



CITYWIDE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLANNING GROUP

MIDPARK DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Current conditions/situational analysis

The Greater Downtown plan is an effort to take a holistic view of the central business district and the neighborhoods and institutions surrounding it.

The goal was to create a plan that illustrates a value proposition for reinvesting in our urban core. The plan built upon previous efforts, but also made an attempt to reach out to community groups, business leaders, and residents like never before.

CityWide Development Corporation (CWD) has been involved with many components of the Greater Downtown plan, but with our tenured experience in developing housing projects, took a special interest in that element. The Neighborhood Development Strategic Planning Group (NDSPG) is a volunteer committee created and administered through CWD. NDSPG has been a valuable brain trust of priority board, business, government, and educational leaders and appeared to be a perfect fit to begin looking for the next neighborhood development project. The task of NDSPG over the last 6 months has been to outline a plan for a redevelopment project that could be included within the Greater Downtown Plan and highlighted within the housing section of that plan.

NDSPG specifically chose to look at the MidPark geography because of its perceived long-term marketability and the ability to leverage previous successful development in adjacent areas. The MidPark District has been a virtual “no mans land”...a mish mash of underutilized land and buildings with no real focus or continuity for a very long time. However, because of its location, the group felt it had extreme potential.

MidPark is located between Downtown and two of Dayton’s largest institutions - The University of Dayton and Miami Valley Hospital who have made huge investments not only on their own campuses, but have reached out to the areas that surround them as well. Both were involved with the Genesis project, a comprehensive neighborhood redevelopment project focused on the

Fairgrounds Neighborhood. Genesis removed much of the blight and built new homes in a place that was formally filled with dilapidated homes, transient housing and crime. But it wasn't only a bricks and mortar project. Genesis also addressed the social issues in the neighborhood and instituted community policing. Today the neighborhood is filled with MVH and UD employees, retirees, and young families. It truly has become a model of success.

Cleaning up the Fairgrounds neighborhood also had a direct result on the Rubicon Business district. Investors now had the confidence to bring new business to Brown Street. Rubicon has become a bustling hotspot of restaurants, shops, and housing that serves the UD students, MVH employees and visitors, and Dayton and Oakwood residents.

The Genesis neighborhood isn't the only achievement that borders MidPark. South Park Historic District, Dayton's largest, is located to the east of MidPark and has hosted three rounds of the Rehabarama Project, each building upon the next. South Park most recently won the National Neighborhood of the Year award and continues to see new growth and renewed spirit in its residents.

Building upon these wins that have already been achieved, MidPark will serve as the final link between our southern neighbors and downtown. It is a critical piece of the puzzle that will serve as an improved gateway while creating a livable district that will help fill Dayton's market gaps in both the housing and office/retail market.

The location of MidPark not only serves as a visual gateway, but its proximity to many successful projects makes it a promising location for future development.

2. Vision

Create a vibrant hub centered between MVH and Downtown that strives to embody a diverse urban-active environment with new housing options, opportunities for economic growth, and amenities to serve the downtown core.

3. Core objectives

- Create a more visually appealing linkage between the Downtown and the MidPark area.
- Leverage previous investment in the surrounding area to establish new development opportunities.
- Construct housing and commercial space that is environmentally sensitive, well thought out, and fills market needs.

4. Recommendations and Action Steps

5 Development Zones

Zone 1: Route 35 Overpass

- The 35 overpasses, while integral for moving highway traffic through the City, is a major barrier for uses at the street level. The overpass creates a visual barrier that “cuts off” downtown from the MidPark area and does not create a positive gateway into the City from the South while also affecting the ascent into Miami Valley Hospital and University of Dayton, two of Dayton’s most significant institutions, from the north. While it is a stretch to think that this area will ever be a destination as is being recommended for some of the other overpasses by the *River Corridors and Active Life Style Committee of the Greater Downtown Plan*; it does need a creative application that will encourage more pedestrian movement and offer a visual improvement during both the day and night.
- Improve Lighting. The most meaningful improvement that should be made to the overpass is lighting. Brightening the space significantly would improve the perception of safety and passability. Lighting can also be taken a step further to create a more interesting artistic improvement. Examples of unique lighting applications can be found all over the country and a few of these have been included in the “visuals section” of this report. Special attention should also be paid to updating the lighting on Warren Street to ease the transition to any new overpass lighting.
- Soften the area. Remove the feel of a highway and create a space people enjoy traveling through. This could include things such as brighter paint colors, murals, covering the concrete highway piers, adding landscaping and pavers, and incorporating more eye-level lighting.
- Define a walkable space. One of the biggest challenges of the area underneath the overpass for a pedestrian is finding a passable route in which they feel safe. Sidewalks are not enough. Current sidewalks can be widened, crosswalks highlighted, landscaping can be added to designate a desired path, and wayfinding signage could be included.

Zone 2: Commercial/Office/Institutional Sector

- The pie-shaped section of properties bordered by the Rt. 35 overpass, Patterson Blvd., Warren St., and Vine St. is an underutilized area that by large has been looked over for many years. This land has the potential to be extremely valuable given its proximity to downtown, the University of Dayton, Miami Valley Hospital, Rubicon Business District, and numerous successful neighborhoods.

Create larger development parcels. Currently, underused streets and multiple property owners dissect much of the commercial area. It would make sense in some cases to acquire property and vacate streets to create larger development parcels for new businesses.

Attract New Businesses. While there are many established businesses in the area, there is room for new economic development ventures as well. This “zone” of MidPark would welcome the location of new institutions, limited service businesses, and businesses focused on Dayton’s identified cluster industries especially healthcare and aerospace.

There is the potential to locate some of the amenities that downtown residents would like to see in closer proximity like a grocery, hardware store, etc., but data gathered by Gem City Real Estate shows that the market for these types of businesses is not strong enough in this area to sustain these uses. However, there could be an opportunity to attract smaller-scale version of these businesses. A large-scale Kroger does not have the market or the acreage to locate within this zone, but a smaller grocery or market may find this area the perfect fit.

Zone 3: Warren St. Corridor

- The zone designated for mixed use within the MidPark area roughly includes the frontage on east side of Warren St. and the former Cliburn Manor site now controlled by the City of Dayton. The goal of this area is to build upon the success of the Rubicon Business District’s retail/business sector and continue it’s growth towards downtown.

Develop the Cliburn Manor Site. The Cliburn Manor site was formally a DMHA housing project that was recently demolished and turned over to the City. With MVH and UD’s financial backing, many of the properties surrounding Cliburn were also acquired. The end-result will be a nearly 9-acre clear site prime for redevelopment. Currently, there are still four outstanding properties that must be obtained and demolished to get complete site control.

Following the acquisition stage, the next step is to do some predevelopment work on the site and release an RFP to interested developers. The vision for Cliburn is a mixed-used development including medical uses, office space, limited retail, and possibly some housing.

Create a New Entrance for South Park. With the acquisition of much of the property for the Cliburn site and the redevelopment plans within the Rubicon Transportation Plan, there is an opportunity to create a new west front door entrance from Warren Street into the South Park Historic District. The Burns St. boulevard could be a natural location for a beautiful new drive into the neighborhood from the West.

Attract Smaller Businesses. The section of Warren Street running from Buckeye to Burns Streets is currently a mix of uses. There are apartment buildings, single-family homes, vacant lots and buildings, some small retail shops, and other small businesses. While some of these uses are and will continue to be viable, many are not. Acquisition of much of this stretch of Warren would be needed to attract new development. The issue with this section is the small lot depth. These would have to be smaller-scale uses like mom and pop stores, restaurants, and small businesses. There is also a desire to possibly keep some of the housing, with specific interest on the Marvin Gardens Apartments.

Change the Warren St. name to Brown St. The Brown and Warren Streets multiple names have been a source of confusion for many years. This potential redevelopment could also serve as perfect timing for removing the Warren St. name and solely maintaining the Brown Street name. With much of the acquisition for the Cliburn site there are very few businesses that have a Warren St. address and might welcome the idea of having a Brown St. address.

Zone 4: Housing

- Housing is an essential component of the MidPark redevelopment area. It builds upon the successful work completed in the adjacent South Park Historic District through three phases of Rehabarama, and also the Genesis Project that focused on the Fairgrounds neighborhood. While neither project was completely unsubsidized in regards to financing, they were both highly successful and proved there was, and continues to be, a market for housing in this geography.

The boundaries for the proposed housing within the MidPark District are roughly: north of Burns Ave., south of Buckeye Street (including a portion of the park), east of Warren St. and west of Morton St. The land area equates to approximately 22 acres. Currently there is a mix of vacant land parcels, single and multi-unit houses, churches, and small number of commercial spaces. A significant amount is underutilized, deteriorating, or on the City of Dayton's code violation or nuisance list.

Acquire Property. The proposed concept for the MidPark neighborhood is a complete demolition (outside of the houses on Buckeye St.), re-plot, and rebuild. For this reason, all land must be acquired and held by a single entity in order to be a viable and attractive site for a developer.

A strategy for quietly acquiring property needs to be determined including the roles and responsibilities for the City of Dayton and CityWide Development Corporation as well as potential funding sources. The Genesis & Phoenix Project models of acquiring property should be considered for this effort.

The Neighborhood Stabilization Fund is allowing for the demolition of 7 nuisance structures within the MidPark neighborhood. A commitment by the City for a

continued focus of demolition funding within this geography could significantly help with expediting the acquisition of property.

An estimate of current tax values for property within the proposed MidPark neighborhood is approximately \$2.7M. This figure does not include the cost to obtain the structures located on Buckeye St. According to the proposed plan, these homes on Buckeye would be maintained with the future goal of renovation. The \$2.7M also does not include any future cost of demolition which would also need to be considered in completing the goal of a clear 22 acre site.

Locate a Developer. Development within a previously built environment found in all urban cores has not only unique challenges, but also added costs. By controlling ownership and clearing the site, it will potentially increase the probability of finding an interested developer willing take on the project.

A list of prospective local, regional, and national developers who have experience in building urban neighborhoods similar to what is desired should be generated. Some general pre-development work should also be completed and a RFP sent to those selected developers.

Improve Infrastructure. After the demolition of properties within the neighborhood, there will presumably be a need for updated infrastructure. This is an opportunity to have a clean slate to modernize any sewage and water lines if needed, bury utility lines, update lighting, and reconfigure the streets to alter the flow in and out of the area in a manner that better suits the style and design of the new neighborhood.

Develop Low-Maintenance Style Housing. The City of Dayton has a wide variety of housing options to offer buyers, but lack one style that is becoming increasingly popular – a low maintenance or patio style home. Dayton will continue to lose residents looking for this type of housing to our suburban counterparts if we do start building this product.

It is not the intention to solely limit marketing to the empty nesters or retirees often linked to the patio home style, but rather offer a single story, highly efficient home desired by anyone who lives an active lifestyle and desires a low-maintenance option of living.

Add a Unique Amenity. Adding new housing on a clean site offers the opportunity to be creative in not on the site plan and general design, but offering unique amenities to the residents. Additional amenities can increase the value of the homes, increase marketability, and set the neighborhood apart from others like it.

Developing a link from this neighborhood to the River trails could be one creative option. A pedestrian/bike greenway could be developed on Burns, Faulkner, or Park continuing to the river and would serve both the MidPark and

SouthPark neighborhoods. This greenway would not only be a pathway but should have substantial enough greenspace to be considered a park.

Additionally, creating a walking trail around the exterior ring of the neighborhood, adding shared garden space, installing unique art or water features, or adding a community/party room are some examples of amenities that could also be explored for the MidPark neighborhood.

Market MidPark Housing. The location of the Housing within MidPark is its most marketable asset. Proximity to Downtown and the Oregon District offer easy access to the workplace, dining, arts, festivals, nightlife, and cultural venues. It is just a quick drive or walk to the core of downtown or an easy stroll across the pedestrian bridge crossing Route 35 into Oregon District. The Rubicon business district also offers numerous quick and fine dining options, coffee houses, convenience stores, salons, and places to shop.

Housing near to Miami Valley Hospital and University of Dayton also offers exceptional opportunities for residents. The MidPark neighborhood would offer a different type of housing for employees of MVH to consider. Residents also can take advantage of closeness of medical offices and volunteer opportunities at the hospital. University of Dayton's Life Long Learning Classes, speakers, and other events held at the college present other opportunities for those who enjoy an active lifestyle long after retirement.

Zone 5: Miami Valley Hospital

- Miami Valley Hospital is a strong community anchor who has invested millions of dollars to better the neighborhoods surrounding their campus. Their involvement with the Genesis project illustrated their desire to offer a safe and pleasant campus atmosphere for their workers, patients, and visitors while offering their employees the opportunity to live in homes adjacent to their workplace.

MVH has continued their commitment to the City of Dayton with the construction of the southeast addition to be opened in 2010. The building of the tower signifies the stake MVH has in the Dayton community and their ongoing quest to better the physical environment in and around MVH.

There has been a deliberate attempt by the hospital over the years to improve the gateways into their campus. Redevelopment within the MidPark District and major roadway corridors would drastically improve the southbound "driveway" into the hospital and generally change any negative perception issues that still remain within the area.

Work Together. As a major anchor on the edge of the MidPark area, it is natural that there will be some overlap and common goals between this plan and those

of MVH. The MidPark Plan understands the role of MVH and respects their desire to continue with their current and future plans for their campus. However, because there is a shared goal of improvement and redevelopment for the greater MidPark area, it is important for both plans and the individuals and institutions involved, to work in concert to redevelop a successful, vibrant new district.

5. Potential Funding Sources

- Create and finance a Pre-Development Fund of approximately \$250K and an Equity Fund of approximately \$10M to assist in the overall development and gap financing of housing projects in the greater downtown geography.

Development within a previously built environment has unique challenges and added costs. Every project that has been completed within the greater downtown area has not done so without gap financing. This not only provides a challenge, but a valid need for a fund to aid in the redevelopment process that makes building housing in the City of Dayton an attractive option for developers.

- Target the Neighborhood Stabilization Funds or other Federal funds to focus demolition on nuisance properties within the MidPark area.

Over \$900K will be spent on demolishing structures in and around the greater downtown area. A portion of that has been spent on the MidPark area. If this is a project that is seen as a primary goal to complete for the City of Dayton, then focusing more of the demolishing funds within this geography would help expedite the process of acquiring property and landbanking under a single owner.

6. Roles & Responsibilities

- While it is still too early to begin discussing roles and responsibilities for this proposed project, there are many successful examples of large-scale project development in Dayton that can serve as an example for MidPark. The Genesis and Phoenix Projects are similar in nature and offer a good comparison for the road ahead. Those two projects were largely successful because of their balanced governing structure that guided the projects from their inception. A similar governing structure is recommended for the MidPark effort.

7. Suggested visuals/renderings for the Plan

MidPark ownership map
Rubicon Transportation Plan -- Warren/Main Renderings
Development Sector Map
Overpass Creative Lighting Renderings
Housing Examples