

Silver Medal Winner

## Uptown District Cleveland, Ohio

The collaborative redevelopment of a mixed-use urban corridor linking arts, education, and health care institutions and adjoining communities



This is an excerpt from:

## Challenging Conventions

The 2015 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence



BRUNER FOUNDATION, INC.

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2016944071  
ISBN: 978-1-890286-10-1

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Cambridge, MA 02139  
[www.brunerfoundation.org](http://www.brunerfoundation.org)

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Rien Van Rijthoven

## Overview

Submitted by: Case Western Reserve University  
Completed: 2015  
Total Development Cost: \$200 million+

Uptown District in Cleveland, Ohio, is the redevelopment of a corridor linking art, educational, and health care institutions with surrounding neighborhoods. It is a sustainable, transit-oriented development located at a convergence of neighborhoods four miles east of downtown.

A truly collaborative effort, Uptown District has transformed two blocks of Euclid Avenue and is part of a broader urban district in the heart of University Circle. What was once a collection of vacant and underused properties is now a community gateway and destination. Bookended by two cultural institutions, Uptown District features outdoor gathering spaces, retail shops and restaurants, student and market-rate housing, and public transit connections.

Envisioned as an arts and entertainment district, Uptown District was designed to create “connective tissue” linking Cleveland’s educational and cultural corridor with downtown and adjoining communities. A design charrette and urban design guidelines completed by Chan Krieger and Associates (now NBBJ) informed the massing and design principles of the development, which now includes mid-block passageways and an internal “alley” that provide visual and pedestrian connections between Euclid Avenue and adjoining buildings, plazas, and parking. The downtown and neighborhood linkage was ultimately improved through the development of Rapid Transit Authority (RTA) rail stations both south of and within

“UPTOWN DISTRICT IS THE PRODUCT OF A SIGNIFICANT COLLABORATION AMONG INSTITUTIONS AND PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERS WHO REMAINED COMMITTED TO A STRONG DESIGN AGENDA THROUGH YEARS OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT.”

—2015 Selection Committee

Uptown as well as by the popular HealthLine bus system on Euclid Avenue that connects Uptown District with downtown and East Cleveland.

Uptown District is a continuing focus of the Cleveland Foundation’s Greater University Circle Initiative, a public-private partnership between leading anchor institutions, philanthropic organizations, financial institutions, community groups, and the City of Cleveland. Launched in 2005, the initiative seeks to leverage institutional resources to improve a four-square-mile area that is home to key cultural institutions such as the Cleveland Museum of Art, Case Western Reserve University (CWRU), and University Hospitals and connect the district with surrounding neighborhoods.

Completed in 2015 and costing more than \$200 million, Uptown District consists of multiple projects around a core “Wall” development in the heart of the district. The \$70 million Wall was constructed in two phases, with major financing provided by the Cleveland Foundation, New Market Tax Credits, and the City of Cleveland. The project continues to evolve and still more development is anticipated.

The sleek, aluminum-clad buildings of the Wall were designed by San Francisco-based Stanley Saitowitz of Natoma Architects and developed by MRN Ltd., a local, family-owned real estate company responsible for Cleveland’s successful East 4th Street district. The ground floors host retailers and restaurants, including nationally and locally owned businesses such as the Barnes & Noble CWRU Bookstore, the Corner Alley bowling and entertainment venue, and Constantino’s, the area’s only grocery store. Upper floors include contemporary, market-rate rental apartments and

student housing for the Cleveland Institute of Art, whose expanded and renovated campus frames the northern edge of Uptown District.

The Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, designed by Farshid Moussavi, anchors Toby’s Plaza, a large public space at the corner of Euclid Avenue and Mayfield Road. Designed by Field Operations, the plaza features public art installations as well as programs and events that draw people to the district and reinforce its emerging identity as the community’s “living room.”

Uptown District highlights the role of anchor institutions in catalyzing and leading community change. The development has drawn national attention for its design and collaborative, institution-led approach and has affirmed the value of taking risks to invest in a long-term vision with broad community benefits. The area “was a no-man’s-land for 40 years,” explains John Wheeler, former senior vice president for administration at CWRU. Uptown District, he said, “rose out of necessity...We couldn’t tolerate what was there any longer.” People in the area refer to Uptown’s “rock and ripple effect”—activity in the district has led to additional interest and development in the area and increased pride in Cleveland as a whole.



Scott Pease (left); CWRU (right)



## Project at a Glance

- The development of a mixed-use hub in the center of University Circle, Cleveland, and a gateway to numerous cultural, educational, health care, and arts institutions.
- A multi-party collaboration led by mature anchor institutions within University Circle that integrates education, art, housing, and retail programs into a vibrant public realm.
- Revitalization of 8.2 acres of formerly vacant and significantly underutilized land on both sides of Euclid Avenue from East 117th Street to Cornell Road.
- Over \$200 million in total investment with over 223,500 square feet of new development, including an iconic new building for the Museum of Contemporary Art, renovation and expansion of the Cleveland Institute of Art, student and mixed-income apartments, and new transit stations.
- 158 market-rate apartments and 130 beds for Cleveland Institute of Art freshmen, along with ground-floor retail shops.
- A transformative project attracting investment in abutting neighborhoods and reinforcing catalyst investments by anchor institutions.



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## Project Goals

- Create mixed-income housing to attract a diversity of residents and students to the area.
- Create retail space that attracts both locally owned and national retail establishments.
- Emphasize signature architecture and placemaking with world-class design.
- Promote connectivity through the design of public spaces and transit.
- Take full advantage of the convergence of art, education, and health care institutions as a source of creative district revitalization.
- Create a sustainable, state-of-the-art development with partnerships and programs that ensure vitality and longevity.



Scott Pease

# Chronology

**1796**

The Connecticut Land Company founds Cleveland's first settlement.

1800

**1826**

Western Reserve College is founded in Hudson, Ohio, about 30 miles southeast of Cleveland.

**Mid-late 1800s**

With the 1827 opening of the Ohio-Erie Canal and expansion of railroads, iron-ore and coal-rich Cleveland becomes an industrial powerhouse.

**1877**

The Case School of Applied Science is founded.

**1882**

Western Reserve College moves east of downtown Cleveland to an area that would later become University Circle and assumes the name Western Reserve University.

**1885**

The Case School of Applied Science (later the Case Institute of Technology) locates adjacent to the Western Reserve University campus.

The Western Reserve School of Design for Women is founded. In 1949, it takes the name Cleveland Institute of Art.

1900

**1914**

Frederick H. Goff founds the Cleveland Foundation, the first of over 700 community foundations now in existence around the globe.

**1950**

Cleveland's population peaks at just over 900,000 people, then diminishes to less than 400,000 by 2010 as residents migrate to suburbs.

**1957**

The 34 institutions in University Circle cooperate to complete a master plan and recommend the creation of what ultimately becomes University Circle Inc. (UCI).

**1967**

The Case Institute of Technology and Western Reserve University merge to create Case Western Reserve University (CWRU).

**1968**

The Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland (MOCA Cleveland) is founded in a Euclid Avenue storefront.

2000

**2003**

Ronald B. Richard is named President and CEO of the Cleveland Foundation. He begins to shift the organization's focus from responsive grant making to proactive, program-related investments that support the foundation's strategic goals.

**2004**

CWRU and UCI host a design charrette featuring Frank Gehry and Laurie Olin, followed by a commission to Chan Krieger & Associates to develop urban design concepts and guidelines for Uptown District.

**2006**

Former city council representative Frank G. Jackson becomes Cleveland's 56th Mayor.

MOCA Cleveland hires Foreign Office Architects and its principal architect Farshid Moussavi to design the museum's new building at the corner of Euclid Avenue and Mayfield Road.

MRN Ltd. is selected as the developer for Uptown District and recruits Stanley Saitowitz of Natoma Architects to create the design.

**2008**

Nationwide economic downturn affects previous financial commitments to the Uptown project; MRN pursues additional funders and separates the project into two phases.

The Regional Transit Authority of Cleveland (RTA) completes the HealthLine Bus Rapid Transit project, with stops at East 118th and East 115th Streets and Cornell Road, considered a crucial link to downtown redevelopment.

**2013**

CIA begins construction on the new George Gund building, allowing CIA to consolidate all activities on one campus on Euclid Avenue.

Ground is broken for the new RTA Little Italy-University Circle Rapid Station.

**2014**

Phase 2 of Uptown District opens.

The new RTA Cedar-University Rapid Station opens.

**2005**

CWRU completes construction of Village at 115, located just northeast of Uptown along E. 115th Street and separated from the main campus by a "desert" of vacant land.

The Cleveland Foundation launches the Greater University Circle Initiative focused on transit-oriented development, housing, education, economic inclusion, and safety.

Barrie Projects develops *Attitude Is Everything UPTOWN: A Catalog of New Ideas for University Circle*, funded through a UCI consortium.

Chris Ronayne leaves his position as Chief of Staff and Director of Planning at the City of Cleveland to become President of UCI.

**2007**

Barbara R. Snyder becomes President of CWRU, inheriting a substantial operating deficit. Snyder launches a period of impressive growth in admissions applications, fundraising, fiscal stability, and new campus construction.

Planning and design begins for a new University Circle transit hub consolidating bus loop and rail service to the north side of Cedar Hill as a gateway to University Circle.

**2010**

Construction begins on Phase 1 of Uptown District. Under President Grafton J. Nunes, the Cleveland Institute of Art (CIA) develops plans for a campus consolidation and expansion in tandem with Uptown development.

**2012**

MOCA and Uptown District Phase 1 open. Construction for Phase 2 begins opposite Phase 1, southwest of Euclid Avenue.

Construction begins on the RTA Cedar-University Rapid Station, a transit hub replacing the 1956 Cedar Hill station.

**2011**

MOCA Cleveland breaks ground on its iconic new building in Uptown.

**2015**

The new RTA Little Italy-University Circle Rapid Station opens.

CIA completes its \$75 million Uptown District campus.

# Project Description

## INTRODUCTION

Cleveland's Uptown District is an evolving mixed-use area which, at the time of application to the Rudy Bruner Award, involved more than \$200 million in improvements that blend retail shops, public space, dormitory and market-rate as well as low- and moderate-income housing, and arts programming with adjacent neighborhood and transportation enhancements. All of these elements are aligned with strategic objectives of community and anchor institutions including Case Western Reserve University (CWRU), University Hospitals, the City of Cleveland, the Cleveland Institute of Art (CIA), the Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland (MOCA), University Circle Inc. (UCI), and the Cleveland Foundation. Located on an 8.2 acre site within University Circle, Uptown is four miles east of downtown Cleveland.

While the scope of the district continues to evolve, there are seven distinct projects that are most prominently featured in the RBA application and together total more than \$200 million in investment. The core of the development is the "Wall," which lines both sides of Euclid Avenue between Ford Drive and East 115th Street with housing and retail space. The Wall, developed in two phases, includes 158 apartments, 130 beds for CIA freshman students, and 80,000 square feet of retail.



### POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1A. "The Wall" Phase I
- 1B. "The Wall" Phase II
2. Toby's Plaza and Uptown Alley
3. Museum of Contemporary Art
4. Cleveland Institute of Art
5. Triangle Apartments
6. Commodore Place Apartments
7. University Hospitals
8. Case Western Reserve University
9. Village at 115
10. Little Italy-University Circle Station

The Wall provides an armature bookended by the new 80,000-square-foot atrium building addition to the CIA that fills the block facing East 115th Street east of Euclid Avenue and a new 34,000-square-foot MOCA building at the corner of Euclid Avenue and Mayfield Road.

Two new transit stations provide connections to Uptown District in addition to the HealthLine bus rapid transit system serving the area since 2008. The existing Rapid Transit Authority (RTA) Cedar-University stop was replaced by a bus-rail hub on the southern border of CWRU where Cedar Glenn Parkway crosses the rail lines, and a new rapid rail station was built at the border of Little Italy and University Circle on Mayfield Road across from Tony Brush Park. A third station in the Buckeye-Woodhill neighborhood at 105 Euclid Avenue, just south of Uptown, further enhances connectivity within University Circle.

The Commodore Place Apartments renovation of a 12-story 1924 hotel provides 198 mixed-income apartments above a retail base at Ford Drive and Euclid Avenue while CWRU Triangle Apartments provide student housing with ground-floor retail. Finally, Toby's Plaza and Uptown Alley create the outdoor public realm linking MOCA and CIA.

Development of Uptown District involved a complex collaboration with several partners sharing significant financial risk. It was a classic example of doing together what none of the collaborators could do by themselves. For example, CWRU invested in property to acquire site control, then engaged local firm MRN Ltd. as lead developer while working in tandem with UCI, the Cleveland Foundation, and the City of Cleveland.

The Uptown District corridor connects nearby development that arose simultaneously, including a new MOCA building and the consolidation of two facilities into one by CIA. None of this work was a sure thing as a stand-alone project, but together all are now on a healthy footing.

Throughout its development, the project employed the creative talents of very accomplished planners and designers. The partners who commissioned the work avoided what they describe as a "good enough" approach to design development and took considerable pride in engaging Frank Gehry, Laurie Olin, Chan Krieger and Associates (now NBBJ), Stanley Saitowitz at Natoma Architects, Farshid Moussavi, James Corner of Field Operations, and Anton Germishuizen of Stantec at various stages of the process. These professionals from around the globe did not collaborate with each other in the delivery of Uptown District but did work within the broad parameters of clear diagrams, general guidelines, and an emerging shared vision communicated by their clients for the district and its abutting neighborhoods.

Uptown District outcomes are still evolving, and the absence of impact data suggests it is too soon to tell what the full benefits will be. That said, Uptown District has added significantly to the appeal of CWRU and the Cleveland Institute of Art to prospective and current students. Neighborhood advocates say the project has influenced investments in quality of life, and the City of Cleveland views Uptown District as a significant economic engine.

## CONTEXT

It was 1796 when the Connecticut Land Company founded its first settlement as what is now known as Cleveland. The area's economy did not flourish until after the War of 1812 and the opening of the Ohio and Erie Canal. The land was rich in iron ore and coal, and the evolution of transportation options from canal to steamboat to rail helped to make the region prosperous. By the 1860s, John D. Rockefeller and his co-investors had founded Standard Oil and Sam Mather was making steel. Cleveland soon became an industrial powerhouse, with affluence and influence that enabled Frederick Goff to establish the Cleveland Foundation in 1914, the

first in a movement of community foundations that now number over 700 worldwide. During this pre-Depression era, the wealth created by industry also established a rich sports, arts, and cultural legacy that persists to this day and underpins the partners in University Circle and what eventually became Uptown District.

Cleveland grew and prospered up to the Great Depression when over one-third of the workforce found itself unemployed for over three years. But the city's economy recovered and continued to grow along with its population until the 1950s. Then, like most of the more than 60 US legacy cities (cities of over 60,000 that lost over half of their population in the post-World War II period), Cleveland began a slow decline during which half of its nearly one million residents fled to the suburbs or elsewhere. From 1976 through 1987, the city went into default and was under the authority of a fiscal control board. Cleveland was the first such city in the United States to face this problem since the Great Depression. The city's downtown and several surrounding neighborhoods were left with high vacancy rates, continued disinvestment, and large pockets of poverty. Very similar stories are told in Pittsburgh, Baltimore, and Buffalo. Today Cleveland, like many other legacy cities, can see the promise of a new day as businesses and residents return to the city.

Uptown District forms the urban spine of the area known as University Circle and offers evidence of the city's shift toward a more prosperous future. University Circle began along Euclid Avenue when Nathaniel Doan, one of the original surveyors from the Connecticut Land Company that founded Cleveland, settled there in 1799. By the 1870s, Doan's Corners flourished and expanded into Cleveland's second downtown, with stores, small industries, churches, a hotel, and a post office. In 1882, the first college in northern Ohio, Western Reserve University (which took its name from the surrounding region, known at that time as the Western Reserve of Connecticut), relocated to the area. Case Institute of

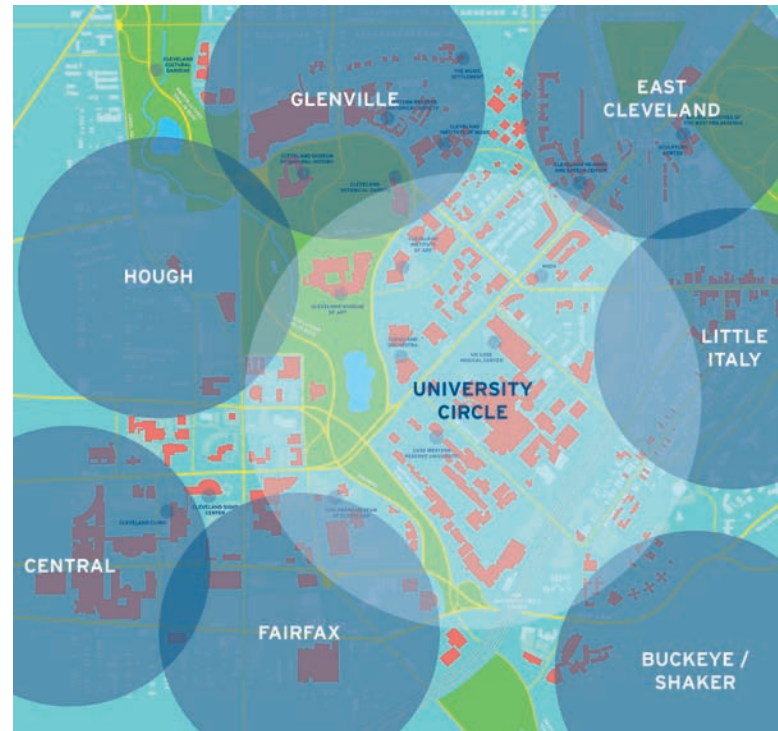


The Doan's Corner area in the 1920's (top) and Case Western Reserve University campus.

Technology followed in 1885, bolstering the area’s growth. By the early 1900s, the Western Reserve School of Design for Women (now the Cleveland Institute of Art) also moved to University Circle, and the concept of developing a world-class arts and cultural center came to life. The Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland Orchestra’s Severance Hall, the Cleveland Botanical Garden, and others all opened or moved into the area during a rapid stage of post-turn-of-the-century growth that continued through the 1930s. University Circle began to establish itself as a center for innovation in health care, with the 1921 opening of the Cleveland Clinic less than a mile away and the 1931 arrival of University Hospitals. On top of educational, arts, and cultural institutions, the hospital network became another feather in the cap of Cleveland, and all of these institutions were located proximate to one of Cleveland’s major arteries, Euclid Avenue.

Yet the positive social and economic environment of University Circle did not hold for the seven surrounding neighborhoods of this cultural incubator. The residential areas, like the city as a whole, saw the first signs of decline in the late 1950s and early 1960s. This is when the well-to-do of these neighborhoods, primarily white residents, migrated to the suburbs, drawn by abundant new housing, the expanding interstate highway system, and easy access to mortgage loans. Meanwhile, lower-income, predominantly black residents remained behind in the city, often in neighborhoods deteriorating from disinvestment.

Many of the neighborhoods surrounding University Circle are economically similar. Over 33,000 people live in what has come to be called Greater University Circle, which includes Buckeye-Shaker, Central, Fairfax, Glenville, Hough, Little Italy, and a portion of the separately incorporated East Cleveland. These neighborhoods are among Cleveland’s poorest, with the median household income below \$25,000 and unemployment topping 15%, more than double the rate for all of Cuyahoga County.



University Circle Inc.



The Greater University Circle neighborhoods (top) include Little Italy (bottom right) and residential areas.

Residents of the adjacent neighborhoods are also racially segregated. In nearby Glenville, for example, the population is 98% African American. The core team of institutions collaborating on Uptown District (UCI, CWRU, the Cleveland Foundation, the City of Cleveland, MOCA, and CIA) sought to improve upon this demographic narrative by promoting a variety of economic inclusion efforts. At the moment there are no policies in place that would limit gentrification in the area, although it is a common topic of discussion in, for example, the work by Neighborhood Connections, a non-profit organization funded largely by the Cleveland Foundation and offering a small grants program intended to help stabilize these neighborhoods.

The area now known as Uptown District was originally centered on Doan's Corners, the lively intersections of Euclid Avenue at East 105th and East 107th Streets. During its height in the nineteenth century, Euclid Avenue bustled with streetcars and trolleys that brought Clevelanders from downtown to the most exciting theaters, restaurants, and shopping promenades of the day. The intersection of Euclid Avenue and East 105th Street is said to have been the home of one of the country's first traffic lights, invented by Clevelander Garrett Morgan in 1922.

At the time of Uptown District's inception, however, 85% of retail space in the area was vacant or seriously underutilized. University Circle had been a site of serious disinvestment for almost 40 years due to the migration of urban residents to the outlying suburbs of Cleveland, whose population steadily declined to 389,521 by 2014.

But signs of life downtown and in University Circle were signaling a return to the urban core. The area that became known as Uptown was thought to be well positioned to build on this trend in urban resettlement.



Case Western Reserve University

*Aerial and street views of the Uptown District site prior to development.*



As early as 2004, CWRU had begun exploring the possibility of engaging collaborators to create a contemporary, mixed-use district. The area targeted was at the intersections of Euclid Avenue at Ford Drive and East 115th Street, which was seen as having the potential to reclaim the historic vibrancy of Doan’s Corners due to the range of existing institutions, including CWRU and CIA, as well as MOCA’s interest in relocating there. Philanthropist Peter B. Lewis grew up nearby and had spent much time in the neighborhood as a boy, prompting his interest in its revitalization. Support from Lewis, CWRU, and other partners led to the design charrette with Gehry and Olin in 2004.

Today, Uptown District is situated nearly in the center of University Circle. The Greater University Circle area, including abutting neighborhoods, provides roughly 60,000 full-time jobs, and nearly 2.5 million people visit each year. The diversity of the institutions in this section of Cleveland may be the best asset of University Circle and Uptown. University Hospitals is immediately east of the district, with Cleveland Clinic less than a mile away. These two health care institutions are two of the largest employers in Cuyahoga County.

Meanwhile, the dense concentration of art and cultural institutions frame the area’s cultural viability, and the purchasing power of employers has been leveraged to increase local spending policies. For example, in 2009, the Cleveland Foundation launched Evergreen, a group of cooperatives that are owned by and employ previously unemployed or underemployed individuals from Uptown’s contiguous, economically challenged neighborhoods. The Evergreen Cooperatives provides commercial laundry services to hospitals and nursing homes, fresh produce to local institutions and businesses (including dining halls at CWRU), and solar panel installation to institutions.

## **PROJECT HISTORY AND LEADERSHIP**

### *Mission and Vision*

In collaboration with other University Circle institutions and the City of Cleveland, CWRU sought to develop a shared vision to revitalize the area of Euclid Avenue stretching from Ford Drive to East 118th Street. The 2005 call for qualifications and proposals, issued by CWRU, broadcast the opportunity for a university arts and retail district, later branded simply as “Uptown,” as follows:

Develop this district into a dense and vibrant mixed-use urban center, which will attract and serve a diverse population of individuals from a very wide service area including residents of adjacent neighborhoods, students, staff, and faculty of CWRU, University Hospitals of Cleveland, the Cleveland Clinic, the Cleveland Institute of Art, the Museum of Contemporary Art, and all other surrounding institutions and neighborhoods in the Northeast Ohio region.

### *History and Evolution*

While Uptown District is rooted deep in the history of Doan’s Corners going back to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this contemporary incarnation is better benchmarked against the origins and evolution of what is now called University Circle Inc.

In 1956, the then 34 institutions that occupied University Circle cooperated with civic leader Elizabeth Ring Mather, who provided funding for Adams, Howard and Greeley out of Boston to prepare a master plan for the area. The intent was to guide the evolution of what was already an impressive array of educational, art, cultural, and health care institutions in the district. One of the key recommendations of that planning effort was the creation of what became the University Circle Development Foundation (UCDF). UCDF evolved into an organization supporting collaboration among over 30 organizations including the best of Cleveland’s cultural, medical, and

educational institutions. By 1970, UCDF became University Circle Inc. (UCI), with an increased focus on shared services among members and supporting a clean, safe, and friendly University Circle environment with increased advocacy for its surrounding neighborhoods. This successful collaboration strengthened UCI with still more institutions joining the organization and prospering through the pursuit of shared agendas. By 1990, the 1957 master plan was updated with a still stronger focus on neighborhood partnerships and promoting mixed-use development. UCI's website refers to this and further actions by its board as moving from "care taking" to being a "catalyst for development."

In many ways, Uptown District is a chapter in a long history of anchor institution cooperation in Cleveland. Other chapters include the UCI five-year action plan instituted in 2007 and running in parallel with the development of Uptown, as well as the publication of *Cleveland's Greater University Circle Initiative: Building on a 21st Century City through the Power of Anchor Institution Collaboration* in 2013. This latest effort is billed as a partnership between philanthropy and anchor institutions and the public sector and was funded by the Cleveland Foundation.

## LEADERS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Key institutional leadership came from Case Western Reserve University, MRN Ltd., and the Cleveland Foundation, all in concert with University Circle Inc., the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, the Cleveland Institute of Art, the Museum of Contemporary Art, and the City of Cleveland.

### *Case Western Reserve University*

The university's leadership on this effort demonstrates the value of higher education institutions collaborating with public and private partners in a shared mission to bring energizing development to their communities. In 2004, President Edward Hundert (2002-2006) initiated a land bank to

help ensure the site control required to create a viable campus district and improve CWRU's competitive position in attracting students.

A key element of the university's plans to improve admissions and student life was the \$126.4 million Village at 115, apartment-style student housing surrounding the school's football field and track. Begun in 2003, the project represented the first new student housing in decades and initially was envisioned as the first of several phases of construction in the larger area known as North Residential Village. The modernization of student housing space made the largely drab area of Euclid Avenue just a couple of blocks south of the village look even less impressive—some even called the stretch a "desert." The university and a broad coalition of institutional leaders realized that a more comprehensive master plan would be necessary to encourage growth and revitalization of the area. Such coordinated development would also reinforce the quality of place CWRU and CIA—located nearby—use to attract and retain students and staff.

CWRU took its precedent from a similar action taken to develop the mixed-use area adjacent to the Yale campus in New Haven, Connecticut. President Hundert aspired to invest in a "campus town" like the one his alma mater had recently achieved. CWRU began to work with UCI president Chris Ronayne, former chief of staff and director of planning for the city, to find potential developers to build condominiums and student housing and bring viable retail into the area in one fell swoop.

An important part of the initial strategy for CWRU and UCI included land banking through the purchase of property for Uptown District. One such CWRU purchase required \$30 million for property commonly referred to as "the triangle" that is bounded by Mayfield Road, Euclid Avenue, and East 115th Street; this land was assessed at \$20 to \$23 million. With the investment in the Village at 115 complete, one of the board's highest priorities was to help address the "desert" on Euclid. CWRU later invested an additional

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Barrie Projects

The Attitude is Everything UPTOWN catalog presented hundreds of possibilities for Uptown.

\$2 million by purchasing a site necessary for the second phase of Uptown District. This site, bounded by Euclid Avenue, Ford Road, and East 115th Street, held a large parcel previously owned by CWRU that had been sold for \$1, removing what was then seen as a worthless asset as well as a liability to the campus. The repurchase, along with the purchase of land above assessed value, were both ways CWRU helped to underwrite the project, much like the program-related investments by the Cleveland Foundation.

For the next stage of the project development, the university worked with stakeholders and brought in Alex Krieger of Chan Krieger & Associates (now NBBJ) to develop an urban design study. Krieger's team was charged with looking at the fabric and usage of the area on the perimeter of the campus from the perspective of the neighborhood residents. The study ultimately provided a fresh look at the area, generating urban design guidelines that informed the massing of the district, its open space plan, and the pedestrian links that permeate the district.

The aspiration for an uptown education, arts, and retail district gained additional support with the publication of *Attitude is Everything UPTOWN: A Catalog of New Ideas for University Circle*, which referenced the Krieger study but cautiously avoided prescriptions in favor of cataloging over 250 ideas. It is interesting to note that the glossy 32-page document does not contain a single map or drawing illustrating development proposals. Instead, it presents a "shoppers catalog" of images from Cleveland and elsewhere and descriptive text that offers a variety of examples of vibrant urban places and activities to help people imagine what Uptown could be. Published through UCI, the catalog was the creation of Kathleen Barrie of Barrie Projects and was funded by Peter B. Lewis, the Gund Foundation, the 1525 Foundation (now the Kent H. Smith Charitable Trust), UCI, and University Hospitals in addition to CWRU. It was an innovative approach that sustained forward momentum without requiring what might be perceived as a commitment to any one way to accomplish the richness

identified in hundreds of precedents cataloged in the publication. Indeed, the visioning process fundamentally changed the tenor and the transparency of the project.

The next step in the development of Uptown District was the creation of an extensive request for qualifications and proposals (RFQ/RFP) from those who would seek to be lead developer for the parcels held by CWRU. The RFQ/RFP was issued in 2005 by CWRU and referenced much of the work leading up to it. In 2006, the award was made to MRN Ltd.

After President Hundert stepped down in 2006, CWRU started rethinking the Uptown District development strategy. The board and new President Barbara R. Snyder proceeded with the initial vision of redeveloping the so-called “desert” that was adjacent to the university.

Still, the project went through five difficult years before the initial groundbreaking in 2010. CWRU was experiencing some of its most difficult fiscal challenges in recent decades, culminating in a budget deficit of \$40 million by 2005-2006, due in part to Hundert’s land banking strategy. As project planning and implementation progressed, Snyder and the CWRU Board of Trustees were clear that they were too financially invested in the project to pull back, even in the face of the housing crisis that hit the country in 2006, the substantial banking failures of 2008, and the subsequent economic turmoil that affected every player in the project. Despite the risks, CWRU and its partners remained committed to a successful outcome for Uptown District.

#### *MRN Ltd.*

The university and its partners were clearly not the only ones at risk in the Uptown District adventure. The designated developer, MRN Ltd., is a family-owned, family-run business consisting of Rick Maron and his two sons, Ari and Jori. MRN is well known locally for its successful East 4th Street



*MRN’s East Fourth Street development in downtown Cleveland.*

development, which became one of the most popular restaurant and bar destinations in downtown Cleveland. One of the primary roles of MRN was to secure financing. The post-2008 economic downturn made this even more complicated, requiring a lot of financial wrangling, multiple sources of loans, and the phasing of land purchases from CWRU.

John Wheeler, who was then the senior vice president for administration at CWRU, was the project manager who ultimately issued and managed the RFQ/RFP for the developer. While part of Wheeler’s job was to minimize risk for the university, he was also the one who returned to his board with shifts in the project budget and scope caused by changes in finance strategy and related program modifications. MRN approached Chicago-based Mesirow Financial Holdings to help provide funding for what was then to be

a condominium rather than a rental apartment-based residential program. Mesirow eventually pulled out when the bottom started to fall out of the housing market in 2006.

It took well over a year, but MRN did acquire a new backer in local Cleveland condominium developer Nathan Zaremba, who also eventually pulled out when a drugstore tenant decided to not proceed—forcing MRN to create a rental strategy to finance the project. Fortunately, Wheeler had the benefit of a supportive CWRU board and president who understood the effects of the economy on the work ahead and persevered as the project changed. For example, the condominium project became apartments, a drug store (self-financed) became a grocery store, and a five-story project was reduced to a three- and five-story project in the same footprint. CWRU stepped up by entering master leases with the Barnes & Noble university bookstore and the grocery store. This step meant that the university would shoulder the financial risk and guarantee revenue for developer MRN. The project thus went forward, and both CWRU and MRN assumed still more risk as MRN carried on as sole developer.

MRN also had a strong commitment to both Uptown and Cleveland. The company had never done a project this large, and watching its financial backers drop out one by one followed by the continued reduction in the scope of the project was daunting. MRN never intended to develop and turn over the keys; the company took pride in operating its properties and saw a sustained commitment to success as the only option. The financial and programmatic contributions of the rest of the stakeholders encouraged risk taking and created the confidence and climate necessary for the project to proceed. Program-related investments by the Cleveland Foundation, City of Cleveland incentives and its ability to remove bureaucratic obstacles to development, commitments to transit by the RTA, and the Cleveland Foundation's ambitious Greater University Circle Initiative all demonstrated long-term commitment to Uptown District development and programming.

### *The Cleveland Foundation*

While the anchor institutions held fast, the commitment of the Cleveland Foundation involved over a decade of investments in virtually every aspect of Uptown District, including transit; planning for MOCA, CIA, and CWRU; investments in the stabilization of the surrounding neighborhoods; and more.

The Cleveland Foundation board describes seven priorities: one is the place-based Greater University Circle Initiative while the other six are all broadly programmatic, serving the whole city. These six priorities address neighborhoods, education, economic development, human services, arts and culture, and community-responsive grant making. After the arrival of CEO Ronald B. Richard in 2003, the foundation had almost \$2 billion in assets and began to aggressively move from funding grants responsively to actively cultivating and targeting investments. When Richard started this process in 2003, 90% of the foundation grants were responsive; by 2011, the foundation was doing 50% targeted grant making; and by the end of 2014, targeted grants rose to 70% of total expenditures. This has meant over \$10 million in targeted direct support for Uptown over the life of the project, including \$6 million in program-related investments to CWRU for Phases 1 and 2 and another \$1 million in a grant supporting planning and incentives for CIA consolidation. The MOCA move to Uptown District was supported by \$1.6 million and RTA relocation studies, and planning and support for UCI round out this strategic philanthropy at work in Uptown. Overall it is an impressive level of support that was critical to making Uptown District a reality.

But the numbers and program categories are only a part of the Cleveland Foundation story. Foundation staff and leadership worked with community-based organizations, city leadership, and anchor institutions as conveners and facilitators. The Cleveland Foundation is described by senior community leadership as the behind-the-scenes organizers of a well-managed party: You don't see them, it is not their party, but the party comes off seamlessly

because of all the background work. Ronald Richard is credited with telling a story about his wife working at the School for the Arts with 14 year olds and realizing that none of her students had been to the museum across the street even though admission was free. When asked why, she was told by the students, "It is not for us." She brought her fury home, and Richard began meeting with the people who could open the right doors. When those doors opened, it was the institutions that took the bow.

Richard and his team at the Cleveland Foundation have been elevating their game year after year since he arrived. For example, Lillian Kuri, program director for arts and urban design (formerly the foundation's program director for architecture, urban design, and sustainable development) works closely with other program staff responsible for neighborhoods, housing, youth, and economic development to achieve the full potential of Uptown District. This coordination extends to include investments related to Neighborhood Connections, a group that offers small grants in Greater University Circle neighboring communities. Neighborhood Connections has provided over 2,063 grants totaling \$7.14 million since 2011 and is creating stronger host communities as part of University Circle and Uptown. The Cleveland Foundation is credited as being the team that "brought everyone together" for Uptown District in an organic way.

### *The City of Cleveland*

It is clear that the City of Cleveland also understands the strength of collaboration, as evidenced by a boldly collaborative approach to economic development. The core of this may be found in Mayor Frank G. Jackson, who assumed office in January 2006 after serving on the Cleveland City Council from 1989-2006, including three years as council president. During Jackson's first campaign for mayor, he reportedly told his electorate that if he couldn't restore hope to the ailing city within 200 days of taking office, he would consider himself a failure. There is ample evidence that hope has been restored. Jackson is the first mayor to serve three terms

since Michael R. White, who was elected mayor in 1989, the same year a young Frank Jackson was elected to the city council for the first time. Matt Jackson (no relation to the mayor) of the Center for Local Economic Strategies in London, England, who visited Cleveland as part of a tour evaluating economic development in select US cities, refers to the city's approach as "the Cleveland Model," pointing to the rich collaboration between the Cleveland Foundation, the Ohio Employee Ownership Center, and the Evergreen Cooperatives.

The city's Department of Economic Development also offers programs for locally owned restaurants in Uptown District, including low-interest loans up to \$40,000 for their tenant fit-outs and a local community benefit agreement that requires hiring of minority and female subcontractors in the construction process, with 20% of the construction hours going to local workers and 4% of the 20% to low-income local workers.

The city government is also credited by the institutions with whom it collaborated for solving problems without a lot of political maneuvering. For example, the city relaxed parking requirements to leverage the transit-oriented development represented in the project. Perhaps more to the point, challenges encountered during design and construction, like fire and right-of-way restrictions in the axis from CIA to MOCA, were considered problems to be solved by the city, not immovable obstacles in the evolution of the project.

All parties involved described the project as replicable when the conditions are defined in the frame of shared investment risk and problem solving. The close collaboration between the Cleveland Foundation, CWRU, the City of Cleveland, UCI, and other organizations and institutions within University Circle is made manifest by quarterly meetings of chief executive officers and other top leaders of these organizations, who together keep their fingers on the pulse of their shared interests.

*The Full Consortium*

Much has already been said about the key leadership in developing Uptown District. In addition, UCI, the RTA, MOCA, and CIA were also able to support critical elements and leverage the work on Uptown to advance their institutional goals. The recognition of the interdependence of the partners makes everyone invested in each other’s success. The narrative of the development of the district is all about how important each piece is to the realization of the larger goals for the work—all of the educational, cultural, and health care institutions as well as city and nonprofit organizations. Public transit, for example, eases the need for driving and parking, offers easy access to Greater University Circle neighborhoods and downtown, improves the ability to market small retail, and attracts student populations to CWRU and CIA. CIA both feeds and is fed by MOCA in their art collaborations, and both CWRU and CIA students add to the retail demand and rental income in both Phase 1 and 2 of the Wall. Recognizing all this and more requires a democratic practice orchestrated by all the players. This is collaborative leadership.

**DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT**

Four key partners—Case Western Reserve University, the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Cleveland Institute of Art, and University Circle Inc.—are described by Uptown District as central to the creation of Phase 1 and 2 buildings on either side of Euclid Avenue. They are indeed a key part of what has been achieved in the district. However, the run-up to and during the development of these buildings brings into focus many other projects and plans necessary for the emerging economic success and quality of life improvements in Uptown District and surrounding neighborhoods. The whole program offered by Uptown Phases 1 and 2 required complementary projects including two RTA stations, the Commodore Hotel renovation, the renovation of the CWRU Triangle Apartments, and creation of Toby’s Plaza to name just a few. Cultivation of all these moving parts required

**TABLE 1: UPTOWN DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

<i>Project</i>	<i>Program</i>
Phase 1	112,000 square feet total; 114 market-rate apartments
Phase 2	20,000 square feet of retail, 44 market-rate apartments, and 130 beds for CIA freshmen
Cleveland Institute of Art (CIA)	80,000-square-foot Gund building
Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland (MOCA)	34,000-square-foot art space
RTA Rapid Transit	Replacement of existing Cedar-University station with a bus-rail hub serving as the gateway to University Circle and new Little Italy and Buckeye-Woodhill rapid rail stations
Commodore Hotel Renovation	Renovation of a 1924 12-story hotel to accommodate 198 apartments above retail, including federally subsidized efficiencies and one- and two-bedroom units
CWRU Triangle Apartments Renovation	Renovation and ground-floor retail conversion
Toby’s Plaza and Uptown Alley	Public park and gathering space adjacent to MOCA

the patient and deft administration of strategic resources by the Cleveland Foundation, the continued support of the City of Cleveland, and the decades of work by UCI.

A look, for example, at the scope of the engagement by the Cleveland Foundation reveals both financial investments and relationships among anchor institutions and other partners. The story of a project's development is generally said to begin with a request for proposals, but the real story begins with the context within which the potential is created for such a request. Strategic explorations and incentives provided by the Cleveland Foundation over a 10-year period literally created the canvas on which Uptown District became a reality. While each of the collaborators in Uptown District could develop similar charts outlining their investments and developments in the area, none address the full range and diversity of the Cleveland Foundation's involvement.

All of the groundwork over a decade and the strategic thinking about the relationships among each of the elements helped to create the broad framework that then enabled the projects presented as the Uptown District.

The RFQ/RFPs issued by CWRU in 2005 called for a mixed-use and mixed-income approach that emphasized both physical and psychological walkability and accessibility as well as providing a framework for further development. Uptown District was envisioned as a hub for local college students in addition to a thriving mixed-income community that attracts local professionals. Connections to nearby neighborhoods and to downtown Cleveland were to be reinforced through improved transportation networks and the promotion of walkable and bike-friendly design. A development that catered to visitors and residents alike would help ensure long-term financial and cultural investment and subsequent ripple effects into the surrounding neighborhoods. Economic investment in Uptown was also seen as a way to serve local adjacent neighborhoods. The same vitality that is good for

the city would also make both CWRU and CIA more attractive to potential students and more competitive with their peers.

For Uptown District to succeed, it was essential to create a destination in the core of University Circle related to the CWRU and CIA campuses. There are numerous attractions in University Circle. Uptown provided a unique urban retail and entertainment destination to complement the cultural campus surrounding Wade Oval, a nearby public park. Time and again visitors, residents, students, and employees visited one retail, cultural, or service institution and then just went home. Uptown District is now home to multiple-attraction options where people can do many things on foot in one trip, transforming what were once parking lots and largely empty buildings into a continuous urban façade that structurally organizes the street, linking together places for shopping, dining, living, and working.

A second prerequisite to success, stressed especially by the Cleveland Foundation, UCI, and the City of Cleveland, was to address larger community needs and potential barriers to quality of life for all who reside in Greater University Circle. Uptown District and immediately adjacent areas provide market-rate and low-income housing opportunities, including the renovation of the Commodore Hotel into subsidized apartments, student housing, and private rental options with 20% of the units affordable to households earning up to 80% of median income. The collaborating institutions also funded early planning to integrate and prioritize intermodal bus and rapid transit stations near Uptown.

The Cleveland Foundation board of directors used a "slum and blight" test—an assessment of the physical condition and demography—in the adjoining neighborhoods as part of the argument to support its program-related investments in the Uptown District initiative, and this review of demographics, including new residents, increases in household income, and access to neighborhood services, still serves to measure their success.





Scott Pease



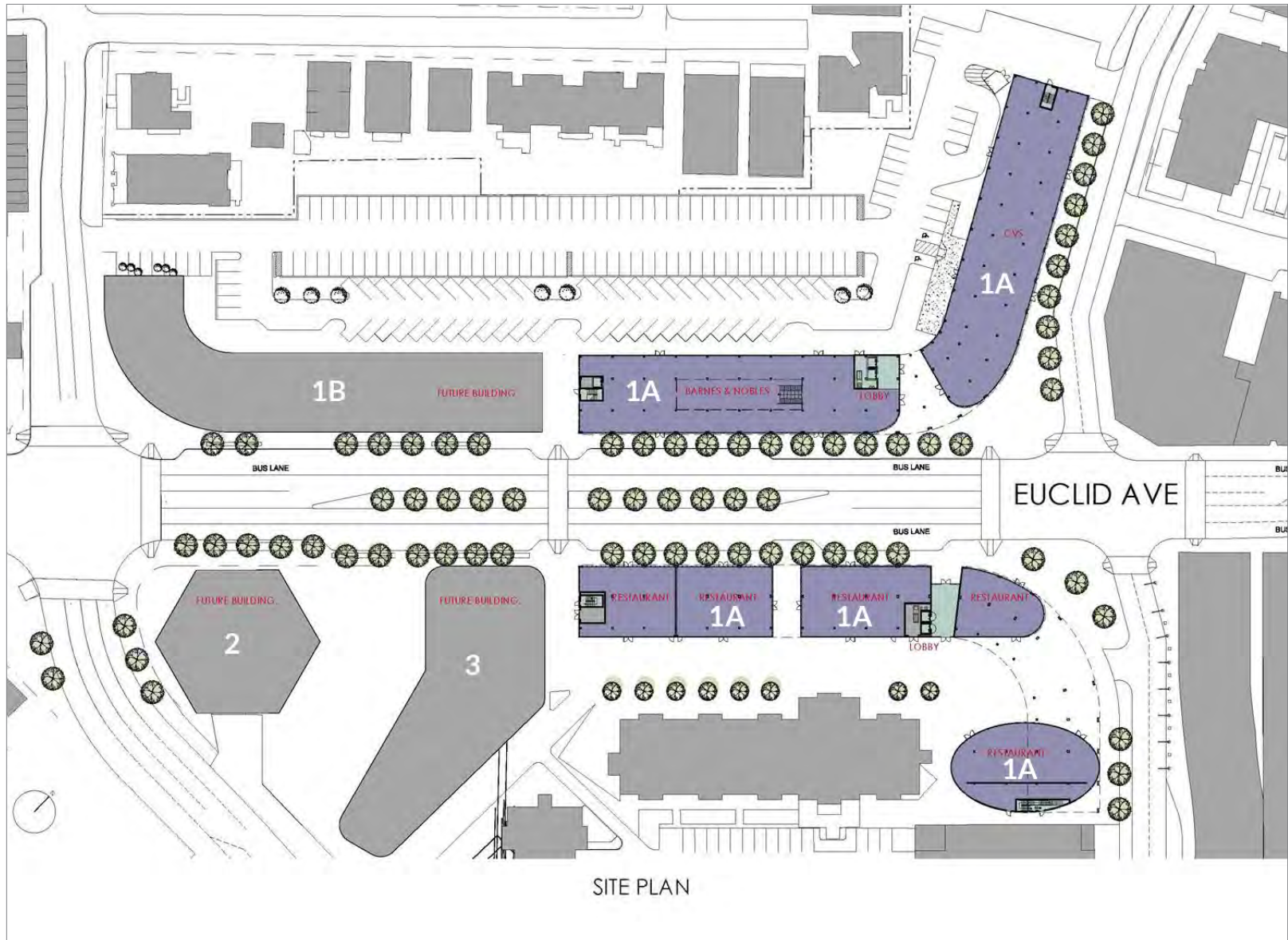
*"The Wall" includes passageways that connect to pedestrian plazas and parking.*

### *"The Wall" – Phases 1 and 2*

MRN recruited Stanley Saitowitz of San Francisco-based Natoma Architects, Inc. to design what became Phases 1 and 2 of the project on both sides of Euclid Avenue. Saitowitz's original concept included five-story buildings with a variety of different condo options. Then the housing market for condos collapsed, resulting in a variety of modifications to program, scale, and phasing. Phase 1 ultimately resulted in 112,000 square feet total, including 114 market-rate apartments. Phase 2 added 20,000 square feet of retail, 130 beds for CIA students, and 44 market-rate apartments.

The intent of the urban design and architecture of Phases 1 and 2 of Uptown District was not to be heroic, but rather to establish a context, or frame, for what became two signature building structures—MOCA to the south and CIA to the north across East 115th Street—as well as other developments and renovations of existing structures to follow. The urban design organizes the multiple structures in Uptown into a cohesive hub. The two main mixed-use buildings northeast and southwest of Euclid Avenue that Saitowitz calls the "Wall" are anchored by the MOCA building by Farshid Moussavi and the Cleveland Institute of Art consolidation by Anton Germishuizen of Stantec, which are connected by Toby's Plaza, designed by James Corner of Field Operations. The projects were planned and constructed within the same four-year period according to a common set of urban guidelines and a shared vision, but with different architects who were likely never in the same room during the design process.

Saitowitz reports what he likes best about this project as a whole is that it is "city making." The CIA entrance on axis with MOCA through the public realm designed by James Corner creates a mix of formal and informal public spaces. The work supplements an already prestigious architectural history in a larger urban fabric that includes buildings designed by Marcel Breuer, Rafael Viñoly, Norman Foster, and Frank Gehry.



Stanley Saitowitz, Natoma Architects, Inc. (numerical annotations by Bruner Foundation)

An early conceptual site plan including "The Wall" phases 1 (1A) and 2 (1B), the future site of MOCA (2), and a proposed additional building (3).

The design changes in the Wall during the project resulted in scale reductions that downsized a consistent five-story structure into a mix of five and three stories. While the reductions were forced by economic considerations after 2008, the smaller-scale fabric reduces the massiveness of the Wall and improves its relationship to the two-and-one-half-story residential fabric of the surrounding neighborhoods. The Wall itself is formed by two sweeping curves with a pattern of tall vertical and long horizontal fenestration. Two-story portal openings at the ground level connect sidewalks on the street to pedestrian access to the neighborhood sides of the buildings and to sweeping pedestrian plazas.

The buildings are clad in extruded aluminum with ridges alternatively oriented vertically and horizontally, producing differentiated shade effects. Saitowitz believes that the clean and simple lines of the buildings give a nod to the industrial heritage of Cleveland, and the urban street wall and mixed-use program combine to "bring downtown to uptown." The glass bases of the buildings express their retail function, with the aluminum and rectangular windows signifying the residential life above the storefront. Saitowitz likens the Wall lining Euclid Avenue to George Haussmann's renovation of Paris. However, rather than being monolithic façades like the 1927 completion of Paris's Boulevard Haussmann, the building materials here separate the uses vertically, recalling other more modernist developments where the bases are a transparent wall of glass set back slightly from the upper floors. This gives the appearance that the buildings are floating above the pedestrian plaza.

Construction costs were an important factor to CWRU and the project pro forma. The one-bedroom apartments within the Wall are a modest 550 square feet. As a result of the economic crisis, the buildings and units were scaled down and built for approximately \$150 per square foot. At the completion of the first phase, there was already a waiting list, and residents were eager to get into the building. The rental prices were targeted at \$2



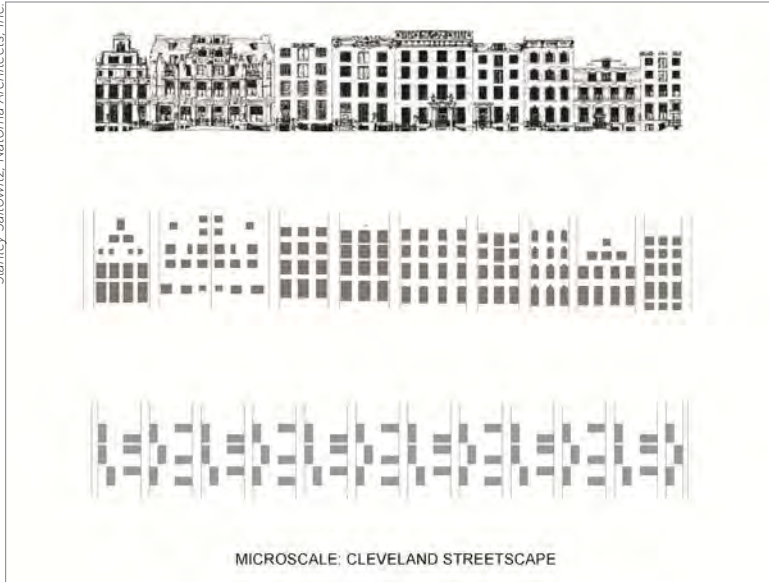
*The design approach to "The Wall" (top) was inspired by traditional street facades in Cleveland and Europe.*

Stanley Saitowitz

Rien Van Rijnthoven



Stanley Saitowitz, Natoma Architects, Inc.



The design of the buildings (top) gives a nod to Cleveland's industrial heritage and traditional urban architecture.

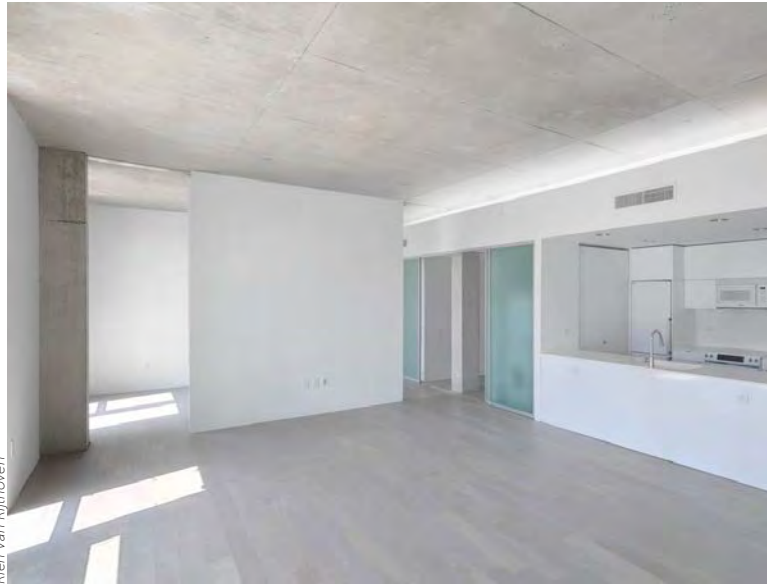
per square foot (\$1,100 per month). MRN and the city saw this project as a breakthrough for market-rate housing because the price point was sufficient to secure financing without the need for subsidy. The fact that the units responded to new market interest in relatively small apartments helped avoid subsidized financing. The modules were also conducive to the creation of student housing, providing 130 beds for first-year CIA students.

The CIA student housing is part of the Phase 2 building which also includes apartments as small as 550 square feet and as large as about 2,400 square feet (two large apartments combined by the tenant). Twenty percent of the apartments are affordable housing for those with household incomes up to 80% of the median income. Many of the market-rate apartments are occupied by doctors, staff, and students working at or in educational programs at University Circle hospitals and universities.

While not in Phase 1 or 2 of Uptown, two significant renovations elsewhere in the district were completed as Phase 2 was underway: the 198 apartments and ground-floor retail in the former 1924 Commodore Hotel underwent a \$9 million renovation, and the CWRU "Triangle Apartments"—largely occupied by graduate students—were renovated and augmented with ground-floor retail.



Commodore Place Apartments (left) and Triangle Apartments.



Rien Van Rithoven



Market-rate apartments (top) and student housing feature contemporary interiors.

The interiors of the Wall buildings are flush with natural light and fitted with clean, contemporary interior design. The double-loaded corridor housing plumbing, heating, and air conditioning services makes flexibility in the interior spaces possible as walls perpendicular to the corridor can be added or removed, enabling a variety of apartment configurations. Portions of the corridor are open to the façade and strategically placed as common living areas that also bring natural light into the corridor. The fluidity of the design is enhanced by the use of sliding doors that, when opened, do not occupy doorway space. The residents of both the dorms and apartments spoke very positively about the quality of their places.

#### *Museum of Contemporary Art: "The Gem"*

The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) has had three homes in its almost 50-year history, all in University Circle: a former Euclid Avenue dry cleaner, an old fraternity house at CWRU, and an old Sears department store in the shadow of the Cleveland Clinic. While MOCA leadership had pursued relocation opportunities in University Circle for several years, the genesis of its current home started to emerge in 2005 when the stakeholders in Uptown began to imagine that it would become an arts, education, and retail entertainment district that was, in the words of the *Uptown Ideas Catalog*, "part college town, part urban neighborhood, and a cultural and arts campus." MOCA leaders were highly engaged throughout the process that resulted in Uptown District.

Cleveland's \$27.2 million, 34,000-square-foot MOCA is the first United States work for London architect Farshid Moussavi. While the project was described in the CWRU RFQ/RFP, the design was commissioned by MOCA and coordinated with Phases 1 and 2 of the Wall as well as the CIA consolidation project. The MOCA building sits at the corner of Mayfield Road and Euclid Avenue. Jill Snyder, MOCA Cleveland executive director, said Moussavi first proposed that the MOCA building about the corner, allowing for an adjacent plaza to provide ample public space within the



*The Museum of Contemporary Art (top) and the Cleveland Institute of Art.*

district. This was a transformative move in shaping the district flow, and MOCA is what Steve Litt of Cleveland's *The Plain Dealer* referred to as an "architectural gem" in James Corner's landscape. The metaphor is apt as the multifaceted geometric building resembles a gem. The hexagonal base of the building is extruded and transforms as it rises to form a square roof finishing at a high point of 67.5 feet. According to Moussavi, however, the building is also contextual in that the black polished Rimex stainless steel façade offers a mirror that reflects its surroundings.

The interior spaces provide views of the Wall, Toby's Plaza, and the axis to the Cleveland Institute of Art through the "Uptown Alley" opening at East 116th Street. The ground floor is free to the public and serves as an "urban living room" for more than 100 public programs each year. MOCA draws more than 40,000 visits annually, generating economic impact in the district through parking, dining, and retail transactions. The main entrance opens to the plaza, not to the corner or street as might be expected in more conventional urban structures. Some argue that MOCA turns its back to the fabric of Uptown District while others enjoy the intimacy of the main plaza entrance and its connection to outdoor programming and the Uptown Alley.

#### *Cleveland Institute of Art*

Located on axis to MOCA, the Cleveland Institute of Art (CIA) is an independent college of art and design located within the Uptown District. Although not part of the Case Western RFQ/RFP, it is fully integrated within the overall urban design of the area. With the encouragement of its tenth president Grafton Nunes, CIA used the opportunity created by Uptown development to complete a \$75 million expansion of its campus that helps anchor Uptown District. CIA retained Stantec in Philadelphia to design an 80,000-square-foot addition to its Joseph McCullough Center for the Visual Arts and remodel the original building that was the site of the historic Cleveland Ford plant. The addition, named for philanthropist

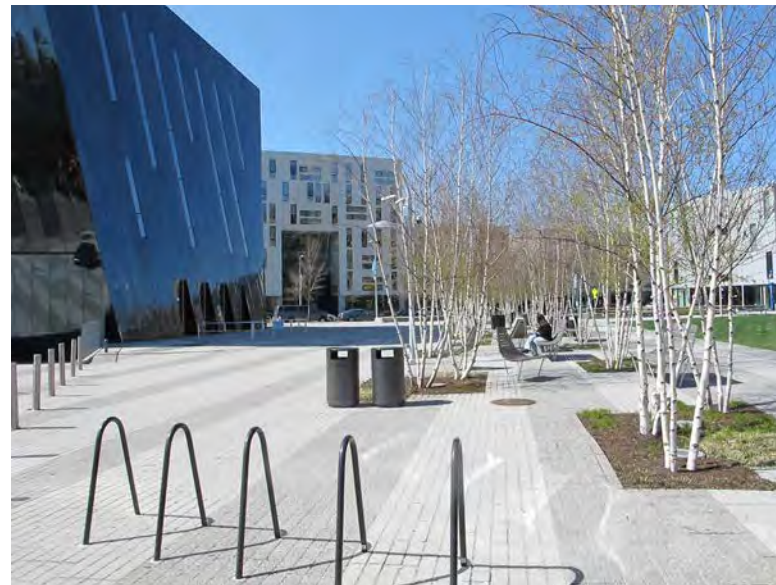
George Gund, contains lecture halls and the Peter B. Lewis Theatre—home to the Cleveland Cinematique, an alternative film theater showing art, independent, and foreign films. A large glass atrium provides a light and airy counterpoint to the former factory. The addition allowed CIA to consolidate its campus and vacate its East Boulevard building, which was jointly purchased by CWRU and the Cleveland Museum of Art.

CIA also collaborated with MRN to develop a rental agreement that provides student housing within the Wall, further assimilating the campus in the Uptown development and helping to attract and retain students.

*Landscape as Connection*

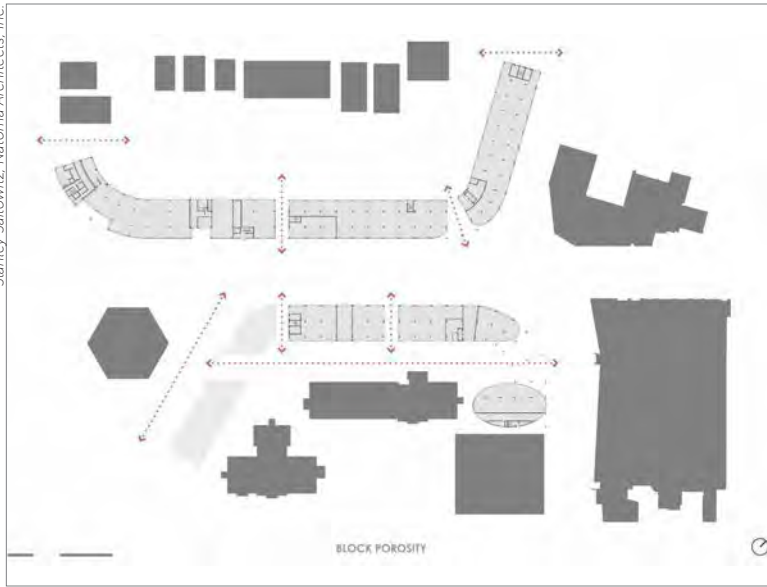
James Corner of Field Operations was chosen to design the public plaza in the triangle that houses MOCA. The design was based on the two cultural institutions, MOCA and CIA, serving as anchors and incorporating the two sweeping Saitowitz-designed buildings as gateways that expose the East 115th Street intersection as a destination. Included in the design for each anchor institution are public areas that connect the whole intersection as a pedestrian area.

The texture of the pathways and pedestrian plazas evokes the same relationships as Saitowitz’s design for the Wall buildings; the striation and verticality of the Wall is projected into the streetscape design. The landscape is also used to draw attention to certain major focal points in the Uptown District development. For example, the main entrance to the Phase 2 building at the corner of Euclid Avenue and Ford Drive, across from Toby’s Plaza and MOCA, features striations that seem to emanate out from the glass and aluminum façade. This also highlights the 22,000-square-foot Corner Alley, a bowling alley that serves as one of the major anchor points of the project on the corner of Ford Drive and Mayfield Road. In short, Field Operations used the architecture as a foil when designing the pedestrian plazas.



*Toby’s Plaza connects MOCA with adjoining buildings.*

Stanley Saitowitz, Natoma Architects, Inc.



Mid-block connections and pedestrian passageways, like Uptown Alley (bottom), link new development to the community.

### Transit

In keeping with the thread of connection that pervades the design of Uptown, another partner in the development of Uptown District was the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA). The RTA's HealthLine bus rapid transit system was developed concurrent to the Uptown project and was brought online in 2008, just in time for the economic collapse. It was a bold initiative, connecting downtown Cleveland through University Circle to East Cleveland. The HealthLine was controversial partly because of the cost and partly because of the segregated nature of Cleveland. Despite the financial troubles, the city and RTA recognized that the area could become a crucial link to downtown. It has since been recognized as one of the best examples of bus rapid transit in the world and has spurred over \$6 billion of investment along the corridor. The new stations connect Uptown District down Euclid Avenue to Public Square, another area slated to be redeveloped by Uptown's landscape architect, James Corner.

In addition, the RTA renovated the old Cedar-University Rapid Station and opened the new Little Italy-University Circle Rapid Station to create new gateways to University Circle and surrounding neighborhoods. The Cedar-University station was designed by Mehrdad Yazdani of Cannon Design's Los Angeles office, working with the URS Corporation (now AECOM). The Little Italy-University Circle station was designed by City Architecture of Cleveland. Part of these updates were encouraged through support from



HealthLine Bus Rapid Transit shelter (left), Little Italy-University Circle station.

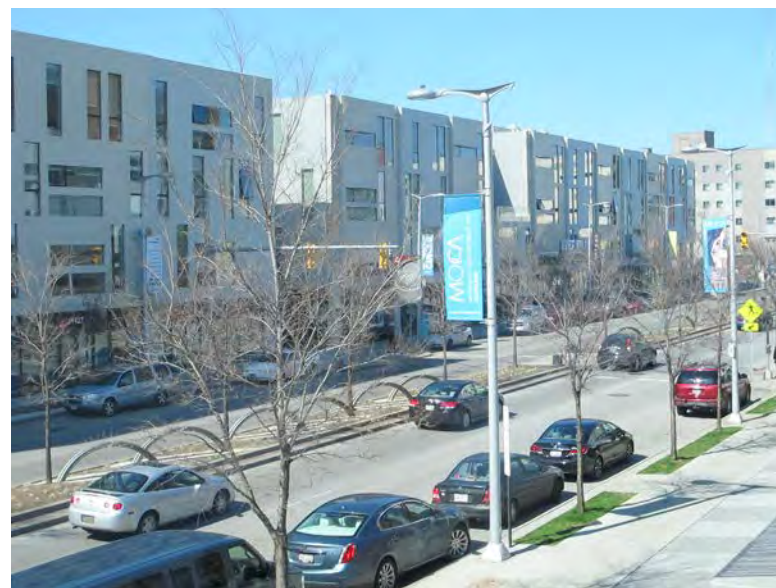


the Cleveland Foundation, CWRU, University Hospitals, and the Cleveland Clinic, which each contributed \$250,000. The vast majority of station construction was funded through grants from the Ohio Department of Transportation and the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency as well as Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) II and III grants from the US Department of Transportation and other federal earmarks from the federal legislative delegation in Ohio. TIGER grant programs are an explicit recognition that transportation systems are an integral part of economic recovery. The rest of the required funding was contributed by the RTA itself.

Again we see a remarkable range of participants, each with a real stake in the project, working together to assure a state-of-the-art transit hub as part of this transit-oriented neighborhood development. Stakeholder parking demands were reduced by public transit options, RTA's transit ridership went up, and distinctive transit connections for University Circle were established in the process. Stanley Saitowitz describes Yazdani's design for the RTA Hub as a gateway to University Circle, Cleveland Heights, and Cleveland itself, much like the philosophy that shaped the design of Uptown District.

### *Uptown Cleveland as a Whole*

The overall design of Uptown District mimics the organizational framework that brought the project to life in the first place. The built environment is representative of the teamwork and connection among organizations needed to get the project off the ground and the contemporaneous development of the major anchor institutions of the area. The project manifests connectivity and teamwork in the built environment through the clarity of client intent read and interpreted by individually contracted designers. This connectivity also refers to the array of public discussions and boardroom debates that made up so much of the whole effort to create Uptown. The open public process in the ideas publication produced by CWRU was grass roots (send us your ideas and best place examples),



*The Corner Alley (top) anchors the intersection of Euclid Avenue (bottom), Ford Drive, and Mayfield Road.*

and this, combined with the representative democracy that surrounded all the participants in the Greater University Circle Initiative and the top-down discussions at the board level, informed the entire decision-making process in Uptown’s development. No one institution appeared to metaphorically win at the expense of another, and there were enough players involved that checks and balances were in place.

### ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

In order to engage people in Uptown District and the greater University Circle area, the stakeholders recognized the need for on-site community programming. A prime example is UCI’s “Wade Oval Wednesdays,” which take advantage of the warm summer months by hosting weekly outdoor concerts in the largest open green space in University Circle between the Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland Museum of Natural History, and Cleveland Botanical Garden—a five-minute walk from Uptown. Uptown District also uses Toby’s Plaza, with its sculptural picnic benches developed in an art competition as well as the “Faces of Uptown” image projections, to host concerts and programs sponsored by CWRU, UCI, and MOCA. Other events have been held on the relatively new public plaza including bicycle demonstrations, retail promotions, and MOCA programs, including free entry to the museum on the first Saturday of each month.

The relationship between CIA and MOCA is programmatic and spatial. MOCA is clearly an asset to CIA students as a site for the presentation of contemporary art. Students learn from MOCA programs and MOCA is physically identified with excellence in art education. The axis between the institutions is a site of mingling among patrons of the museum and students at CIA.

Community members and nonprofit and philanthropic organizations also realized that Uptown District lacked attractive, affordable housing as well



Public art includes “Faces of Uptown” (top) and picnic benches in Toby’s Plaza.

as neighborhood services, retail, viable social services, and entertainment. They worked collaboratively to recruit and support diverse residents and commercial tenants to Uptown and the surrounding neighborhoods through entities like UCI; Neighborhood Progress, Inc., a local community development funding intermediary; and Neighborhood Connections, a nonprofit that works to strengthen and empower neighborhoods through direct engagement with residents.

While much has already been said of the Cleveland Foundation, it is useful to note that it spun off Neighborhood Connections as a separate nonprofit organization that remains largely supported by the foundation. Neighborhood Connections' mission is to enable neighborhood restoration at the scale of individual homes and community facilities and activities. The primary focus areas are the neighborhoods surrounding Uptown District, although in time they anticipate being able to expand into other areas.

In the network of large institutions that make up Uptown District, the main emphasis is still regional connectivity and the encouragement of local businesses. However, there is a significant presence of chain stores like Panera, Barnes & Noble, Jimmy Johns, and others. These institutional chains are described as providing stability while the project and Cleveland itself gain traction. In addition to these chain stores, there are still the local touches that make Uptown District unique to Cleveland, including local bars and restaurants, boutiques, a locally operated grocery store, and the Corner Alley bowling alley at Euclid Avenue and Ford Road.

Another mainstay of the district is the Happy Dog at the Euclid Tavern at East 116th Street and Euclid Avenue. The Euclid Tavern was established in 1908 and became an eccentric but venerable rock club that over time came to represent the vitality and diversity of a district as varied as the acts that played there. The tavern closed in 2013 when the struggling business was bought out by University Circle Inc. to preserve and update the site.



Locally owned businesses include the Corner Alley (top) and Mitchell's Ice Cream (right).

The reopening of the Euclid Tavern as the Happy Dog is symbolic of the concern for history, local interest, and rebirth of the area. The owners of Happy Dog redeveloped the Euclid Tavern with very little alteration to the overall atmosphere of the original space. The faithful reproduction of the

Euclid Tavern is in sharp contrast to the modern architecture of the Wall and MOCA’s “gem,” but it is consistent with the renovation of the former Ford plant to accommodate CIA’s expansion and the renovation of the Commodore Hotel into modest apartments.

### FINANCING

There was much groundwork that needed to be laid to actually create Uptown. The Cleveland Foundation is a common thread in the history of the collaboration among the institutions involved in financing the project. The sources and uses of all seven projects are beyond the scope of this report, but the full expenditures on these projects totaled more than \$200 million as of 2015.

**TABLE 2: CLEVELAND FOUNDATION GRANTS AND INVESTMENTS RELATED TO UPTOWN DEVELOPMENT**

Grant to MOCA for relocation to Uptown	\$1,600,000
Grant to CIA for consolidation in Uptown	\$1,000,000
Planning grant to Maximum Accessible Housing Ohio	\$150,000
Grant to UCI for joint parking feasibility study	\$50,000
Grant to UCI to promote Living in the Circle forgivable loan program for home buyers, strategic investments, a visitor’s center, and a safety study	\$150,000
Grant to RTA for planning Mayfield Road Station	\$120,000
Grant to CWRU for predevelopment, streetscape, and public amenities for Uptown	\$1,000,000
Program Related Investment Phase 1 (the Wall)	\$4,000,000
CWRU planning grant for Phase 2 (the Wall)	\$160,000
Program Related Investment Phase 2 (the Wall)	\$2,000,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,230,000</b>

The details on groundwork by the Cleveland Foundation as well as the actual sources and uses of Uptown Phase 1 are provided in Tables 2 and 3 to show the level of engagement by the Cleveland Foundation and the relative complexity of the financing for the initial phase of the project. Phase 1 northeast of Euclid Avenue involved 112,000 square feet total and included 114 market-rate apartments and 60,000 square feet of retail.

After the economic downturn that began in 2006 and the subsequent cautiousness of banks regarding direct bank funding, the developers of Uptown District had to find creative solutions to finance the project. The partnership between UCI, the Cleveland Foundation, local government, and MRN was what made this project possible. These four major organizations worked together to develop a complex network of low-interest loans that would be used to qualify the project for New Market Tax Credits (NMTC), an innovative federal financing program established in 2000 as a vehicle to bring private capital investment to low-income communities. Other funding resulted from direct grants to the project in combination with low-interest, program-related investments. One of the keys to successful completion of Uptown was constructing it in two phases, the first to show the viability of the project and the second to complete it.

CWRU’s commitment to hold the master leases for the university bookstore and grocery store helped convince banks such as First Merit and Key Bank that the project was viable in a fragile financial climate. It is the kind of patient financial investment that anchor institutions can make in anticipation of long-term returns. Many Quality Low-Income Community Investment loans (QLICI) were provided to enhance eligibility for tax credits. The project has to carry the debt for seven years to sustain its eligibility, after which the debt from places like the Cleveland Foundation can be forgiven, essentially making the loan a grant to the project. QLICI Loan A is unique, as it includes \$4 million from the Cleveland Foundation, \$2 million from the Gund Foundation, and \$750,000 from the Village Capital Corporation that

will not need to be paid back. Overall there are loans totaling approximately \$10.9 million that revert to grants after seven years, nearly a fourth of the total funding sources. The Cleveland Development Partnership II Loan came from the Community Reinvestment Act pool.

The City of Cleveland Department of Economic Development (CDED) also played a significant role in the funding of the Uptown project. The CDED directly contributed \$5 million from its Vacant Property Initiative, a forgivable loan program that encourages businesses to buy out and revitalize vacant areas in Cleveland. This loan provided a catalyst for further investment by banks, as the CDED was able to shoulder more risk during a financially sensitive time. This gave Uptown enough capital to establish better borrowing terms with local banks.

It is important to note that the City of Cleveland attached caveats to its money that required construction contractors to hire 20% of their labor



*Constantino's Market serves Uptown as the district's only grocery store.*

force from Cleveland residents, 4% of whom had to qualify as low-income earners. One of the primary goals of the Jackson administration is to ensure that local development projects create direct benefits for Cleveland residents. To achieve this goal, the city has been resolute in strengthening the interface between the Mayor's Office of Equal Opportunity, development departments, and the contracting community. The focus has been on living wage, resident employment, diversity, and inclusion. The City of Cleveland's enactment of the Cleveland Resident Employment Law in 2004 provides a strong base for this work. Cleveland had been encouraging a walkable, pedestrian-friendly development, and its financial commitment to this project in a time that was financially unstable was an investment that aimed to close the gap in local development during the economic downturn. This governmental investment was also an important symbol of the commitment to what the city believes is the future of Cleveland.

Phase 2 is the triangular site across from Phase 1 on Euclid Avenue. The \$26 million Phase 2 project provides 20,000 square feet of retail, 44 apartments, and room to accommodate 130 CIA students. It was also funded with a variety of low-interest loans, including many QLIC loans tied to the New Market Tax Credits. It was a significantly simpler deal to assemble given the demonstrated viability of Phase 1 and the less ambitious program of construction.

New Market Tax Credits A, B, and C came from Huntington Bank, the Cleveland Foundation, and developer equity. One of the most interesting funding mechanisms for Phase 2 was the \$5 million from the Cleveland International Fund, which is a collection of donations by international philanthropists for the purposes of investing in the United States in return for the ability to work in the country. This is representative of the unique collaborative and connective approach of the developers and nonprofits working on Uptown, only here projected into a financial domain.

TABLE 3: PHASE 1 DEVELOPMENT	
<i>Sources</i>	
First Merit Bank	\$8,400,000
Key Bank	\$9,000,000
Qualified Low-Income Community Investment QLICI Loan A	\$6,750,000
QLICI Loan B	\$2,715,000
QLICI Loan C	\$160,000
QLICI Loan D	\$2,250,000
QLICI Loan E	\$3,601,450
Cleveland Development Partnership II Loan	\$1,500,000
City of Cleveland Vacant Property Initiative Loan	\$2,750,000
Deferred Earn Out to CWRU	\$4,250,000
Qualified Active Low-Income Community Business (QALICB) Members Equity Contribution	\$2,355,639
Release of Funded Community Development Entity (CDE) Fees and Expenses Reserves	\$224,776
Release of Funding of Preferred Return Reserve to Leasing Company AJAPPJR V LLC	\$53,975
Interest of Construction Escrow	\$6,457
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$44,017,297</b>
<i>Uses</i>	
<i>Land</i>	
Cash at Closing	\$1,825,000
Deferred Earnings	\$4,250,000
Hard Costs	\$27,766,522
<i>Soft Costs</i>	
Architectural/Engineering	\$1,110,027
Landscape/Streetscape Architect/Engineer	\$105,000
Building Permits and Fees	\$166,296
General Conditions	\$732,995
Insurance	\$83,633
Legal Fees	\$915,443
Marketing	\$126,000
Soft Cost Contingency	\$832,996
Survey	\$80,350
Tax Credit Application Fees	\$41,650
Brokerage Fees	\$980,325
Pre-Construction Services	\$891,450
Other Loan Fees	\$530,986
Economic Impact Study	\$15,000
Investor Closing Fee	\$15,000
Construction Period Interest	\$910,501
Funding Preferred Return to AJAPPJR V LLC Reserve	\$76,200
CDE and Administration Fees Paid Quarterly	\$174,776
Audit and Tax Paid Annually in December	\$50,000
Payment of Preferred Return to AJAPPJR V LLC	\$53,975
Funding of CDE Fees and Audit and Tax costs	\$1,058,550
Less: Amount Funded from Operations	(\$300,600)
Developer Fee	\$2,000,000
Less: Deferred Portion	(\$1,147,702)
Project Contingency	\$672,924
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$44,017,297</b>

The total scope of Uptown District development clearly exceeds MRN's \$70 million projected cost, totaling over \$200 million when including the \$75 million CIA expansion, the \$26 million MOCA building, and the \$32 million for site acquisition. Additional funds were expended on parking and RTA HealthLine and Cedar-University Rapid Transit infrastructure, fit-out for several tenants, the CWRU Triangle Apartments renovations, and the Commodore Place conversion of a hotel into 198 mixed-income housing units. As intended, the whole of Uptown District is continuing to see new investment and development.

## IMPACT

Key ideas and themes drawn from Cleveland's Uptown District development will evolve for decades to come. However, first and last among them is the process of inter-institutional collaboration that invites shared risk and shared return, which has already produced a far greater return for all involved than had the institutions acted alone. Success is a catalyst for future development, and credit for success widely shared energizes all participants.

In any city, transit is too big a political and economic entity to be pushed by only one constituency. In the collaborative construction of Uptown District, it was pushed by an army of constituents. And, once tested for strength, relationships among the constituents got stronger, trust increased, and more got done. So while it may be counterintuitive, more and diverse partners have proven in Uptown to be better able to act than any one on its own.

Planners and designers often see diverse partners and multiple stakeholders as the enemy of clear vision, but in Uptown, many strong professionals played with a loosely but strategically developed playbook to deliver a new, distinctively modern yet non-heroic urban fabric and architecture. The net

result is a strong urban design with solid new landmarks, a well-defined yet permeable district, significant transportation nodes, and a walkable mixed-use neighborhood.

## *Success Is a Catalyst*

Uptown District has helped to create and, indeed, foster demand for a mixed-use rental market where for the past half century none existed. The residential units in Phase 1 were 70% leased within a month of their opening, and the Phase 2 units were 100% leased when that building opened. Other developers are planning another mixed-use apartment, retail, and office building named Intesa which will be built on nearby land owned by UCI. The project will add more than 250 additional apartments in University Circle. Still other developers plan to begin construction this year on One University Circle, a new 20-story apartment building where the Children's Museum of Cleveland once stood, on land also owned by UCI.



*Uptown District has created and fostered demand for a mixed-used rental market.*

### *Transit Is a Catalyst*

Uptown has been transformed into a more diverse, walkable, and transit-oriented urban setting. The new RTA HealthLine and RTA stations allow travel between Uptown District and downtown, and the success of this line has already contributed to further transit-oriented development.

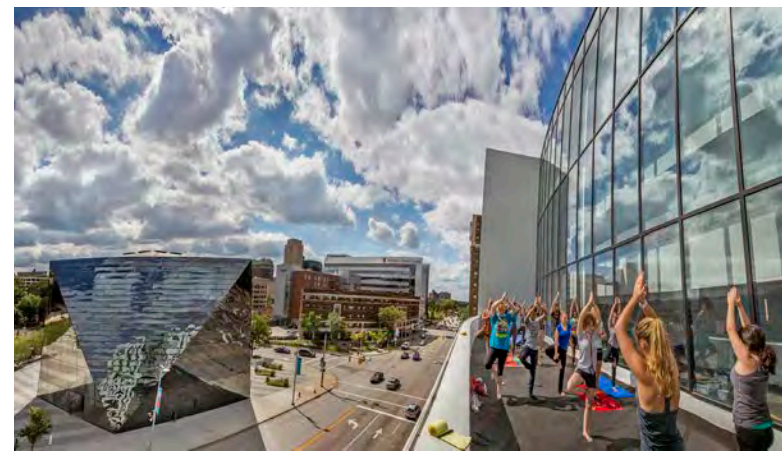
The RTA reports that since its start, the new rapid transit stations have increased ridership at a steady rate year after year. The Red Line RTA service has 19 miles of rail servicing downtown through University Circle and beyond and services 6.2 million riders per year.

### *Strong Relationships Get Stronger with Practice*

Not only are there examples of impact on the built environment in the development of Uptown District, but there is also ample evidence of improved public-private partnerships and institutional collaboration in University Circle. The strength of the relationships between the main stakeholders CWRU, CIA, MOCA, the City of Cleveland, UCI, and MRN with the Cleveland Foundation and other philanthropies helped the group weather the development challenges along the way. The economic and housing crisis forced the stakeholders to “press the reset button” on their financing plans and eventually revise most of the final building design. The diversity of the stakeholders and the creativity and flexibility they showed in financing, building, and marketing Uptown is a testament to the future success of University Circle and a great example for communities across the country. This project shows that with the right partners and creative thinkers, positive change is replicable in places where it might not have been decades ago. As part of the Cleveland Foundation’s ongoing Greater University Circle Initiative, the president of the Cleveland Foundation, the president of CWRU, city leaders including the mayor, and other University Circle partners meet quarterly on issues of shared interest.



Robert Muller



Scott Pease

Programming includes outdoor concerts and yoga.



### *It's Not a College Town; It's a Place for Clevelanders that Includes the College Community*

While the university presence is unmistakable, all of the institutions invested in the project utilize the space for activities and programming. What sets this college town apart, however, is that it is not a college town—it is a place for all Clevelanders to congregate.

Programming in and just outside of the projects in Uptown District include concerts, street festivals, university celebrations, art exhibitions, walking tours, a program of free first Saturdays in MOCA, special discount nights for medical staff from University Hospitals, picnics, CIA public art installations, and more. The diversity of institutions that deliver programs and the diverse range of new residents assure a multi-generational experience. These programs are curated by staff at CWRU, CIA, MOCA, UCI, and many other University Circle partners. By all accounts the district has gone from “no traffic” to “no place to park” through the rich mix of uses in Uptown and the wide array of programming.

### *Gentrification Is an Issue*

Part of the promise of Uptown District is that as economic inclusion programs on workforce development and employment, safety and security, small grant home repairs, K-12 education, and human services for adjacent neighborhoods mature, the diversity of the area will be further enriched and sustainable. More work on the policy side of gentrification will be required to realize this promise.

It is too soon to tell if the demographics surrounding Uptown are changing. Some are optimistic about a shift to a better mix of affluence with existing residents, and others are afraid that gentrification is exactly what will happen. Much of the work of Neighborhood Connections seeks to seed neighborhood development and improvements in the largely African American communities that are part of the neighborhoods abut-

ting Uptown District and University Circle, and to the extent that affordable housing within Uptown is seen as helping, that may also address concerns about possible gentrification. Phases 1 and 2 have 20% affordable units, the Commodore Hotel was restored into subsidized affordable housing, and greater access to transportation is a significant help for overall area affordability.

Neighborhood Connections is also host to an innovative “Neighbor Up” network to improve community health, build neighborhood wealth, and create meaningful places. For example, teams of residents and healthcare professionals work on reducing infant mortality and lead poisoning rates in the Greater University Circle. They also encourage local spending as a vehicle for wealth creation. Participating neighbors in greater Buckeye and Glenville work on construction projects, and all six neighborhoods in the Greater University Circle area participate in a “City Repair Night,” where best practices on community and public spaces are shared and collectively enabled. So far nearly 1,500 neighborhood residents have participated in the Neighbor Up network since its inception in 2012. Their regular meetings in Uptown are networking at its best.

The relatively small size of the development to date makes it difficult to assess if the project is attracting people from other parts of the city to live, work, or even shop there. However a number of market-rate apartments and below-market-rate apartments are occupied by people who did not previously live uptown. Projections of additional development are planned and some are under design. Still others are under construction or have already cut the ribbon. MOCA reports its highest visitation rates ever since opening and claims success in an ambitious capital campaign. CWRU reports it is receiving three times the number of applicants since 2007, and officials believe the interest is partly related to the quality of the context Uptown District creates for the university.

The City of Cleveland approaches concerns about gentrification and displacement with multiple programs related to affordable housing, transit, and work force development, including a Community Benefit Agreement that ties development incentives to employment. The latter was unveiled in 2013 after two years of hard work and collaboration between the city and business, civic, labor, and trade organizations including the Greater Cleveland Partnership, the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, and several agencies representing minority contractors and union workers. Each pledged to set goals for hiring local and minority skilled workers for future construction projects throughout the region and to support training programs that feed the pipeline to the industry's workforce.

Uptown District partners also work to keep a diverse population through programs like the Evergreen Cooperatives, worker-owned cooperatives that employ previously unemployed or underemployed residents from economically challenged neighborhoods nearby. Neighborhood Connections is an example of a nonprofit organization that works to combat gentrification with small grants at the individual homeowner or neighborhood scale.

There are no policies tied to rising property values that assure displacement will not occur. However, while the market seeks incentives to develop, the city is working to ensure a percentage of affordable units will be provided.

### *Good Design Matters*

The philosophical thread that connects the physical structures in Uptown is evidence that good design matters. Each building has its unique conceptual characteristics that define its place in Uptown. The retail base of the buildings on both sides of Euclid Avenue encourage both pedestrian and residential use; MOCA is the focal point; and CIA, CWRU, and University Hospitals are situated on four distinct corners of the project, providing anchor points for the area both physically and socially connected to the core.

### *Sustainability Matters*

Now that Uptown District is more complete, the only step left is seeing how it holds up in the future. As of early 2015, Uptown could be regarded as a success, as it has aided all of the institutions that were directly or tangentially involved. Uptown has helped make CWRU more attractive to applicants, whose numbers have tripled since 2007. MOCA moved to a new location and has significantly increased attendance. CIA consolidated its campus and was able to house all freshman students across the street in new dorms, enriching the mix of tenants on Euclid Avenue. The next step is to draw and retain additional retailers and maintain the status of the area as a "place." Not incidentally, the projects all meet LEED certifications.

### *Diversity Matters*

Uptown District bypasses the historical bifurcation of Cleveland down Euclid Avenue that split the area into two economically, environmentally, and



*Landscape and building design promotes connectivity.*

socially distinct areas. Instead, the project utilizes RTA connections to integrate Uptown District rather than segregate it, and Euclid Avenue now brings Clevelanders together rather than divides them. The richness of event programming and its open and largely free nature invites a mixed age, race, and class engagement. The array of institutions also caters to a multi-generational population and varied income capacity.

*Connections are Critical*

One thing that remains to be seen is whether Uptown District can broaden CWRU's and CIA's connections to Cleveland. In the age of digital connectivity and openness, connectivity in the urban form is just as necessary as it ever was, and good integration of education, arts, culture, and economic development is crucial for the development of a good 21st century city. Uptown represents this connectivity with the fabric of the project and its links to the city of Cleveland. The RTA rapid transit and

related rail connections also significantly improved access to the jobs, culture, art, and education available not just in Uptown, but in all of Greater University Circle.

Uptown District is still evolving, but judging by the institutional patience during the turbulent inception of the project and its successes to date, Uptown as a whole demonstrates great promise. Additional phases of work and success in efforts to revitalize adjacent neighborhoods will increase the variety and vitality of an already transformed urban district.

**ASSESSING IMPACT IN RESPECT TO PROJECT GOALS**

*GOAL: Create mixed-income housing to attract a diversity of residents and students to the area.*

Uptown includes a mix of affordable, market-rate, and student housing. Phases 1 and 2 allow for 20% affordable housing for those who earn up to 80% of median income. The 15-story Commodore Hotel renovation is all low-income efficiencies and one- and two-bedroom units. Still more mixed-income units are being developed in the community. Uptown has frankly exceeded its mixed-income housing diversity goals with over 293 housing transactions in the surrounding neighborhoods and 450 new residents as of 2015, and the trending of this new resident activity is moving the needle on measures of poverty and racial mix.

*GOAL: Create retail space that attracts both locally owned and national retail establishments.*

The retail mix in early 2015 included 24 food, drink, retail shopping, and amenity establishments like the University Circle Visitors Center. Sixteen of the 24 are locally owned businesses. Of the food and drink establishments, eight of 13 are local. Of the shopping and amenity establishments, seven of the 10 are local.



Case Western Reserve University's annual Blue Block Party on Toby's Plaza.

Robert Muller



Rien Van Rijthoven



The new development offers signature architecture and a place for the community to come together.

*GOAL: Emphasize signature architecture and placemaking with world-class design.*

Certainly the array of well-known designers is impressive. The architecture of Phases 1 and 2 has been praised in local, national, and international media as well as in professional press. The diagram of the site reveals an approach that provides for “short blocks,” and Uptown Alley affords ample outdoor café and plaza seating along the pedestrian route that connects MOCA and CIA. The entire Uptown District is very walkable and the wayfinding is clear based on the simplicity of the building and site designs and lines of sight to various attractions.

*GOAL: Promote connectivity through the design of public spaces and transit.*

Transit capacities connect downtown with Uptown District and all of University Circle. The short blocks link the new development to neighboring communities, and the relationships among MOCA, CIA, CWRU, and University Hospitals are clearly visible standing in Toby Plaza.

*GOAL: Take full advantage of the convergence of art, education, and health care institutions as a source of creative district revitalization.*

Uptown District created a place to mix the populations from CWRU, University Hospitals, and CIA with MOCA patrons as well as customers of restaurants, bars, and entertainment venues, building on its strengths as a multi-institution and multi-purpose destination. The density of the population working in these Uptown institutions and the easy links available through new transit options also represent significant leverage of existing strengths. Finally, the history of the site includes memories of a place of character that offered bowling and music, memories that are also leveraged in the new district.

*GOAL: Create a sustainable, state-of-the-art development with partnerships and programs that ensure vitality and longevity.*

LEED silver environmental standards were the aspiration for CIA, MOCA, and both of the Phase 1 and 2 buildings. While all the certifications are not concluded, no one is anticipating any difficulty meeting these state-of-the-art standards. The sustainability of the development itself seems assured based on the strengths of the partner institutions and the long-term financial commitments they have made, including lease arrangements and the underwriting of both the Barnes & Noble university book store and the grocery store. The concurrent developments of RTA rail hubs also help assure commuter traffic, and movement to and from downtown along the Red Line RTA and Euclid Avenue bus line will continue to the site. The long-term programming for Toby's Plaza is currently subject to oversight by CWRU and may be vulnerable to budget ups and downs, but given the strength of the partners, that would likely just be another problem to solve, and they seem to be good at team problem solving.

*Future Plans*

The ongoing work of the Greater University Circle Initiative is designed to address the quality of life in all seven neighborhoods that abut Uptown District. CWRU also already has added or has plans to add new facilities totaling more than one million square feet of academic, residential, and public space to its campus, including the newly opened University Center. Private retailers have begun to notice the increased investment as well, and retail space in the surrounding area that has been vacant for some time has now come alive with new tenants, adding new restaurants and entertainment venues to the area. Uptown District is hosting a variety of community events and programs, including concerts and bicycle riding promotions that celebrate its role as a community hub and draw additional people to the district.



*Uptown District links art, education, and health care including University Hospitals (top) and MOCA.*

### SELECTION COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

In selecting Uptown District as a Silver Medalist, the Selection Committee recognized the importance of a collaborative, anchor institution-led project that focused on making the community a better place and a commitment to quality design. They praised CWRU's decision to invest in the neighborhood rather than turning its back and walling itself off, noting that it resulted in increased enrollment. The committee observed that this kind of approach is rare, with exceptions like the University of Pennsylvania's investment in West Philadelphia and Trinity College in Hartford. The committee was excited about the potential for the project to inspire similar initiatives and to be a model for other universities and communities.

The committee praised the development approach that integrated student and market-rate housing, a museum, retail, and public transit, including two

new rail stations. They acknowledged the significant collaboration among the institutions and public and private partners who remained committed throughout years of planning and development and persevered through significant financial challenges. The committee observed that Uptown District reflects this spirit of collaboration in the creation of a new community hub and the physical presence of the institutions, locally owned businesses, residents, and students.

The committee praised the vision and ambition that set the stage and expectations for design quality and resulted in the involvement of well-known designers. They admired the courage it took to make a deliberate shift away from the more conservative and traditional architecture predominant in the city towards more contemporary design, noting that it "puts Cleveland on the map." The committee observed that although the design is overtly mod-



*Uptown District at dusk.*

Scott Pease

“THE COMMITTEE ADMIRERD THE COURAGE IT TOOK TO DELIBERATELY SHIFT TOWARDS MORE CONTEMPORARY DESIGN THAT PUTS CLEVELAND ON THE MAP.”

ern, it is not “heroic.” Instead, it seeks to create a new urban context through the use of “background” buildings that connect the district with adjoining development and create a sense of enclosure. They noted that the overall plan and massing make the right urban design moves in respect to scale, turning the corners, and incorporation of first-floor retail and mid-block portals that encourage pedestrian flow between Euclid Avenue and the adjoining pedestrian mall and parking area. The committee observed that the boundaries of the project are “fuzzy,” suggesting that this permeability lends itself to physical and social integration with adjoining neighborhoods.

Although the committee commended the project for the strong design agenda that served as an “act of engagement” and shifted attitudes towards design in the community, some members questioned the choice of aesthetics and construction materials. They observed that the new building materials do not blend in color, scale, and texture with ones found in the existing neighborhood. The committee commented that the glossy black geometric MOCA building turns its back on the main intersection of Euclid Avenue and Mayfield Road and appears out of place, and that the public plazas would benefit from “softening” with additional plantings and greenspace. The committee also questioned the degree to which the project has benefited adjoining low-income neighborhoods and residents. While they acknowledged that institutional commitment and investment in the community through the Evergreen Initiative, Hire/Buy Local program, and Neighborhood Connections illustrates commitment to community, they felt that the actual impact was unclear and expressed concern about potential gentrification that would push out existing residents.

**RELATED RBA WINNERS**

Uptown District highlights the role of anchor institutions in catalyzing and leading community change. Several previous RBA winners involved complex collaborations between diverse anchor institutions and local municipalities that generated new investment in mixed-use development, public spaces, and programming that benefitted and revitalized their communities.



**CIVIC SPACE PARK** (2011 Silver Medalist) resulted from a close collaboration between Arizona State University (ASU) and the city of Phoenix, bringing new ASU facilities downtown and generating rapid transit and commercial mixed-use development as well as the creation of a park with a large art installation, all of which add density and programming to downtown.



**DOWNTOWN SILVER SPRING AND DISCOVERY WORLD HEADQUARTERS** (2005 Silver Medalist) in Maryland is the product of a public-private partnership that leverages transit with large cultural institutions. In this case, the American Film Institute and Discovery World Headquarters worked together to revitalize one of the earliest Washington, DC, suburbs.



**CAMPUS CIRCLE** (1995 Silver Medalist) was a collaborative initiative led by Marquette University that transformed a 90-square-block area next to the school in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The project involved community-based organizations, businesses, and residents in improving housing, developing commercial property, and promoting safety and community involvement.

Pike Place Market (1987 Gold Medalist), Yerba Buena Gardens (1999 Gold Medalist), and Santa Fe Railyard (2011 Silver Medalist) offer additional examples of public-private partnerships that developed and implemented complex projects with ambitious community goals.

More information about these and other RBA winners can be found at [www.rudybruneraward.org](http://www.rudybruneraward.org).

## Resources

This case study was compiled from information gathered from the project application, an extensive site visit in April 2015, discussions with the RBA Selection Committee, and research and interviews conducted during those processes and throughout the writing and editing of this book. Titles and positions of interviewees and URLs listed below were effective as of the site visit unless otherwise noted.

### INTERVIEWS

#### Case Western Reserve University:

Barbara R. Snyder, President

John Wheeler, Senior Vice President for Administration

Marilyn Mobley, Vice President, Inclusion, Diversity and Equal Opportunity

Steve Campbell, Vice President, Campus Planning and Facilities Management

Julie Rehm, Vice President, Government and Foundation Relations

Jennifer Cimperman, Special Projects Director,

Government and Foundation Relations

Latisha James, Senior Director, Local Government and Community Relations

Irwin Lowenstein, Campus Architect

Kevin Slesh, Director of Real Estate

#### City of Cleveland:

Frank G. Jackson, Mayor

Tracey Nichols, Director of Economic Development

Mamie Mitchell, Councilwoman, Ward 6

#### Cleveland Foundation:

Ronald B. Richard, President and CEO

Lilian Kuri, Program Director for Arts and Urban Design

India Pierce Lee, Program Director for Neighborhoods, Housing, and Community Development (interviewed after the winners were selected as she recused herself during the selection process)

#### Cleveland Institute of Art:

Grafton Nunes, President

#### CIA Uptown Apartments/Student Residences:

Jiaxin Cai, Resident

Sydney Givens, Resident

Grace Gongaware, Resident Advisor

Marissa Krekeler, Resident

Hanna Rubin, Resident

Gabrielle Watson, Resident Advisor

#### MRN Ltd.:

Ari Maron, Partner

Rick Maron, General Contractor

#### Community Partners:

Maribeth Feke, Director, Planning and Programming,

Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority

Pete Mitchell, Co-founder/Co-owner, Mitchell's Ice Cream

Danielle Price, Program Coordinator, Community Engagement,

Neighborhood Connections

Ronald B. Richard, President and CEO, Cleveland Foundation

Chris Ronayne, President, University Circle, Inc.

Jill Snyder, Executive Director, Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland

Steve Standley, Chief Administrative Officer, University Hospitals

#### Consultants:

Kathie Barrie, Principal, Barrie Projects

Alex Krieger, NBBJ (formerly Chan Krieger Associates)

Stanley Saitowitz, Partner, Stanley Saitowitz|Natoma Architects, Inc.

*\*Interviews conducted by phone*

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