



**Middletown Master Plan
Redevelopment Roundtable
1 N. Main Street
Friday, January 14, 2005
9:00 to 11:00 AM**

Minutes

Present:

Name	Organization/Constituency
Betsy Bowe	Malcolm-Pirnie, Inc.
Shawnda Combs	Butler County Economic Development Department
Brian Coughlin	Butler County Economic Development Department
Chris Dobrozsi	Al Neyer, Inc.
John Fonner	Butler County Port Authority
John Furbay	Aeronca, Inc.
Bert Grimes	2nd Ward Community Council
William Kruspe	Banker, partner of Neighborhood Housing Services
Robert Lafkas	Midd Cities, LLC
Walter Leap	Downtown Alliance
Dan Lipson	Annuity Real Estate Partners, LLC
Stephanie McChesney	Ohio EPA, Southwest District Office
John McKinney III	Middletown Regional Hospital
Greg Martin	Martin Excavating
David Pearce	Banker
Joe Smindak	Ohio EPA, Southwest District Office
Perry Thatcher	Middletown City Council
William Triick	Chamber of Commerce
Mark Vella	Al Neyer, Inc.
Jon Wells	Wausau-Bay West Paper Corp.
Larry Wood	Middletown Economic Development Corporation

City Staff. Martin Kohler, Brian Forschner, Angela Tucker, Joanne Mejias-Yancey

Consultants. Brad Schwab, Tim Bender

The meeting began at approximately 9:10 a.m. at the former Cinergy building in downtown Middletown. Professionals from McKenna Associates, Inc. gave a brief overview of the Master Plan process, work completed, and redevelopment related strategies. The meeting was well attended with approximately twenty (20) development related professionals including bankers, developers, real estate brokers, EPA professionals, environmental consultants, business leaders, land owners, and entrepreneurs, several of whom were Middletown residents.

The purpose of the meeting was to:

- receive expert feedback on proposed *brownfield* and *greyfield* redevelopment strategies and





mixed use development;

- build consensus on stated redevelopment strategies and need for action; and
- begin building understanding of issues with stakeholders and forge partnerships;

Summary

The majority of the meeting time was used to discuss brownfield issues followed by greyfield redevelopment (or the reuse of vacant or underutilized uncontaminated commercial property). Participants also commented on mixed land use strategies. Very similar responses were provided for each meeting topic and are summarized below:

1. Market forces and location are the two main attributes that will drive brownfield and greyfield redevelopment.
2. The city must provide leadership and articulate a vision for redevelopment to occur. Properties will continue to languish until costly development obstacles are removed. Thus, success will come only after the City removes as many obstacles as possible to even the playing field with greenfield sites.
3. Sites should be redeveloped in a targeted fashion based on community priorities. Development of a decision making matrix was suggested to prioritize sites and use of resources.
4. A redevelopment planning process was identified.
 - a. First, define the problem. For example, prepare Phase I and II environmental assessments for brownfields/greyfields as needed.
 - b. Determine how much money is required to remove obstacles such as contamination.
 - c. Determine gap financing or other methods of city participation to make site attractive.
 - d. Find development partners to participate and redevelop site.
5. Education of public and outreach to partners in the business community is essential.
6. Redevelopment is possible and is occurring all over Ohio. The common element in all case examples is strong public leadership and participation in the redevelopment process

Goal B.1. Convert all underutilized commercial and industrial properties to productive uses.

Redevelop Brownfield Properties

1. Market forces will drive Brownfield redevelopment. City should focus remediation and reuse efforts on sites that offer the best economic development opportunities.
2. Need to have cooperation among property owners.
3. Educate property owners about city's ability to work cooperatively with them and other government agencies to potentially remove liability issues and remediate property. Use education as a method to build trust and gain property owner support.
4. Use enforcement tools when necessary when dealing with unresponsive property owner.
5. The extent, method and cost of clean up are based, in part, by proposed land use. Cleanup for industrial land uses require the least amount of environmental remediation; cleanup for residential land uses require the greatest amount of remediation and costs the most.
6. Time frame for cleanup can take anywhere from 18 months to 5 years or longer depending on how complicated cleanup is and how long the granting process takes. This allows costs to be spread over time.

Redevelop Greyfield Properties.





1. The city should treat greyfield properties similar to brownfields.
 - a. City involvement is required to remove development obstacles and bring back into productive use.
 - b. Prioritize redevelopment in a targeted fashion using a score sheet or decision making matrix.
 - c. Selected sites should have economic development potential to eventually thrive and create jobs and offer new housing.
2. Greyfield redevelopment may require additional public outreach because many of these sites were once neighborhood anchors. The existing Middletown Regional Hospital campus serves as an example.

Goal B.3. Use redevelopment opportunities to introduce mixed land use developments that satisfy the needs of the neighborhood.

Mixed-Use Development.

1. Mixed use development has its own set of unique development obstacles that must be overcome. Again, the city was called upon to set a vision and be willing to provide gap financing or other appropriate level of participation.
2. The existing hospital site offers an opportunity for mixed-use redevelopment because there are some practitioners staying at the facility after the hospital moves.
3. The Fairfield Town Center is a good example of mixed use development.
4. Locating residential land uses on brownfield sites may prove to be difficult because of the high cleanup standard required to get the land to a pristine state. It was suggested that residential be placed on land that was not previously contaminated within a brownfield or off-site but adjacent to the brownfield. Periphery residential development could be used to revitalize the brownfield's surroundings, strengthen the neighborhood, and create a stronger market for goods and services.
5. Greyfield redevelopment could more easily accommodate residential uses than brownfields.
6. There is a core of mixed-use land downtown. A larger representation of the residential land use is needed to increase market demand for space and goods and services.

Other Comments.

1. EPA provides technical assistance to communities who need help with complex brownfield redevelopment issues.
2. The City should meet with another municipality that has had success in redevelopment to see how they were able to succeed. Such community should not be seen as a direct competitor for new jobs.
3. Improved access to brownfields and downtown are needed to make sites more attractive in the market. Roosevelt to University is too long with too many interruptions. Existing traffic signals need to be timed to prevent delays.
4. I-75 will be at over capacity in the future. This will make alternative routes more attractive. Rt. 4 needs to be improved through downtown Middletown.
5. Another interchange north of the existing SR 122 is needed to improve access to downtown.
6. The destination will be what brings people to Middletown, not the color of the land (brown, gray or green).
7. Promote the downtown and nearby brownfields based on existing amenities and infrastructure.
8. Market mitigated brownfield property to businesses that do not need interstate access and





could benefit from lower land costs.

9. One participant state that brownfield and greyfield redevelopment should occur but only after the city successfully controls or guides development at the SR 122/I-75 interchange. Appropriate development here will increase city revenues which can be applied for redevelopment later. (NOTE: This issue will be brought up again at Steering Committee meetings.)

