

December 3, 2025

To: Mayor and Members of City Council

202502080

From: Sheryl M.M. Long, City Manager

Subject: Emergency Ordinance – 3940 Old Ludlow Avenue and 4000 Spring Grove Avenue Acquisition – Cincinnati Northside Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation d/b/a NEST

Attached is an Emergency Ordinance captioned:

AUTHORIZING the transfer and appropriation of \$400,000 from the unappropriated surplus of Northside Equivalent Fund 525 (Northside TIF District) to the Department of Community and Economic Development non-personnel operating budget account no. 525x164x7400 to provide resources for the purpose of assisting Cincinnati Northside Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation with acquiring certain vacant commercial real property located at 3940 Old Ludlow Avenue and 4000 Spring Grove Avenue in the Northside neighborhood of Cincinnati, with authorized uses to include acquisition-related and due diligence costs; **AUTHORIZING** the transfer and appropriation of \$20,000 from the unappropriated surplus of Northside Equivalent Fund 525 (Northside TIF District) to the Department of Community and Economic Development personnel operating budget account no. 525x164x7100 to provide resources for administrative project delivery costs associated with the acquisition of 3940 Old Ludlow Avenue and 4000 Spring Grove Avenue; and **DECLARING** expenditures from such project accounts related to Cincinnati Northside Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation's acquisition of 3940 Old Ludlow Avenue and 4000 Spring Grove Avenue in the Northside neighborhood of Cincinnati are for a public purpose and constitute a "Public Infrastructure Improvement" (as defined in Section 5709.40(A)(8) of the Ohio Revised Code) that will benefit and/or serve the District 25 - Northside Incentive District, subject to compliance with Ohio Revised Code Sections 5709.40 through 5709.43.

STATEMENT

This corner property is a key redevelopment opportunity at the gateway to the Northside neighborhood business district. Securing site control will allow the community to guide reinvestment in a manner that supports neighborhood business vitality, strengthens pedestrian activity, and enhances the overall vibrancy of Knowlton's Corner.

By supporting Cincinnati Northside Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation d/b/a NEST (the "Developer") in acquiring this Property, the City is advancing the redevelopment of a long-identified priority site within one of Cincinnati's most active and engaged neighborhood business districts. In doing so, this investment directly supports

the City’s vision for livable, diverse communities where residents can meet daily needs close to home.

BACKGROUND/CURRENT CONDITIONS

The Developer intends to acquire the real property at 3940 Old Ludlow Avenue and 4000 Spring Grove Avenue (the “Property”) in the Northside neighborhood, the former longtime location of a White Castle restaurant. In summer 2025, the restaurant operator decided to close the business and allow its lease to expire at the end of 2025. The seller and operator have determined to demolish the non-historic building, creating a rare and exciting opportunity for new mixed-use infill development at a prominent intersection.

For years, Knowlton’s Corner, including the Property, has been identified in official planning documents as a priority location for revitalization. Such documents include the Northside NBD Historic District Guidelines (1982) and the Northside Comprehensive Land Use Plan (2006/2014). The Knowlton’s Corner and Beyond Area Plan (2023)—not yet adopted by the City—further highlights the area’s redevelopment potential.

Recent efforts by the Developer to revitalize Knowlton’s Corner have resulted in three of the six corner properties coming under the Developer’s control. This includes two historic buildings, the former Stagecraft building and 4001 Hamilton Avenue, which the Developer is preparing for adaptive reuse. In contrast, the Property offers a unique opportunity for mixed-use *new* construction to complement the abundance of historic revitalization activity around it. Following acquisition, the Developer intends to explore infill development options, marketing the Property to potential co-developers or end users.

The Northside Community Council voted unanimously in favor of the request on October 20, 2025, and has issued a letter of support. The City also hosted a Community Engagement Meeting on November 12, 2025, to seek feedback on the assistance request, the results of which can be found here: <https://www.cincinnati.gov/planning/community-engagement/past-community-engagement-meetings/>

DEVELOPER INFORMATION

Founded in 2006, the Developer serves as the Northside neighborhood’s nonprofit community development corporation (CDC). Their mission is to ensure that *Northside endures as a thriving and vibrant community by revitalizing the built environment and improving neighborhood livability.*

The Developer has advanced multiple redevelopment projects in recent years, including the renovation of 4024 Hamilton Avenue into commercial and restaurant space; the co-development of John Arthur Flats senior housing; the acquisition and stabilization of the former Stagecraft building, 4001 Hamilton Avenue, and the former Park Theatre; and community initiatives such as a façade program, a public art and mural program, and the creation of a community pocket park.

PROPOSED INCENTIVE

The Administration is recommending the appropriation of \$400,000 in Northside TIF District funds to cover the Developer's eligible costs related to the acquisition of the Property. The ordinance also provides \$20,000 for City personnel-related costs associated with administration and oversight of this project.

RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends approval of this Emergency Ordinance. The emergency is necessary because the seller requires the transaction to be completed before the end of 2025, feasible only with an emergency clause.

Attachment: Project Outline and Proposed Incentive

Copy: Markiea L. Carter, Director, Department of Community & Economic Development

Project Outline

Project Name	Acquisition of former White Castle property
Street Address	3940 Old Ludlow Avenue & 4000 Spring Grove Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45223
Neighborhood	Northside
Property Condition	Vacant land (building recently demolished)
Project Type	Property acquisition
Project Cost	Acquisition Costs: \$420,000 Total Project Cost: \$420,000
Private Investment	Developer Equity: \$0
Sq. Footage by Use	21,000 SF (.48 acres) of vacant land
Location and Transit	Walk Score: 84 Transit Score: 48
Community Engagement	Northside Community Council voted in support on October 20, 2025. City Community Engagement Meeting was held on November 12, 2025.
Plan Cincinnati Goals	Complete Initiative Area Goal (p. 114-117)

Project Image and Site Map



Proposed Incentive

Property Transaction Types	Direct Funding – District TIF Grant
TIF District Grant	\$400,000 (plus \$20,000 City admin costs)