DUCK ISLAND NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

DRAFT: December 2013

DUCK ISLAND NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN
Community Planning Charrette
December 5-7 2013

Conducted by

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with support from

Cleveland Neighborhood Progress

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1.0 | INTRODUCTION

In September of 2013 the Tremont West Development Corporation, with support from Cleveland Neighborhood Progress, engaged Kent State University's Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative (CUDC) to facilitate a community planning process for Duck Island.

This report is a compilation of the design and planning ideas that emerged over a three-day community workshop (or "charrette") that was held at St. Wendelin's Parish in early December 2013. The planning process revealed a small and insular neighborhood proud of its independence, but dealing with a range of issues including aging housing stock, concerns about crime, and areas of deferred yard and house maintenance. However, the neighborhood's location and strong transit, pedestrian, and bicycle connections have resulted in much recent development speculation.

The plan is an effort to mediate new development opportunities with the needs of the existing Duck Island residents. It includes recommendations about neighborhood identity; open space, including landscape strategies and recreational connections; higher-density development along Abbey Avenue and Columbus Road; and neighborhood infill development. The primary goal of this work is to balance high-quality new development with existing neighborhood character.

2.0 | EXISTING CONDITIONS

Duck Island is at the western end of the Lorain-Carnegie Bridge and therefore receives much through-traffic on Lorain Avenue from cars heading in and out of Downtown Cleveland. However, the neighborhood is relatively disconnected from both Ohio City and Tremont, its two larger neighbors. This disconnection is largely a result of topography: the neighborhood surrounded on the north, east, and south by a sharply sloping drop-off into the industrial Flats, and on the west by the trench for the RTA Red Line train. Duck Island is essentially a small plateau surrounded by a green "moat" of underbrush and forestation.

This topographical distinction also creates many dead-end or single-block streets, creating a sense of separateness, isolation or oasis. The sharp topography and the near-west location lends itself to incredibly striking views of Cleveland's downtown and its industrial Flats all along the north and east sides of the neighborhood. Building stock is largely comprised of scattered single-family houses, many nondescript and aging.

Connectivity

Though the Duck Island neighborhood has a relatively low-profile as compared to other Cleveland neighborhoods, it is well positioned to become one of the city's most a walkable, transit-oriented neighborhoods.

ROADS: Duck Island's major streets include Lorain Avenue, leading to Downtown; Abbey Avenue and, to a lesser extent, Willey Avenue, connecting to Tremont; and Columbus Road, connecting to W. 25th Street and, when the lift bridge over the Cuyahoga is repaired, to the industrial Flats.

GATEWAYS: Three major gateway points into Duck Island: (1) the connection along Abbey Avenue to Gehring/Lorain, with access to the West Side Market; (2) the connection across the Abbey Avenue Bridge into Tremont; and (3) the intersection at the south of end of Columbus Road joining W. 25th Street. All three intersections are currently underutilized as neighborhood gateways.

BIKE & TRANSIT: Existing & proposed bike routes and greenways, such as the bike path along Abbey Avenue, the multi-use path along the Lorain-Carnegie Bridge to Downtown, and the proposed Towpath Extension, Red Line Greenway, and Lake Link Trails all pass by or through Duck Island. In addition, the RTA Red Line station at Gehring and Lorain Avenue is a strong anchor point to the neighborhood and a quick connection to Downtown.

Development Interest

Because of its close proximity to Downtown, Ohio City, and Tremont, and its connections to transit and bicycle infrastructure, Duck Island has recently become the target of much developer speculation. The scale of proposed development ranges from single-family infill housing, to multi-lot townhouses, to large-scale mixed-use development. The map below indicates planned development, either plan from developers' architectural drawings, or more generally in orange for planned development and pink for speculative development.

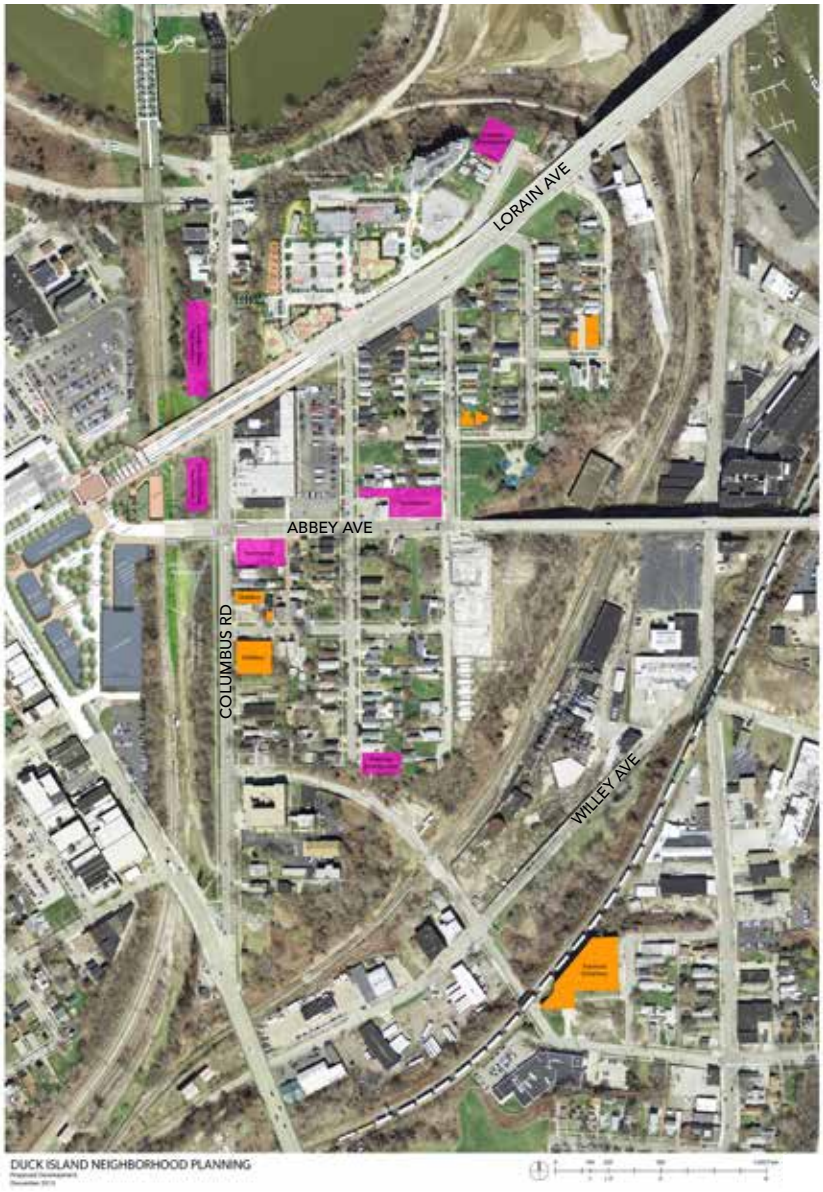
Duck Island residents recognize that their neighborhood is likely to become more dense and more prominent than its current state. This planning process is intended to find ways to shape this new development in ways that maintain the aspects of the neighborhood most valued by existing residents'.

A few of the proposed developments for Duck Island.

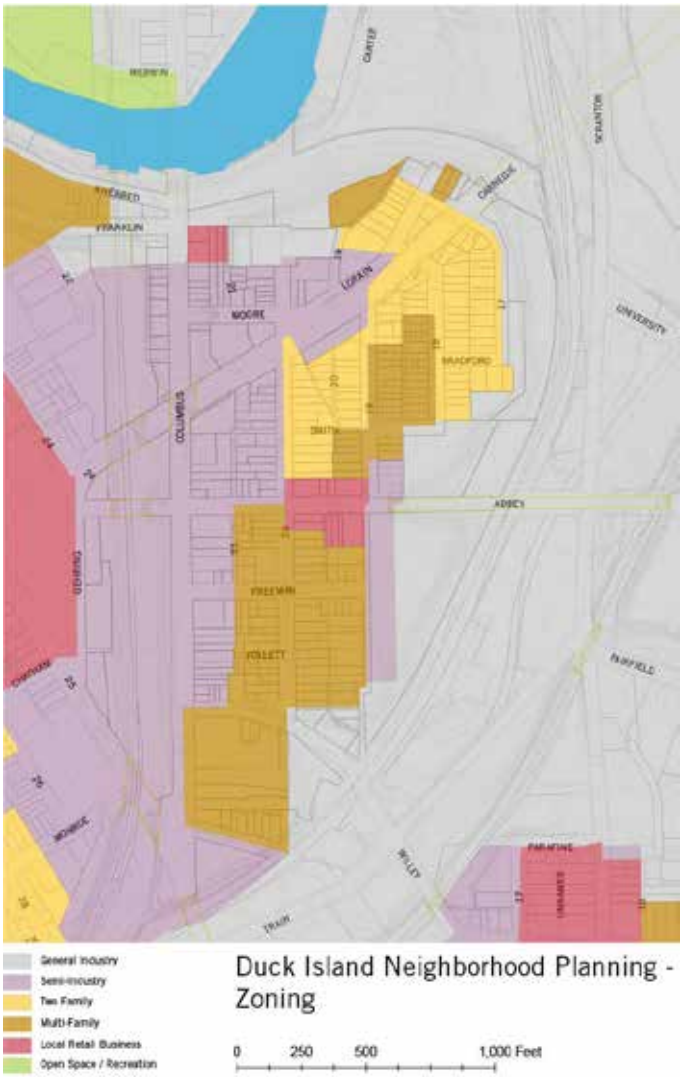
TOP: Proposed townhome development along West 19th Street south of the Abbey Animal Clinic.

MIDDLE: A mixed-use development located north of Lorain, including housing and ground-floor commercial.

BOTTOM: A 4-unit townhome development proposed for West 18th St.



Zoning and Land Use



ZONING

Existing zoning in Duck Island is comprised of four major categories: 1) General Industry, in gray, surrounding the neighborhood on the north and west; 2) Semi-Industry, in purple, along Columbus Road and the majority of Lorain Avenue; 3) Multi-Family, in brown, the southern half of the neighborhood fabric; and 4) Two-Family, in yellow, in some of the northern neighborhood fabric. A fifth category in pink, Local Retail Business, is mainly along Abbey Avenue between W. 20th and W. 19th Avenues.

VACANCY - OWNERSHIP

A preliminary map of vacancy in the neighborhood. This map breaks down the vacancy by ownership: 1) lots owned by the City of Cleveland; 2) lots owned by the Cuyahoga County land bank; 3) lots owned by developers who may or may not already have specific plans for the parcels; and 4) other privately-owned lots used as side yards for adjacent homeowners.

DUCK ISLAND NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING
Non-Residential Buildings
December 2013

NON-RESIDENTIAL ASSETS

When institutional, industrial, and commercial uses are overlaid on the neighborhood, it is clear that while Duck Island is primarily a residential neighborhood, there are some major non-residential uses. Morgan Services, on the northeast corner of Columbus and Abbey Avenues, is the largest commercial business, but other commercial uses include Abbey Market and two bars, Duck Island Club and the Velvet Tango Room. St. Wendelin's Parish, at the south end of Columbus, is the only church in the neighborhood, and it shares a campus with the Head Start School at Columbus and Willey Avenues.

DUCK ISLAND NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING
Base Map - Green Space
November 2013

EXISTING & PLANNED OPEN SPACE

Duck Island has only one formal park, Abbey Park, but it has a large amount of planned and potential open space. The Red Line Greenway, a three-mile bike and pedestrian path being developed by the Rotary Club, will pass just to the west of Duck Island and link to downtown Cleveland at the Carl B. Stokes U.S. Courthouse, the Red Line Rapid station at West 25th Street, and the Zone Recreation Center at West 65th Street. The Towpath and Lake Link Trails will align with the eastern and northern edges of the neighborhood. Also, the slopes that surround the neighborhood should be recognized as a potential open space network. Aggregated together, this map illustrates the neighborhood's potential open space network, if existing areas and projects are connected thoughtfully.

3.0 | CHARRETTE PROCESS

A charrette (or workshop) is a brief but intense design exercise that produces a wide range of ideas that are developed and discussed in a public format.

The Duck Island charrette began with a series of focus group meetings which brought together local developers, public officials, and major property owners. This was followed by a community meeting at which the project team presented existing conditions and gathered input from neighborhood residents and stakeholders. The project team asked a series of questions about the neighborhood and subsequently facilitated group breakout sessions. First, residents were asked to quickly identify what they like best about the neighborhood, where they like to go, and problems they would like to see fixed (see opposite page for responses). Then groups met around maps and discussed four main themes: open space and connections; neighborhood infill and density; corridor development; and neighborhood identity.

The following day, the project team synthesized the input from the community and developed initial design concepts. An informal input session was held at St. Wendelin's where community members could stop by and offer further input. A second public meeting was held the following day to present initial design concepts and open a dialogue for a shared vision of the neighborhood. A third community meeting was held in January, 2014 to discuss the recommendations and identify neighborhood priorities.

RESPONSES, BRAINSTORMING EXERCISE:

Q: What do you like to do in the neighborhood in your free time?

A: Run | Jog | Bike | Take RTA | Walk to the West Side Market | See the views | Visit relatives, neighbors, friends | Enjoy walks in the park | Walk my dog | Walk downtown | Work on yard and garden | Sitting on my porch swing | Listen to Indians games on the porch | Go to St. Wendelin's for functions | Hike the hills | Walk to W 25th and Tremont

Q: Where are the best places to go in the neighborhood? Why?

A: View of the City at the end of Lorain | Grove Court | Down Columbus Road Bridge to view Downtown | Hillside | Watch big boats on river | Abbey Bridge - convenient & well-lit | Bridge into Tremont - good views | Abbey Park | Playground St. Wendelin's - welcomes all | Velvet Tango Room during Happy Hour | Duck Island Club neighborhood is eclectic | Lorain Bridge

Q: What are three problems in the neighborhood that you would like to see fixed?

A: Industrial eyesores | Non-maintained houses | Trash in vacant lots | Vacant houses | Vacant lots | Neglected landscapes | Substandard housing | Graffiti | No food options | Parking issues | Park & playground feels unsafe | Junkyards | Lack of density around Abbey Avenue | Perceived crime | Lack of investment | Unsafe feeling for diverse background (racism) | Too many electrical lines | Drug activity

Q: If you could have any neighborhood amenity, what are some things you would want?

A: Tie into Towpath extension, Lake Link, and Rotary trails | Community garden | Maintain architecture | Walking trail | Park that feels safe | Picnic pavilion | Dog area in park | Tennis courts | Commercial/restaurant area | More stores, shops, art studio | Diner | Grocery store | Easier access to RTA, instead of walking around | Streetcar to Tremont | Walkability on Abbey

4.0 | DRAFT PLAN

The Duck Island neighborhood planning process produced recommendations for organizing future development, along with detailed recommendations regarding neighborhood identity, open space, residential density, infill strategies, housing typologies, safety, and maintenance.

The plan's two organizing ideas are to:

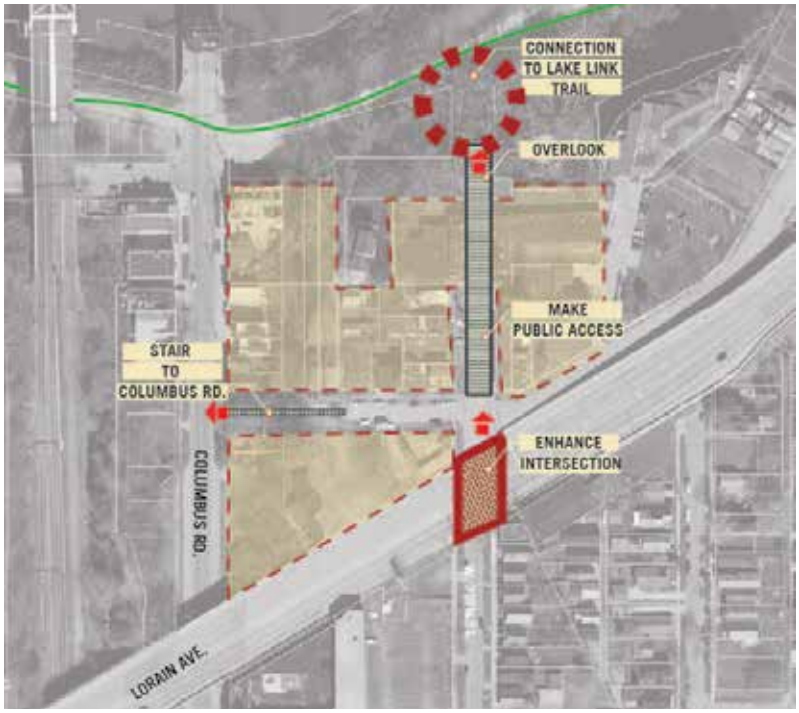
- apply various landscape strategies to the sloping topography that surrounds the neighborhood to create a varied,but linked, network of open space; and
- develop Abbey Avenue as a small-scale mixed-use corridor with a cohesive streetscape design, anchored by intersections acting as gateways into the neighborhood.

Residential densities can vary within the neighborhood, in order to retain the small-scale character of the interior streets. The primary corridors, Abbey Avenue, Lorain Avenue, and Columbus Road allow for higher densities. The area north of Lorain Avenue is best suited for higher density, mixed use development, provided that public access is still provided for connectivity, green space access, and views of downtown and the river.

Neighborhood Identity

Duck Island is a small neighborhood, tucked between Ohio City and Tremont, but it has a distinct character in terms of architecture and unique neighborhood destinations. During the charrette, residents expressed pride in their location, their views, and the neighborhood's under-the-radar status. It is very important to Duck Island residents that the neighborhood be viewed as separate and distinct from its two neighboring communities. For example, Abbey Avenue should not attempt to replicate either W. 25th Street in Ohio City or Professor Avenue in Tremont. New development in Duck Island should to retain a small-scale character that is distinct from the city at large. Signage, streetscape elements, and scale of new development should take these distinctions into account.

Also, the slopes which surround Duck Island, seen on the following page, are a physical feature that sets the neighborhood apart, physically and symbolically, from the rest of the city. With an integrated landscaping and maintenance strategy, the slopes could unite the neighborhood and act as an identifying feature.



TOP LEFT: The Velvet Tango Room exemplifies the neighborhood's low-key appeal as a hidden treasure for those in-the-know.

BOTTOM LEFT: The Duck Island Club, another distinctive neighborhood spot.

RIGHT: The intersection of W. 20th Street and Lorain Avenue is all many people ever see of Duck Island. Enhancing this intersection as a primary entry point to the neighborhood would create a clear, central point of connection and a strong visual identifier for Duck Island.

Open Space

Duck Island's defining topography clearly delineates the boundaries of the neighborhood. However, at present the sloping hillside is underutilized and lacks a cohesive presence in the neighborhood. Given the strong feedback in favor of walking, views, and other recreational opportunities, this slope, when linked when defined by a series of landscape strategies, could become a network of productive green space that provides ecological and social benefits to Duck Island while defining its identity. It should be noted that in no case should all plantings be removed, as the soil is subject to erosion and landslides. But removing some of the overgrowth would give the slopes a well-tended appearance and reduce concerns about crime.

CREATE PUBLIC OVERLOOK AT END OF LORAIN AVENUE TO DOWNTOWN

EXPLORE STORMWATER CAPTURE ON SLOPE HEADING TOWARDS RIVER

CREATE HILLSIDE LINK DOWN TO COLUMBUS ROAD & LAKE LINK TRAIL

CLEAR UNDERGROWTH ON EAST-FACING SLOPE FOR VIEWSHED

FRAME ABBEY AVENUE BRIDGE WITH SUCCESSIVE SEASONAL PLANTINGS

INTERSPERSE SEASONAL PLANTINGS WITH FLOWERING TREES FOR HEIGHT

MAKE CONNECTIONS FROM COLUMBUS ROAD TO PLANNED REDLINE GREENWAY

TREAT TOXIC INDUSTRIAL SITES WITH PHYTOREMEDIATION PLANTINGS

CONSIDER FUTURE PEDESTRIAN/BIKE CONNECTIONS FROM E. 20TH ST DOWN TO WILLEY AVENUE

FORMALIZE PARK SPACE AT SOUTH END OF COLUMBUS ROAD, CONNECT TO GREENWAY

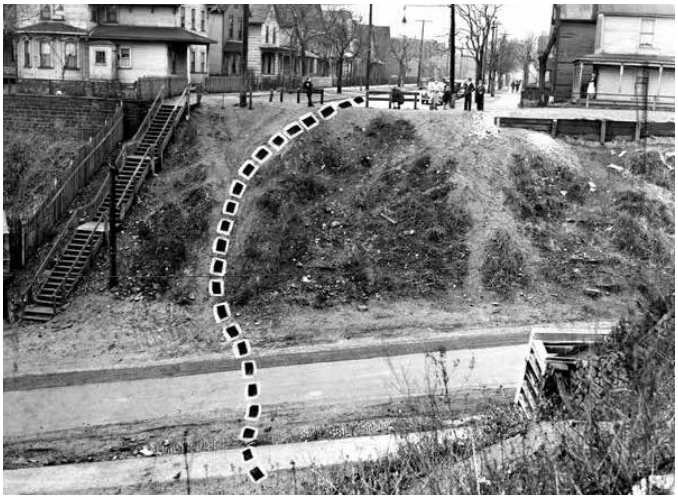
RETAIN AND ENCOURAGE WETLAND PLANTINGS AT BASE OF HILL AT WILLEY AVENUE

Stormwater Capture

FAR LEFT: The northern slope of Duck Island, close to the Cuyahoga River, could be used for terraced or switchback stormwater capture in order to slow or halt stormwater before it flows into the river, reducing the overall load on the watershed. (Schematic Drawing for the Cistern Steps on Vine Street in Seattle, WA. Source: *Growing Vine Street*)

TOP AND BOTTOM RIGHT: The stormwater system could be attractively planted and designed in such a way to allow public access and use.

Hillside Linkage



FAR LEFT: The southern end of W. 20th Street once had a pedestrian link to Willey Avenue. Though residents raised safety concerns about reconstructing this feature, in the future when the Fairmount Creamery project and other development bring more activity to Willey Avenue, the idea could be revisited. (Source: *The Cleveland Memory Project*)

TOP RIGHT: The staircase could be wooden, or it could be a switchback ramp for greater accessibility.

BOTTOM RIGHT: As bicycle paths will pass along Duck Island, the hillside link should be designed in such a way to provide ease of bicycle transport up and down the hill.

Clear Undergrowth

FAR LEFT: The west-facing slope of Duck Island north of Abbey Avenue has potentially good views of Downtown and the Flats, but is hampered by underbrush. Though the hillside cannot be completely cleared due to erosion concerns, overgrowth could be removed around existing trees.

TOP AND BOTTOM RIGHT: Some alternative ideas for landscaped slopes. Residents expressed concern about creating formal pathways or recreational space along this slope, as they have security concerns about the industries in the Flats below.

Seasonal Plantings & Flowering Trees

Though the slopes on either side of the Abbey Avenue Bridge (heading east to Tremont) could be planted as gateway into the neighborhood and as an identifying feature for Abbey Park. Using successive seasonal plantings, the slope can be layered with plants that will bloom throughout the spring and summer, calling attention to the neighborhood entry point through color and texture. Similarly, flowering trees can be interspersed where height is preferred.

Remediation Landscape

The area at the base of Willey Avenue, particularly along the slope to the north, is reportedly contaminated with industrial remnants, complicating any potential development. However, by using a series of phytoremediation plantings, which draw industrial toxins out of the soil in a slow but controlled process, it may be possible to clean the site up without embarking on an intensive and disruptive excavation. The plantings would visually tie into the larger landscape system, while providing ecological benefit.

Wetland Plantings

On the south side of Willey Avenue at the base of the Duck Island slope is a patch of fragmites, tall grasses that predominantly grow in wet soils. Though more extensive study is required, this is a potential indicator of former or neglected wetlands. Part of the Duck Island slope strategy should be to intentionally support and bolster these wetland sites with additional plantings and wetland management.

Lorain Avenue Overlook

TOP LEFT & RIGHT: The end of Lorain Avenue (where it intersects with W. 17th Street) attracts frequent informal public visits for views of Downtown. Public access to the "million dollar view" of Downtown and the Flats should be retained, even as new development occurs north of Lorain Avenue.

BOTTOM LEFT: A small investment in paving and landscaping would enhance the overlook and provide a public viewing platform.

BOTTOM RIGHT: The overlook could include a structure such as this, to enhance the view.

Bridge Berm Garden

TOP LEFT: The existing berm alongside the Lorain-Carnegie Bridge is not well-maintained; residents have noted the area looks disorderly and harbors trash and other unsavory uses.

BOTTOM LEFT: Instead of standard grasses, the berms could be planted with "low-mow" grass that looks like a lawn but requires less maintenance. This could also allow for sledding in the winter, something residents noted is difficult with higher grasses.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Alternatively, the south-facing slope could serve as a location for terraced community gardens.

Abbey Park

Residents noted that Abbey Park, though difficult to see from Abbey Avenue, is very heavily used, primarily for its basketball court. However, problems with the park include loitering, drugs, and public urination.

Approximately $400,000 has been set aside for a splash park in Abbey Park in the City of Cleveland's capital plan. Many residents expressed an interest in other park features and investments, instead of a splash park.

The lots along the western edge of Abbey Park (adjacent to W. 19th Street) are actually not part of the park. Several are privately owned by an industrial landowner (nearest the intersection of W. 19th Street and Abbey Avenue). However, the parcels at the southeast corner of W. 19th Street and Smith Court are in the city's land bank, and would be relatively easy to include in a park redevelopment. In any case, all of the parcels along the western edge of Abbey Park should be re-zoned as green space to protect the park from development incursions.

Duck Island residents appear divided about whether the basketball court should remain. Many noted that, because it is one of the few full courts on the west side, it is often used by people who drive into the neighborhood and park on side streets, often leaving trash and disrupting neighbors. However, these problems may be solved with some basic investments including a public bathroom and security cameras, in order to cut down on the nuisance issues, while retaining the neighborhood advantage of a basketball court.

Columbus Point & Greenway Connections

NEAR RIGHT: The intersection of Columbus & W. 25th Street is wide, confusing, and unfriendly to pedestrians. When the Redline Greenway is implemented, this corner could become of even greater importance in anchoring the green space network of Duck Island.

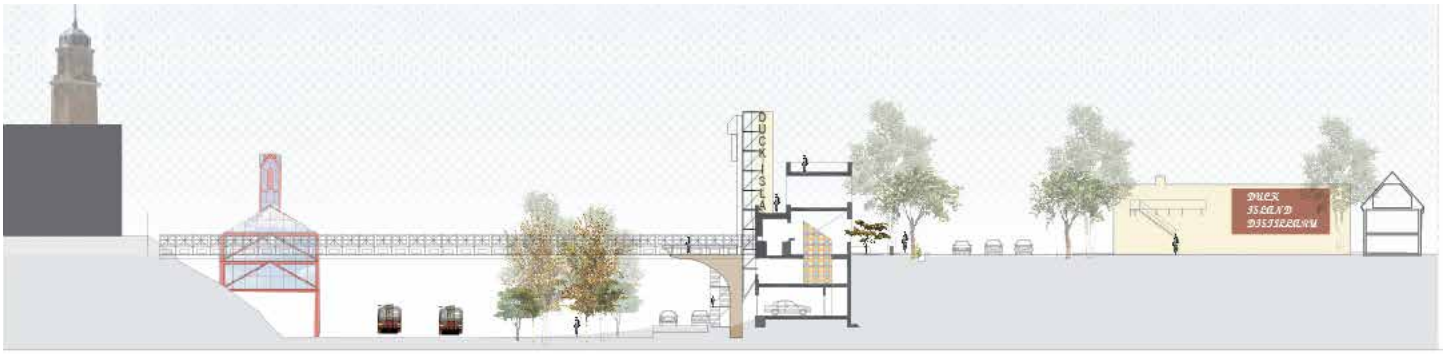
FAR RIGHT: A rendering of the Rotary Club's planned Redline Greenway, which will run directly west of Duck Island. (Source: Vocon). The Greenway will be an asset to Duck Island; however, particular care should be given to connections at Columbus Road & W 25th Street, and Columbus & Abbey Avenue.

Abbey Avenue

Abbey Avenue serves as the primary connection between Ohio City and Tremont. It is also Duck Island's "Main Street" although it does not register as a primary corridor for the neighborhood. This is because very few buildings actually front onto Abbey Avenue; instead the street is lined with the sides of houses and other buildings. Even Abbey Market, an anchor use on Abbey Avenue that has both fans and detractors, has its main entrance off a side parking lot, rather than facing Abbey.

Residents said that, while Abbey Avenue would be a center of commercial activity, it should still retain a small-scale, neighborhood feel. Any retail or mixed-use development should primarily serve residents from the immediate surrounding area. Particular attention should be paid to the intersections at Abbey Avenue and Columbus Road, and Abbey & W. 19th Street, as the primary "gateway" intersections into Duck Island. These corners should be anchored by well-designed, mixed use development projects.

Particular consideration should be given to the possibility of the RTA Redline Greenway project moving forward. This would conceivably stimulate development demand in the area for housing. Developer schematics have shown that building into the hillside, on land currently owned by the RTA, is possible. Pedestrian links down to the trail from Columbus Road would provide connectivity to the RTA station at W. 25th and the new trail. At the eastern end of Abbey Avenue, infill development and an enhanced neighborhood park could further reinforce a sense of neighborhood identity.



TOP: Schematic concept for housing development along Columbus Road and the Redline Greenway.

BOTTOM: Abbey Market has drawn criticism from residents for its appearance and the noisy patrons it sometimes attracts, particularly after dark. However, residents appreciate the convenience of having a small commercial service directly in their neighborhood. Facade improvements could reorient the entrance toward Abbey Avenue and clean up the appearance of the building.

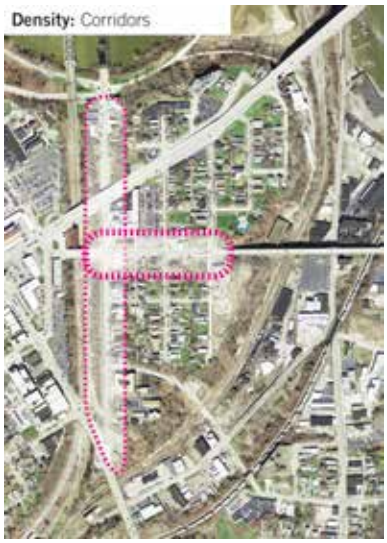
Neighborhood Density

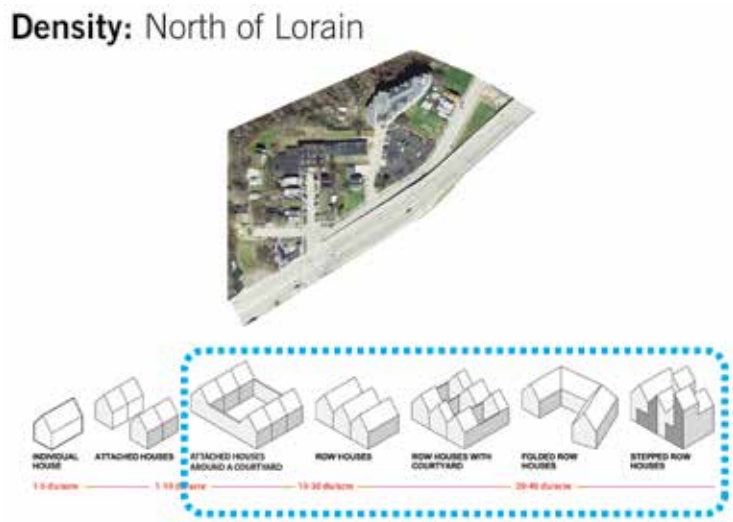
Residents of Duck Island discussed the kinds of development that should be allowed in the neighborhood. Preliminary consensus began to emerge with regard to following density diagrams:

TOP: On interior streets, small-scale infill housing, whether one structure per parcel or, less popularly, townhomes, is preferred. Heights should be capped at 35 feet.

MIDDLE: The two main corridors in Duck Island, Columbus Road and Abbey Avenue, can support higher densities. Abbey Avenue should be developed as a small-scale mixed-use street with commercial, retail, or food service businesses on the ground floor and housing above, interspersed with townhomes and other housing types. The slope on the west side of Columbus Road can also handle higher densities, although any development needs to prioritize public access and views to the Redline Greenway with frequent breaks between buildings.

BOTTOM: The area north of Lorain Avenue can support higher densities than the rest of the neighborhood. However, just as along Columbus Road, any development here should also prioritize public access with pedestrian and/or bike paths leading through the area.





Housing Typologies

Duck Island currently has an eclectic range of smaller-scale houses and retail businesses. A variety of housing types could be designed to fit into the neighborhood, provided that new development respects the size and massing of existing homes.

1: Residential units above neighborhood-scale retail would help to establish Abbey Avenue as Duck Island's "Main Street."

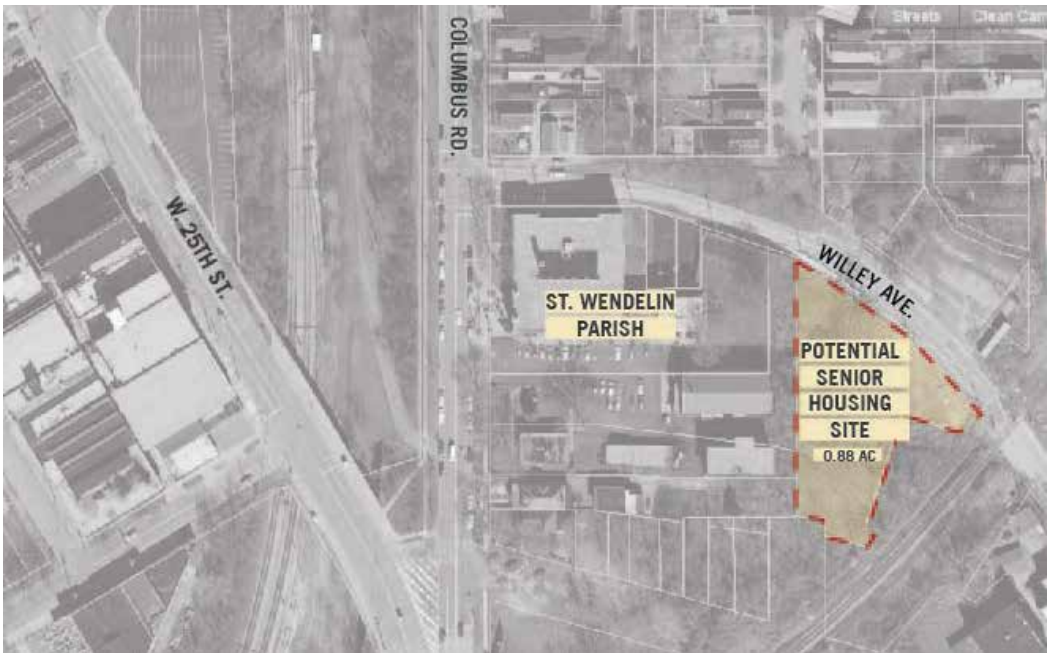
2: Townhouses with garages tucked below would be an appropriate typology for new development along Columbus Road that fronts the Redline Greenway trail.

3: 1-½ to 2-story infill homes would fit in well with existing housing on Duck Island's side streets.

4: Roof terraces would enable residents to enjoy the neighborhood's spectacular views.

5: A mixture of traditional and contemporary architectural styles could expand the market appeal of the neighborhood.

Duck Island is an ideal neighborhood for people to “age in place” due to the close-knit character of the community, convenient access to public transit, and strong neighborhood institutions like St. Wendelin’s parish. There is a large privately owned vacant site immediately east of St. Wendelin’s campus. This site is well-suited for senior housing, possibly development in partnership with the Catholic Diocese. If this site is not available, other options could be explored for senior housing in the neighborhood. Market trends reflect the fact that today’s seniors are not interested in what their parents had in terms of assisted care or nursing homes. Many seniors would prefer to remain a part of the community, rather than be sequestered in elderly-only facilities. Senior apartments or senior co-housing would provide an alternative for older residents to be a remain Duck Island, and for those who might choose



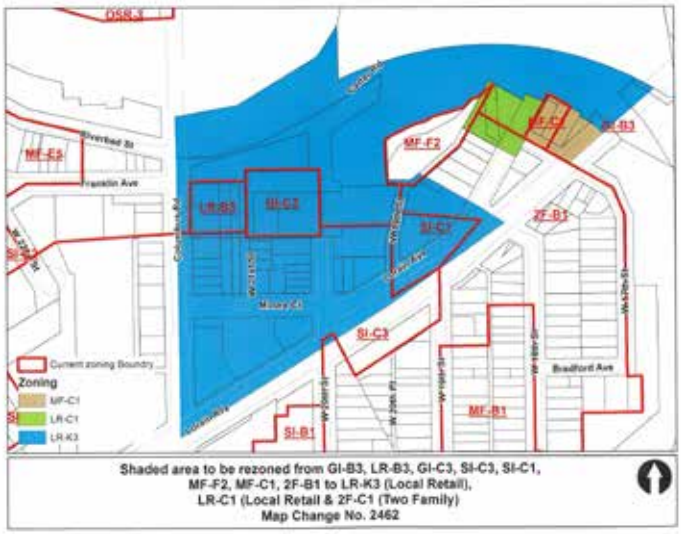
TOP: Senior apartments could be tucked into the hillside behind St. Wendelin’s Parish.

BOTTOM: Examples of senior housing include an apartment complex (left) and a co-housing development (right)where residents live independently but share common areas and meals.

Zoning

This zoning overlap map reflects the discussions that occurred during the charrette. The part of the neighborhood north of Lorain is already slated for a zoning change, as seen in the plan below. Additional changes in the neighborhood could be made along Abbey Avenue and Columbus Road to encourage mixed-use and multi-family housing, respectively. Additionally, the whole of Abbey Park and its adjacent parcels to the west should be rezoned as Open Space, as should the land at the end of Lorain Avenue, which would enable the public to retain access to views from the neighborhood of Downtown, the Cuyahoga River, and the Flats.

Duck Island Proposed Zoning Overlay



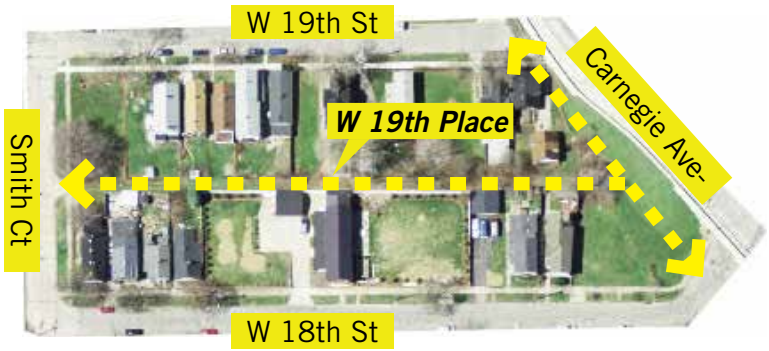
Additional Recommendations

Green Alley

TOP LEFT: The current alley is overgrown, unmaintained, and lacks an outlet at the north end.

BOTTOM LEFT: A rendering from Los Angeles' proposal for the Avalon Green Alley Network (Trust for Public Land/Salt Landscape Architects) illustrates some basic principles of a "green alley," which manages stormwater and allows for vehicular access to the rear of the block's lots in order to minimize on-street garages and curb cuts. Further study is needed to determine the best outlet for the alley, but preliminary survey indicates W. 18th Street may be the better option.

BELOW: Alleys in Duck Island are an under-utilized resource. One block in particular–between W 19th Street and W 19th Street, north of Smith Court–could serve as a prototype for a new approach to Cleveland's.



Public Access at Moore Court

As large-scale development occurs north of Lorain Avenue, and larger trail networks like the Lake Link Trail and the Towpath extension are implemented in the Flats, public access must be maintained through the northern area of Duck Island. It may be possible to use Moore Court, a public right-of-way, as a hillside connection from Columbus Road.

LEFT: A potential public connection at Moore Court.

BELOW: Columbus Road at the existing Moore Court right-of-way.

Monroe Avenue Extension

St. Wendelin Parish is a key institution within Duck Island. It is located at the edge if the neighborhood can could be better connected, both programmatically and physically, to the community.

A long term connectivity strategy would extend Monroe Avenue to the northeast until it intersects Columbus Road, creating a new intersection at W. 25th and Monroe/Columbus. Part of Columbus, where it meets with W. 25th Street, would be eliminated.

This street reconfiguration would enable Monroe to align directly on axis with the façade of St. Wendelin Church. The southern portion of Ohio City (along Monroe) and the southern tip of Duck Island would be directly connected and the intersection would be simplied. Also, a nearly three acre development site would be created. However, extending Monroe would require a bridge structure over the rapid tracks, which would be an expensive undertaking. Also, coordination would be necessary with the plans for future housing on the west side of Columbus.

Security & Safety

SECURITY CAMERA

LIGHTING UNDER BRIDGES

FAR LEFT: Security cameras in strategic locations, which may include Abbey Park, may address some of the neighborhood's safety concerns.

NEAR LEFT: Lighting under the bridge overpasses in the neighborhood would make the neighborhood feel safer and more walkable, by night and by day.

Maintenance

GRAFFITI MANAGEMENT

LANDSCAPE CLEARING STRATEGY

LEFT: Graffiti needs to be addressed promptly, or the problem is likely to spread. Security cameras, clean-up efforts led by Tremont West Development, and block watch volunteers can help to keep graffiti problems under control.

RIGHT: Organized efforts to clear weeds and brush on the slopes surrounding the neighborhood would improve the appearance of this green space and open up new opportunities for residents to use this green space.

5.0 | PHASING & IMPLEMENTATION

Neighborhood Priorities

At the final community meeting for the Duck Island plan, community participants indicated their support for various recommendations in the plan through an informal voting process. Participants expressed support for all of the recommendations in contained in the plan, with some variation but no clear mandate for specific recommendations that need to move forward first. As a result, the following recommendations have been organized based on general indications of support and likelihood of implementation.

Development

1. As a general land use concept, higher density development should be targeted to the part of the neighborhood north of Lorain Avenue. Columbus Road can support multi-story development along the Red Line Greenway and mixed use (residential with ground floor retail) should be encouraged for Abbey Avenue. Elsewhere on the smaller residential streets in the neighborhood, infill development should be limited to one and two-family residential development. To implement this development strategy, TWDC and the Cleveland Planning Commission staff, in partnership with the Councilman, should initiate zoning changes consistent with the plan recommendations for development.
2. To ensure that new development enhances the public realm and provides benefits for existing residents, TWDC should work with private sector partners to establish a development fund for the neighborhood. When new development occurs within the neighborhood, the developer would pay into the fund on a one-time, per-unit basis. TWDC should establish a committee of residents and advisors to decide how these funds would be used for the betterment of the neighborhood.
3. Improvements Abbey Market are a clear priority for community members. Since the Market is privately owned, TWDC should work with the owners to design, finance, and implement a range of storefront and parking lot improvements.
4. There was some interest in senior housing for the neighborhood. TWDC could initiate a conversation with the Catholic Diocese and/or other partners, regarding the possibility of senior housing development in the neighborhood.

Green Space and Infrastructure

1. Preserving the western edge of Abbey Park as green space is a neighborhood priority. The western edge consists of several of the parcels, some privately owned and others in the land bank. TWDC should work with the city to rezone these parcels as green space to ensure that they remain dedicated for park use.
2. The publicly owned parcel at the northern end of W. 17th Street (where it intersects with Moore Court) should also be rezoned as green space to preserve public access to neighborhood views.

3. The community expressed support and enthusiasm for treating the slopes that surround the neighborhood as a cohesive green space and identity feature for the neighborhood. The next step would be to develop a landscape plan for the slopes, incorporating the following range of landscaping treatments.
   - Explore green infrastructure strategies for the northern part of the slopes. A first step would be to meet with the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District to determine if the area is within a priority location for Project Clean Lake, NEORSD's long-term control plan for the mitigation of combined sewer overflows. Also,determine if green infrastructure in the northern slopes might be eligible for other NEORSD support through its stormwater grants program.
   - Establish guidelines or policies for development in the area north of Lorain Avenie to ensure public access to important views and amenities, and interconnectivity of streets and sidewalks throughout the neighborhood.
   - Explore landscape alternatives for the berms along the Lorain Carnegie Bridge, which could include low-mow grasses that reduce maintenance needs and allow for a more tidy appearance for the berms in the spring and summer growing season. The Cleveland Botanical Garden has developed and tested low-mow seed mixtures and would be a logical partner in developing a low-mow planting strategy for the berms. A tiered community garden could be explored for the south-facing berm, creating a distinctive landscape feature for the neighborhood that also builds relationships between neighbors and could provide fresh, healthy food. The Neighborhood Connections program at the Cleveland Foundation could provide funding support. The Ohio State Extension might be able to offer technical support and advice for a tiered agriculture site.
   - Preserve trees but remove undergrowth on the west-facing slope, to maintain a green edge that has a more maintained appearance that reduces the likelihood of illegal dumping and other illegal activities. The removal of undergrowth needs to be a careful process, as erosion issues and potential landslides on the hillside are a concern. The City Parks Department, in conjunction with local volunteers, could implement this aspect of the slope strategy.
   - Plant hardy, distinctive perennials, such as daffodils and black-eyed susan, on the slopes for an annual burst of season color. Flowering native trees, such as eastern redbud, would provide a notable identity feature along the slopes at the eastern end of the Abbey Avenue bridge. The City Parks Department, in conjunction with local volunteers, could implement this aspect of the slope strategy.
   - The west-facing slope, south of Abbey Avenue, was identified as a potentially contaminated site. A remediation landscape could be explored for this site, using specific plant materials (referred to as "hyper-accumulators") to slowly extract contaminants from the soil. TWDC, in partnership with Environmental Health Watch and other partners, could pursue a grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement Program.

- A historic hillside linkage at the southern end of West 25th Street could be recreated to provide a linkage to the Fairmount Creamery project, currently in development. It's important to not that neighborhood residents clearly do not want the linkage restored under current conditions, as the stairs that previously existed at this location contributed to crime in the neighborhood. The restored linkage is a possible idea for the future, once new development provides an overall improvement of safety and investment in the neighborhood.
- The southern area of the slope appears to have wetlands conditions. TWDC could commission a wetlands assessment to determine if there are, in fact, wetlands in this area, and the quality of any wetlands identified. If wetland conditions exist, TWDC could pursue a Sustain our Great Lakes grant for wetlands restoration from the National Fish and Wildlife Fund.
- The eastern slope is the setting for the Red Line Greenway Trail, a project being developed by the Cleveland Rotary Club.

4. Since $400,000 in city funding is available for improvements to Abbey Park, TWDC should engage a landscape architect to work with the community to develop a detailed plan for the park that incorporates the range of uses residents would like to see in the park. The most requested improvements to emerge from the planning process include a gateway or entry feature at the southwest corner of the park and tennis courts somewhere in the park. Residents were divided as to whether to retain and improve the basketball courts or eliminate them. There was some interest in a splash park. Parking concerns need to be addressed, especially as additional programming and features are added to the park. Public restrooms were requested. In the short-term, TWDC could talk with the City about installing portable restrooms in the park.
5. Some community residents expressed interest in restoring W. 19th Place as a green alley. The alley is not currently navigable, but could be restored as a model project to demonstrate stormwater practices and the city's Complete & Green Streets policy. Project partners could include the City's Office of Sustainability and/or the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District.

Safety and Maintenance

1. Convene a neighborhood task force to determine whether and where security cameras, tied to the Cleveland Police Department, should be installed.
2. Work with the City to target inspection and enforcement efforts toward properties in the neighborhood that are in poor repair. Increase community awareness of assistance programs aimed at home repairs and maintenance.
3. Develop a lighting plan for the bridge underpasses; secure Community Development Block Grant funds, a Neighborhood Connections grant, or other funding to pay for the installation of lighting. Work with the city to determine a plan for long-term maintenance of the lighting.
4. Develop a graffiti response team, through TWDC and neighborhood block clubs, that can respond quickly to incidents of graffiti and other vandalism in the neighborhood.

Funding Sources and Partners

PROGRAM	GRANT AMOUNT	DEADLINE	WEBSITE	POTENTIAL PROJECTS
Cleveland Great Places	Up to $15,000	Fall of 2014 (tentative)	http://planning.city.cleveland.oh.us	Slope strategies, enhancement of the scenic overlook
Cleveland Storefront Renovation Program	$25,000 or up to 40% of eligible rehab costs	None	http://www.city.cleveland.oh.us/CityofCleveland/Home/Government/CityAgencies/CommunityDevelopment/StorefrontRenovation	Abbey Market improvements
Neighborhood Connections	$500 to $5,000	February and July, typically	http://neighborhoodgrants.org/	Wide range of small scale projects, including programming of Abbey Park; tiered community garden on the Lorain Avenue berms; and seasonal plantings/clearance efforts for the slopes
National Fish and Wildlife Fund: Sustain Our Great Lakes Fund	$25,000-$1 million (most competitive in the $35,000 to $50,000 range)	Feb 18, 2014 for pre-proposal	http://www.nfwf.org/easygrants	Phyto-remediation strategy for slopes
US Environmental Protection Agency: Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement Program (EJCPS)	Up to $120,000 for a two-year project	Feb 18, 2014	http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/resources/publications/grants/ej-cps-rfp-2014.pdf	Remediation landscape for slopes; stormwater management projects
Project Clean Lake (Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District)	varies	contact NEORSD	Contact Sewer District staff directly	Potential partnership on green infrastructure projects for larger new development sites and possible slope strategies at the northern end of the neighborhood; green alley pilot project
Small-Scale Stormwater Demonstration Projects Grant	$10,000	on hold	http://www.neorsd.org/watershedgrants.php	Slope strategies, especially wetland restoration and green infrastructure; green alley pilot project
Ohio Environmental Education Fund	$5,000-$50,000	letter of inquiry by 3/4/14; deadline is 3/11/14	http://www.epa.state.oh.us/oeef/EnvironmentalEducation.aspx	Green infrastructure and erosion control strategies for the slopes, with a public education component. Will *not* fund beautification.
RTA Transit Waiting Environments	Varies, typically tied to streetscape improvements	n/a	http://www.riderta.com/planning	Bus shelters on Lorain Avenue
Ohio Arts Council	$5,000 to $20,000	April 1	http://www.oac.state.oh.us/grantsprogs/grants.asp	Events and programming for Abbey Park
NEA Art Works	$10,000 to $100,000	Late summer, typically	http://arts.gov/	Community design and engagement activities
NEA Our Town	$25,000 to $200,000	January, typically	http://arts.gov/grants-organizations/our-town	Public space creation/public art along the Redline Greenway
Art Place	$50,000-$500,000	Pre-application in December, typically	http://www.artplaceamerica.org/	Public space creation/public art along the Redline Greenway
Ohio History Fund	$2,000 to $20,000	Late summer, typically	http://www.ohiohistory.org/local-history-office/funding-opportunities/history-fund	Oral history project to document neighborhood's past and present residents; historic survey or markers; bricks and mortar funds for historic building rehab.
Surdna Thriving Cultures	Varies	Rolling	http://www.surdna.org/what-we-fund/thriving-cultures.html	Events and programs; teen-based activities; planning and community efforts

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