

# GREAT PLACES! IN CLEVELAND AND ITS NEIGHBORHOODS

1st Edition



Cleveland City Planning Commission • October 2012

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### Cleveland City Planning Commission

601 Lakeside Avenue, Room 501

Cleveland, Ohio 44114

<http://planning.city.cleveland.oh.us>

*Robert N. Brown, principal author*



*Great neighborhoods* are often anchored by *great “places.”* These are distinctive places that add identity and character to a neighborhood or a district. They are also gathering places that bring residents together in way that strengthens the sense of community. Great places can be, to a neighborhood, what a living room is to house.

Many of these great places are outdoor plazas. Some are indoor spaces that are open to the public. And, typically, they are visually or architecturally distinctive places that are unique to a particular neighborhood. When you see one, you immediately know where you are! For purposes of this report, a great place is:

- a visually distinctive place (in its design and its context)
- a public gathering place (frequented for enjoyment and special events)
- a compact place (seen and experienced from a single point)

Although not all great neighborhoods are anchored by great places, there is no doubt that these great places strengthen neighborhoods and are often the mark of a truly great neighborhood.

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This report seeks to identify and celebrate some of those great places – large and small –in Cleveland and its neighborhoods. *A second purpose of this report is to identify the potential to strengthen or create other great places that can help enhance neighborhoods throughout Cleveland.*

**NOTE:** Other “great places” will be added in future editions.

Web: [What makes a great place?](#)



# art & soul of buckeye

buckeye neighborhood



The 16-foot tall “Trumpet Man” stands at the corner of East 118<sup>th</sup> & Buckeye, calling neighborhood residents to the urban plaza known as the *Art & Soul of Buckeye*.

In 2008 a community partnership transformed a former asphalt parking lot and an undistinguished park into a truly “great place” that adds identity and character to the Buckeye neighborhood.

Artist James Simon designed the Trumpet Man (and his admiring dog) in recognition of the music festivals that had been held at this site and which continue to be a summertime attraction here. Artist Angelica Pozo’s tiled seating wall brings color and a festive look to the park.

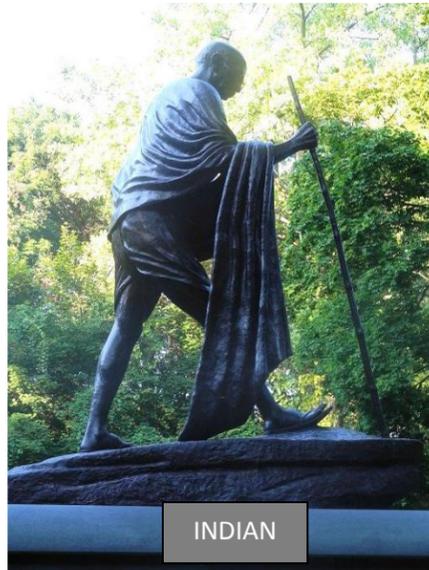
Since the park was established, the arts have become more and more a part of the revitalization of the surrounding Buckeye neighborhood.

The *Art & Soul of Buckeye* project was created by a partnership between the Buckeye Area Development Corporation, Neighborhood Progress, Cleveland Public Art and Parkworks (now LAND Studio), the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, the St. Luke’s Foundation, the Charter One Foundation, the Cleveland Foundation and the City of Cleveland. **Web:** [buckeye video](#)



# cleveland cultural gardens

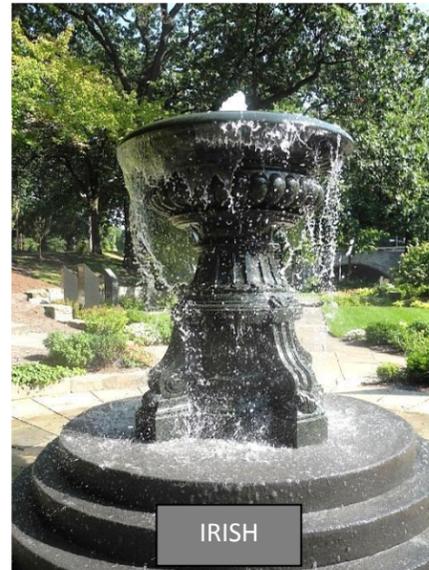
glenville, hough and university circle neighborhoods



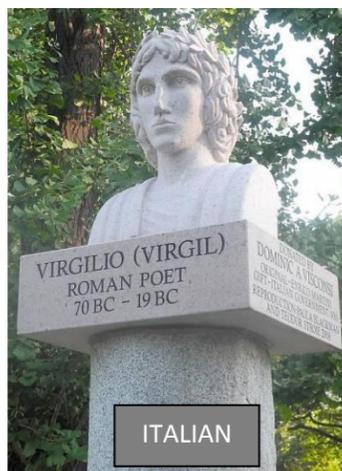
INDIAN



LATVIAN



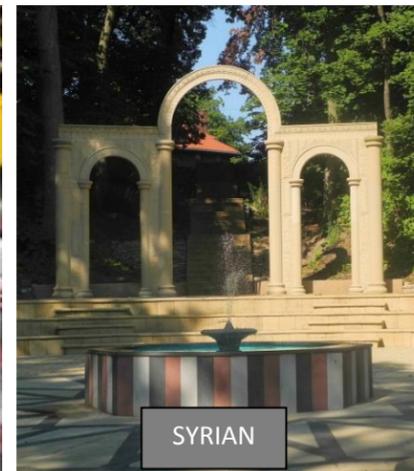
IRISH



ITALIAN



ONE WORLD DAY



SYRIAN



HUNGARIAN



AZERBAIJAN

Unique among Cleveland's "great places" are the Cultural Gardens – not a single great place but a series of about 30 great places arrayed along 2.3 miles of Martin Luther King Boulevard and a portion of East Boulevard, between Glenville and Hough, north of University Circle. The first garden was established in 1916, followed by implementation of a full cultural gardens plan starting in 1926.

The *Cultural Gardens* were established to celebrate the cultural diversity of the Cleveland community and to promote understanding and peace among the region's many nationality groups.

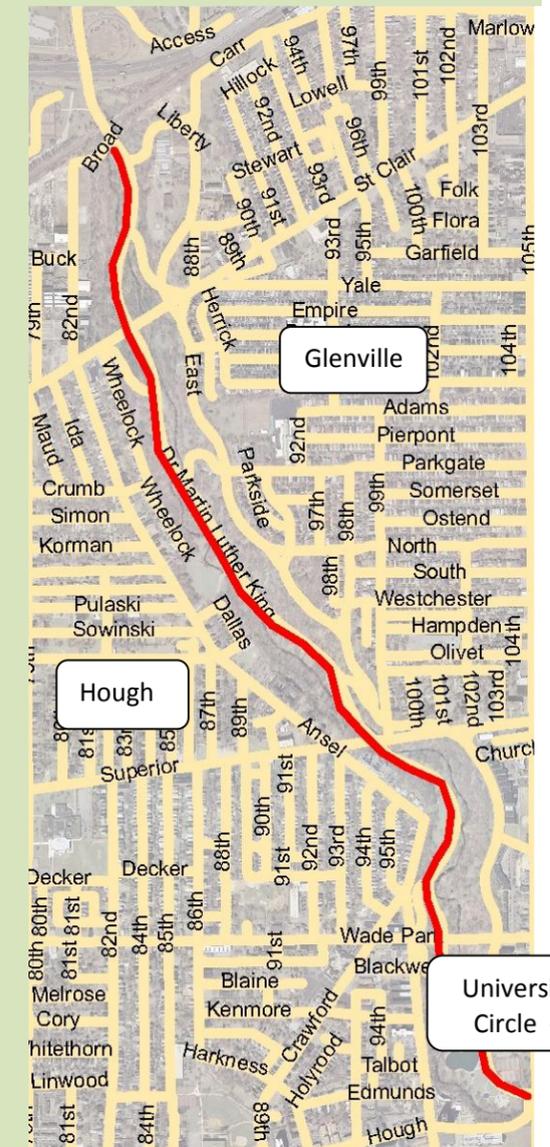
Each of the gardens is marked by a combination of landscaping and monuments related to a particular nation or nationality group -- a kind of outdoor United Nations of Cleveland!

In fact, Guillame Fatio, founder of the League of Nations, visited the gardens early in their history, hoping to use them as a model for a similar installation at the League's future headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

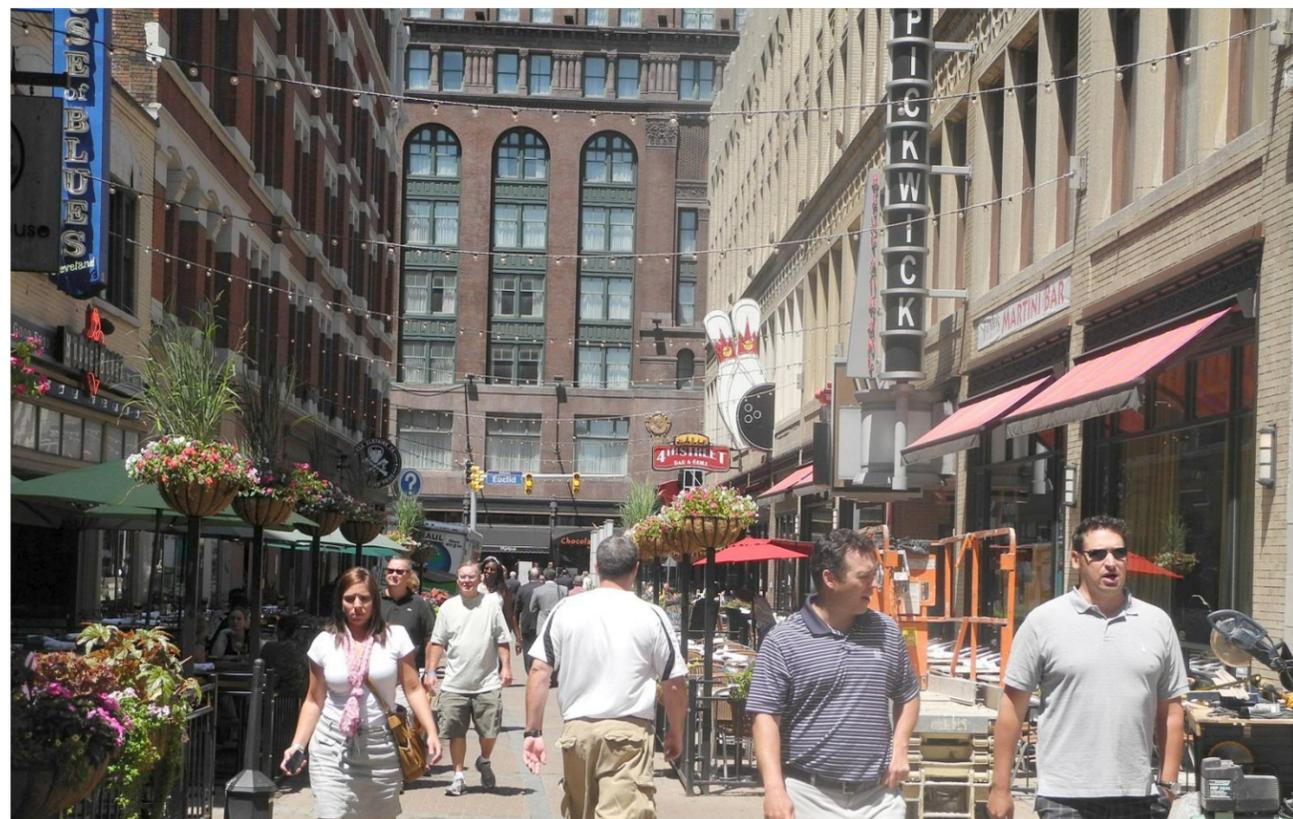
Although most of gardens were built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, recent years have witnessed a surprising resurgence of interest in the *Cultural Gardens*, with the establishment of six new nationality gardens since 2005.

Many of the gardens are the sites for annual festivals and special events, including the annual "One World Day," bringing together nationality groups from across the region.

Web: [Cultural Gardens](http://CulturalGardens)



## east 4<sup>th</sup> street gateway neighborhood



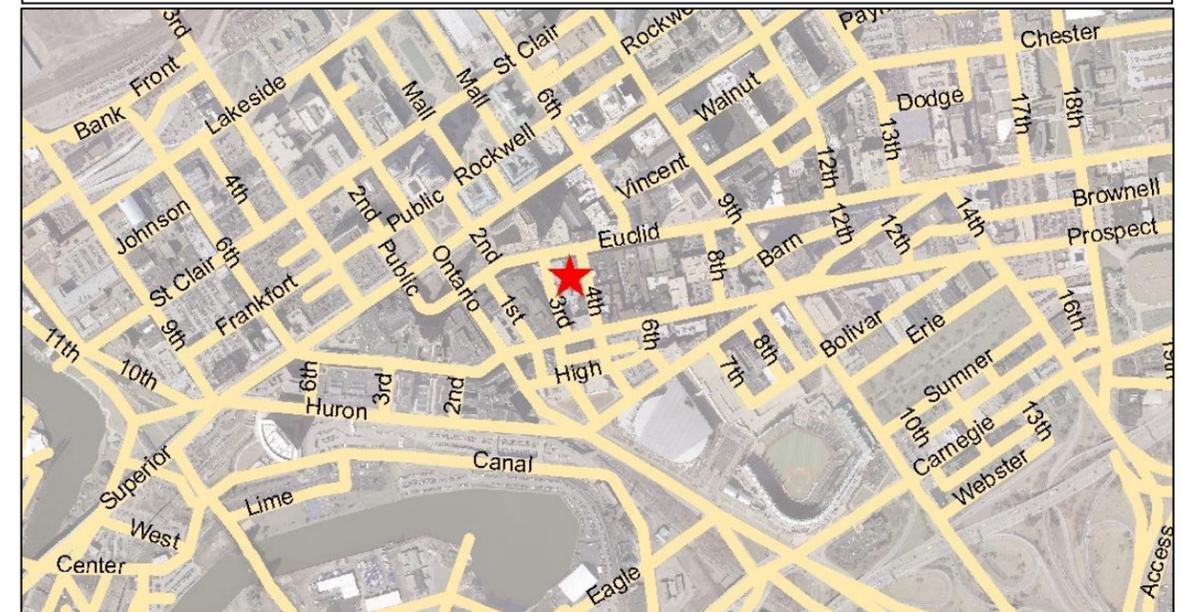
East 4<sup>th</sup> Street between Euclid Avenue and Prospect Avenue in downtown Cleveland has a storied history – from its heyday as a vaudeville center in the 1930's to its time as a rundown second-rate shopping street in the 1970's and 80's to its present re-birth as a diverse mixed-use district, energized by outdoor cafes on a fully pedestrian-oriented urban block.

In the late 1990's young developer Ari Maron saw the potential of East 4<sup>th</sup> Street to be transformed into downtown's "coolest" place for urban living and dining. Ari and his father Rick proceeded to purchase most of the block and began renovating the historic buildings. They were joined by Nick Kostis, who opened the pioneering restaurant and comedy club, Pickwick & Frolic, in 2002.

East 4<sup>th</sup> Street has the "bones" of a great urban street. It is compact – only 450 feet long – and it is intimate – only 42 feet wide and lined by streetside mid-rise building that give the street a comfortable pedestrian scale.

East 4<sup>th</sup> Street is now home to over 200 apartments set above the streetside storefronts, several award-winning restaurants (including Michael Symon's "Lola"), a comedy club, and the House of Blues, a national concert venue. **Web:** [East 4th](#)

★ East 4<sup>th</sup> Street, between Euclid Avenue and Prospect Avenue



# eastman reading garden

civic center district

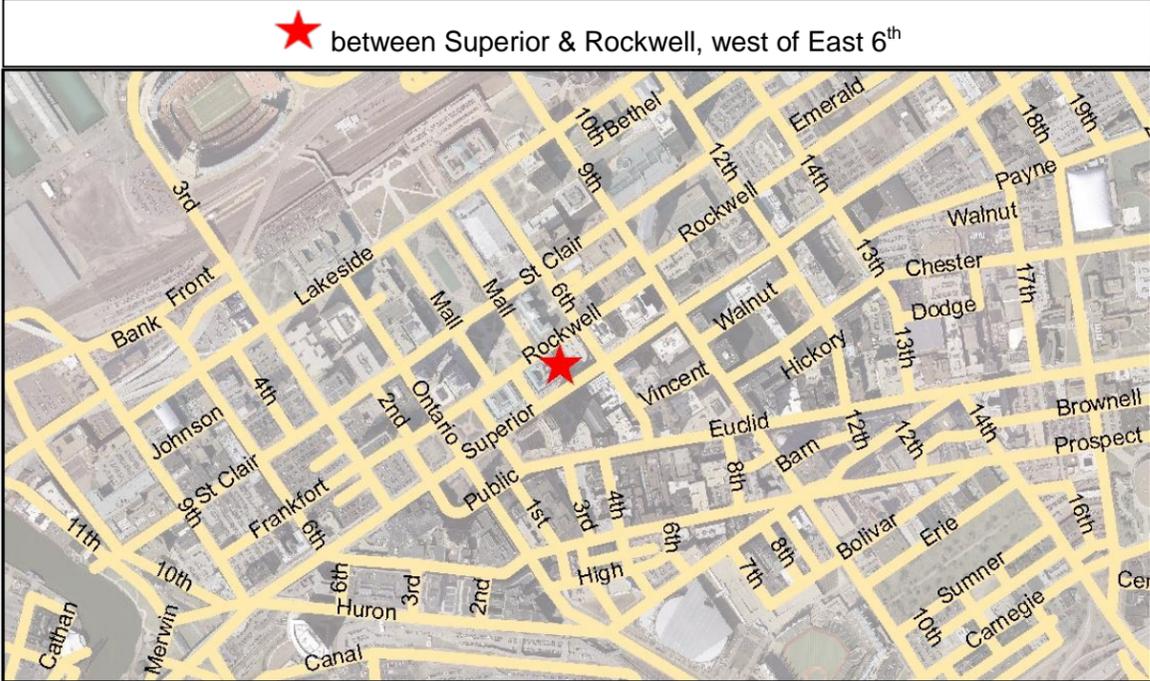


The [Eastman Reading Garden](#), nestled between the two buildings of Cleveland's main library, connecting Superior and Rockwell Avenues, is one of the most beloved public spaces in the city. Since its re-design in 1998, this little gem has been a favorite spot for downtown workers to enjoy lunch, chat, relax and, yes, to read!

The garden is enclosed by a bronze gate, designed by sculptor Tom Otterness, composed of letters and word fragments that piece together to form words and sentences. Otterness also sculpted playful small bronze figures, scattered around the garden, mischievously stealing and rearranging letters from the gate.

Maya Lin (Vietnam Memorial artist) created an L-shaped fountain and reflecting pool, titled "Reading a Garden," which can be read correctly only if seen as a reflection in the water. Tan Lin wrote words and poems around the garden, encouraging visitors to create their own poems and meanings.

The *Eastman Reading Garden's* landscaping was designed by the Olin Partnership, based in Philadelphia. Funding for the garden and its artwork came from the Cleveland Foundation and the Ohio Arts Council, assisted by Cleveland Public Art (now LAND studio).





# gordon square

detroit shoreway neighborhood



Gordon Square radiates from the intersection of West 65<sup>th</sup> & Detroit in the heart of the Detroit Shoreway neighborhood. In recent years, *Gordon Square* has become one of the most vibrant places in northeast Ohio, energized by theaters, restaurants, art galleries, shops and unique urban living opportunities.

West 65<sup>th</sup> & Detroit is one of the last remaining commercial district intersections in Cleveland that retains its historic building fabric on all four corners. On the northwest corner, the district is anchored by the Gordon Square Arcade, built in 1921. On the southeast corner is the *Gypsy Beans* coffee shop, which became a neighborhood gathering place as soon as it opened in 2007.

The public face of *Gordon Square* was transformed in 2009 with completion of a \$3 million streetscape project that buried unsightly utility wires and added artist-designed paving, benches, signs, lighting and bus shelters.

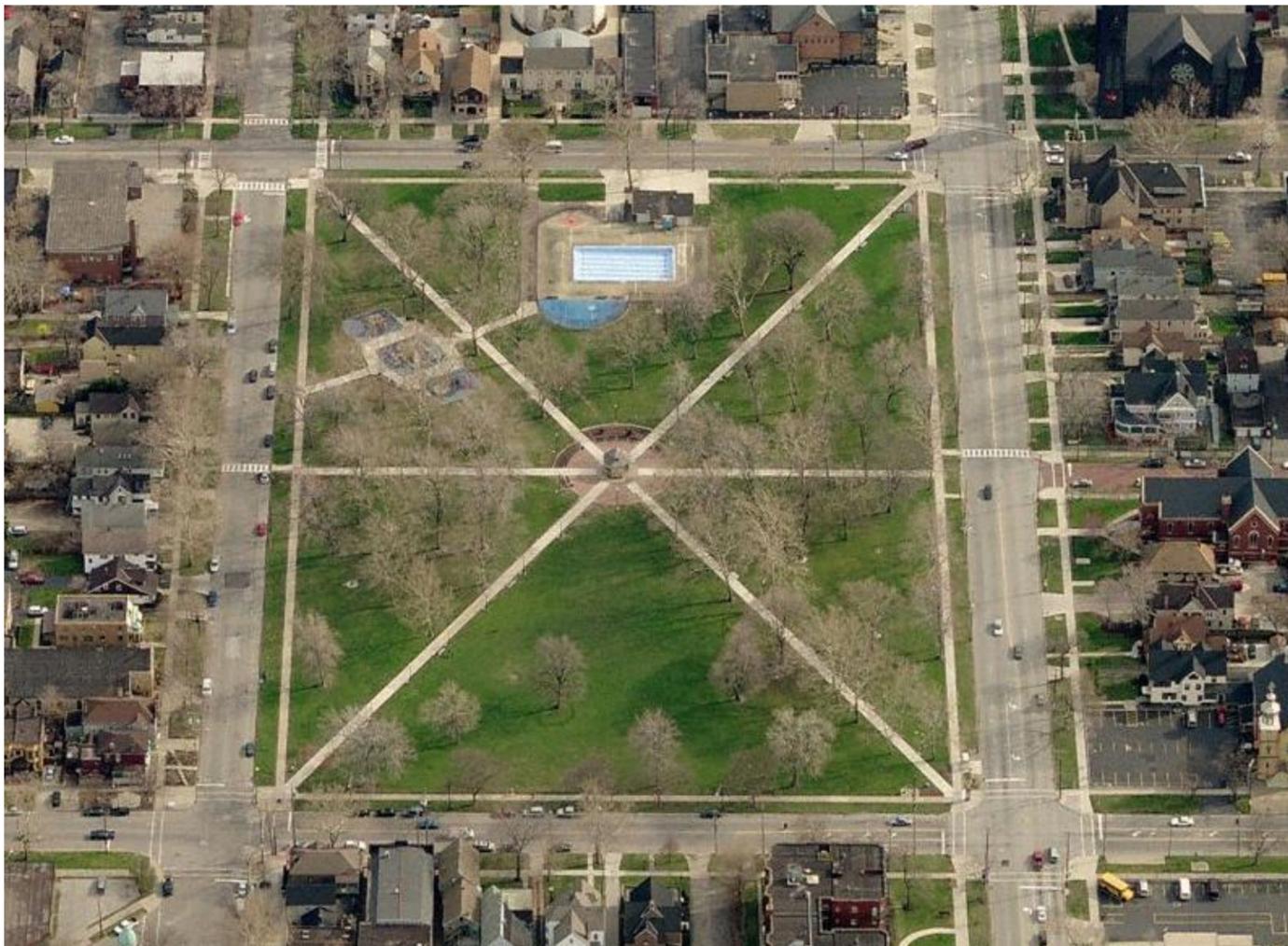
Restoration of the historic *Capitol Theater*, in the Gordon Square Arcade, and its re-establishment as a first-run urban movie theater was completed in 2009. *Cleveland Public Theater* led the District's re-birth with its establishment on Detroit Avenue in 1985. Soon these theaters will be joined by a new home for the *Near West Theater*, a community-based theater company. Web: [GSAD](http://GSAD)

★ Detroit Avenue and West 65<sup>th</sup> Street



# lincoln park

tremont neighborhood



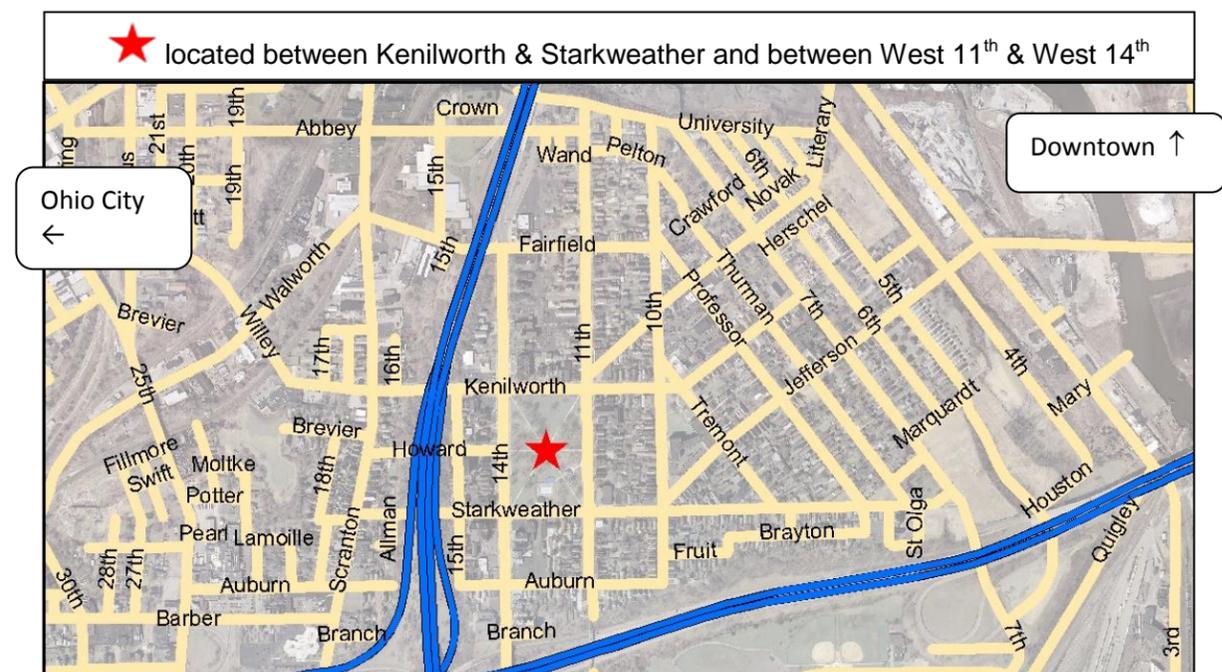
*Lincoln Park* is the heart of the Tremont neighborhood. It is the classic but relatively rare “village green” – a perfectly located place that has the power to draw a community together.

The park is activated by its surroundings, being bordered on all four sides by an eclectic mix of urban architecture and uses, including housing, restaurants and churches.

*Lincoln Park* opened as a City park on July 4, 1880 but had been used as a community park since the 1850’s when it was known as Pelton Park, after landowner Mrs. Thirsa Pelton, who purchased the land with the intention of opening a girls’ school. The park was renamed to commemorate President Lincoln’s brief encampment there with Union troops during the Civil War.

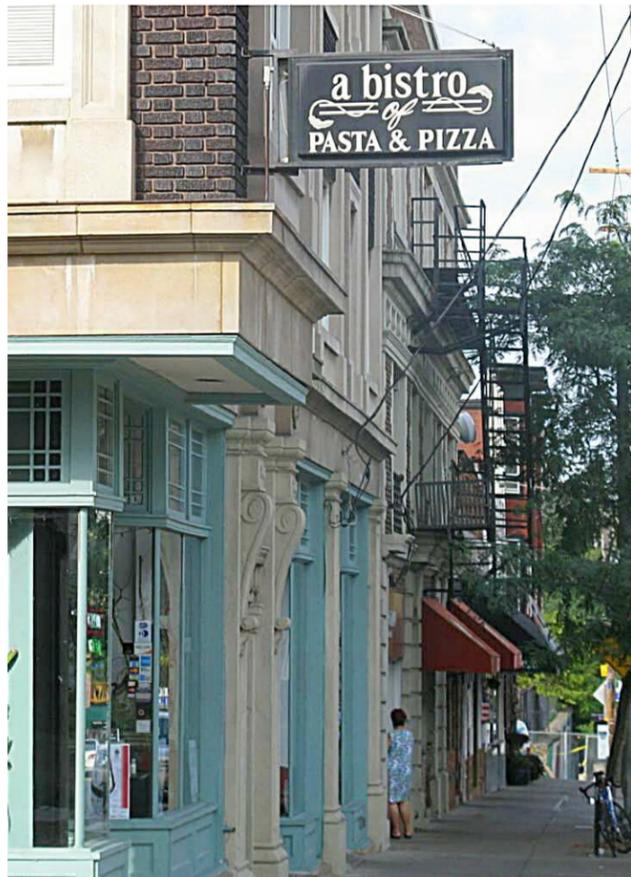
Today *Lincoln Park* is home to a neighborhood swimming pool, diagonal walking paths, benches, and a picturesque gazebo that was added during a 1989 renovation of the park.

*Lincoln Park* comes to life during the warm-weather months with a weekly farmers’ market, art fairs, and free concerts and performances.



# murray hill & mayfield

little italy neighborhood

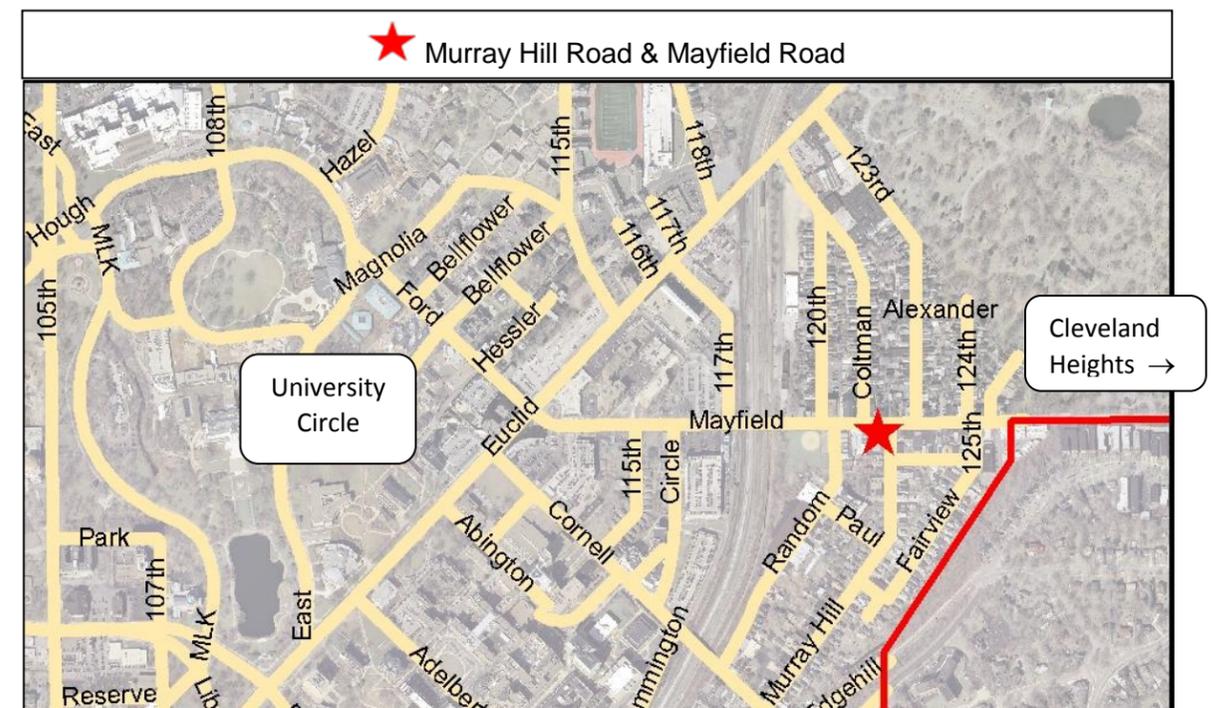


Within one block of the intersection of *Murray Hill and Mayfield Road* in Cleveland's historic Little Italy neighborhood are 12 restaurants, several art galleries and shops, and the Holy Rosary church and school – all in streetside locations in this very walkable neighborhood.

On any warm evening, the sidewalks of Little Italy are teeming with people, sitting in outdoor cafes and strolling from storefront to storefront. Some walk from the immediate neighborhood, others come from the adjacent University Circle district, while still others come from across the region to enjoy the restaurants and art galleries in this classic European-style urban setting.

In the late 1880's the neighborhood became a destination for Italian immigrants, many of whom worked as stone masons crafting monuments for the adjacent Lakeview Cemetery. As the population grew, the first Holy Rosary congregation was established in 1891 and the current church was built in 1902.

In recent years, Little Italy's historic building stock has been refreshed with the development of upscale townhouses and flats and with conversion of the Murray Hill School to housing and artist studios and galleries. **Web:** [Little Italy](#)



# perk plaza at chester commons

avenue district neighborhood



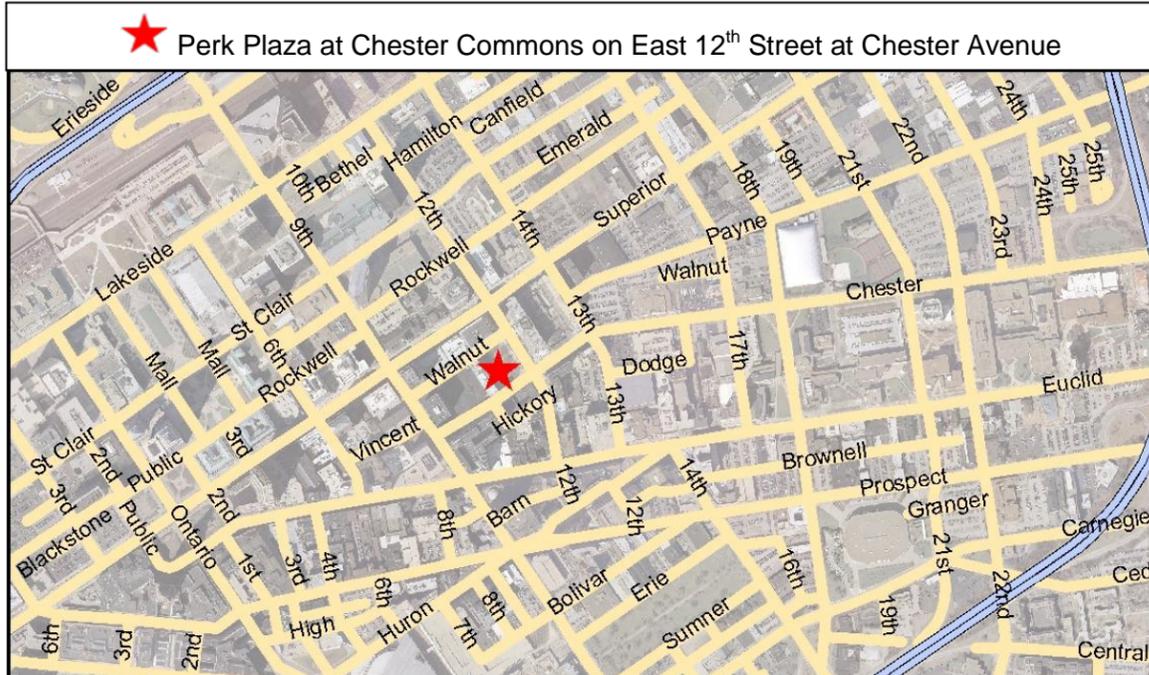
Ralph J. Perk Plaza at Chester Commons began its second life on November 21, 2011, with its opening as a fully re-designed City park in the heart of downtown's Avenue District, at East 12<sup>th</sup> & Chester.

The original *Chester Commons* park opened to great fanfare in 1972 and was later noted as "one of the best genuinely urban pedestrian spaces in Cleveland." With its hilly landscape, brightly painted concrete walls and its "waterwall," *Chester Commons* was well used and was the site of popular summertime "Parties in the Park" each week. Over time, however, the park fell into disrepair and dis-use and became more of a neighborhood nuisance than an amenity.

The new two-acre park, designed by New York-based landscape architecture firm Thomas Balsley Associates and local firm McKnight and Associates, is more transparent in its design than was its predecessor and is enhanced by a series of light wands, a bold red awning, oversized concrete lounge chairs, a concert stage and a grassy hillside (retaining one element of the original park).

LAND Studio (formerly ParkWorks) shepherded the project through its many years of fundraising and design, with the help of the City Council and the Mayor. Today, the park is a vibrant place that pulls together the thousands of residents and office workers who call the Avenue District home.

**CHESTER COMMONS: 1970's**



# shaker square

buckeye-shaker neighborhood

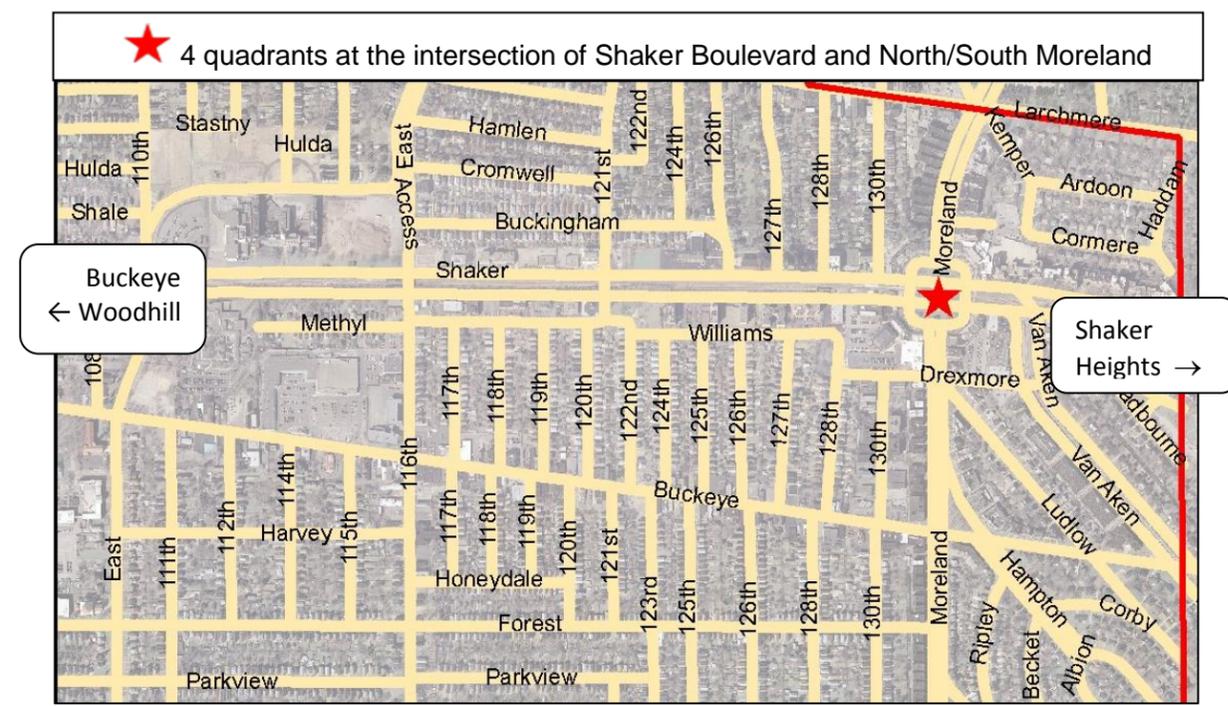


*Shaker Square* was “mixed-use,” “transit-oriented” and “walkable” several decades before these terms became fashionable among city planners! From its beginning in 1929, *Shaker Square* was one of the most comprehensively and creatively planned urban developments in American history, linked by a rapid transit line to downtown Cleveland’s Terminal Tower – all developed by Cleveland’s visionary Van Sweringen brothers.

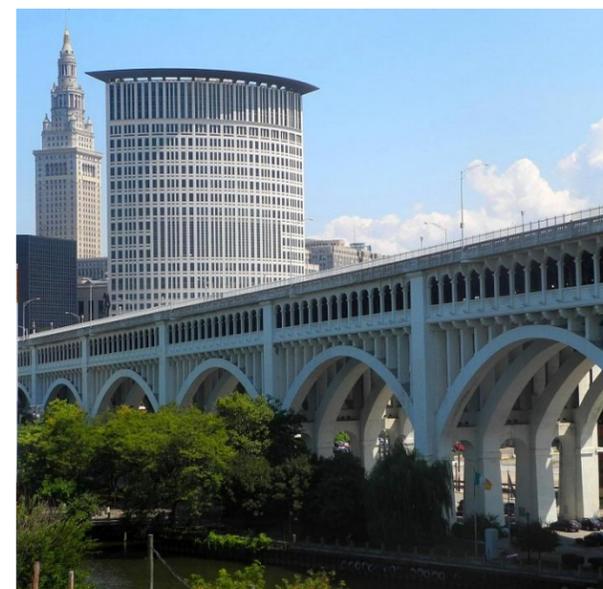
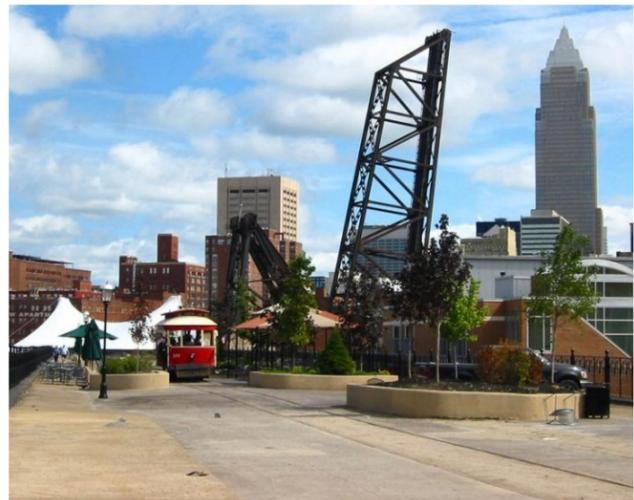
The four quadrants of *Shaker Square* were designed in an octagonal shape, with two-story Georgian-style buildings surrounding a central green area and the transit line, linked to a collection of stately apartment buildings on Shaker Boulevard and North and South Moreland Boulevards.

Today *Shaker Square* continues to thrive as one of the region’s most vibrant and successful mixed-use developments, demonstrating that “quality” never goes out of style!

Restaurants with outdoor seating line all four quadrants of the Square, drawing local residents together in a kind of communal dining room. During warm-weather months, a weekly farmer’s market and free concerts, along with art fairs and other special events, make *Shaker Square* a popular destination for residents throughout greater Cleveland. **Web:** [Shaker Square](#) [Video](#)



# superior viaduct flats district

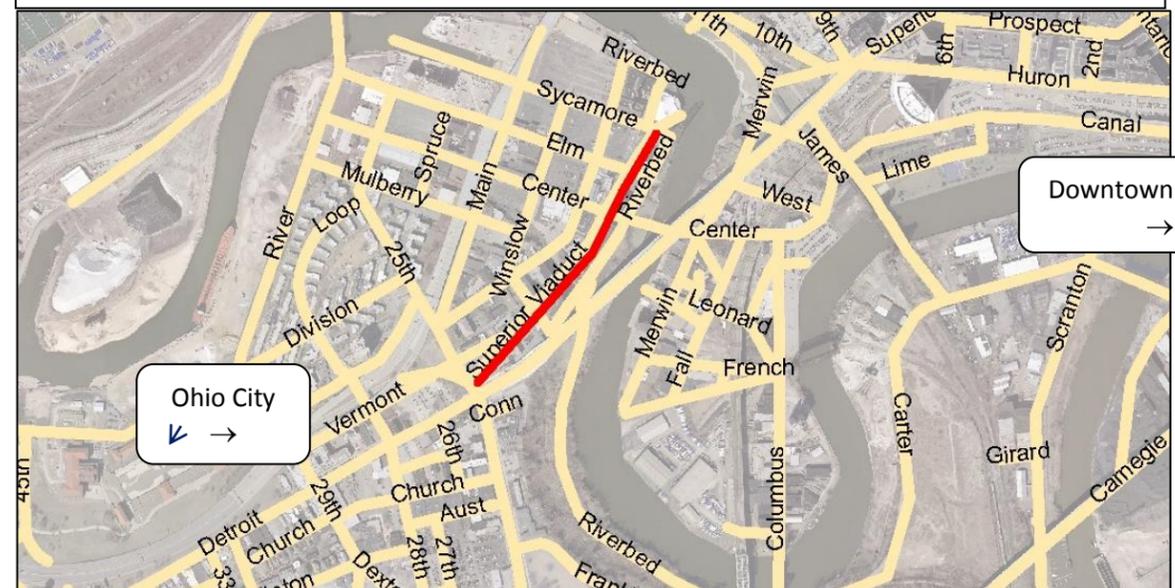


With great fanfare in 1878, the *Superior Viaduct* was completed as the first high-level bridge across the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland. Commuters no longer had to travel up and down steeply sloping roads to cross the river. The excitement was relatively short-lived as the bridge was closed in 1920 after construction of the even higher Detroit-Superior Bridge in 1917. In 1923 the pivoting center section of the viaduct, and then the eastern segment, were removed – leaving behind only the viaduct’s west end and its seven distinctive stone arches.

Deterioration of the surface and railings of the remaining viaduct eventually caused the City to close off most of the bridge, leaving it as an abandoned but still grand architectural relic. Then in 1999 a local developer approached the City with a proposal to build apartments on land next to the bridge, with pedestrian connections to the bridge’s deck. The City responded by leasing the bridge to the developer, who proceeded to renovate the bridge, replace the railings, build three apartment buildings and renovate one building for offices and a restaurant with an outdoor patio on the bridge deck.

Today the *Superior Viaduct*, with spectacular views of downtown and the river, is open to the public and available for special events.

West side of the Cuyahoga River, north of Detroit Avenue



# wade oval & art museum lagoon

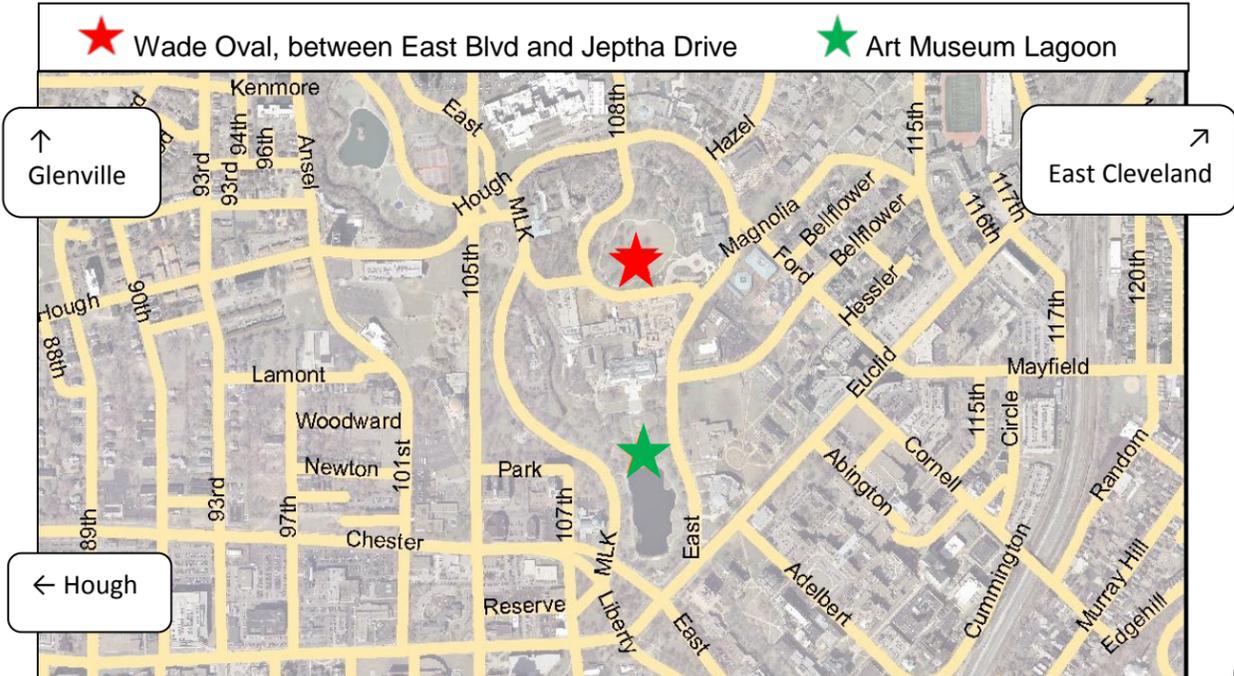
university circle neighborhood



In one sense, *Wade Oval* is little more than a field of grass. What makes Wade Oval one of Cleveland's great places is its context and its programming. The context is unparalleled. Around the edges of *Wade Oval* are a collection of Cleveland's greatest institutions – the Museum of Art, the Natural History Museum and the Botanical Gardens. Within one block are Severance Hall, home of the Cleveland Orchestra, the Western Reserve Historical Society, and the buildings of Case Western Reserve University.

The programming of *Wade Oval*, by University Circle Inc. and its partners, is extraordinary. Every Wednesday evening during the warm weather months, thousands of Clevelanders converge on the Oval to hear music, buy food from kiosks, picnic, stroll and sometimes watch a movie under the stars. Once a year, *Wade Oval* becomes the site of one of America's most creative parades, known as "Parade the Circle," which draws 2,000 participants dressed in fanciful hand-made costumes and 50,000 spectators.

Just to the south of Wade Oval is the *Art Museum Lagoon*, one of the most picturesque spots in greater Cleveland. With the lagoon in the foreground and the Art Museum in the background, the beauty of this spot makes it the region's most popular location for outdoor weddings and wedding party photos. **Web:** [WOW Video](#)



# west side market

ohio city neighborhood



The *West Side Market*, with its 137-foot tall clock tower, is the iconic symbol of the Ohio City neighborhood. Cleveland's oldest and largest farmers' market, the *West Side Market* dates back to 1840, when an open market was established on the site.

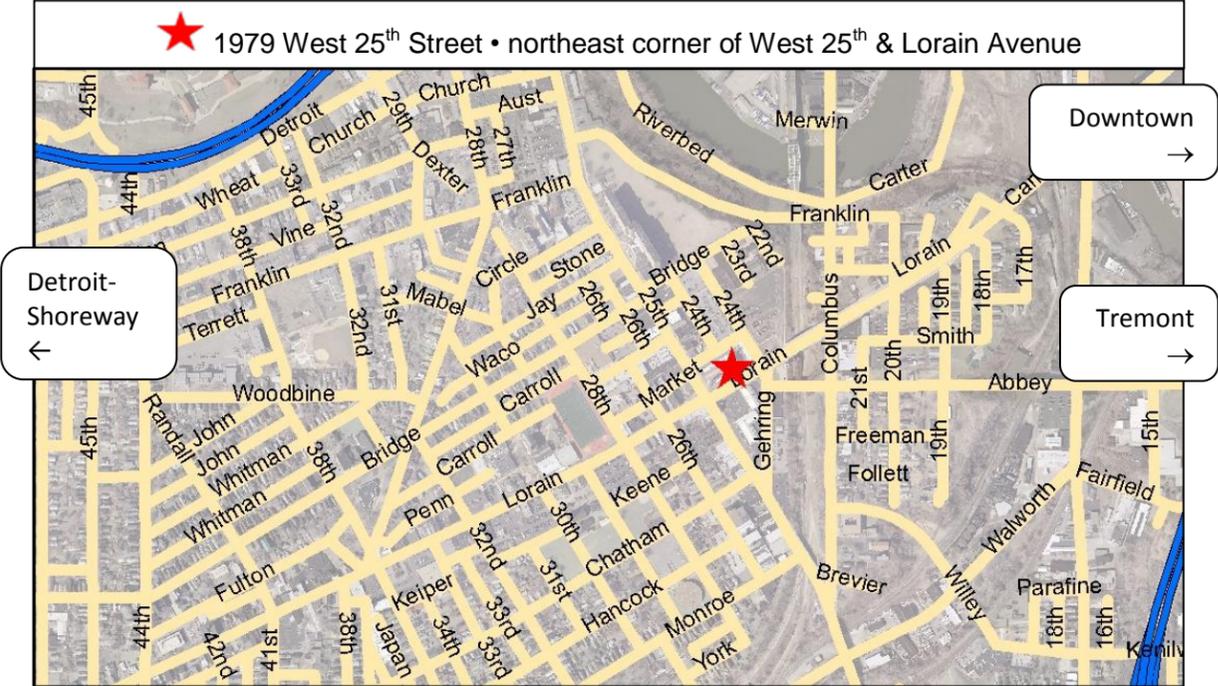
The current building opened in 1912 and was designed by Cleveland architects Benjamin Hubbell and W. Dominick Benes, who also designed the Cleveland Museum of Art and many other local landmarks.

Over a million people visit the *West Side Market* each year, purchasing a variety of fresh and prepared foods from a hundred local vendors, representing many nationalities and ethnic groups.

The *West Side Market* is a "great place" not only because of its iconic architecture but because of the way it draws residents of Ohio City and greater Cleveland together in a unique shopping experience that harkens back to the earliest days of Cleveland's history.

Within the Ohio City neighborhood, the *West Side Market* anchors the West 25<sup>th</sup> Street district, one of Cleveland's most vibrant destinations for dining, shopping and urban living.

**Web:** [West Side Market](#)





# market avenue

ohio city neighborhood



Directly across West 25<sup>th</sup> Street from the historic West Side Market is *Market Avenue*, an intimate brick-paved street lined with outdoor cafes. It is one of Cleveland's truly great streets and great places.

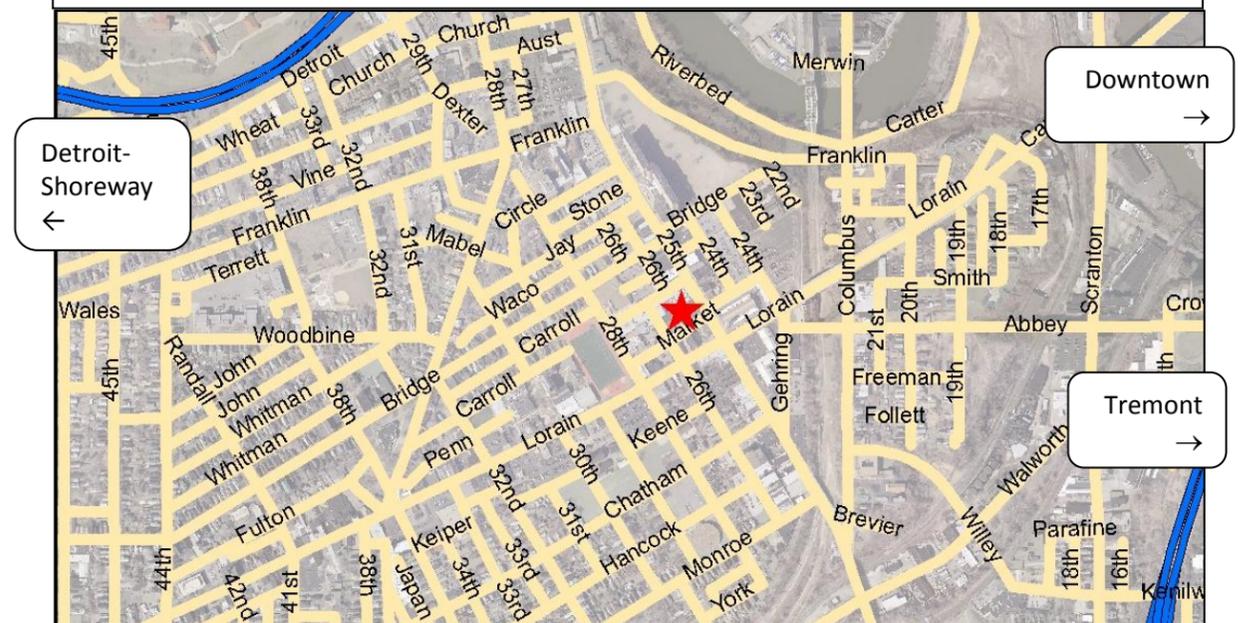
*Market Avenue* is anchored by the Great Lakes Brewing Company and restaurant, established in 1988 by brothers Pat and Dan Conway as the first brew pub and micro-brewery in Ohio. It occupies the site of a bar that was frequented in the late 1930's by Cleveland's famed safety director and "untouchable" Elliot Ness.

At the West 25<sup>th</sup> Street entrance to *Market Avenue* is the newly renovated *Market Square Park*, with its public picnic tables, the "By Hand" mural, and space for concerts and other special events.

*Market Avenue* and *Market Square Park* succeed in bringing the activity from inside the West Side Market out into the street, energizing the entire West 25<sup>th</sup> Street retail and mixed-use district.

The synergy between the West Side Market, the restaurants of *Market Avenue* and West 25<sup>th</sup> Street, and a nearby urban farm is making Ohio City a regional destination for fresh food and unique local dining – helping to secure Ohio City's reputation as Cleveland's "artisan neighborhood."

★ Market Avenue, west of West 25<sup>th</sup> Street and north of Lorain Avenue



Not every great place is a big place. Not every great place draws people from throughout an entire community. Some great places are small spaces that impact just one or two blocks of a neighborhood. These “great little places” are, however, no less significant in the positive impact they can have in adding character and identify to the surrounding area and improving the quality of life for residents. The following pages highlight examples of these “great little places” in Cleveland – places that can be replicated in unique ways in other locations.



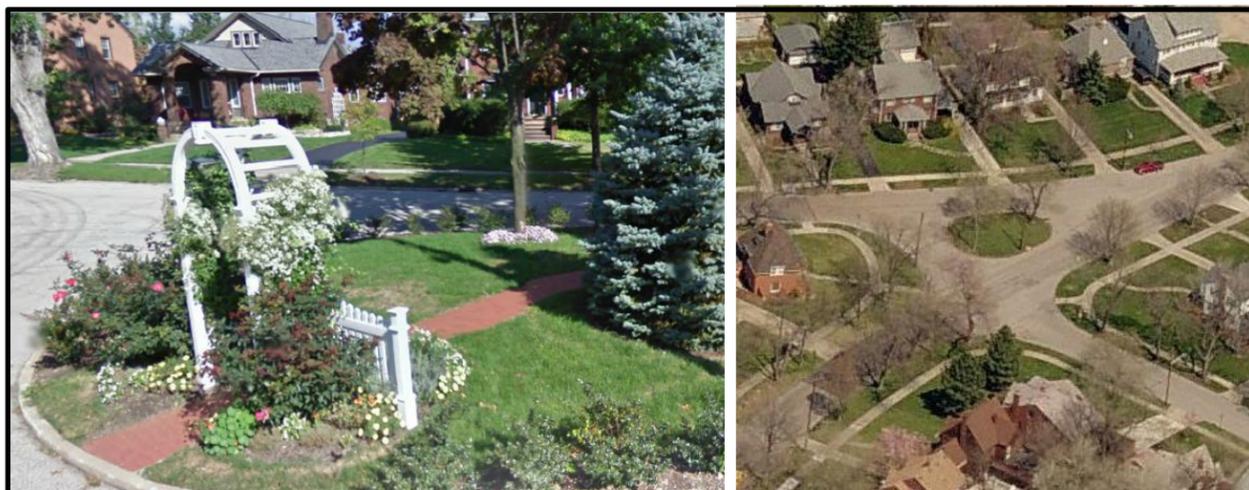
**Mortimer Avenue Corner Park.** Until November of 2010, the gateway to the Mortimer Avenue community at West 117<sup>th</sup> Street was an unkempt vacant lot occupied by an unsightly billboard. Today that corner lot is the site of an L-shaped walking path marked by entryway trellises, benches, shrubs and trees.

The project, which was facilitated by funding and assistance by the City of Cleveland and Neighborhood Progress, was accomplished through a true community partnership, with participation by the Westown Development Corporation, the Mortimer Block Club, the Kensington Block Club, and the Brighton Block Club. The site is owned by the City as part of its Land Bank.



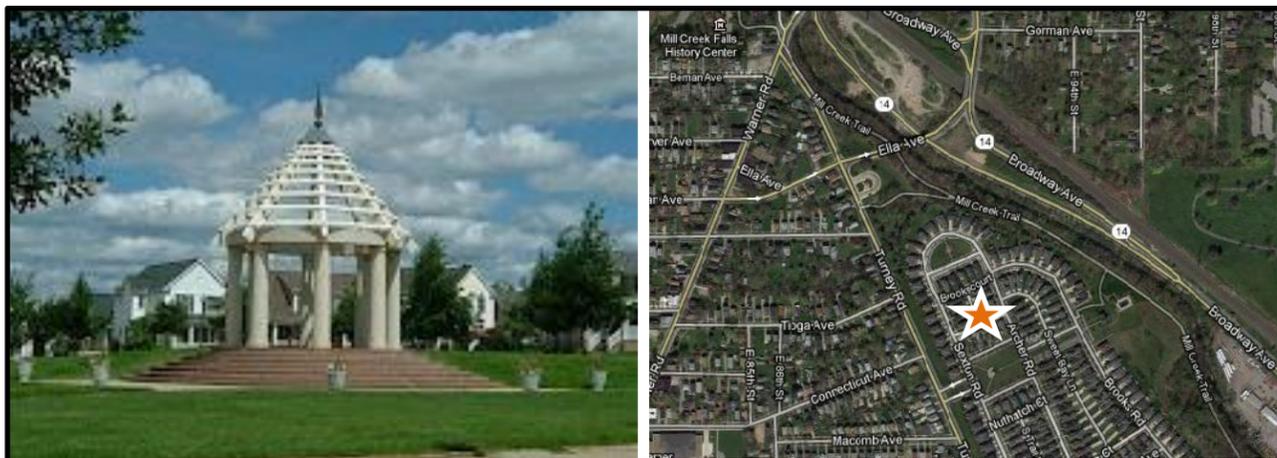
**Blaine Avenue Community Garden.** Just south of Wade Park Avenue and a few blocks east of East 86<sup>th</sup> Street sat one of the many vacant and overgrown lots that challenge life in sections of Cleveland’s Hough neighborhood. Today that vacant lot is not just a community garden but it is the site of classes that educate residents in the art of growing fresh, healthful food, and it is the site of a “cob oven” built by local residents and used to cook communal meals.

The group that programs the Blaine garden describes its mission as follows: *“Our mission is to help people in underserved communities learn to grow fresh local food and build healthy long lasting relationships with each other so they can use those skills and relationships to create opportunities in their own neighborhoods.”*



**South Hills Island.** When two streets come together at an acute angle, they create the opportunity to establish a special little place that can add character to a neighborhood and become a unique amenity. Typically, these opportunities are overlooked, and the “leftover” spaces are either striped off or left as excess roadway asphalt.

In the South Hills section of the Old Brooklyn neighborhood, the triangular space formed by the intersection of South Hills Drive and Cypress Avenue has been transformed into a little garden spot, with a red brick pathway, colorful landscaping, an entranceway trellis and a bench. It shows how much can be accomplished in a very small space! And there are hundreds of similar opportunities in neighborhoods across the city.



**Mill Creek Gazebo.** When homebuilder Nathan Zaremba took on the challenge of building the largest single-family development in the City of Cleveland's modern history, he committed himself to creating a traditional city neighborhood where residents would feel connected to one another as part of a true community. With the help of his architect, Paul Volpe from City Architecture and the community group's project manager Bobbi Reichtell, he succeeded in doing just that in the course of completing the 222-unit Mill Creek community in the 1990s, adjacent to Mill Creek, on the site of a former state mental hospital.

Today, the Mill Creek gazebo is the centerpiece of the neighborhood – visually and as a gathering place – for residents of this Warner-Turney community.



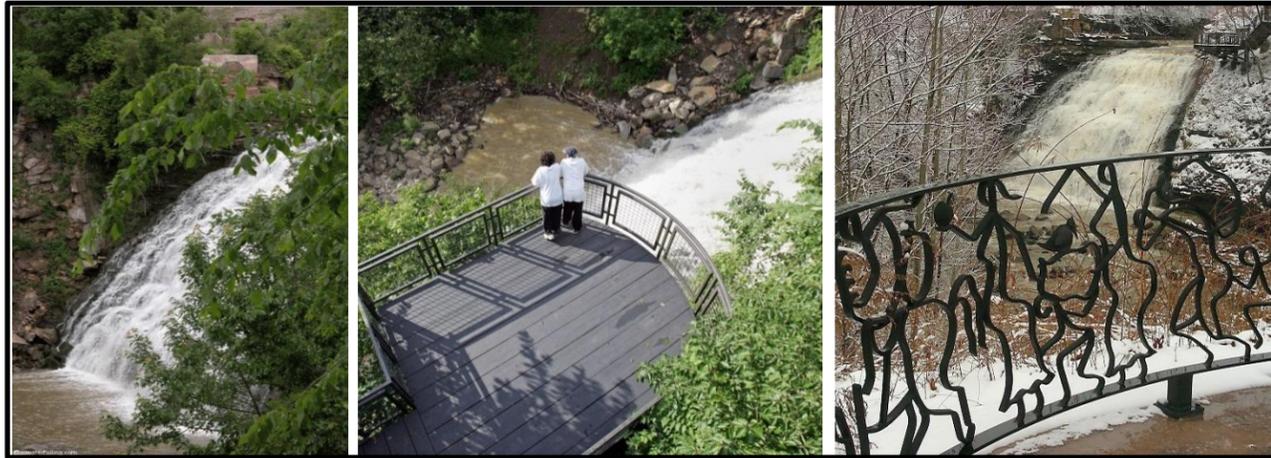
**West Park Police and Firefighters Memorial.** West Park and the Kamm's neighborhood have been home to large numbers of Cleveland's safety forces for decades. In tribute to those officers who gave their lives in the line of duty, a series of ironwork sculptures were installed, starting in 2002, along 1/3 mile of Rocky River (Riverside) Drive, overlooking the Metroparks and the Rocky River. The sculptures were designed by local artist Brinsley Tyrrell.

The centerpiece of the memorial is a scenic overlook featuring a granite and bronze monument designed by local sculptor Paula Blackman. The memorial is the focal point of an annual fundraising drive and events to honor police officers and firefighters, particularly from West Park and the Kamm's neighborhood.



**West Clinton Labyrinth Garden.** A vacant lot at the northeast corner of West Clinton Avenue and West 65<sup>th</sup> Street in the Detroit Shoreway neighborhood provided a perfect opportunity for members of the West Clinton Block Club to create a work of landscape art for the enjoyment of local residents. Installed in 2004, the West Clinton Labyrinth Garden was designed by local artist Melissa Daubert, with curving paths intended to reflect the currents of Lake Erie.

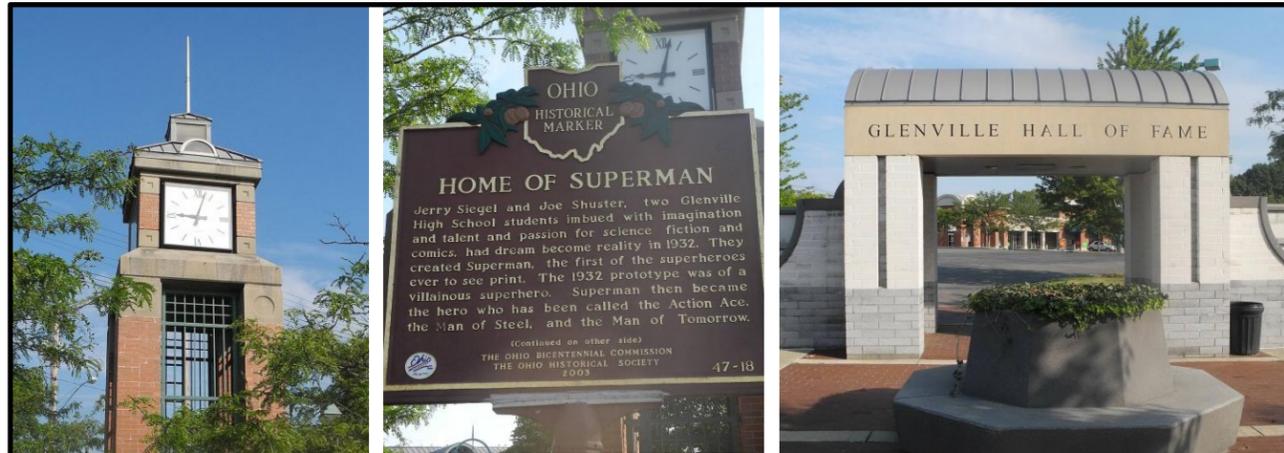
It is place of respite in the midst of a busy urban neighborhood – a place for quiet contemplation and meditation, including local yoga classes. The space is owned by the Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization and is maintained by local residents.



**Mill Creek Waterfall Overlook.** Tucked away in Cleveland's Slavic Village/ Warner-Turney neighborhood is the tallest waterfall in Cuyahoga County. The 48-foot high Mill Creek Waterfall was almost completely hidden from public view until the Slavic Village Development Corporation and local residents worked with the Cleveland Metroparks to create an overlook in 2004.

Beginning in 1799, the earliest settlers in Cleveland used the falls to power grain and lumber mills. In 1905 the falls were moved 300 feet to accommodate construction of a freight rail line, which still runs along the top of the falls. Today, this still little-known scenic gem has become a key asset in the development of new housing and revitalization of the surrounding neighborhood.

**Web:** [falls video](#) [falls winter video](#) [falls history](#)



**Glenville Clock Tower & Wall of Fame.** The intersection of East 105<sup>th</sup> & St. Clair lies at the heart of the north Glenville neighborhood. In 1999 the northeast corner of that intersection was enhanced with an ornamental clock tower, seating and landscaping. A Glenville Hall of Fame was added just to the east on St. Clair Avenue, celebrating the lives of famous Glenville residents – including Olympic star Jesse Owens, Mayor Michael White, Superman creators Jerry Seigel and Joe Shuster, Senator Howard Metzenbaum and many others.

With the anticipated renovation and re-use of the adjacent East Side Market, the still under-utilized spaces at the intersection of East 105<sup>th</sup> & St. Clair have the potential to become a more vital and “connected” place, helping to energize revitalization throughout the Glenville neighborhood.

The following pages highlight several places in Cleveland that have the potential to be “great places” because of their strategic locations or iconic design. Some of these are, in certain respects, already “great places” but have the potential to be significantly greater with enhanced physical improvements or programming. The purpose of this discussion is to stimulate interest in creating and strengthening great places that will make Cleveland and its neighborhoods more desirable communities in which to live, work, shop and visit.



**Whiskey Island Coast Guard Station.** The former Coast Guard station on Whiskey Island occupies what may be the most significant and scenic spot on Cleveland’s lakefront – where the Cuyahoga River meets Lake Erie. The building, designed by Cleveland City Hall architect J. Milton Dyer, served as a Coast Guard Station from 1940-1976 and was a restaurant for two years in the 1990’s. In 2003, the building, in very poor condition, was donated to the City.

Since taking ownership, the City has cleaned up the site and replaced the roof over the main building. In recent years, the site has hosted the Burning River Festival. Plans call for rehabilitating the property for public recreation, special events, boating, and possibly environmental research and education. [\[report\]](#)



**Canal Basin Park.** In 1825 work began to build the Ohio & Erie Canal, connecting Ohio and Lake Erie to markets in the eastern United States. Today, the towpath that was built along that canal has become a unique bicycling and walking trail that will soon stretch 110 miles, from Cleveland, through Akron, to New Philadelphia. The historic northern terminus of the towpath is an area along the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland’s Flats district, about a mile south of Lake Erie. It is the site of the planned *Canal Basin Park*.

[Canal Basin Park](#) is planned as a 21-acre park and historical site that will be the northern terminus of the Towpath Trail and a hub of activity for trail users. With the final six miles of the trail under construction, opening of the park is slated for 2016. Plans for a trail extension to Whiskey Island and Lake Erie are underway.



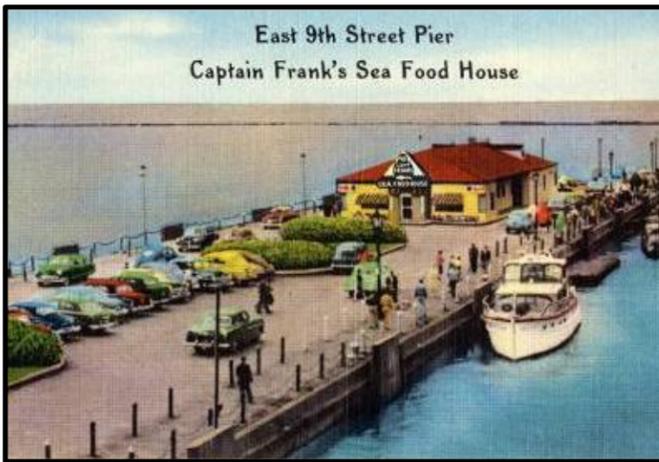
**Public Square.** Given its central location in downtown Cleveland and its history as the city’s most significant public space, it is difficult to think of [Public Square](#) as anything other than a “great place.” However, for decades Clevelanders have known that *Public Square* fails to live up to its potential as a vibrant public space, mainly because of the way it is bisected by two wide streets that make the four quadrants of *Public Square* a place that is intimidating to pedestrians.

Today plans are underway to close Ontario Street to consolidate two of the Square’s four quadrants and to convert Superior Avenue into a more pedestrian-friendly street that could be closed on weekends and for special events. These changes, combined with a full landscape re-design of the Square, give hope that *Public Square* will finally take its rightful place as Cleveland’s “greatest place.”



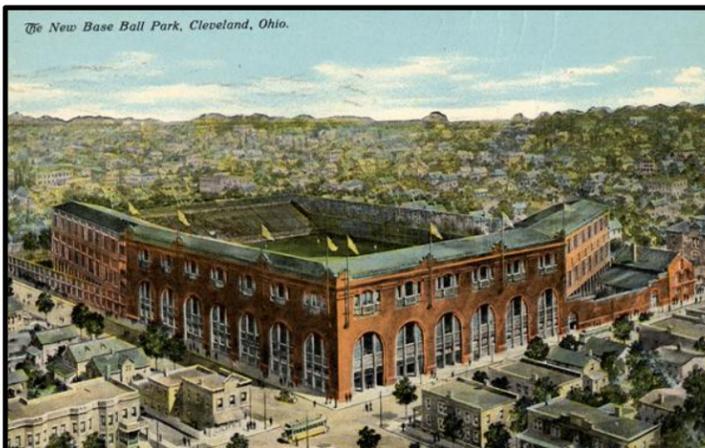
**Burnham Malls.** At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the City Beautiful movement was transforming American cities by creating monumental civic developments epitomized by order, harmony and grandeur. Cleveland is the site of one of the most fully realized plans of the City Beautiful movement – the 1903 “Group Plan,” led by architect and planner Daniel Burnham. Grouped around three landscaped malls are the city hall, county courthouse, federal courthouse, school district headquarters, main library, and Federal Reserve. The Malls themselves, although grand, have suffered from a lack of activity and vibrancy.

In 2010, with the impending reconstruction of the Malls for an updated Convention Center (under the northerly two malls) and a “medical mart,” Mayor Frank Jackson appointed a new [Group Plan Commission](#), under the leadership of Tony Coyne, to re-create the Malls as vibrant, people-friendly places.



**East 9<sup>th</sup> Pier.** The central spine of Cleveland’s downtown lakefront at North Coast Harbor is the *East 9<sup>th</sup> Street Pier*. In its hundred-year [history](#), the *East 9<sup>th</sup> Street Pier* has gone from a hub for Great Lakes passenger cruise ships in the early 1900’s to a center for freight shipping in the mid-1900’s to its current role as a scenic pedestrian plaza at the core of downtown Cleveland’s lakefront tourist destinations, including the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, the Great Lakes Science Center and Browns’ Stadium.

However, the lack of restaurants and small-scale destinations have left the pier devoid of activity and vibrancy other than during special events. In 2012 the City adopted an updated [Downtown Lakefront Plan](#) that shows a re-energized *East 9<sup>th</sup> Street Pier* that will be worthy of its location in one of Cleveland’s great places.



**League Park.** Hidden from the view of most Clevelanders are the remnants of one of the oldest major league ballparks in America – [League Park](#), built in 1891 as home to the National League’s Cleveland Spiders at East 66<sup>th</sup> & Lexington, and rebuilt in 1910. *League Park* was the exclusive home to the Cleveland Indians from 1901-1933 and was used for a portion of each season until 1946.

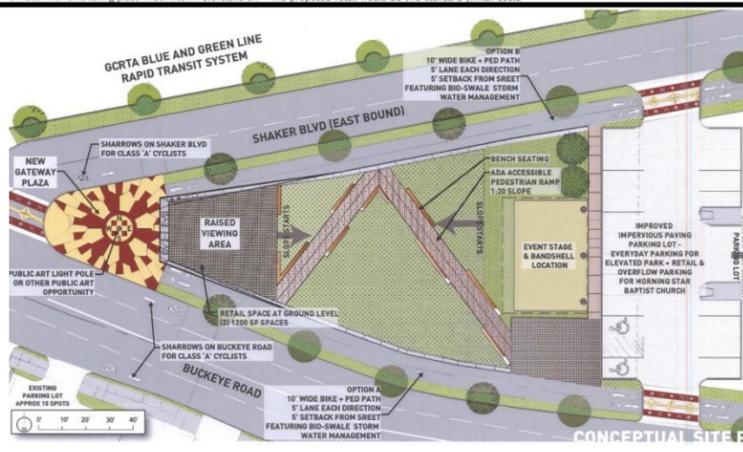
After Cy Young pitched on opening day in 1891, League Park made history with the first (and only) unassisted triple play in a World Series, Babe Ruth’s 500<sup>th</sup> home run, and the Cleveland Buckeyes win of the Negro League Championship.

Today *League Park* is on the verge of a \$5 million restoration, including a small museum – making it a centerpiece for revitalization in the Hough neighborhood.



**Variety Theater Plaza.** In Cleveland's Westtown neighborhood, the community development corporation and community leaders are working to renovate the long-vacant Variety Theater at 11815 Lorain Avenue into a focal point for arts-based revitalization. Built in 1927 as a grand theater accommodating 1,900 guests, the Variety is set in a building that once housed ten stores and twelve apartments. In the 1980's the theater hosted rock concerts by the likes of R.E.M., Metallica and Stevie Ray Vaughn.

Across the street from the Variety Theater is a vacant lot at 11850 Lorain Avenue that could be transformed into a community gathering place and an outdoor café linked to an adjacent commercial building. Cleveland city planner Michael Bosak prepared a rendering showing how that vision can be realized.



**City View Park.** A key gateway at the western end of the Buckeye and Shaker neighborhoods is now occupied by an unsightly vacant lot and a closed car wash building. This triangular piece of land formed by the intersection of Buckeye Road and Shaker Boulevard has the potential to create a much more positive image for the adjacent neighborhoods and offers a great view of the downtown skyline from nearly a hundred blocks away.

A plan prepared in 2011 for the Buckeye-Woodhill neighborhood proposes that this site be transformed and redeveloped as "City View Park," with a public plaza, public art, and a small retail building with a green roof that could serve as a raised viewing area, facing the downtown skyline. The Buckeye Area Development Corporation is now working to implement the plan incrementally.



**Kinsman & Union in Mt. Pleasant.** Kinsman Road is the diagonal east-west spine of the Mt. Pleasant neighborhood in southeast Cleveland. Union Avenue is a secondary but important east-west roadway in the neighborhood. Where these two streets intersect at a triangular angle, they create the potential for a distinctive place and focal point for the Mt. Pleasant neighborhood.

Recognizing the potential of this place, the community has added landscaping to a triangle at the southwest corner of Kinsman and Union. However, the small size of this landscaped area and its location between two busy streets and a gas station limit its ability to serve as a neighborhood gathering spot and as a true "great place." The challenge is to realize the potential of this location to create a truly great place, worthy of this truly great Cleveland neighborhood.

**CLEVELAND CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**

Frank G. Jackson, Mayor

Robert N. Brown, City Planning Director  
Anthony J. Coyne, Chairperson

*Robert N. Brown, principal author*



**CITY OF CLEVELAND**  
Mayor Frank G. Jackson

Contributing Staff

Michael Bosak

Martin Cader

Freddy Collier, Jr.

George Cantor

James Danek

Marka Fields

Linda Henrichsen

Trevor Hunt

Thomas Jordan

Robert Keiser

Kris Lucskay

Donald Petit

Maurice Ruelens

Kim Scott

Jonathan Holland, intern

Nicholas Hug, Intern

Cleveland City Planning Commission  
601 Lakeside Avenue E., Room 501  
Cleveland, Ohio 44114  
216-664-2210

Web: <http://planning.city.cleveland.oh.us>

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