typical concrete and masonry systems, vegetated swales treat water and allow it to percolate into the ground as it drains. A vegetated swale seems appropriate for Lomond Boulevard because the Kingsbury Run flows beneath the street and is the reason for the street's gentle curve. A natural, environmentally sensitive stormwater management system in this neighborhood could become a prototype for similar efforts elsewhere in the City and within the First Suburbs.

A vegetated swale must be designed and constructed in consultation with landscape architects and civil engineers, but general design principles include:

- Gently sloped banks to basin at least 2 feet in width.
- Variety in plantings to promote good soil health, control erosion, and maximize filtration and pollutant absorption.
- Layered plantings with native grasses and sedges established nearest the basin and woody trees and shrubs nearer the tops of the banks.
- Curbless or frequently broken curbs to allow water to flow into swale; breaks should not be catch basins or drain inlets and should empty into small patches of rocky soil to slow down and redirect runoff from the street.

Links to Regional Green Space Network

With traffic islands or a vegetated swale, Lomond Boulevard would provide an appealing pedestrian and bicycle link to green spaces within the City, such as Lomond Elementary, Gridley Triangle Park, the Sussex Family Center and, via Avalon Road, to the Shaker Lakes. The draft greenspace plan for Cuyahoga County identifies links to parks and greenspace throughout the region. Lee Road, as the western end of the target neighborhood, is identified as a "potential greened connector" in the County's plan. A potential greened connector is a street that has been identified as a way to connect significant green spaces within the County and, therefore, is a good candidate for streetscaping, bike routes, and other enhancements. When funding becomes available to implement the County's plan, Lee Road will be in a good position to qualify for assistance.

L A K E W O O D

Neighborhood Improvement Concepts

Commercial District
Garden Lane
Industrial Edge
Madison Park

Overview

The Lakewood target neighborhood is at the southeastern end of the City and is bounded by Madison Avenue on the north, Lakewood Heights Boulevard on the south, Lewis Road on the west, and Madison Park on the east. The neighborhood was selected for this study because of its high concentration of two-family houses.

The neighborhood has a lot going for it. It has a strong, pedestrian-oriented retail strip along Madison Avenue and is adjacent to a major public recreation facility (Madison Park). Homes in the neighborhood are well maintained. The neighborhood design concept attempts to capitalize on the neighborhood's many strengths by enhancing the appearance of streets and the park, improving parking for the retail strip, and introducing new types of housing to dilute the concentration of two-family houses.

Existing

Gross area: 2,325 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,050 SF

Upper unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,003 SF

Lakewood House Type 1: Finished Third Floor

In this scheme, an addition is built on the back of the house, creating a larger master bedroom for both the upper and lower units. The third floor is finished, adding a large bedroom/loft and an additional bathroom to the upper unit.

Features include:

- rear addition for master bedroom on first and second floors
- remodeled kitchens on first and second floors
- pass-thru between kitchen and dining room on first and second floors
- remodeled bathrooms on first and second floor
- finished third floor with bedroom, walk-in closet and full bath

Propose

Gross area: 3,095
Addition: 570

Lower ur
2 bedrooms, 1 ba
1,150

Upper ur
3 bedrooms, 2 bat
1,753

Lakewood House Type 1: First Floor Bonus Room

The advantage of this alternative is that it creates a larger owner-occupant's unit via economical means. The first floor "bonus room" is added to the upstairs unit and can be used as a bedroom, in-law suite, teen suite or home office. The one bedroom rental unit on the first floor has potential to be used as an apartment for in-laws or an adult child.

Features include:

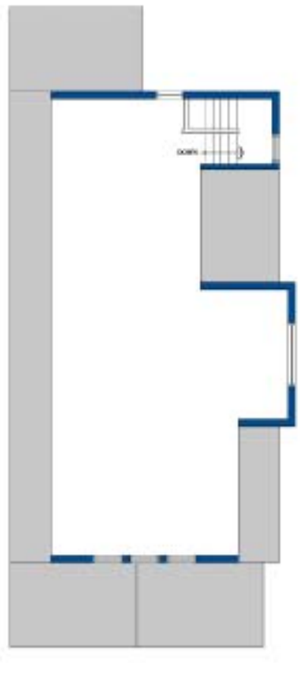
- new separate entry for lower unit
- new entry closet and foyer for upper unit
- open living and dining rooms on first floor—creates "great room" feel
- remodeled kitchens for both units
- addition creates larger first and second floor bedrooms
- enlarged bathroom on first floor could be handicapped-accessible
- part of first floor allotted to second floor unit as a "bonus room"
- open stair to second floor
- updated bath on second floor
- new closet and bookshelves for upper unit
- optional cathedral ceiling for upper floor unit

Existing

Gross area: 2,325 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,050 SF

Upper unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,003 SF



Proposed

Gross area: 2,525 SF
Addition: 200 SF

Lower unit
1 bedroom, 1 bath
850 SF

Upper unit
3 bedrooms, 1-½ baths
1,528 SF

Existing

Gross area: 2,325 SF

Lower unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,050 SF

Upper unit
2 bedrooms, 1 bath
1,003 SF

Lakewood House Type 1: Single-Family Conversion

In this alternative, the two-family house is converted to a large single-family. The floor plan has the flexibility to allow for a first floor bedroom or study. There are three bedrooms on the second floor and the future option of finishing off the third floor for additional bedrooms or a home office.

Features include:

- first floor bedroom/study
- first floor family room with optional deck
- two-story dining room
- breakfast nook
- new kitchen
- remodeled bathrooms on the first and second floors
- additional closet space for the upstairs bedrooms
- second floor loft/playroom
- option of eliminating the second story front porch to make the house look more like a single-family

Proposed

Gross area: 2,150 SF

4 bedrooms, 2 baths
Family room, loft

Concept plan Improvements to Madison Avenue. Athens Avenue, Lakewood Heights Boulevard, and Madison Park

Neighborhood Design Concepts

Athens Avenue at Waterbury Road

Lake Erie Screw Corporation

Consolidated parking with landscaped buffer and infill commercial development for Madison Avenue

Crosswalks and parking lot landscaping at Madison Avenue and Waterbury Road

Madison Avenue Commercial District

Madison Avenue has an comfortable, pedestrian-friendly quality with a good mix of businesses in traditional storefronts along the street. Clearly defined crosswalks and bump-outs would make the street more pedestrian-friendly. A more ambitious strategy would be to acquire the homes that are immediately adjacent to the retail buildings on Madison Avenue. Homes that abut retail areas are typically less desirable than other houses in a neighborhood and they often have lower property values as a result. Acquiring these properties as they become available and consolidating them to create parking for Madison Avenue businesses will serve three purposes:

1. Additional parking will support the retail area, making it easier to attract and retain high-quality businesses
2. The land acquired could also be used to create a substantial landscape buffer that will make the parking lots more attractive while protecting adjacent homes from the adverse affects of living next to a retail area.
3. Adding parking at the rear of the existing businesses would create a site for infill retail development on Madison Avenue, just west of Waterbury Road, where a parking lot currently interrupts the continuity of the commercial strip.

Athens Avenue at Waterbury Road

Athens Avenue with crosswalks, street trees, and underground utilities

Athens Avenue with traffic circles and new housing in a modern style, including second story garden terraces.

Athens Avenue with traffic circles and new housing in a traditional style.

Athens Avenue / Garden Lane

Athens Avenue is a main route to Madison Park for neighborhood residents, especially children on foot and bicycle. But the street lacks visual appeal since it is lined with the sides of houses—no houses face Athens Avenue. Also, street trees are sparse; instead there is a forest of utility poles and overhead lines. Car and truck traffic also uses the street as a cut-through. Concepts for improving Athens Avenue include:

- *Adding stop signs along the street:* There are few stop signs along Athens Avenue and this makes the street a very efficient route for cars and trucks while potentially endangering pedestrians and bicyclists. Automotive through traffic should be encouraged to use Madison Avenue, where it will benefit the commercial area. Truck traffic should be concentrated on Lakewood Heights Boulevard, where it can easily access the freeway and the industrial area just south of the neighborhood. Athens Avenue should be primarily for local traffic.

- *Adding crosswalks to intersections:* Brick crosswalks would increase the safety of Athens Avenue by slowing down traffic and increasing drivers' awareness of pedestrians in the neighborhood. A less costly option would be a stamped asphalt product (i.e. "Streetpave") that creates a textured surface for crosswalks, again increasing awareness of the presence of pedestrians.

- *Planting trees:* Despite the narrow tree lawns, smaller trees could be planted along Athens Avenue. Some ornamental varieties, such as flowering crabapples and callery pears, could be planted along Athens Avenue, even with the existing utility poles and wires. A dense planting of trees would create more of a garden quality for the street.

- *Burying utility lines:* A more ambitious effort would involve burying the utilities along Athens Avenue. This would have a dramatic effect on the appearance of the street and would allow for larger street trees. The cost of burying utility lines is high but is offset by reduced maintenance costs to electrical and telephone lines over time.

- *Adding traffic circles:* Small landscaped circles at intersections would help to slow traffic and make Athens Avenue a less convenient option for trucks. They also provide an opportunity to add more greenery to the street, visually signaling that this is a path that leads to the park. Traffic circles can be designed so that they do not inhibit emergency vehicles from getting to the neighborhood. Maintenance of the landscaping is very important so the circles are assets to the neighborhood rather than eyesores. In places where traffic circles are common, "Adopt a Circle" programs are an effective way to get block clubs and community organizations involved in maintaining the landscaping.

- *Introducing new housing:* An even more ambitious option is to introduce a new housing type that faces Athens Avenue. To do this, a parcel three houses deep would need to be assembled immediately north and south of Athens Avenue. This land could be redeveloped with townhouses facing Athens Avenue. The development could encompass just one block or it could occur along the full length of the street. Six existing two-family houses in one development module could become 16 townhouses with attached rear parking. The cost of this kind of redevelopment would be high but it would transform Athens Avenue from a nondescript side street to a garden lane leading to Madison Park.

Lakewood Heights Boulevard with new housing

Lakewood Heights Boulevard with street trees and a landscaped median with dog run

Lakewood Heights Boulevard

Lakewood Heights Boulevard is similar to Athens Avenue in that no houses face the boulevard and the street lacks trees. However, the street carries significantly more traffic than Athens Avenue, especially truck traffic that serves the nearby industrial area. Ideas for improving Lakewood Heights Boulevard include:

- *Planting trees:* Trees would buffer the homes adjacent to the street from the noise and debris generated by this major thoroughfare.
- *Landscaping for the median at Lakewood Heights Boulevard and Clarence Road:* Although this sloped median is planted with grass, additional landscaping, including trees, shrubs, and groundcover would create a more effective and appealing buffer between the residential and industrial areas.
- *Dog run on the median:* The western edge of the median is fairly flat; the eastern edge has more of a slope. By enclosing the western edge of the median with a fence and landscaping, a small dog run could be created. Dog parks, where dogs are permitted to run free, are very popular in residential neighborhoods. A dog park is usually at least an acre and includes some parking because people may bring their dogs to the park from surrounding areas. The Lakewood Heights Boulevard median is too small for a conventional dog park but large enough for a dog run, primarily for residents of the immediate neighborhood and their dogs.
- *Housing on Lakewood Heights Boulevard:* A housing development along Lakewood Heights Boulevard might be possible if the City of Lakewood partnered with the City of Cleveland on a joint development. The Lakewood side of the street could have high-density live/work units to capitalize on the excellent accessibility of the neighborhood. There are two RTA stations within a five to ten minute walk of the neighborhood; freeway access via West 117th Street is also very convenient. The Cleveland side of the street could have higher density loft-style apartments, also to capitalize on the potential for live/work.

Madison Park

Madison Park is one of the neighborhood's strongest assets. Proximity to the park adds value to the houses in the neighborhood. A few things that would enhance the character of the park include:

- *Additional landscaping:* The park is a large open space that lacks definition. The park would be enhanced by a landscape plan that creates focal points at entries and differentiates the recreational uses within the park. The two large parking lots in the park reduce the perception of the park as an open green space. Additional landscaping at the edges and within the parking lots would soften these hard surfaces and improve the appearance of the park.

- *Park reconfiguration:* A more ambitious idea is that the eastern part of the park, which consists mainly of surface parking lots, could be separated from the park by a new road. The road would be lined with trees and would provide angled parking for park visitors. Street parking would also be available at the north and south sides of the park. By moving parking to the perimeter of the park, the large parking lots could eliminated or at least reduced in size. This would free up the eastern end of the park for residential development, possibly townhouses that overlook the park.

Perimeter and parking lot landscaping for Madison Park

New housing at the edge of Madison Park

Design Concepts

- Maintain a sidewalk from front door to sidewalk.
- Maintain a mix of evergreen and deciduous plant material.
- No more than one large shade tree should be planted in front yards.
- Shade trees should be encouraged for back yard use to defray cooling costs.
- Encourage small walkways between neighboring driveways to create a more personal circulation system.
- Install window or porch planting boxes to add seasonal color to both levels of homes and to allow for tenant planting space.
- For general planting, use only plants that are tolerant of site conditions and require little special attention.
- Create dedicated outdoor seating areas in both the front and back yards paved with loose material to control excess runoff and erosion.

Guidelines

- Yards should be a minimum of 90% plant material, with the remaining land used for walks and patio spaces (excluding loose surface or planted patio spaces).
- Planting should not be less than 10% or more than 50% evergreen to encourage year round color, interest, and screening.
- The lack of a lawn is acceptable, provided that there are a variety of perennials, annuals, and ground covers to create an intriguing ground plane.
- Plantings should be at least three feet from the foundation with the exception of annuals, perennials, and ground covers.
- Plant material over one foot tall should be set back at least four feet from the sidewalk.
- Tree lawn should consist of lawn or groundcover only, along with street trees.
- All plant material should be installed during dormancy (with the exception of perennials and annuals) between March 21st and May 15th or between September 18th and November 30th.
- Plant material should be mulched to a depth of two inches at time of installation and kept well watered for four to six weeks after installation.
- Ideally, soil samples and microclimate conditions (sun, shade, wind, drainage, etc.) should be used to determine appropriate plant choices for site specific use.

Concepts and guidelines intended to assist two-family homeowners and landlords in creating functional, livable, and aesthetically pleasing outdoor spaces

LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

Ornamental tree
Cercis canadensis
(Eastern Redbud)

Evergreen shrub
Illex glabra (Inkberry)

Medium-large tree
Corylus colerna
(Turkish Filbert)

Plant List

The following plant list is divided into broad groups of planting types to assist homeowners and municipalities in plant selection for specific site needs. Many of the plants listed are native species to Ohio, and most are not invasive species. As with any planting design, selection of plants from the following list should be done with regard to specific site microclimate conditions and size. Consulting a horticulturalist is the best way to ensure the best plants are selected for specific uses.

- *Large trees:* Suitable for large open areas or naturalized zones as well as street planting. Although these trees do a spectacular job of providing shade to homes and yards, special attention to existing pavement and structures should be taken when placing them to prevent both root and branch damage that can occur as the trees age.
- *Medium – large trees:* Combining some shade and ornamental interest with a compact size, these trees are generally good choices for smaller lots as well as street planting. The tight forms and uniform shapes of many of these varieties of trees allow them to act as natural architectural features in the landscape, making them useful in parks and plazas. Although they are smaller, consideration must still be given to existing site conditions when placing these trees.
- *Ornamental trees:* Generally smaller and more compact than other trees, the many varieties of ornamental trees can provide visual interest to any landscape situation in any season. Some have traits that make them intriguing year round. As their canopies tend to be quite low compared to larger shade trees, placement near walkways and driveways should be carefully evaluated for security reasons. Ornamental trees are wonderful additions to any yard, especially those too small to accommodate large shade trees. They are also great for naturalized and open spaces.
- *Large conifers:* Used to screen and provide year round color and interest, these trees follow the same rules that apply to large broadleaf trees.
- *Broadleaf shrubs:* These shrubs fulfill countless roles in the landscape, from accent planting to massing to naturalization. Many are controllable regarding size, while others grow to be quite massive. Specific site conditions must be taken into careful consideration with the selection and placement of any large broadleaf plant material. Hedging, border planting, slope stabilization, and seasonal color are common uses for broadleaf shrubs.
- *Evergreen shrubs:* Fulfilling many of the same roles as broadleaf shrubs, evergreen plant materials have the added benefit of year round color. Some varieties are dense enough to provide visual, noise, and wind screening as well. Great as a backdrop to other more vibrantly colored plant material.

- *Vines and Groundcovers:* Groundcovers fill in large expanses of land without lawn. They bring texture, color, and seasonal interest to the ground plane and can be used to integrate structures into the landscape with their climbing habit.
- *Perennials, Grasses, and Sedges:* The varieties and uses of these plants seem endless, as are their uses. Typically used to add color and textural interest to the landscape, these plants can also stabilize slopes and limit erosion, act as screens, and naturalize areas. When selected and planted appropriately, perennials, grasses, and sedges can be the focal point of a constantly changing flowering cycle.

Ornamental tree Amelanchier (Service Berry)

Large Trees

Botanical Name	Common Name
Acer spp.	Maple family
Aesculus octandra	Yellow Buckeye
Betual nigra	River Birch
Betula lutea	Yellow Birch
Betula papyrifera	Paper Birch
Fagus grandiflora	American Beech
Fagus sylvatica	European Beech
Fraxinus americana	White Ash
Fraxinus pennsylvanica	Blue Ash
Gleditsia tricanthos var. inermis	Thornless Honeylocust
Gymnosladus dioicus	Kentucky Coffeetree
Larix laricina	Eastern Larch
Liliodendron tulipifera	Tuliptree
Liquidombar styraciflua	Sweetgum
Platanus occidnetalis	Sycamore
Quercus spp.	Oak family
Taxodium distichum	Baldcypress
Ulmus parviflora	Lacebark Elm
Zelkova serrata	Japanese Zelkova

Medium - Large Trees

Botanical Name	Common Name
Carpinus betulus	European Hornbeam
Corylus colerna	Turkish Filbert
Koelreuteria paniculata	Panicled Goldenrain Tree
Nyssa sylvatica	Black Tupelo
Tilia Cordata	Littleleaf Linden

Ornamental Trees

Botanical Name	Common Name
Amelanchier arborea	Downy Serviceberry
Amelanchier laevis	Allegheny Serviceberry
Carpinus Caroliana	American Hornbeam
Cercis canadensis	Eastern Redbud
Chionanthus virginicus	Fringe Tree
Cornus spp.	Dogwood family
Crateagus spp.	Hawthorn family
Hamamelis virginiana	Common Witchhazel
Magnolia stellata	Star Magnolia
Magnolia virginiana	Sweetbay Magnolia
Magnolia x soulangiana	Saucer Magnolia
Malus spp.	Crabapple family
Prunus sargentii	Sargent Cherry
Prunus subhirtella	Higan Cherry
Prunus virginiana	Common Chokeberry
Pyrus calleryana	Callery Pear
Salix discolor	Pussy Willow
Syringa spp.	Lilac
Viburnum spp.	Viburnum family

Large Conifers

Botanical Name	Common Name
Abies concolor	White Fir
Picea spp.	Spruce family
Pinus bungeana	Lacebark Pine
Pinus strobus	White Pine
Pinus sylvestris	Scotch Pine
Tsuga canadensis	Canada Hemlock

Large Broadleaf Shrubs

Botanical Name	Common Name
Aesculus parviflora	Bottlebrush Buckeye
Aronia arbutifolia	Red Chokeberry
Forsythia spp.	Forsythia
Hydrangea macrophylla	Bigleaf Hydrangea
Hydrangea quercifolia	Oaklean Hydrangea
Syringa spp.	Lilac
Viburnum spp.	Viburnum family

Medium Broadleaf Shrubs

Botanical Name	Common Name
Berberis thunbergii	Japanese Barberry
Buddleia spp.	Butterflybush family
Buxus spp.	Boxwood family
Cornus alba	Tatarian Dogwood
Cotoneaster spp.	Cotoneaster family
Euonymus alatus	Burning Bush
Kerria japonica	Japanese Kerria
Mahonia aquifolium	Oregon Grapeholly
Rhododendron spp.	Rhododendron family
Ribes alpinum	Alpine Currant

Small Broadleaf Shrubs

Botanical Name	Common Name
Deutzia garcillus	Slender Deutzia
Fothergilla gardenii	Dwarf Fothergilla
Itea virginica	Virginia Sweetspire
Potentilla fruticosa	Shrubby Cinquefoil
Spirea spp.	Spirea

Evergreen Shrubs

Botanical Name	Common Name
Chamaecyparis spp.	Falsecypress family
Illex glabra	Inkberry
Illex x meserveae	Meserve Hybrid Holly
Juniperus spp.	Juniper family
Myrica pensylvatica	Northern Bayberry
Pinus mugo	Mugo Pine
Taxus spp.	Yew family
Thuja occidentalis	Eastern Arborvitae

Vines and Groundcovers

Botanical Name	Common Name
Campsis radicans	Trumpet Creeper
Clematis virginiana	Virgin's Blower
Euonymus fortunei var. colorata	Purple Winter Creeper
Gaultheria procumbens	Creeping Wintergreen
Hedera helix	English Ivy
Parthenocissus quinquefolia	Virginia Creeper
Wisteria sinensis	Chinese Wisteria

Perennials

Botanical Name	Common Name
Achillea	Yarrow
Artemesia spp.	Artemesia family
Astilbe spp.	Astilbe family
Campanula spp.	Bellflower family
Coreopsis spp.	Coreopsis family
Dianthus spp.	Dianthus family
Echinacea spp.	Coneflower family
Euphorbia corollata	Flowering Spurge
Geranium maculatum	Wild Geranium
Heuchera spp.	Coralbell family
Hosta spp.	Hosta family
Lavadula spp.	Lavender family
Mertensia virginica	Virginia Bluebells
Metteuccia pensylvanica	Ostrich Fern
Phlox divaricata	Wild Blue Phlox
Polemonium reptans	Creeping Jacob's Ladder
Rudbeckia hirta	Black-Eyed Susan
Salvia spp.	Salvia family
Sedum spp.	Sedum family

Grasses and Sedges

Botanical Name	Common Name
Andropogon gerardii	Big Bluestem
Carex muskingumensis	Palm Sedge
Juncus effusus	Soft Rush
Liriope spicata	Creeping Lilyturf
Miscanthus sinensis	Maiden Grass
Panicum virgatum	Switchgrass
Schizachyrium scoparius	Little Bluestream
Sorghastrum nutans	Indian Grass
Spartina pectinata	Prairie Cord Grass

Groundcover
Euonymus fortunei
(Winter Creeper)

IMPLEMENTATION

Preliminary Value Estimates

The cost of implementing any of the prototype designs using a specific two-family house will vary considerably, depending on the condition of the existing house, how closely it conforms to the prototype and the quality of materials and finishes used in the rehabilitation. The following analysis looks at one prototype from each neighborhood and provides a preliminary estimate of the range of costs involved in implementing the design schemes. These figures are the estimated value of the improvements and are in addition to property acquisition costs.

Cleveland Heights Type 2

Conversion to side-by-side double

- Purchase price range for two-family house in target neighborhood: $65,500 to $190,000
- Average home purchase price in target neighborhood: $125,586
- Estimated cost range of proposed value enhancements: $145,000 to $175,000 ($72,500 to $87,500 per unit)

Shaker Heights Type 1

Enhanced double with lofted third floor

- Purchase price range for two-family house in target neighborhood: $70,000 to $175,000
- Average home purchase price in target neighborhood: $129,411
- Estimated cost range of proposed value enhancements: $65,000 to $95,000

Lakewood Type 1

Enhanced double with first floor “bonus room”

- Purchase price range for two-family house in target neighborhood: $85,200 to $146,000
- Average home purchase price in target neighborhood: $122,903
- Estimated cost range of proposed value enhancements: $45,000 to $75,000

Preliminary Implementation Strategies

As this document goes to press, the implementation phase is getting underway. This section is a preview of potential implementation strategies. It is not intended to be an implementation plan but rather a range of ideas and opportunities for further consideration. A successful implementation strategy will involve a variety of tools to accommodate the needs of existing and prospective residents and to take into account the different processes and resources available within the Consortium cities. Key components of an implementation strategy include:

- *Financial tools without income guidelines:* Incentives that are geared to residents regardless of income will attract and retain higher income households in the target neighborhoods and help to enrich the economic diversity of these areas.
- *Programs that combine resources of the Consortium cities:* Each city in the Consortium has its own tools for stimulating housing reinvestment, but the power of the Consortium is the combined strength of its member cities. Some financial incentive programs will need to continue to be funded independently by each municipality, but the Consortium cities can join forces to lobby for legislative changes and to provide technical assistance and resident services more effectively.
- *Some programs that are available to tenants and investors, as well as owner-occupants:* This is especially important in the two-family neighborhoods. Even though encouraging owner-occupancy is a primary goal of the housing initiative, there are high percentages of absentee-owners in the two-family target neighborhoods. To have a tangible impact on the neighborhoods, some programs must address investor-owned properties, in addition to those with owner-occupants.

Financial Tools

Deferred second mortgage for rehab work: A deferred second mortgage can be a powerful incentive for getting existing or prospective residents to implement the housing unit design schemes. A deferred second mortgage would be structured like a home equity loan but could only be used for home repairs and upgrades. Interest rates, loan terms, and administrative processes would need to be developed by the Consortium cities, but as an example:

> An owner plans to spend $20,000 to combine the second floor and third floor of her two- family into a large owner's suite with a home office. She receives the funds to make these improvements as a deferred second mortgage with a 1% rate; payments on the second mortgage are deferred until she sells the house or ceases to be an owner-occupant. Ten percent of the second mortgage could be forgiven each year as a way to encourage and reward owner-occupancy.

Tax abatement: Tax abatement is a way to promote housing reinvestment. Some homeowners feel that when they invest substantial sums of money in home improvements, they are penalized for their efforts by having to pay higher taxes. To counter this disincentive, cities can abate property taxes on the value of improvements. For example, Fairview Park offers a seven-year property tax abatement on the value of improvements to existing residential and commercial properties. The entire city has been designated as a Community Reinvestment Area so the abatement is available city-wide. Routine maintenance, such as painting, replacing a roof, or repaving a driveway would not be eligible for tax abatement as these types of repairs do not increase a home's appraised value. Adding a bathroom, expanding a kitchen, adding central air conditioning, and finishing an attic as living space are examples of work that increase a home's appraised value.

Tax abatement works best when the value of improvements is high. Smaller upgrades do not result in much tax savings and are often not worth the effort it would take to administer an abatement program. Tax abatement can be difficult to implement because of the administrative time it takes to monitor improvements and track abatements. Also, tax abatement must be coordinated with a municipality's school district. But it can be a powerful incentive for a homeowner to make substantial upgrades to their current home rather than move to a new home.

In addition to abating the value of improvements to existing houses, tax abatement can be used to reduce the tax liability for new residential construction. For example, Fairview Park is considering amending its abatement legislation to provide a seven-year property tax abatement for new residential or commercial construction. The City may abate 50% of the value of new construction for up to seven years. Tax abatement for new construction would provide an incentive for developers to create new housing in the target neighborhoods, as described in the neighborhood design concepts that are part of this study. If all or most of the First Suburbs offered offer a tax abatement program with the same terms, it could be marketed jointly as a way to increase the appeal of housing in the inner ring. Although each City would have to identify its own Community Reinvestment Area, and work out an arrangement with its own school district, adopting the same program in each community would make the program simple and understandable for prospective buyers and developers.

Equity assurance: An equity assurance program guarantees that a property will retain its value. A homeowner typically pays a small fee to enroll in the program. The fee pays the cost of an appraisal by an impartial, third party appraiser. This appraisal becomes the guaranteed amount that the owner will receive when they sell the house. Typically, the guarantee only takes effect after the owner has lived in the house for at least five years. The program requires the owner to provide regular maintenance. If a property's condition declines during a homeowner's tenure, the property is reappraised and the guarantee only applies to the value at reappraisal. This type of program is often used as a marketing device to generate interest in neighborhoods where home sales are slow and homebuyers, who are often first-time buyers, may be worried about their ability to re-sell the home when they are ready to move.

From a financial standpoint, equity assurance programs are a fairly safe bet for most cities. In 2001, the 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania organization prepared a profile of nine existing equity assurance programs in municipalities in Pennsylvania, Illinois, Missouri, and Maryland. There are over 7,000 households enrolled in these nine programs and only five claims have been paid to homeowners to date. The earliest program, in Oak Park, Illinois, has been in place since 1977, and it has never had to pay a claim.

For the First Suburbs target neighborhoods, property appreciation has ranged from 3.6% to 4.25% annually in the bungalow neighborhoods and 3.84% to 6.21% in the two-family neighborhoods. Since most properties in the First Suburbs are appreciating in value, it is unlikely that there would be many claims if the Consortium cities instituted an equity assurance program. But, if such a program were adopted as a Consortium-wide effort, it could used as a marketing tool—promoting the fact that buying in the First Suburbs is a safe bet. The First Suburbs Development Council could administer the program, although each municipality would be responsible for paying any claims within their boundaries.

A more effective version of this program would guarantee a return on the value of any upgrades that the homeowner makes while living in the property. Homeowners in the First Suburbs are unlikely to worry about a loss in value since most bungalows and two-families have a modest but steady annual appreciation. However, homeowners might be concerned that they are over-improving their property if they make the range of value enhancements described in this study. They may fear that they will never get the money they have invested into a house back out when they sell it. To counter these concerns and provide an incentive for major improvements, the Consortium could offer an equity assurance program that guarantees that a homeowner will be able to re-sell their home for the purchase price plus a percentage of the cost of value enhancements. The details of this type of incentive program would need to be carefully developed by the Consortium but, as an example:

> A resident buys a bungalow in one of the Consortium cities for $90,000. Using the unit designs in this document for inspiration, he makes $70,000 worth of improvements to the property. The plans are reviewed and approved by the Consortium city in which the property is located, and the value of the improvements is certified by the city based on receipts provided by the homeowner. After five years, the owner decides to sell the house. The equity assurance program guarantees that he will be able to get the original purchase price of the house ($90,000) plus 75% of the value of the enhancements ($52,500) for a total minimum sales price of $142,500. If the owner cannot get this price for the house within a preset period of time, he would submit a claim to the city and receive a check for the difference between the guaranteed sales price and the actual sales price.

With this type of program, the Consortium cities assume some of the financial risk for homeowners who make major upgrades. The cities should not have to guarantee 100% of the value of improvements because homeowners rarely recapture the entire value of the improvements they have made when they sell their house, even in very competitive real estate markets. The percentage could drop to 40 or 50% to reduce the potential fiscal liability of participating cities, but a higher percentage will result in greater participation, especially in the early days of an equity assurance program.

Development tools

Landbanking: In first ring communities where residential neighborhoods abut commercial districts, a program of municipal property acquisition and land banking would help to protect residential property values and strengthen commercial districts. In this study, the Lakewood, Maple Heights, and Fairview Park target neighborhoods are prime candidates for municipal landbanking. The houses that abut the commercial districts often have lower property values than similar housing that is a little further away. If communities start buying the houses that are adjacent to commercial areas as they become available, they can be used to create an attractive landscaped buffer between residential and commercial areas. The landbanked lots can also be used to create additional parking for businesses in the commercial area.

Municipalities should also consider acquiring and landbanking contiguous properties within residential neighborhoods to create opportunities for residential development as shown in the neighborhood design concepts that are part of this study. Each of the target neighborhoods would benefit from increased housing choices to dilute the heavy concentration of bungalows or two-families in the neighborhoods now.

Technical Assistance

Bungalow and Two-family affinity groups: The First Suburbs Consortium can help to develop a sense of community among bungalow and two-family owners by cultivating informal associations of bungalow and two-family owners. Membership in a bungalow or two-family affinity group should be free and provide substantial benefits, such as discounts at building material suppliers, design assistance, and contractor referrals. There could be events geared toward bungalow and two-family homeowners. Some of the Cities already conduct these kinds of programs, but the Consortium as a whole could bring together a larger group of people with shared interests.

Bungalow briefs and two-family tip sheets: User-friendly guides for maintaining and improving bungalows and two-families could be prepared for the Consortium as a whole, using the combined expertise of building and housing departments staffs in all of the member cities to provide specific advice about how to address the problems common to these two housing types. Two excellent models for homeowner assistance materials are the Bungalow Briefs series prepared by Chicago's Historic Bungalow Initiative and *Cape Cods and Ramblers: A Remodeling Planbook for Post WWII Houses* prepared by the Design Center for the American Urban Landscape at the University of Minnesota.

Free (or substantially discounted) architectural services: The housing unit designs in this study are prototypical and would need to be adapted to the conditions of a specific house in order to be implemented. Subsidizing design services is one way to motivate owners to explore the options for their bungalow or two-family. For example, a bungalow or two-family owner (both owner-occupants and absentee-owners) could be eligible for a one-hour consultation with an architect to discuss potential upgrades to their property. The architects providing this service would be on retainer to the Consortium and would be selected based on their expertise in dealing with the creative rehab of these two housing types. The one-hour session would be used to generate ideas for the house and get the owner excited about the possibilities for improvements. If the owner decides to go forward with the improvements, he or she would provide a statement of intent, detailing the proposed scope of work, for review and approval by the city in which the property is located. Upon completion of the work, the property owner would be reimbursed for the total design fees (or a percentage thereofe, as determined by the Consortium). It is important that all of the cities adopt the same program to reduce confusion and to allow the program to be marketed by the Consortium as a whole. Cities would assume the cost of design services; these costs would be recouped over time in increased property tax revenues generated by the improvements. Initially, a grant could be obtained to conduct a pilot program.

Resident services

To make target neighborhoods in the First Suburbs appealing to the widest range of potential residents, the Consortium should consider a fee-based package of resident services. Older homeowners, single parents, and busy professionals might be attracted to a neighborhood where they can pay a fee and receive basic services, such as landscaping and snow removal from sidewalks and driveways provided for them. The program could be modeled on the services provided to residents in detached condominium communities. Condominium associations handle lawnmowing and other landscaping, as well as snow removal. Condominium owners are responsible for maintaining their units.

This type of program could be somewhat difficult to implement for an individual city, because it would take a considerable amount of time to administer, even if only a few residents participated. By offering the program to bungalow and two-family residents on a Consortium-wide basis, it could be administered more efficiently and, because it would involve many more participants, better rates for the provision of services could be negotiated by the Consortium, lowering the cost for individual residents. This program could be available to both owner occupants and to tenants of two-families and bungalows.

The Consortium could also offer “handyman” services to residents who lack the time or ability to perform routine home maintenance tasks such as cleaning gutters, changing storm windows and screens, touch-up painting, etc. These services could be available to homeowners for a fee, but the Consortium, through its development council, would retain a crew of handymen to do the work for pre-negotiated fees. The Consortium could also maintain a list of contractors and provide referrals to homeowners who need more than basic handyman services. There is a liability issue, since the Consortium would be the conduit for the provision of services and for contractor referrals. But if the legal issues can be resolved, the Consortium could do the work of checking references and acting as an intermediary for homeowners, providing a tremendous benefit to existing and prospective residents.

State and Federal Policy Reforms

The First Suburbs Consortium should lobby to enact a state rehabilitation tax credit and to change the federal law that determines entitlement versus non-entitlement criteria for Community Development Block Grant funding.

State Rehabilitation Tax Credit: The state could offer an income tax credit for rehabilitation work to houses that are at least 50 years old. Several states, including New Jersey, Maryland, and Kentucky offer a rehab tax credit for older homes. Typically, these programs are geared toward historic homes, but Ohio could show its commitment to revitalizing first ring suburbs and all other older, built-out communities by making the program available for all homes that are at least 50 years old. As in other states, the program could be available to owner-occupants and absentee owners and provide a state income tax credit equal to 20% of capital costs of a rehabilitation project—construction costs included, but not appliances or furnishings. The credit could be limited to substantial rehabilitation projects, where the construction cost exceeds 25% of the value of the home prior to the rehabilitation. Or the program could set a minimum and a maximum value for work that is eligible for the program. In other states, work must be completed with a set time period, typically two years. Although the program would result is a loss of income tax revenues to the state, the rehabilitation programs create jobs and stimulate economic development, resulting in a net gain to state coffers.*Community Development Block Grant Entitlement status:* Four of the First Suburbs Consortium member cities (Cleveland Heights, Euclid, Parma, and Lakewood) have populations over 50,000 and are therefore considered entitlement communities through the Federal Community Development Block Grant program. These communities get a set allocation of federal funds each year for housing revitalization and other community development activities, within the program criteria established by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The remaining ten cities are non-entitlement communities, which means that these cities must compete with each other and with all of the outlying municipalities in the County to secure community development funds. The Cuyahoga County Department of Development reviews competing applications from the non-entitlement communities and determines which communities receive funding and at what level.

The Consortium should work towards securing a new kind of entitlement status for its non-entitlement member cities. The combined population of the ten non-entitlement cities in the Consortium is over 200,000 residents. If the federal government would recognize these cities as a unified entity, deserving of entitlement status, it would give the Consortium more control over this important funding stream. Through the Consortium, the ten cities would receive a set amount of funding each year, rather than be subject to the competitive process at the County. The cities could decide collaboratively how to best allocate these funds among themselves, rather than be restricted by the County’s criteria, which do not adequately take into account the special needs of the inner-ring. The cities would also have the flexibility to develop their own storefront program, rather than having to use the County’s program which has not been very effective in inner-ring commercial areas. Although it would take a major effort to change the federal laws governing entitlement status, the benefit would be enormous for the smaller cities in the Consortium.