

## **July 2008 Revitalization Update**

### **Vine to Short Vine Reconnection/Streetcar Issue**

On June 30th, the City requested the CCC's position regarding Anchor Properties' University Village Concept Plan not including a vehicular reconnection of Vine to Short Vine. The City's letter included the following:

However, at this time, we have been informed that the stakeholders do not want this connection established and are satisfied with the fact that the current plan for the University Plaza does not show the vehicular connection between Vine and Short Vine.

This means that additional traffic will not be routed through the business district and the streetcar will most likely travel up Vine Street from Downtown and continue onto Jefferson with stops on Jefferson, not Short Vine. It is my understanding that the City of Cincinnati does not have the ability or the interest to advocate for this connection to be put into place, but I think we should ensure that there is full knowledge about it and the potential implications of this decision for all the stakeholders since this was originally their request.

The July 2nd informal CORT meeting was cancelled, but Clyde Nowlin and Kay Weaks met with Martino Anguilli to clarify the UVA/VCURC's position on this issue. Martino explained Scott Enns sent Anchor Properties a letter detailing UVA/VCURC's concerns, suggesting improvements to the Concept Plan, and stating their position regarding the vehicular reconnection as follows:

One point of clarification, both UVA and VCURC are comfortable with focusing on a visual connection versus a physical vehicular connection between Vine Street and Short Vine. While the general consensus of both groups is to have a physical vehicular connection, we are all in agreement with moving forward with a visual connection due to the limited financial resources available for the redevelopment/development of our business district. Therefore we believe the visual connection is the financially responsible solution, and anticipate those public financial resources necessary for a physical connection will be redirected in other emerging development opportunities within the Short Vine Business District.

The subsequent CCC Board's response to the City included the following:

Council's Board is aware of the communication sent to Anchor Properties by the University Village Association (UVA) and the Vine St Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (VCURC). We concur with their thoughtful advocacy for development of an even more visionary urban plan. We understand their consideration to move forward without a vehicular reconnection is due to limited financial resources available; however, the CCC takes the position that it is short sighted not to provide accommodation for a 'light rail only' vehicular reconnection of Vine to Short Vine. We absolutely agree that three dimensional representations of the site and/or site elevations are essential to our understanding, and we ask that they be required prior to our final approval.

The CCC Board also sent members of CORT (Corryville Revitalization Court) a request for a formal meeting to be held July 9th to discuss recent developments in the University Plaza plans.

On July 8th, CCC members Clyde Nowlin, Kay Weaks, and Nathan Ruggles attended the monthly UVA meeting to question their position on the streetcar issue. The Uptown Consortium's Tony Brown also attended. Despite Clyde's appeal simply not to close the door on a 'streetcar only' accommodation, and Nathan's assertion that lack of a Short Vine route is not in the best interest of the community, and will have a negative financial impact, there was no support for the CCC's position. Al Porkolab noted UC

supports the route on Jefferson. Tony Brown explained because Euclid is to remain open, the site is not large enough to accommodate a streetcar connection, and the community will need to decide if the issue is a 'deal-breaker' or not.

At the July 9th CORT meeting progress reports were given on the following issues:

### **Vending District**

Scott Enns reported implementation of the City's designation of Short Vine (from north of Corry, to south of University) as a 'Vending District' will begin soon. He explained the designation requires sidewalk sellers to either be operators of a Short Vine business (setting up a table outside their business), or persons with a Short Vine vendor's license. Placement regulations limit the number of legal sites to three in the 2600 block, two in the 2700 block, and one in the 2800 block. Vendors and peddlers are prohibited anywhere else along Short Vine, and no food vendor's are permitted. He met with the City's Rick Hardy to identify locations for the 6 permitted sites. Rick is to send a map, which will be posted on [www.Corryville.org](http://www.Corryville.org), and explanation packets to be distributed to current peddlers. Vendor's licenses will be issued on a first come-first serve basis. Scott has questioned how the policy is to be enforced, and is awaiting an answer.

### **Façade Improvement**

Scott reported that the façade program is 'on hold' until Short Vine businesses have a better understanding of how the program can work. Al Porkolab explained property owner Carlos Mincks is interested in taking advantage of the program, but has been unable to get any bids because the contractors he contacted said their experience with payment from the City makes it prohibitive. Arn Bortz said PNC Bank has been contacted for assistance, is interested, and the issue will be pursued.

### **Policing Issues**

Martino Anguilli is the CPD contact, and will pursue details of the Vending District enforcement.

### **University Plaza Redevelopment**

Mike Ricke reported that in association with Cole Russell Architectural Group and KKG Urban Design Consultants, Anchor Properties met with Charles Graves (City Planning) and other City staff on July 1st. He said they will also meet with UC next week. Mike presented the most recent Concept Master Plan with topographical stats noted, and discussed the difficulties designing a site with such varied extremes. He presented the Phase One Plan and explained it includes the Kroger's and Walgreen's buildings, pedestrian walkways, and the surface parking lot. He also presented a preliminary elevation rendering for the Kroger's building. In discussion that followed:

- There was positive reaction to the Kroger's façade which has the appearance of a two story building, and distinctive architectural features at all corners.
- There continues to be significant concern about the 'non-urban' character of the Walgreen's building, and the other potential structures along Corry, and a desire for a more pronounced Jefferson/Corry gateway. Wes Munzel presented a UC concept sketch proposing to cut back the northwest corner of Jefferson/Corry, resulting in a larger traffic island and allowing Walgreen's to sit at the edge of the street.
- Dan Plofchan questioned whether some kind of structural element was planned to separate the west side of the pedestrian walkway in front of the Kroger's building from the parking lot. He was told none was planned. Dan said he had not understood that the 'pedestrian' walkway would also allow vehicular traffic, and expressed concerns about the resultant pedestrian 'experience'.

Charles Graves summarized the City's perspective on the issues as follows:

- Development of the site in the context of an Urban Renewal Plan overlay is demanding.
- A decision will need to be made about the zoning designation, whether as a 'planned development' or requiring application for 'variances' and 'conditional uses'.
- Traffic Engineering needs to weigh-in on the one way vehicular entrance from Taft.

- The Walgreen's design is challenging, as it can be seen from all angles, and placement of the entrance.
  - The aesthetics of the other potential buildings along Corry need to be considered.
  - Preservation of the Auburn Triangle Park green space, and the Euclid Ave connection are positives.
  - Screening for the Euclid/Taft view of Kroger's backside is important.
  - The traffic flow along the pedestrian street needs to be examined.
  - The streetcar will not be coming up Short Vine.
  - A streetcar stop along Jefferson needs to be considered.
  - The city is working to insure the site is developed with an urban character.
- Phil Rotte expressed disappointment that provisions are not being made for the streetcar to continue north on Short Vine.
- Mike Ricke noted the site is already under-parked by 100-150 spaces according to zoning regulations.

A site walk-through was proposed for Monday July 21st, at 2 pm.

Revised renderings will be posted on [www.Corryville.org](http://www.Corryville.org) prior to the July 22nd CORT/CCC meeting.

A 3-D model will be presented at the meeting.

### **Future Projects**

- The need for more Short Vine public parking was noted.
- Arn Bortz announced that due to the unrealistic selling prices being asked by some neighborhood property owners, future projects would be smaller and proposed for property already held, or acquired at a reasonable cost.
- Ken Tully indicated interest in developing his property at 24 E University Ave, and was told assistance could be discussed.

Submitted by Kay Weak, CCC secretary