

# Euclid Avenue

Cleveland, Ohio

## Enhancing a Corridor through Transit Investment



### Redevelopment Strategies

- » Broad infrastructure improvements centered around transit
- » Public/private partnerships to fund and implement the project

### Results and Lessons Learned

- » Strong public/private partnerships between multiple stakeholders contributed to the success of the project.
- » The establishment of a new transit line resulted in \$6.3 billion in new development, 13,000 new jobs, and more than 4,000 new residential units along the corridor.

**Euclid Avenue in Cleveland** is celebrated in the city's history as the turn-of-the-20th-century home to John D. Rockefeller and other prominent American businessmen. However, as development pressure and Cleveland's population increased, Euclid Avenue's luxury homes gave way to parking lots and shopping centers.

Beginning in the 1970s, local leaders set out to reestablish the corridor as a major transportation and economic development link by implementing a new transit system along the avenue. Seeking to connect the city's two largest commercial districts—downtown and University Circle—Cleveland stakeholders voted to establish a bus rapid transit (BRT) system in 1998. Known as the HealthLine, the BRT has both improved connectivity and attracted new development to the area since its completion in 2008.

In strategic partnerships with state and federal agencies, local stakeholders—including the city of Cleveland, the Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals, and the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (Cleveland's regional planning agency)—

completed the project for a total investment cost of \$200 million. The three goals guiding the development were to (1) improve service and efficiency for customers, (2) promote economic and community development along and adjacent to the line, and (3) improve quality of life for residents and visitors of the corridor and for area employees.

Today, the 9.2-mile HealthLine services Cleveland's cultural amenities, businesses, medical centers, and the convention center while operating seven days a week, 24 hours a day, along dedicated bus lanes. HealthLine buses and stations are highly efficient because the hybrid vehicles contain GPS communication, multiple doors for boarding, and text and audio communications. The stops feature raised platforms, fare vending machines, station signage, real-time displays, and interactive kiosks.

In anticipation of increased growth along the corridor, \$10 million of the total investment was put toward improving sidewalks, bike lanes, and the utility infrastructure. Design improvements along the corridor include lighting, public art,



newly paved surfaces, and 1,500 trees. Adjacent neighborhoods were given distinct identities through varying tree species, lighting patterns, and pavement and bus shelter designs.

Since the HealthLine's completion, new development and increased stakeholder collaboration have greatly improved the aesthetics and the usability of Euclid Avenue. Transit travel times have been reduced from 40 to 28 minutes. In the first year of operation, ridership increased by 48 percent, and between 2008 and 2015, ridership increased 70 percent.

The HealthLine has been credited with having the highest return on investment of any recent U.S. transit project, with \$6.3 billion in develop-

ment along the line, 13,000 new jobs, and more than 4,000 new residential units. The hybrid buses have 75 percent better fuel economy, and the new trees are expected to absorb close to 48 pounds of carbon dioxide per year once they reach maturity. After the BRT was completed, travel between destinations along Euclid Avenue became quicker for those traveling by bus or car and safer for those traveling by foot or bike.

Those accomplishments earned the HealthLine the Grand Award from the American Council of Engineering Companies in 2010, the Global Award for Excellence from ULI in 2011, and the title "Best in North America" by the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy in 2013.

**OPPOSITE:** A new BRT system has helped reestablish Euclid Avenue as a major transportation corridor in Cleveland. *(Craig Kuhner)*

**ABOVE RIGHT:** Before, Euclid Avenue was a desolate, car-oriented corridor that lacked public and private investment. *(Jason Hellendrung)*

**ABOVE LEFT AND BELOW:** Now, Euclid Avenue operates as a complete and scenic street. *(Craig Kuhner)*

