



**Middletown Master Plan
Steering Committee Meeting
February 3, 2005, 4:30 pm**

Minutes

Attendance:

Steering Committee members: Sam Ashworth, Valerie Back, Doug Bean, Frank Chapman, Dane Donham, Wanda Glover, Harold Jackson, Larry James, Ted Karchner, Cathy Newkirk, Nancy Nix, Virginia Ritan, Mark Wall, Tom Williams, Larry Wood, Noah Powers

Staff: Bill Becker, Angela Tucker, Joanne Mejias-Yancey, Brian Forschner

Consultants:

Brad Schwab, Tim Bender

The Steering Committee meeting began at 4.30 pm with a brief introduction by Brian Forschner. This being the final Steering Committee meeting before the plan is presented to Council, Brian explained to SC members that their continued input in the process would be helpful, and provided an opportunity for members to express their continued participation. Brad Schwab of McKenna began the presentation of Goal C: Community Image to the Steering Committee.

Mr. Schwab introduced the concept of Community Image and how it relates to the Master Plan process. As he went through each objective to the goal, he asked for comments and suggestions from Steering Committee members.

COMMENTS:

Private Schools

A representative of Middletown Schools indicated that, although Middletown Schools had a good relation with the private schools in the City, it would be counter-productive to promote private schools in Middletown because they are competitors.

Historical Museum/Artwork

Mr. Schwab suggested the idea of pursuing historical artwork in downtown based on the City's manufacturing history, and was informed that there are already two museums, the Canal Museum and the Historical Society Museum.



In response to objective 5, a member of the SC informed the committee that a problem that realtors outside of Middletown have is overcoming the perception that the City is a good-old-boys club.

24 hr Downtown

The comment was made that the title of “24-hour-downtown” carries a negative connotation in Middletown because of the kind of activities that occur downtown. Name should be changed to “Vibrant Downtown”

Thoroughfare Plan/Interchange Feasibility –

The Oxford State Road interchange was supported more vocally by SC members as opposed to the Manchester Interchange. The understanding was that Manchester does not offer a very suitable location for an interchange. Manchester Road at I-75 has significant physical barriers which will inhibit the possibility of constructing an interchange at the site. The largest problem is topography.

Furthermore, Oxford State Road is a better site for an interchange for two reasons. First, it will connect SR 73 and 4 to I-75, giving direct access to west Middletown. Also, this will provide secondary access for industrial trucks to AK Steel without requiring them to drive through the commercial areas along US 122.

Jurisdictional Collaboration

As Middletown considers an expansion policy, collaboration between adjacent communities is imperative. The political will exists already, it’s just a matter of identifying it. Some property owners have chosen to pump sewage uphill rather than to buy into Middletown’s sewage system, but some property owners can be persuaded into annexation easily.

Outpatient Clinic

One tentative objective of the Master Plan was to create an outpatient clinic to continue to provide medical care to residents after Middletown Regional Hospital moves to the interchange. A comment was made, which led to a discussion about the current outpatient clinic on the south side of town. The clinic is a full-services facility, but needs room for expansion. Furthermore, the biggest barrier this clinic has is its reputation for only serving basic needs. Rather than creating a new clinic, consideration should be placed upon expanding the existing clinic and improving its reputation.

Overall Community Development

A comment was made that development of office and retail sites is market driven, but rooftops help to drive the market. One member encouraging Madison Township to develop in west Middletown to bring rooftops near to downtown and the riverfront.

At this point, a handout was given to members of the SC to vote for their most important priority. Each person was given 14 points which could be distributed as they wish to indicate the importance of each objective. Results are as follows:



STEERING COMMITTEE STRATEGY PRIORITIZATION	TOTAL POINTS	AVERAGE POINTS
Implement targeted Brownfield/Greyfield Redevelopment Program	32	1.9
Develop Public-Private Economic Development Organization	26	1.5
Attract jobs in growth industries, such as high-tech or healthcare	26	1.5
Support and partner with Middletown City School District in their efforts to improve public education	21	1.2
Improve image perceptions through marketing, communication and aesthetic improvements	19	1.1
Target Declining Neighborhoods for Sustained Redevelopment	18	1.1
Create Market Ready Sites for economic development at “greenfield” locations	17	1.0
Develop New Interchange on I-75	17	1.0
Solve Combined Sewer Overflow Problem	16	0.9
Prevent Negative Housing Cycles in Healthy Neighborhoods	15	0.9
Develop World Class community Amenities (Retail, Parks, Recreational facilities) to Attract and Retain Population	14	0.8
Develop Mixed Use Developments to improve neighborhood quality of life	7	0.4
Improve existing job retention/expansion.	6	0.4
Create 24 Hour Downtown; Revitalize Downtown	4	0.2

Surprisingly, the strategy receiving the most votes was “Implement targeted brown/greyfield redevelopment program.”

Other comments received on the survey suggested that funding for transportation projects come from sources other than City funds, such as grants. Another person commented that the anonymity of “Sound Off” in the Middletown Journal harms the City’s plans and credibility, and residents should be encouraged to sign their name to their opinion and provide constructive criticism. Finally, a few people stressed the importance of all of the items on the survey, and said that continued cooperation and support from the Steering Committee was important for the success of the plan.

MIDDLETOWN