

# 2011-2016 Strategic Plan Update

April 2016

**GOAL 1:** Montgomery is a city of vibrant commercial and residential neighborhoods with a growing employment base anchored by a robust healthcare industry and sustained by public and private sector partnerships committed to retaining, expanding, and diversifying our residential, office, retail, entertainment and services options.

**SUMMARY:** Five separate strategies have been developed to meet this goal. The City will investigate what incentive programs are available and what other communities are doing to increase business activity. The City will develop a business recruitment strategy, a business retention and expansion initiative, and encourage the redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties which can add new employment and earning tax revenues and also provide a full range of services for the residents. Incentives for progressive residential development will be evaluated. Increased collaboration and partnering with commercial property owners, business owners, brokers and developers is a critical component of these strategies.

#### **CURRENT ACTIVITIES**

- The business community continued to do well in 2015 with numerous new businesses moving into the community. Construction of The Christ Hospital Outpatient Center was completed. Fifth Third Bank completed a demolition and rebuild of the bank building located at 9990 Montgomery Road. The three-unit townhome building across the street from Montgomery Hill at 7925 Remington Road has also been completed. Twin Lakes Senior Living Community demolished the former Honda buildings and the former LM Kohn building on Montgomery Road in order to accommodate a building expansion and potential retail use along Montgomery Road. The former Glock building was purchased and renovated for Houdini's Room Escape.
- At the same time, the efforts to redevelop the Gateway Redevelopment Area (GRA) at the south end of the City continue. Gateway Partners was identified as the preferred developer and submittals to ODOT are being completed to identify the optimal solution for an intersection modification at RR/Cross County Highway and Montgomery Road. Staff will continue to work with Gateway Partners to negotiate a preferred developer agreement, refine the site plan and identify funding sources for the project.
- Staff continues discussions with developers for the north portion at the Vintage Club. It is anticipated that the developer will submit for an updated General Development Plan approval in summer of 2016 and once agreement on public financing has been reached.
- Staff has continued to encourage the development of underutilized spaces and has met with key representatives of Twin Lakes to work through approvals for the expansion of the Main Campus and to discuss a potential retail building along Montgomery Road. Staff has also worked with Twin Lakes in regards to the development of the vacant property along Montgomery Road between the Safety Center and City Hall. Staff has also worked with Camden Homes on the redevelopment of the former Montgomery Swim and Tennis Club on Orchard Club Drive. Staff has had several conversations with developers regarding the potential for multi-family residential projects on different properties within the City, including, the Marketplace and on the west side of Montgomery Road between Deerfield and Pfeiffer Roads.
- Partnerships/relationship building has been accomplished through the business calling effort, intensive conversations with the owners/developers of the Vintage Club, lunch meetings with commercial realtors and numerous conversations with developers and consultants regarding the Gateway Redevelopment Area.

- The building permit waiver for solar photovoltaic installations was extended for 2015 and a partnership was formed with the Environmental Advisory Commission and Greater Cincinnati Energy Alliance to host several informational sessions. The program has garnered regional attention and led to the first commercial installation in the City at Pipkin's Market. Staff has had discussions with the Planning, Zoning and Landmarks Committee for the reimplementation of this program in March of 2016.

#### **WHAT'S COMING UP (6 MONTHS)**

- Move forward with the process at the Gateway Redevelopment Area, including obtaining approval for the preferred intersection modification at RR/Cross County and Montgomery Road, negotiate a preferred developer agreement with Gateway Partners and work with the Planning Commission, Landmarks Commission, residents and staff to create a workable plan for the site and determining the financing for the project and public improvements.
- Creation of an entertainment district including downtown and the Gateway Redevelopment Area.
- Continue to work with the staff, Law Director and City Council to complete negotiations on plans and discussions of the appropriate level of public assistance for the north half of the Vintage Club and submit plans for approval.
- Planning Commission and staff work with Twin Lakes on development plans for the property along Montgomery Road between Schoolhouse Lane and Safety Center.

#### **CHALLENGES**

- Numerous projects happening at once, including GRA, Vintage Club, Twin Lakes expansion and Orchard Trail.
- There is a lack of quality restaurant space available for sale or lease.
- There is a lack of quality office space for sale or lease in the 5,000-20,000 square foot range.
- The process for the approvals from ODOT for intersection modifications at the intersection of RR/Cross County Highway and Montgomery Road is long and may cause potential larger employers to look at other available sites.
- The analysis and negotiations on the appropriate level of public assistance for the remaining portion of the village section of the Vintage Club have taken a considerable amount of time and have delayed submission of the plans to the Planning Commission.
- There is a large interest by developers for multi-family residential projects within the City with proposed densities that exceed what is allowed by the Zoning Code.
- There has been redevelopment in the Commercial Corridor that while in compliance with the Code, does not reflect the traditional architecture of Montgomery and a comprehensive study of the Corridor is needed.
- Most of the City's vacant spaces are being absorbed creating a lack of options for new/expanding businesses; however, there are still several underutilized and/or vacant properties remaining in the Commercial Corridor.
- Increasing concern regarding the numerous teardowns within the City regarding the architecture, size, stormwater runoff, excess trash to the landfills, reduction in starter homes and/or empty nester homes and the increasing price point of housing in the community.

**GOAL 2:** Montgomery's long- term fiscal stability plan is to support both current and future levels of service with controlled levels of expenditures and revenues generated locally gaining greater financial independence by reducing the City's reliance on state-shared revenues.

**SUMMARY:** The GRA and Vintage Club projects continue to be a focus of the City with regard to finances. There will be increased pressure to commit revenue to the project, as a result, City Council and Staff will need to develop a plan for financial support.

**CURRENT ACTIVITIES**

- Developing a sound financial plan to assist in the development of the Gateway Redevelopment Area.
- Developing a sound financial plan to assist in the development of the north portion of the Vintage Club which incorporates the remaining portion of Great Traditions property bordering Christ Hospital and the north portion being developed by Brandicorp.
- Complete the transfer of properties in the Gateway Redevelopment Area into the Community Improvement Corporation.

**WHAT'S COMING UP (6 MONTHS)**

- Goal 2 has been largely completed. Some items have been proposed for carry over into the 2016 – 2021 Strategic Plan and are currently being addressed or will be addressed before the end of the year.
  - Research and implement a financial software to replace existing applications for budget, accounting, tax and payroll.
  - Fee review and benchmarking against neighboring communities, including random audits of fee collections.
  - Planning for the fire tax levy based on forecasted budget and cash flow.
  - Pursuit of grants and other funding for the Gateway Redevelopment Area.

**CHALLENGES**

- The staff turnover in the Finance Department will require new supervisors and leaders to learn the work culture and operation guidelines working with our qualified and experienced staff in the department to build on past successes and to enhance our service delivery.

**Goal 3:** Montgomery's organizational structure and workforce enable it to be a national leader in the delivery of services that meet the essential needs of the community and are financially sustainable, efficient, of the right level and quality and within available resources.

**SUMMARY:** This goal was completed following the organizational restructuring activities in 2014.

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| <b>CURRENT ACTIVITIES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>          |
| <b>WHAT'S COMING UP (6 MONTHS)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul> |
| <b>CHALLENGES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>                  |

**GOAL 4:** Montgomery has actively engaged citizens, continued to be an accessible local government and created synergistic partnerships with organizations while working together to build connection, ownership, pride and positive direction for the community.

**SUMMARY:** The 2016 focus of this goal is utilizing partnerships with volunteers, MCLA graduates, Sycamore Community Schools and Connect Montgomery organizations to jointly provide services that engage the public.

#### **CURRENT ACTIVITIES**

- Collaborate on joint projects with Sycamore Schools and Blue Ash, (4.3.4)
  - MyCommunitree.org was an innovative collaboration with Sycamore Community Schools and Blue Ash. Unfortunately, team representatives have changed and priorities realigned resulting in the cancellation of this project. Many lessons were learned through this project which will be used to enhance and strengthen other existing and future partnerships.
  - Faith Lynch and Mallory Bonbright from Sycamore Community Schools are collaborating on news media training for Montgomery staff. Mallory has direct experience with the media from her several years working in a local television station.
  - In 2015, a shared telephone system was installed with overall management provided by Sycamore staff. Both Sycamore and Montgomery will continue to meet in 2016 to update the existing support agreement and develop future shared innovations.
  - Staff is currently working on the ‘MCLA 2.0, A conversation about housing’ session for April 14. Over 66 MCLA graduates have responded affirmatively to this invitation to attend. The partnership with Xavier University Community Building Institute will provide ‘graduate-degree’ credentials to this new endeavor. Liz Blume, Director of the Institute will provide a summary report to the City on input gathered at this seminar. (4.3.1)
- The Community Engagement Grant was redesigned to be the Service to the Community Grant.

#### **WHAT’S COMING UP (6 MONTHS)**

- Goal 4 has been completed but engagement will continue to be a focus in the new Strategic Plan. Some items already in the works include:
  - Establishing community engagement as the way we operate following a similar model that was used for HPO.
  - In the effort to utilize technology to make connections, staff is preparing to launch a City feed on the Instagram platform to be in place prior to July events. Staff is also researching the possibility of using Snapchat to reach the 13-34 year-old demographic.

#### **CHALLENGES**

- Time, talent and resources are at a premium and in competition.
- A common struggle in community engagement is to find champions that will lead projects, ideas and initiatives. We continue to cultivate those champions through those we engage with the Montgomery Citizens’ Leadership Academy and other engagement ventures.

**GOAL 5:** The City has a quality of life and image that makes Montgomery the community of choice to live, work and play.

**SUMMARY:** The focus of this goal is on the image of Montgomery as a place to do business, an active and cultural community in a thriving economic environment.

**CURRENT ACTIVITIES**

- Art Guidelines were completed through the work of the Arts Commission. (5.5.3)
  - The Arts Commission will discuss locations for Public Art in 2016. There is an amount for public art budgeted in 2016. (5.5.5)
- The Arts Commission created a sponsorship packet to be used to obtain financial support for the Arts Commission activities and will begin utilizing it in 2016. (5.5.6)
- Regarding hosting recreation sporting events and to utilize park fields and courts, staff implemented pickleball courts in 2015 in Dulle Park. (5.3.6)
  - Staff will implement a survey to residents in 2016 to assess interest in leagues. (5.3.6)
- Regarding adding connections from residential neighborhoods to services and key community locations, staff applied and received grant funding for a sidewalk project to install sidewalk on the east side of Montgomery Road from Weller Road to the main entrance of Bethesda North. This project is currently scheduled in ODOT fiscal year 2017. (5.2.7)

**WHAT'S COMING UP (6 MONTHS)**

- The Arts Commission will discuss and propose potential locations of Public Art to City Council in the near future.
- The Arts Commission will seek sponsorships using the new sponsorship packet in 2016.
- Staff will implement a survey to assess interest in leagues in 2016.

**CHALLENGES**

- Securing Right-of-Way and/or Sidewalk easements for the sidewalk project.

**GOAL 6:** Montgomery partners with the community to utilize, re-purpose or build facilities that meet the changing needs of our community and city operations, creating a comprehensive master plan for facilities needs and uses that will satisfy both community and government needs into the future.

**SUMMARY:** The work completed on Goal 3 identified our organizational structure changes and facility needs as a result of these changes. Suggestions include: remodeling at the public works facility to accommodate the movement of staff from city hall, and to accommodate space needs during the summer when staffing increases with seasonal employees. Funds for the Public Works facility expansion were earmarked in the five-year budget cycle for final consideration in the future. Two projects mentioned in the facility study were funded and completed in 2015. An expanded salt storage facility resulted in a drastic increase in storage area for road salt. The suggested parking lot expansion at the Safety Center/Pool was completed and resulted in eighteen additional parking spots which will be critical during the summer months when the pool is in operation.

The facility summary report was created and staff suggested several projects be considered for inclusion in the 2016-2021 strategic plan. A renovation of City Hall Council Chambers was one of those projects and funds were tentatively included in the five-year budget cycle and set aside in 2018 for consideration at that time. Many of the maintenance projects and small improvements suggested for City-Owned buildings such as the landmark properties were included in the 2016-2021 budget request.

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| <b>CURRENT ACTIVITIES</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consideration of projects mentioned in the facility summary report during the 2016-2021 strategic planning process</li></ul>  |
| <b>WHAT'S COMING UP</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Development of a plan to implement ideas or projects included in the new strategic plan</li><li>• Creation of a funding plan for facility improvements to include in future capital project budgets for identified projects</li></ul> |
| <b>CHALLENGES</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The availability of funding and determination of funding sources</li><li>• Prioritizing projects and development of plans</li><li>• Available land and parking requirements for any facilities requiring additional parking</li></ul> |