



For Immediate Release

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The Port of Cleveland Awards TLCI Contract to Michael Baker International for Catalytic Project at Irishtown Bend

Collaborative project kicks off to transform vacant land into stable greenspace with connections to the Cuyahoga River and regional trail system

Cleveland, Ohio (February 9, 2017) – Today, the Port of Cleveland in partnership with the City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA), LAND studio, and Ohio City Incorporated, announced a Transportation for Livable Communities planning process for Irishtown Bend with the award of a \$125,000 contract to engineering firm Michael Baker International. Michael Baker International will bring partners CMG Landscape Architecture, a San Francisco based firm, and 4ward Planning, a planning group from Pittsburgh to the project.

This unique collaboration of community partners from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors are working together to transform vacant, potentially dangerous land into publicly accessible green space, preserve maritime operations vital to Northeast Ohio, and spur economic development and recreational opportunities along the Cuyahoga River.

The TLCI planning effort is the first step in the process to stabilize the hillside from crumbling, ensuring that the shipping channel along the Cuyahoga River remains open to

connect businesses with the supply chain. The project is a culmination of several years of efforts by Ohio City Incorporated and the City of Cleveland to convene government and community partners. The Port of Cleveland has been working toward a viable solution for bulkhead stabilization for five years including a catalytic investment of nearly \$500,000.

“Irishtown Bend presents us with both a serious threat and an incredible opportunity,” said Will Friedman, CEO of the Port of Cleveland. “We’re glad to be a part of this coalition that will not only protect the Cuyahoga and upriver businesses that rely on maritime, but also position the hillside for dynamic public use. It’s a perfect win-win.”

For decades, the land at Irishtown Bend has sat vacant, disconnected from the Ohio City neighborhood, and unsafe for public and development use. Ohio City Incorporated will shepherd the project and work with the current land owner CMHA to build connections to the adjacent Riverview Estates and Ohio City Farm.

“Irishtown Bend represents a 23-acre opportunity to pull together an entire neighborhood and connect the people of Cleveland to the waterfront,” said Tom McNair, Executive Director of Ohio City, Inc. “And most importantly as the first waterfront park in America connected to public housing it would do so equitably.”

“We are proud to be a part of this strong collaboration that is bringing together partners to benefit our residents and the entire community,” said Jeffery K. Patterson, Chief Executive Officer of the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority. “We see this development as a tremendous asset for the families that reside in our properties as well as the surrounding neighborhood. We are excited about the opportunity to help residents of this community have access to natural amenities like the trails and waterfront parks that were previously unable to be fully accessed and utilized in the past.”

LAND studio is engaged to ensure a high level of design that’s in line with the organization’s commitment to creating world-class public spaces that connect Cleveland’s neighborhoods and unite, inspire, and enrich its people. Once completed, the greenspace at Irishtown Bend will provide a critical link in the Ohio and Erie Canalway trail system that will allow the Towpath and the Cleveland Foundation Centennial Lake Link trails to connect with the West Shoreway Trail, the future Red Line Greenway and to Lake Erie at Wendy Park.

“The development of a world-class greenspace on Irishtown Bend provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity for Clevelanders to be connected to the Cuyahoga River and the historic Ohio City and Tremont neighborhoods,” says Greg Peckham, Managing Director of LAND studio. “Through other projects such as Perk Park and Public Square in downtown,

we are seeing how accessible, beautiful greenspaces are improving quality of life and driving economic development. Irishtown Bend has the same type of catalytic potential.”

Michael Baker International brings CMG, and 4ward Planning to their team to address the planning and design for this phase of the project.

“There are critical infrastructure and topographic considerations at Irishtown Bend, but we will basically be starting from scratch on an urban waterfront, which is an exciting opportunity,” says Douglas Blank of Michael Baker International. “Developing this unique site provides an opportunity to extend the vitality of the Market District north with connections to the Cuyahoga River and regional trail system. We are looking forward to listening to the many stakeholders’ ideas and concerns to guide the process of developing a dynamic, cohesive plan.”

“CMG is thrilled to continue our work on the Cleveland Foundation Centennial Trail and making Irishtown Bend a special place along its length. This project exemplifies our firm's mission to build artfully designed open spaces that connect people with nature and with each other,” says Scott Cataffa, principal at CMG. “We look forward to working with our partners and the Cleveland community to design a memorable landscape along this embankment that connects the Ohio City neighborhood to the regional trail system, the Cuyahoga River, and eventually, the Lake Erie shore.”

The Irishtown Bend project is also in the running for a Clean Ohio Fund award. The Clean Ohio Fund grants will be announced on February 15, 2017.

Other partners in the project include: Northeast Ohio Sewer District, ODOT, and the West Creek Conservancy. Funding and support for Irishtown Bend is provided by the Port of Cleveland, Ohio City Inc., The Cleveland Foundation, LAND studio and the Keithley Foundation, NOACA, The State of Ohio, Cleveland Neighborhood Progress, The Frohring Foundation, and The Snavely Group.

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The Port of Cleveland is a key to Northeast Ohio’s global competitiveness, providing the quickest route between North American’s Heartland and Northern Europe and linking the region to the world. An economic engine for Northeast Ohio, the Port brings over 13-million tons of cargo through the Cleveland Harbor, resulting in \$3.5 billion in annual economic activity and more than 20,000 jobs. As a Green Port on a Great Lake, the Port of Cleveland plays a leading role in the environmental restoration and revitalization of Lake Erie and the

Cuyahoga River, and helps to create vibrant, accessible waterfronts for all. For more information, please visit the Port website at: www.portofcleveland.com.

The Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority's mission is to create safe, quality affordable housing opportunities and improve the quality of life for the communities they serve. CMHA owns and manages property and administers rent subsidy programs to provide eligible low-income residents and families with safe, sustainable, dynamic communities of choice where everyone can strive for success. Visit cmha.net, @CuyahogaHousing on Twitter and Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority on Facebook.

LAND studio is a nonprofit that identifies, creates, and implements a public space vision in the city of Cleveland. The organization works towards a goal of transforming and revitalizing the city by filling it with vibrant places that unite, inspire, and enrich its people. To learn more visit www.land-studio.org.

Ohio City Incorporated is the Community Development Corporation for the Ohio City neighborhood. The organization leads the development of Ohio City by serving a diverse community of committed people, driving new investments in and preserving the history of a unique place, and promoting an authentic urban neighborhood. For more information, visit ohiocity.org.