

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS  
CITY OF BOWLING GREEN CITY COUNCIL**

Minutes of

Meeting

BEAR GRAPHICS 800-325-8084 FORM NO. 10/148

**MONDAY, MARCH 18, 2019**

Held

20

The regular meeting of the Bowling Green City Council, held in the Council Chamber, 304 North Church Street, Bowling Green, Ohio was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Council President Aspacher. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

On roll call, Council Members Aspacher, Herald, Hollenbaugh, Jeffers, Robinette, and Rowland were present. Council Member Zanfardino was not present. Also present were Mayor Richard Edwards, Municipal Administrator Lori Tretter, City Attorney Michael Marsh, Utilities Director Brian O'Connell, Planning Director Heather Saylor, and Parks and Recreation Director Kristin Otley. Public Works Director Brian Craft was not present.

Council Member Rowland moved, Robinette seconded, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held March 4, 2019 as distributed. On unanimous voice vote, Council President Aspacher declared motion carried.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence.

**SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS – MAYOR EDWARDS**

Mayor Dick Edwards invited Police Chief Tony Hetrick and Fire Chief Bill Moorman to come forward to introduce the newest police officer and firefighters recently added to the ranks. Chief Hetrick introduced Christopher Roley from Kentucky. Hetrick noted that he went through the Ohio Highway Patrol peace officer training and is an 8-year veteran of the Marine Corps Reserve. Chief Moorman introduced three new firefighters, Michael Brown, Tyler Ellis and Jason Adkins indicating that all three have completed their probationary periods and successfully passed training. On behalf of City Council, Council President Aspacher welcomed them to the City noting that City Council intends to provide them with the resources needed to do their jobs well.

**LOBBY VISITATIONS**

Neocles Leontis, 119 N. Summit Street, addressed City Council regarding his concerns that there is no legal requirement for fire safety inspections or health inspections of older homes that have been divided into apartments before they are marketed as rentals to primarily students. Leontis also indicated that he learned recently that the Fire Division destroys fire reports after five years. He asked City Council to look into this practice and suggested that all fire reports be placed online in the interest of transparency. Leontis suggested that "prevention of fire and enforcement of fire codes" should be added to the Fire Division's mission statement.

**NEW LEGISLATION**

The following new legislation was recommended by the Administration and presented to Council for introduction:

Council Member Jeffers, for the Finance Committee, introduced the following resolution and ordinances:

- Resolution transferring previously appropriated funds.
- Ordinance providing supplemental appropriations for the current expenses and other expenditures of the City of Bowling Green, Ohio, during the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2019 and ending December 31, 2019.

- Ordinance authorizing the Municipal Administrator and the Utilities Director to advertise for bids and enter into a contract or contracts for design, engineering, right-of-way acquisition, construction, and other services relating to Poe Road improvements and Ditch Culvert Phase 2 Improvement Project.
- Ordinance certifying unpaid cost of snow removal to the County Auditor for placement on the tax duplicate.
- Ordinance authorizing the Municipal Administrator to sell and/or otherwise dispose of materials not needed for municipal purposes, and declaring an emergency.

### OFFICIAL REPORTS

Mayor Edwards distributed the report, "A Strategy for Redevelopment" to City from Development Strategies of St. Louis regarding its study of the East Wooster Street corridor. Mayor Edwards read a statement regarding the report. A copy of that statement and report are attached to and made a part of these minutes. The Mayor invited comments, reactions and advice from Council Members. Council Member Herald volunteered to assist in the implementation. Council Member Rowland praised the Mayor for his push towards progress and noted that he has set the stage and it's up to Council to take it seriously and push forward with progress. Council Member Robinette agreed with the Mayor's comments that "opportunities abound and asked about the involvement of the University. Mayor Edwards responded that the City has already been meeting with University staff all through this process. He indicated that the next step is to take the report and begin to identify the priorities and where to start first. Council Member Herald summarized by saying that the City is not stagnant, it is moving forward, not settling for status quo, and Council is ready to take the community where it needs to be.

Municipal Administrator Lori Tretter noted that in conjunction with the report mentioned above and the CAP Plan, staff has been preparing an RFP (request for proposals) to do a comprehensive review of the City's zoning code. Tretter indicated that after reviewing this latest report, additional amendments are being made to the initial RFP based on the report findings.

Tretter also reported that the recent legislative changes made to parking regulations are now fully implemented in City parking lots. She noted that parking in lots was increased from 2 hours to 3 hours maximum and that handicapped parking is now free. Tretter reminded citizens that the free parking on Main Street is still limited to two hours.

Tretter reminded Council Members of the CVB Brand Launch party being held on Thursday, March 28, from 5-7 p.m. at the Four Corners Center.

Tretter requested an Executive Session of City Council at the end of this evening's meeting for the purpose of discussing land acquisition.

Planning Director Heather Saylor reminded Council Members of the Interfaith Breakfast on April 2 at 7:15 a.m. in the Junior Fair Building and asked them to RSVP to her office. Saylor also noted that the Historic Preservation Committee will hold its first meeting on Wednesday, March 20, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber.

Parks and Recreation Director Kristin Otley reported to Council that work is underway in City Park on the construction of the new park building.

City Attorney Michael Marsh had no report.

Utilities Director Brian O'Connell updated Council on the Wooster/Main Street intersection closure for waterline work. O'Connell indicated that he thought the intersection would be open by Saturday afternoon.

Public Works Director Brian Craft was not present.

**COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Council Member Robinette reported that he was able to listen to the County's "State of the County" address on the radio and what struck him most was how well things are going economically and that the City is in a good place to share in the successes of the County. Robinette stated that the community is in a good place and the opportunity needs to be seized to continue the growth opportunities.

Council Member Hollenbaugh announced that a Community Improvement Committee meeting will be held on Monday, April 1, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber to continue discussions regarding single use plastic bags.

Council Member Herald noted that his quarterly 4<sup>th</sup> Ward meeting will be held on March 27 from 7-9 p.m. at the Community Center. Herald indicated that as a member of the Community Improvement Committee, he will be discussing ideas regarding single use plastic bags and invited those interested to attend.

**READING OF LEGISLATION**

Acting Clerk Jamie Kominek, read Resolution #3728 transferring previously appropriated funds, for first reading.

Council Member Jeffers moved, Rowland seconded, to suspend the rules and give Resolution #3728 its second and third reading. On roll call vote, Council Members Herald, Hollenbaugh, Jeffers, Robinette, Rowland, and Aspacher voted yes. Council President Aspacher declared motion carried, and rules suspended.

Acting Clerk read Resolution #3728 for second and third reading by number and title only.

Council Member Jeffers moved, Rowland seconded, to adopt Resolution #3728. On roll call vote, Council Members Hollenbaugh, Jeffers, Robinette, Rowland, Aspacher, and Herald voted yes. Council President Aspacher declared motion carried, and Resolution #3728 adopted.

Acting Clerk read Ordinance #8757 providing supplemental appropriations for the current expenses and other expenditures of the City of Bowling Green, Ohio, during the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2019 and ending December 31, 2019, for first reading.

Council Member Jeffers moved, Rowland seconded, to suspend the rules and give Ordinance #8757 its second and third reading. On roll call vote, Council Members Jeffers, Robinette, Rowland, Aspacher, Herald, and Hollenbaugh voted yes. Council President Aspacher declared motion carried, and the rules suspended.

Acting Clerk read Ordinance #8757 for second and third reading by number and title only.

Council Member Jeffers moved, Rowland seconded, to adopt Ordinance #8757. On roll call vote, Council Members Robinette, Rowland, Aspacher, Herald, Hollenbaugh, and Jeffers voted yes. Council President Aspacher declared motion carried, and Ordinance #8757 adopted.

Acting Clerk read Ordinance #8758 authorizing the Municipal Administrator and the Utilities Director to advertise for bids and enter into a contract or contracts for design, engineering, right-of-way acquisition, construction, and other services relating to Poe Road improvements and Ditch Culvert Phase 2 Improvement Project, for first reading.

Acting Clerk read Ordinance #8759 certifying unpaid cost of snow removal to the County Auditor for placement on the tax duplicate, for first reading.

Acting Clerk read Ordinance #8760 authorizing the Municipal Administrator to sell and/or otherwise dispose of materials not needed for municipal purposes, and declaring an emergency, for first reading.

Council Member Jeffers moved, Rowland seconded, to suspend the rules and give Ordinance #8760 its second and third reading. On roll call vote, Council Members Rowland, Aspacher, Herald, Hollenbaugh, Jeffers, and Robinette voted yes. Council President Aspacher declared motion carried, and the rules suspended.

Acting Clerk read Ordinance #8760 for second and third reading by number and title only.

Council Member Jeffers moved, Rowland seconded, to adopt the emergency clause for Ordinance #8760. On roll call vote, Council Members Aspacher, Herald, Hollenbaugh, Jeffers, Robinette, and Rowland voted yes. Council President Aspacher declared motion carried, and the emergency clause adopted.

Council Member Jeffers moved, Rowland seconded, to adopt Ordinance #8760. On roll call vote, Council Members Herald, Hollenbaugh, Jeffers, Robinette, Rowland, and Aspacher voted yes. Council President Aspacher declared motion carried, and Ordinance #8760 adopted.

Acting Clerk read Resolution #3727 authorizing the Mayor of the City of Bowling Green, Ohio, to file a capital and operating plan for the years 2019 through 2022 with the Ohio Department of Transportation for grants through the U.S. Department of Transportation, as authorized under Federal Transit Laws, as Codified, 49 USC Section 5311, Financial Assistance for other than Urbanized Areas, for second reading.

Acting Clerk read Ordinance #8754 authorizing the Municipal Administrator and the Utilities Director to seek qualifications and/or advertise for bids and enter into a contract or contracts for design, engineering, right-of-way acquisition, construction, and other services relating to the E. Wooster Street/Campbell Hill Road roundabout project, for second reading.

Acting Clerk read Ordinance #8755 amending and adopting Section 35.70 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Bowling Green, Ohio, regarding city fees and fees charged for services, for second reading.

Acting Clerk read Ordinance #8756 amending and adopting Section 113.04(B), (D) & (E) of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Bowling Green, Ohio, regarding mobile food vendors, for second reading.

Acting Clerk read Ordinance #8750 amending and adopting Section 33.01(N) of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Bowling Green, Ohio, regarding salary schedule established, for third reading.

Council Member Jeffers moved, Rowland seconded, to adopt Ordinance #8750. On roll call vote, Council Members Hollenbaugh, Jeffers, Robinette, Rowland, Aspacher, and Herald voted yes. Council President Aspacher declared motion carried, and Ordinance #8750 adopted.

Acting Clerk read Ordinance #8751 amending and adopting Section 33.03(A) of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Bowling Green, Ohio, relating to pay for school police, interns, and Civil Infractions Hearing officer, for third reading.

Council Member Jeffers moved, Hollenbaugh seconded, to adopt Ordinance #8751. On roll call vote, Council Members Jeffers, Robinette, Rowland, Aspacher, and Herald voted yes. Council President Aspacher declared motion carried, and Ordinance #8751 adopted.

Acting Clerk read Ordinance #8752 authorizing the exchange of real estate with the Wood County Board of Developmental Disabilities, for third reading.

Council President Aspacher moved, Robinette seconded, to adopt Ordinance #8752. On roll call vote, Council Members Robinette, Rowland, Aspacher, Herald, Hollenbaugh, and Jeffers voted yes. Council President Aspacher declared motion carried, and Ordinance #8752 adopted.

Acting Clerk read Ordinance #8753 authorizing the Utilities Director to accept an easement for utility purposes from Howard M. Gray and Linda S. Gray, for third reading.

Council President Aspacher moved, Herald seconded, to adopt Ordinance #8753. On roll call vote, Council Members Rowland, Aspacher, Herald, Hollenbaugh, Jeffers, and Robinette voted yes. Council President Aspacher declared motion carried, and Ordinance #8753 adopted.

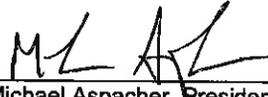
Council Member Herald moved, Jeffers seconded, to excuse Council Member Zanfardino from this evening's meeting. On unanimous voice vote, Council President Aspacher declared motion carried.

Council Member Herald moved, Rowland seconded, to move Council into Executive Session at 8:05 p.m. for the purpose of discussion land acquisition. On roll call vote, Council Members Aspacher, Herald, Hollenbaugh, Jeffers, Robinette, and Rowland voted yes. Council President Aspacher declared motion carried.

Council Member Herald moved, Robinette seconded, to move Council out of Executive Session at 8:30 p.m. On roll call vote, Council Members Herald, Hollenbaugh, Jeffers, Robinette, Rowland, and Aspacher voted yes. Council President Aspacher declared motion carried.

Council Member Herald moved, Jeffers seconded, to adjourn. On unanimous voice vote, Council President Aspacher adjourned the March 18, 2019 regular meeting of the City Council at 8:31 p.m., subject to call.

  
Jamie Kominek, Acting Clerk of Council

  
Michael Aspacher, President of Council



Report to City Council  
Richard A. Edwards, Mayor  
March 18, 2019

You now have before you the long anticipated “A Strategy for Redevelopment” for the East Wooster Corridor as proposed by Development Strategies of St. Louis.

The report is the culmination of a process that began in June, 2018 and is a collaborated effort between the City of Bowling Green and Bowling Green State University.

It reflects months of substantial input by various stakeholders in the community and the work of a Steering Committee involving key staff members from both the university and the city.

In many respects, the report is a byproduct of a process that began in 2012 with the City and university visioning that led into the Future Land Use update in 2014 and continued through the Community Action Plan in 2017.

Each of these four community redevelopment efforts is interrelated: one to the other with timely and important, and I might add, challenging recommendations primed for implementation.

In looking at the East Wooster Street corridor, we are well aware of the major construction project at the I-75 intersection that will be completed in 2019: two roundabouts in the interest of driver safety and traffic flow and a new and attractive bridge over I-75 that will be both pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

Connecting the other end of the Wooster Street corridor, and thanks to the thoughtful and much appreciated contributions from the public, we will shortly see the completion of the Wooster Green in historic downtown BG.

But the focus today is on how best to use that area adjoining the campus proper and how that development may be used as a catalyst for other areas in the city.

As identified in the report, we have had some minor rezoning efforts with the creation of the B5 zoning classification. Nevertheless, we are all aware that this area that is so important to the future of BGSU is directly tied to quality development.

In reading the report, you will find an unmistakable sense of urgency for some very obvious reasons: the diminishing numbers of traditional age college students beginning in 2025 will intensify competitiveness in the marketplace and increasingly students and their parents are making decisions about where to attend on the basis of appearance, i.e., image, negative impressions. The effects of these issues on BGSU certainly have a community-wide impact on the city. We know that Kent has made substantial improvements in those areas adjoining its campus. The simple truth is that we as a community cannot afford the economic losses associated with declining enrollments.

The consultants tell us a painful truth: “BG has a major image problem that needs to be fixed” and that the condition of the City is placing the University at a competitive disadvantage in attracting students.

While I take some exceptions to these bald statements because I sincerely believe that we have not been standing still as a community, I nevertheless agree that timing is critical and we have no choice but to move forward with deliberate speed on a priority basis.

In my view, the key to our future along the East Wooster Corridor will be our ability to attract private investors to build in targeted areas along the corridor, e.g., the Thurstin-Manville intersection, the area near the Falcon Health Center, and the immediate entry point into the city off of I-75.

In order for that to happen, according to the consultants, the City needs to create a “regulatory framework for development” to establish standards for setbacks, landscaping, signage, architectural quality and then to make certain that there is adherence to those standards. And, I agree with the consultants, the City must be proactive rather than reactive and that means addressing as a matter of priority zoning issues, architectural standards, and expanding the offerings of incentives.

Since the contract with Development Strategies is with BGSU, please be assured that President Rogers has a copy of the report and that we will be meeting soon to establish priorities for implementation. By necessity, a shared vision between the City and the University on how best to move forward is paramount and I have every reason to believe that the excellent working relationships between town and gown will continue unabated.

On balance, I believe the report is constructive and certainly reflects strategic thinking. It is prescriptive but on its own is not an antidote for any perceived shortcomings in our joint planning processes. The first steps toward implementation will be critical and will set the tone for success. Opportunities abound!

I now invite your reactions and comments and most importantly your advice. Thank you!

# East Wooster Street

## A Strategy for Redevelopment



Bowling Green, Ohio  
February 2019  
**WHITE PAPER**

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                     |        |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Introduction                        | Page 1 |
| Problem Statement                   | 2      |
| Goals Statement                     | 3      |
| What is the Opportunity?            | 3      |
| Where is the Opportunity?           | 4      |
| Agents of Change Urgently Needed    | 5      |
| Sequencing of Midtown Sites         | 6      |
| Top Implementation Priorities       | 7      |
| Full Implementation Recommendations | 8      |

## INTRODUCTION

In June of 2018, Development Strategies began working with the City of Bowling Green, Ohio and Bowling Green State University to create a land development strategy for East Wooster Street, the main road that connects the interstate to the rest of the community. Despite minor changes to the zoning code and some property assembly by BGSU, the corridor as a whole continues to struggle and is peppered with haphazard development and poor quality buildings. Development Strategies was charged with creating a plan that will spur redevelopment and put the City and BGSU on a shared path to success.

Over a period of six months, Development Strategies thoroughly analyzed market conditions, conducted numerous stakeholder interviews, and worked closely with a steering committee composed of key staff members from the City of Bowling Green and Bowling Green State University. These efforts culminated in a presentation to key stakeholders and city council, and ultimately, this white paper. This document will summarize the challenges and opportunities involved in redevelopment of the Wooster Corridor and identify a way forward, which will require the City and BGSU to work together to enact change.

# PROBLEM STATEMENT

## Poor Entry Impact and Image

Bowling Green is a far more impressive community than its first impression indicates. It has two major assets that many communities would be envious of: a public university and a charming, historic downtown. Even so, **the main corridor that welcomes visitors to the City and connects these destinations gives a negative impression that is hard to overcome.** The investments BGSU has made in the Stroh Center and Falcon Health Center set a new standard for quality; however, both public and private investment will be needed to infuse the 1.8-mile corridor with vitality.

## Economic Change

**The national economy is changing, but Bowling Green has not adapted its approach to economic development.** The City's efforts in regards to industrial/manufacturing jobs have proven fruitful, but this singular focus has come at the expense of knowledge-based industries that are growing and are expected to become increasingly important in the future. This blue-collar focus needs to be balanced with a broader vision of growth that will lead to greater prosperity in the long-term, and this is going to require a new strategic direction that is supported by all members of the community.

## Brand and Identity

People are increasingly choosing where they want to live based on the quality of life.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the quality of place (amenities, public space, walkability, etc.) is becoming a critical component in attracting and retaining the next generation of people who will call a community home. At least two major institutions, BGSU and Wood County Hospital, have clearly stated that the quality of the City, and the state of Wooster Street in particular, are negatively affecting their ability to attract talent. Potential employees don't see the amenities they desire and find it easier to go elsewhere. Top students and their parents come to the community and don't see it as a fun, progressive place they want to spend the next four or more years in. **Bowling Green has a major image problem that needs to be fixed.**

## Competition and Urgency

**Bowling Green needs to make large strides in quality of place, or risk declining enrollment for its biggest employer.** The number of college bound students is likely to decline substantially starting in the year 2025.<sup>2</sup> Officials at BGSU are keenly aware of the challenge before them. Attracting students is going to be increasingly competitive, and students are choosing where to attend based not only on the quality of the campus and educational programs, but increasingly based on the quality of the community where the school is located. BGSU is going head to head with institutions in cities that offer a much higher quality of place than Bowling Green--ones that have facilitated redevelopment in their downtowns, invested in the quality of their streets, feature high quality amenities and restaurants, host numerous community events, and exude charm and character. The condition of the City puts BGSU at a competitive disadvantage and negatively affects the ability of the university to attract students.

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<sup>1</sup> Kreisberg, Nicole; et al. *Top Job Destinations for College Graduates*. Retrieved from <https://www.aier.org/research/top-job-destinations-college-graduates>

<sup>2</sup> Gawe, Nathan D. *Demographics and the Demand for Higher Education*. John Hopkins University Press, 2018.

## GOALS STATEMENT

The City and BGSU hope to redevelop Wooster Street into a vibrant corridor that features high-quality development with diverse retail, dining, entertainment, employment, and residential options. Wooster Street is seen as an opportunity to create a unique identity for the community that can be used to attract students, faculty, residents, and employees.

## WHAT IS THE OPPORTUNITY?

### Harness Market Opportunity—Finite/Strategic

The market analysis presented on August 2<sup>nd</sup> revealed opportunities that can be seized upon immediately, particularly in regards to upscale student housing. Even so, demand in Bowling Green is not unlimited, so opportunities for quality new construction must be used wisely. These new projects must be directed to strategic spots along the Wooster corridor, even though it will require significant effort and intervention on behalf of the City and BGSU.

**The “hands off” approach to redevelopment must end—the types of projects the community desires and needs will not happen on their own.** The economics of quality development is extremely challenged in Bowling Green, making it all the more important that the City and BGSU work together. **Robust incentives such as TIF and tax abatement will be essential** and property assembly may be necessary. If these efforts are not undertaken, the next student housing project will follow the path of least resistance and happen on “easy” greenfield properties like the former Harshman site, or even worse, on the periphery of the City. These greenfield sites are easier to develop than the alternative, but will not be as catalytic as they will do nothing to remove the undesirable buildings that are detracting from the community and hampering economic development. If greenfield student housing development occurs, the likelihood of the community being able to support another large upscale student housing project is greatly diminished and the opportunity for a transformational project will evaporate. **The power of one transformational project should not be underestimated;** undertaking the first big project can build momentum and set the tone for the rest of what is to come.

### Set the Stage for Future Cycles of Investment

While more student housing may not appear to be the first choice of the community right now, the fact remains that it is **one of the only types of products that is currently profitable enough to withstand the costly redevelopment involved along the Wooster corridor.** Additional public outreach is desperately needed to help the community understand these development feasibility issues. Community fears can be lessened by education on how increased density and architectural controls can be used in tandem to produce buildings that will be a source of pride for the city. It is also important to help the community understand the “long game”. Once a cycle of investment occurs (a few successful projects, streetscape improvements, etc.), market demand for other products will increase as the area becomes more desirable and higher rents can be achieved. So the young professional housing, mixed-use retail, and boutique hotels that are not possible now, may very well be possible in the future. **But Bowling Green needs to take the first step and use the opportunities available now to ensure that more opportunities will be available later.**

### Create a Distinctive Place (attract talent, visitors, grow the economy, grow the pie)

Bowling Green has an opportunity to create a distinctive place by building upon its core assets and rigorously working to improve the elements that detract from its charm. Investments in the quality of place (amenities, streetscapes, art, events) will pay dividends in the future. These improvements will help attract the next generation of residents who will call this city home. These same investments can be used to appeal to tourists, whose purchasing power can be used to help smooth out the slow summer months that deter many businesses

from entering the Bowling Green market. These efforts will create a virtuous cycle, expanding the local economy and creating more opportunities for growth and future redevelopment.

## WHERE IS THE OPPORTUNITY?

### Midtown

**In the Midtown District, the key sites are at the northwest and southwest corners of East Wooster & Thurstin/Manville.** The sites are very marketable for high-quality student housing as they are adjacent to campus and within walking distance of downtown. The city-owned site would require relocation of one or two facilities, but the large lot depth and single-ownership still make this the ideal place to target for the first catalytic project. Development of these key sites will require many efforts including: rezoning, design guidelines, and incentives. Other “early wins” for Midtown include adaptive reuse of the dual gas stations at East Wooster & Enterprise.

### Eds, Meds & Beds

At over ½-mile in length, the Eds, Meds & Beds District is **a long stretch of road that’s going to require multiple products and development cycles to fill.** Currently the best market opportunity lies in an additional ambulatory care facility, which Wood County Hospital has expressed interest in. As before, this potential facility needs to be strategically positioned. It will need to be near the existing Falcon Health Center, but rather than building back farther into the neighborhood, this new building should be placed prominently along East Wooster Street with any parking appropriately landscaped and buffered. There is also market support for affordable senior housing, which would tie in nicely to this expanded health care district. While the community initially envisioned this area being ideal for townhomes or other housing for young professionals, the data leads us to believe that product cannot be brought to market at this time, unless BGSU wants to give the land to their selected developer at essentially no cost.

### Walkable Hospitality

Rather than identify key sites, the main takeaway for the Walkable Hospitality District is that the City needs to **create a regulatory framework for development.** Standards for setbacks, landscaping, signage, architectural quality, and connectivity need to be established and consistently enforced. The market strength of the area is apparent as many first class tenants are already in place, but those tenants are in in less than ideal properties. Once these city standards are in place, and properties redevelop over time, the quality of the district as a whole will improve.

### Interstate

The Interstate District has demand for many tenants that would benefit from the large secondary market area that Bowling Green serves. However, full-scale redevelopment of this district will be incredibly difficult, due to challenging property assembly and expensive land, which would trigger the need for substantial incentives. As with the Walkable Hospitality District, **improvement in City codes would go a long way towards improvement in the aesthetics and functionality of the area.** Incentives may still be required to compel existing properties to conform to new development standards—particularly with respect to pole signs.

# AGENTS OF CHANGE URGENTLY NEEDED

In some instances, a leader emerges that has the energy and fortitude to push a community in a new direction and see tough projects through to the end. More often, communities that wait for this singular “savior” fall behind. It is important to emphasize that progress needs to be made quickly, with or without a single leader. **A small group of dedicated individuals will need to work together as a team, as there is much to be done before the first shovel hits the ground—and time is of the essence.** Each new project that’s built under insufficient city standards will likely be there for another 30 years or more. Each day that passes, BGSU will face increasing pressure to let student housing development occur on “easy” sites (on-campus locations like the Harshman site) instead of catalytic sites (off-campus locations where low-quality buildings can be removed as part of the redevelopment). Each time a prospective resident, employee, or student comes to town, Bowling Green has lost another opportunity to make a good impression.

## THIS CITY AND ITS INHABITANTS NEED TO DO SOME THINGS DIFFERENTLY

### City

The city must switch its stance from reactive to proactive. The kind of development that will transform the image of the community will not occur on its own. Bowling Green must find the will to get into the thick of it—helping to assemble sites, using robust incentives, recruiting potential tenants—all the tools in the book that will enable them to encourage high-quality development. The City must also welcome Bowling Green State University as a partner and work to improve communication, develop trust, and enhance collaboration.

### BGSU

BGSU will likely need to take the lead on purchasing land at key sites and recruiting developers. Beyond that, the university needs a more visible presence on Wooster and throughout the community as a whole. BGSU can leverage their resources and staff/board knowledge to infuse entrepreneurial roots (like incubators and start-up spaces) and artistic character into the community. To do so, the university will need to work with the City to enact change, much of which needs to happen outside the official campus boundaries. Improved communication with city officials and a dialogue with the community are necessary to develop trust and support, and lay the foundation for greater collaboration.

### Hospital

Wood County Hospital and BGSU have many of the same issues in regards to talent attraction, and improved quality of place is essential to the future of both entities. Therefore, both parties should strive to find a way to work together again, for the betterment of the community. The hospital’s desire to provide additional ambulatory services along the Wooster corridor might be the best opportunity for collaboration.

### Property Owners

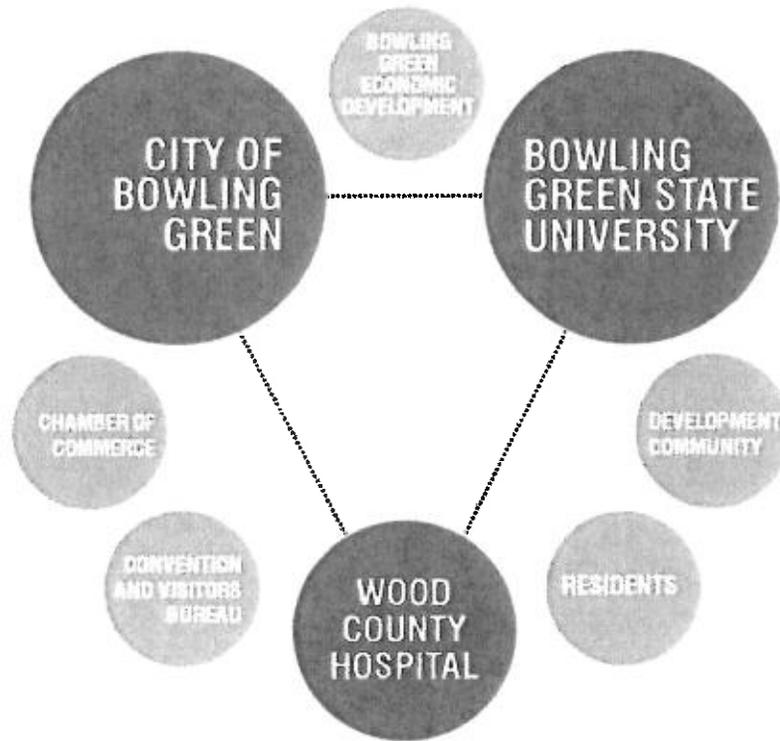
The vision of this plan will need to be shared with local property owners to build a sense of common purpose and to find ways to harness the enthusiasm many of them have for certain elements of the plan. Owners who are holding properties with no intent to improve them need to be encouraged to sell for reasonable prices in the name of progress.

### Community

The community needs a broad engagement process to help them understand feasibility issues underlying redevelopment along the corridor. This engagement process should include a robust online component, ensuring that the “silent majority” is being heard. With this improved knowledge, the community will be able to shift their efforts from resisting change and new development to helping craft city requirements that will make predictable outcomes for everyone, focusing on quality and appropriate placement. This public outreach should also be used

as an opportunity to help citizens develop a deeper understanding of BGSU's aspirations, thereby improving confidence and cooperation moving forward.

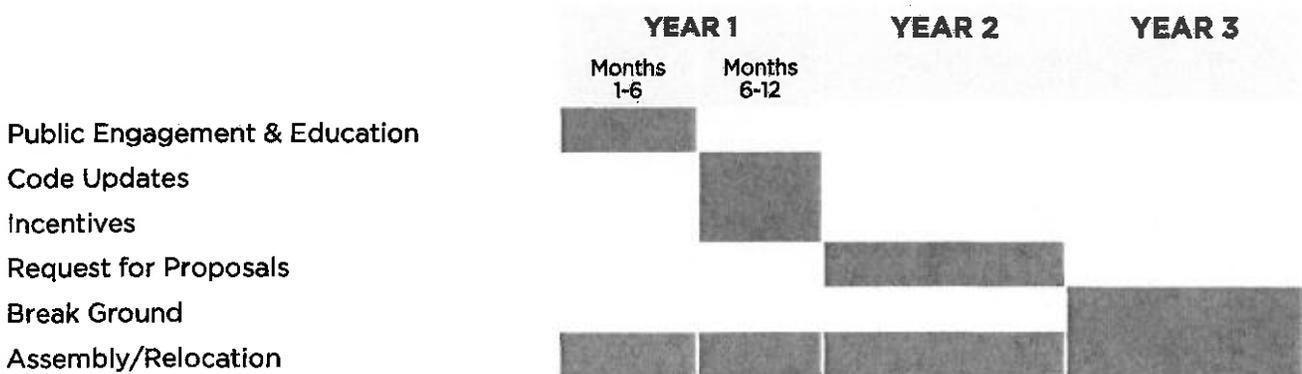
## PARTNERSHIPS



# SEQUENCING OF MIDTOWN SITES

As discussed in presentations on September 24<sup>th</sup> and November 13<sup>th</sup>, two of the most critical redevelopment sites are at the northwest and southwest corner of Wooster & Thurstin/Manville in the Midtown District. The list below summarizes the steps that must be taken before a high quality project can occur on either of those sites.

- 1) Public Engagement & Education
  - a. Public outreach needed before code changes or a major development project
  - b. Educational component paired with online survey to gather broad community perspective
  - c. Explanations on development feasibility, zoning, and architectural standards
- 2) Code Updates
  - a. Zoning & architectural standards to be updated simultaneously (don't want to allow for greater density if you don't have any control over the quality of the product)
- 3) Incentives
  - a. Education of elected officials on use of incentives such as TIF and tax abatement
  - b. Outreach to other taxing districts (especially schools)
  - c. Expansion of existing districts
  - d. Creation of new districts
  - e. Development of incentive policy
- 4) Request for Proposals
  - a. Issue RFP for city-owned site at northwest corner of Wooster & Thurstin/Manville—first priority
  - b. Choose best developer, negotiate deal—protect best interest of the City, ensure quality of the project
  - c. If/when SBX corner at the southwest corner of Wooster & Thurstin/Manville is acquired by BGSU or the City, issue RFP
- 5) Assembly/Relocation
  - a. Start working towards potential relocation of fire station & public utilities building
    - i. Look for potential sites and identify funding sources
  - b. Start working to acquire SBX corner
    - i. If owners are being unreasonable and negotiations are ultimately unsuccessful, consider a blight study



# TOP IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

## City

- Public outreach and education
- Zoning code update & creation of architectural guidelines
- Incentive districts
- Relocation of city facilities
- Arrange monthly coordination/strategy meetings between key staff members from the City and BGSU

## BGSU

- Take the lead on property assembly in Midtown and Eds, Meds & Beds Districts
- Coordinate with hospital to find site for ambulatory care facility along Wooster
- Work to keep nursing program in Bowling Green
- Contribute funds (if possible) to accelerate city-led processes
- After working out a site for the hospital in Eds, Meds & Beds, decide how to proceed with other fully assembled blocks of properties. Three alternatives:
  - Sit tight--Continue to assemble properties and wait for key projects and investments in the Midtown District to improve marketability of the area as a whole. Wait for next cycle of redevelopment when more options might be available.
  - Senior housing--High-quality affordable senior housing is a marketable product that BGSU could pursue right now and get a reasonable return for the land. Senior housing is not as strategic of a move, but it can be an attractive product that can help fill space in a long corridor with limited market demand.
  - Young professionals--Data indicates that young professional housing is not feasible at this time without major concessions on the price of the land. If BGSU is potentially willing to make these concessions to "prime the pump", then issue RFP and carefully evaluate any proposals received.
- Take the lead on infusing public art into the community, starting with highly-visible edge areas of campus and then working with the City to incorporate into streetscapes and public places.
- Utilize BGSU's strengths with the College of Business and well-connected board members to encourage start-ups and entrepreneurial activity in the City
- Expand marketing & outreach to make broader Toledo market aware of activities occurring in/around campus
- Explore opportunity for conference center hotel on BGSU property
- Create forgivable loan program for employees purchasing homes in targeted areas

# FULL IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1. Focus on Midtown

- Identify appropriate redevelopment sites
- Create developer guidelines for building design & quality
- Update zoning for density & mixed use
- Develop incentive policy for desired development types/locations
- Expand existing incentive districts & create new districts (such as TIF)
- Assemble/package/partner
- Invest in right-of-way
- Recruit existing businesses to move to downtown area (creative and legal are good targets)

## 2. Create Early Wins

- Public art
  - Encourage it, provide it, or require it (or a combination)
  - Philanthropy—identify potential donors who have an interest in the arts and direct/encourage their efforts
- Adaptive Reuse—particularly former gas stations
- More community events

## 3. Engage & Align

- Residents
  - Significant public outreach needed before zoning changes or other major efforts. Get out ahead of any project and educate. Include on-line survey to gather information from younger generation who typically don't attend traditional public meetings.
- City
  - Set up regular monthly meeting schedule with key people from City, BGSU, and Wood County Hospital (and perhaps members of the local development community—Green/Mecca and Maurer/Greenbriar)
  - Educate public officials on types of incentives available and how they can be used
  - Update incentives & city regulations
  - Coordinate property assembly plan with BGSU for Midtown & Eds, Meds, & Beds districts
  - Create a strategic plan for economic development that acknowledges the quality of place, startups, and growing knowledge industries as strategically important
  - Relocate public utilities buildings & fire station to less prominent locations—potential for using State Capitol Money for this project—partner with BGSU on application
  - Encourage local philanthropy—identify potential projects (art, health & wellness, amenities, etc); consider working with the businesses community to coordinate fundraising
- University
  - Coordinate property assembly plan with City for Midtown & Eds and Meds districts
  - Work to keep nursing program in Bowling Green
  - Develop plan for future of on-campus housing with an understanding that additional student housing on campus may limit options for redevelopment elsewhere within the community. BGSU needs to determine: how many students to accommodate on campus in the future, what buildings will be renovated, and what buildings will be torn down.
  - Strive to place any new major facilities in highly visible edge areas of campus

- Contribute art and connect student artists with local opportunities
- Work on incorporating BGSU strengths on business & entrepreneurship into the community
- Assist in effort to improve housing stock by creating a forgivable loan program for faculty/staff who choose homes in targeted neighborhoods
- Encourage local philanthropy—connect potential donors with specific projects and community needs; consider hosting fund raising events for these efforts
- Hospital
  - Work to get new ambulatory project (and future medical growth) in the Eds, Meds & Beds District in highly visible spot along Wooster
  - Consider philanthropic programs, such as health & wellness, that are mission-aligned

#### 4. Develop the Catalysts & Assemble Key Sites

- NW & SW Corners of Wooster & Thurstin/Manville
- Eds, Meds & Beds District (BGSU to continue property assembly)
- Issue Request for Proposals (RFP)
- Select development partners
- Enter into development agreement
- Explore possibility of blight study

#### 5. Get the Policies in Place

- Zoning
  - Increase max height
  - Density bonuses at key corners
  - Circulation & cross-access easements
  - Site layout—maximum front setbacks
  - Landscaping
  - Parking
  - Buffers
  - Signs
  - Evaluate bed & breakfast regulations (might be able to encourage reuse of those large historic homes on Wooster—a good alternative since boutique hotel is not likely right now)
  - Reevaluate requirement for retail on 1<sup>st</sup> floor in new B5 district (and other use restrictions) — developer flexibility is important.
- Incentives
  - Explore creation of additional districts (such as TIF) or expansion of existing districts (like expanding the Special Improvement District (SID) to include the Midtown area)
  - Develop policy on when incentives will be used
  - Have an independent party review incentive requests and moderate meetings with developers
  - Use incentives to discourage retail east of the interstate
- Architectural design standards
- Future Land Use Map
  - Show desired roadway connections in Walkable Hospitality & Interstate Districts
- Schools—encourage improvement of local public schools
- Historic preservation

## 6. Invest in the ROW

- Reallocate excess lanes/road widths for bike/ped, wider sidewalks, on-street parking, street trees, etc.
- Focus on bikability-walkability
- Develop detailed designs for future roadway cross sections along Wooster
- Gateways
- Require ROW dedication as part of new projects in key areas
- Interstate overpass/ramp beautification

## 7. Create the Destination

- Explore opportunity for conference center hotel on BGSU property
- More community & BGSU events that target Toledo population, extend length of farmer's market season
- Improve outreach & marketing to bring more BG residents to campus for events
- Use increased tourism to level out the slow summer months, enabling the community to target desired restaurants & shops
- Consider increase to hotel/motel tax (currently one of the lowest in the region) and invest these funds wisely in the community
- Add art to the visitor experience

## 8. Put Wooster to Work

- Partner with BGSU to encourage entrepreneurs & start-ups
- Broaden definition of economic development—target growing sectors nationally. Don't just focus on industrial/manufacturing. Don't just leave it to private property owners to target specific tenants.
- Support small business growth. Consider programs such as low interest loans, rent or improvement subsidies, and district-wide marketing efforts.
- Encourage restaurant growth by exploring designation of Downtown/Midtown area as Community Entertainment District (for additional liquor licenses)

