



**Kennedy  
Heights**

**Kennedy Heights  
Community Council**  
PO Box 36318  
Cincinnati, OH 45236

**DRAFT FOR REVIEW AND COMMENT**

April 18, 2023

To: J. Robert Smyjunas, CEO  
Vandercar Holdings, Inc  
5027 Madison Road  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45227

**RE: Letter of Support for the Redevelopment of the Former Schroder School Property Site at 3500 Lumford Place in Kennedy Heights**

Rob,

Thank you for your diligence and on-going cooperation in the development of refinements to your original conceptual redevelopment plan for the former Shroder Junior High School Property.

As you are aware the deteriorating condition of the former school building and associated grounds has been a source of concern for our community since the closure and eventual sale of the property in 2012. The property has been identified as one of our neighborhood's most important redevelopment sites through the course of several strategic planning and visioning studies including our *2022 Neighborhood Comprehensive Plan* and the more recent *Shroder Working Group Vision*.

We appreciate your willingness to incorporate key components of our visioning and redevelopment priorities within the plan which you presented before the Community Council at our March 21st meeting. Over the course of the past seven (7) months we have provided multiple opportunities for our residents to review various drafts of the concept plan and have received extensive feedback from adjoining property owners, concerned residents and affected stakeholders. Both our recent *Neighborhood Comprehensive Plan* and the 2012 "*Plan Cincinnati*" Citywide Comprehensive Plan update have cited the importance of providing quality housing options of varied sizes and types for residents at all income levels and at all stages of life.

We support your proposed development of rental townhomes and patio homes as these modern housing options will expand the neighborhood's housing choices and broaden opportunities for new and existing residents seeking the conveniences and amenities which they can offer. Further, we support the urban design plan for the proposed neighborhood and appreciate your willingness to decrease the number of homes being proposed in your earlier concept plans to the current 64 unit maximum.

In recognition of the significant cost and site constraints inherent to the removal of the blighted and environmentally contaminated building we support the use of City and or State funding toward the demolition and remediation of the former school building and site.

Further, we support for the establishment of Tax Increment Financing and/or other public funding options which the Administration and City Council deem appropriate to assist you in overcoming gaps in the required funding of public utilities, earthwork, site restoration, remediation and other items necessary in completing the public infrastructure and amenities essential to the redevelopment of the property and its seamless integration with adjoining streets and Kennedy Park.

We are keenly interested in collaborating with Vandercar and the Cincinnati Parks District to devise an improvement plan to protect and enhance the ephemeral streams and woodland habitat adjoining the development, including the restoration of the adjoining woodland habitat and the development of an improved sidewalk and trail network.

In order to ensure that the final development plan is well integrated into the fabric and environment of the larger neighborhood we respectfully ask that Vandercar, the Cincinnati Planning Commission and the City of Cincinnati address the following listing of community concerns leading up to the required re-zoning hearing and continuing through the issuance of all required final City permits for demolition & construction. Each of the following concerns have been voiced in the meetings with adjoining residents and community members as noted above:

1. Any final plan approved by the City of Cincinnati should be reasonable relative to the development's compatibility with the neighborhood and should not exceed the proposed density of the November 22<sup>nd</sup> Concept Plan.
2. The design of all proposed homes should feature durable materials, styles and finishes which are complimentary to those on surrounding streets and the general character of the surrounding neighborhood. We look forward to appointing a small ad-hoc group of neighborhood residents to serve in a design review and advisory capacity as proposed at the March 21, Community Council meeting.
3. Traffic & Pedestrian Safety on adjoining streets should not be compromised or diminished in any way. Particular attention should be given to pedestrian safety along Lumford and Robison where park visitors must cross streets serving the development.
4. Stormwater Runoff from the development should be managed in ways that preserve the water quality and health of the contiguous ephemeral streams and downstream wetland.
5. Clearing & site grading for the development should not encroach upon the Park or adjoining properties or negatively impact the ecology or environmental quality of the adjoining woodlands.

6. The building demolition & abatement process necessary for the removal of the former school buildings and remediation of the site should be carefully and continuously monitored to prevent off-site contamination and potential health impacts. The same level of care and scrutiny should be applied to all phases of site and building construction.
7. The proposed rental properties should be professionally managed to ensure the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the homes and grounds.
8. The final open space configuration of the approved plan should be complimentary and additive to the environmental quality of Kennedy Park.
9. The final landscape plans should include significant landscape buffer plantings, canopy trees and understory plantings. Any approved landscape plans should include specifications for the proper restoration of soils within bufferyards and open spaces and feature native plant species which are compatible with the ecosystems found in the adjoining woodlands, ephemeral stream corridor and Kennedy Park.

Thanks again for your consideration . We look forward to continuing the collaborative relationship which has developed between us, the City of Cincinnati and the Cincinnati Parks District.

Sincerely,

Sharifah Tafari, President  
Kennedy Heights Community Council

*cc: William Weber, Assistant City Manager, City of Cincinnati  
Jason Barron, Director, Cincinnati Parks  
Al Gerhardstein, Esquire, Kennedy Heights Development Corporation*

*attachments: 3500 Lumford Place Brief History & FAQ's, 5 pages  
Kennedy Heights Shroder Working Group Vision, \_#\_ Pages*