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Strengthen Our Core



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Overview

As its name implies, this chapter, “Strengthen Our Core”, focuses on continued improvement of Xenia’s historic downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.

Residents are emotionally attached to downtown and support efforts to help downtown regain prominence in Xenia’s civic life. No other issue generated as much public concern, emotion or hope during the planning process.

Xenia’s Core, downtown and adjacent neighborhoods, are currently stressed. Underutilized commercial property, empty storefronts and idle industrial buildings in Xenia’s core area pull the entire community down. Yet, much of Downtown’s rich urban fabric and history remains intact. Residents desire a vibrant, walkable downtown with retail, restaurants, entertainment and the arts occupying well-maintained structures.

Strengths

Xenia has the **largest traditional downtown** in Greene County serving as a source of community identity and pride.

Xenia’s downtown is anchored by an **iconic historic courthouse** that is visible from many directions.

A public square and several ornate historic buildings provide a **strong sense of place**.

Xenia’s leadership including City Council, Xenia Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Xenia Now are **committed to downtown revitalization** and have implemented many 2008 Downtown Strategic Plan recommendations.

Investment, events and programs are creating **renewed interest and optimism** regarding downtown’s future.

Xenia’s core boasts three officially recognized historic and **architecturally significant neighborhoods**.

Traditional neighborhoods are **highly walkable** with diverse architecture, tree-lined streets and sidewalks.

Weaknesses

Downtown lacks shops and restaurants and is **not serving its full economic, social, or cultural function**.

The 1974 tornado’s **devastation of grand, historic structures** and their modern replacements near downtown hurt Xenia’s internal and external image.

A **gap in the bike path network** in downtown makes it challenging for cyclists to enter and traverse downtown, creating a **lost opportunity** for downtown businesses.

High vacancy, combined with a lack of commitment from some downtown property owners, has depressed market values and led to **deferred maintenance**.

Vacant industrial properties create eyesores and redevelopment challenges due to potential contamination.

Costly rehabilitation work is needed to convert some unoccupied upper floors to residential or office space.

Outside downtown, Xenia’s community core is a collection of **dissociated aggregates**. Greater physical and psychological connections are needed to create a unified brand image.



Objectives and Strategies

Recent Downtown Successes

Downtown revitalization efforts are just beginning. The City along with Downtown Xenia Now have made great strides over a brief two-year period including the successful bid for a \$400,000 grant through the State of Ohio Tier II Downtown Revitalization program.

\$800,000 in additional money was raised to leverage a total of \$1.4 million for downtown improvements. 2010/2011 downtown projects made possible from this funding and other sources include:

- Numerous façade improvements completed utilizing Xenia’s Downtown Facade Loan Program.
- Improvements to City Parking Lots #2 and #8.
- Enhancements to Xenia Station Bike Spur from 3rd St. to Xenia Station.
- Enhancement of East Main St. from Whiteman to Collier Sts.
- Bicycle and pedestrian crossing improvements at Detroit St. and Miami Ave.
- Painting of two murals with assistance from the Xenia Mural Society.
- Design and installation of wayfinding signage and two directory map kiosks.
- Curb and sidewalk improvements.



SC1 Create Vibrant Downtown-Adjacent Neighborhoods

Historically, downtowns provided nearby residents goods and services within walking distance. Residents in turn supported a variety of merchants in one compact location.

This synergy eroded over time as business models changed and personal mobility increased.

However, proximity to a vibrant downtown is still considered a market asset, albeit for more entertainment/lifestyle reasons than in the past. While a vibrant downtown can help adjacent neighborhoods, vibrant adjacent neighborhoods can in turn boost downtown’s viability.

SC1.1 Increase utilization of Xenia Station by attracting an active tenant and increasing programming. Xenia Station is an extremely popular meeting spot for cyclists from Xenia

and beyond, yet the facility has not fully realized its potential. It also suffers from occasional vandalism. Identify a permanent user for the facility to attract interest to the area and provide increased security. Work through community-based groups like Friends of Xenia Station to organize events that activate the property on a regular basis.

SC1.2 Develop a streetscape and branding plan for the Allison/Orange/West Main/West Second area. This area,



a portion of which is sometimes referred to as “Midtown,” is a mixed-use district west of downtown. It contains a wide array of uses, including single- and multi-family residential, industrial, retail and offices. The area boasts excellent vehicular access as well as the location of the Xenia High School football stadium. However, the development pattern is relatively haphazard, buildings are aging and the area lacks a clear identity. Coordinated branding, streetscape enhancements and targeted redevelopment over time could help to ensure the area’s long-term viability. Work with property owners on a plan to unify and enhance this district.

SC1.3 Organize an annual home tour and utilize NG1.5 tasks to market neighborhoods in the community core. Using the tasks identified in NG1.5 (develop a neighborhood marketing campaign), promote the benefits of living in Xenia’s historic districts and other core neighborhoods. Examples of benefits include access to a wide range of amenities, small town charm, and a pedestrian-friendly environment.

In addition to NG1.5 tasks, organize a home tour (e.g. Parade of Homes) each year in neighborhoods close to

downtown as a fundraiser and to increase awareness about downtown living. Tours of historic homes and downtown apartments/condos have proven successful in many communities.

SC1.4 Extend downtown streetscapes into adjacent neighborhoods. The purpose of this strategy is to create stronger physical, psychological and economic ties between adjacent neighborhoods and downtown. Identify specific, phased streetscape projects that visually tie adjacent neighborhoods to downtown and make the “community core” a more cohesive district.

SC1.5 Start a resident/merchant benefit program. Work through Downtown Xenia Now and Friends of Xenia Station to organize special events targeting residents, as well as merchant promotions that offer discounts to “community core” residents.

SC1.6. Create a downtown residents organization. Work through community-based groups to create one or more resident organizations that promote civic engagement and socialization in community core neighborhoods.

SC1.7 Develop a downtown greenway behind Xenia Station. Purchase property and clean up brownfield properties in the floodplain from SR 42 to Detroit Street to create a passive linear park, creating a southern “bookend” (like Shawnee Park to the north) for the community core. Incorporate creek overlooks and walking trails.

A greenway will provide an additional amenity to attract more residents to the community core. Acquiring flood-prone properties would eliminate future flood hazards to residents. Brownfield cleanup will eliminate the potential for contamination of Shawnee Creek, a tributary of the Little Miami River. State and federal





grants from a variety of sources are available to assist with the greenway initiative.

SC2 Change Downtown's Role

Downtown Xenia, like most American downtowns, will never perform its former central business district role again. Efforts to replicate past market conditions will fail. Downtown must find a new niche.

Downtowns are being repositioned from job or retail centers to livable, mixed-use, lifestyle neighborhoods. Residential, arts, cultural and entertainment uses are backfilling spaces left by the companies that moved to the edge of town or went out of business.

SC2.1 Amend zoning and parking policies to encourage residential uses on upper floors. Allow building owners to offer public parking spaces as an incentive to encourage rehabilitation of downtown building upper floors as apartments and condos. Allow residential as a permitted use in the Zoning Code. Monitor public parking usage periodically to determine whether amendment of parking policies or zoning regulations are needed. Update the downtown parking study (last updated in 2007) as upper-floor occupancy increases and parking demand begins to exceed supply.

SC2.2 Create a positive business culture that attracts a diverse range of retail and entertainment uses. Downtown's



Downtown as a "Lifestyle" Neighborhood

Downtown must be more than a collection of historic buildings or a place to go once a year for a festival to perform its role as the center of Xenia.

Downtown must become a cohesive neighborhood that offers lifestyle choices including housing and a critical mass of attractions and amenities clustered in a walkable environment. Downtown can be a unique, eclectic neighborhood with access to a variety of amenities like shopping, restaurants, community theater (XACT), Xenia Public Library, YMCA, Shawnee Park and regional bike paths all within walking distance.

Calmed traffic, ample street furniture and inviting public spaces and parks define the level of pedestrian infrastructure needed to create a lifestyle neighborhood downtown.

Second and third floor office space in many communities has been converted into residential loft space, in recognition of decreased demand for office space and an increased demand for lifestyle housing. This strategy adds households downtown and bolsters retail market demand.

Shifts in the housing market favor this strategy. Today, 40% of renters choose renting for lifestyle reasons, not financial limitations. 60% of households in a recent poll suggested they would prefer to live in a walkable location over the suburbs. These market forces represent an excellent opportunity to revitalize existing housing units near downtown and rehabilitate upper floors of mixed-use buildings.



relatively affordable rents and unique spaces will often attract independent businesses that do not utilize sophisticated site-selection processes. Therefore, a less formal, more personalized approach is needed.

- **Downtown business support resources.** Work through Downtown Xenia Now to create a business support program that increases networking opportunities (as described in GE5.4, Chapter 3) and promotes available space. Provide retail market data to businesses. Utilize the vacant building space database developed in GE5.1 (Chapter 3) to identify available space. Develop creative promotional campaigns such as promotional stickers on vacant storefront windows that include a contact phone number and QR code.
- **Supportive regulations.** Some potentially beneficial uses, such as assembly uses, currently require a lengthy and at times unnecessary Conditional Use review process. Amend the Zoning Code to permit a broader range of uses by right.



SC2.3 Identify space and resources to make downtown a community event hub.

Community events are an integral component of creating a vibrant downtown, because they reacquaint people with downtown and reinforce downtown's positive aspects to visitors and businesses.

Downtown Xenia is blessed by proximity to excellent public event spaces such as Shawnee Park and Xenia Station. However, these venues are somewhat removed from downtown, and the core of downtown lacks viable event space. Closing Main Street or Detroit Street is challenging since these are critical thoroughfares with few parallel alternatives.

Form an interdisciplinary committee to study options to create a downtown event hub. Survey vendors and guests to identify their likes and dislikes. Continue to seek sponsorship of events as well as permanent improvements. Potential locations for event space include designation of existing or future streets as "festival streets" (see Objective SC3), a redesigned Courthouse plaza, and/or creation of additional downtown open space.

SC2.4 Market Downtown to Development Professionals.

Many of the development opportunities located in the community core will be overlooked by the development community, due to the expenses and complication associated with redevelopment. Revitalization efforts require aggressive promotion to succeed. Identify and meet with developers that have a niche in urban infill, adaptive reuse and redevelopment projects, as well as their brokers and bankers.

Redevelopment projects often require finesse and creative



financing beyond what is needed with new construction. Look for expertise with New Market Tax Credits, Clean Ohio Fund, Historic Tax Credits, etc. Give developers a tour of community core development opportunities and the vision for revitalization to raise awareness.

SC 2.5 Attract the arts. The arts are a common revitalizing influence in downtowns. Distressed downtowns provide low rent and unique spaces that are attractive to aspiring artists. Art display, performance and education venues attract visitors to distressed and vibrant downtowns and provide a unique amenity for residents.

The Xenia Area Community Theater (XACT) is a significant downtown asset that is poised to expand its artistic scope within Xenia. Create a committee within Downtown Xenia Now to work with XACT, building owners and regional arts organizations to attract additional artists to downtown. Identify building space suitable for art galleries, studios, art education and live-work units.

SC2.6 Increase downtown visitations through targeted marketing. Market downtown Xenia and advertise in targeted publications. Target surrounding colleges and institutions such as Athletes in Action (AIA) as well as cycling organizations.

Events held by these institutions attract thousands to Greene County each year. Xenia is in an excellent position to capture a percentage of these visitors by delivering an authentic downtown destination.

Work with the Greene County Convention and Visitors Bureau for ways to joint-market with other Greene County attractions. Potential ideas include

hard-copy and online marketing materials, as well as blogging and social media activities by advocacy groups.

SC 2.7 Establish a funding mechanism for downtown promotion, events, maintenance and beautification. As the Main Street Approach suggests, successful downtowns often require a dedicated management organization that is focused solely on the downtown, similar to what shopping centers have. Downtown Xenia Now is beginning to



Building at NW Corner of Detroit and Main, destroyed by 1974 tornado

Existing K-Mart store on W. Main St. between West and Galloway St.

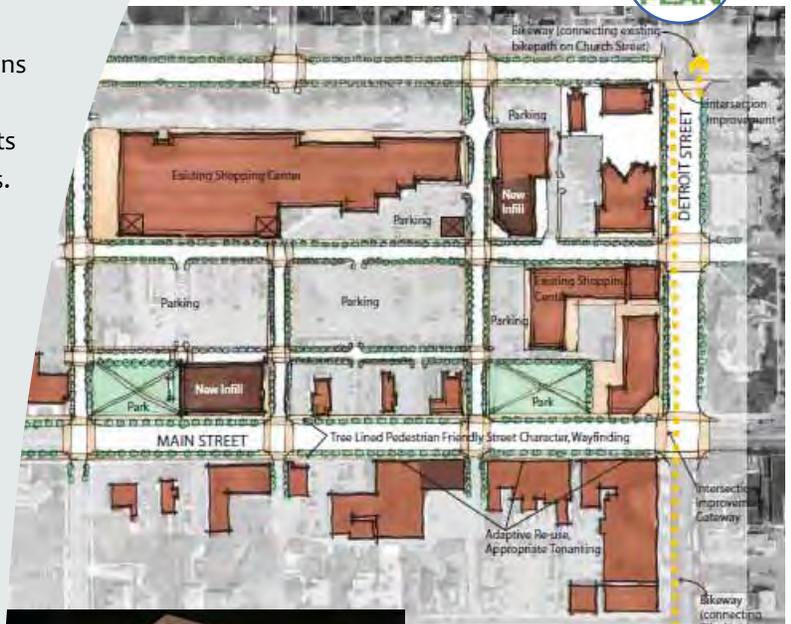




Xenia Towne Square Redevelopment Goals

The 2008 Downtown Strategic Plan, as well as citizens during the X-Plan process, expressed the need to redevelop Xenia Towne Square to better integrate its form and function with downtown and fill vacancies. Building on this input, X-Plan establishes a series of design goals to guide redevelopment discussions:

- **Restore the urban street grid.** The previous block grid was displaced when a superblock was assembled to construct Xenia Towne Square. Restore the downtown street grid by extending Market and Galloway Streets and creating shorter blocks with a pedestrian scale. Add on-street parking to West Main Street to calm traffic and compensate for parking lost to redevelopment.
- **Incorporate public space.** Include provisions for a plaza and/or a “festival street” to provide a public gathering and festival space, as recommended in Strategy SC2.3. Festival streets are designed for easy closure during special events. Benches can swing in to block streets. Sidewalks and road pavement are at one level grade to reduce tripping hazards, using bollards and/or landscaping instead of curbs. A festival street could start at the existing courthouse plaza and continue westward along an extended Market Street, connecting to a future plaza to the west.
- **Restore urban fabric.** Construct new buildings adjacent to the street in order to re-establish the pedestrian-friendly, urban neighborhood that once existed. Infill the existing parking lots and frame existing and future streets with urban architecture that complements the remainder of downtown.
- **Incorporate a mix of uses.** Select a mix of not only retail, but uses such as office, residential and institutional. Redevelopment scenarios proposed by residents include recreational, residential, and civic uses such as a YMCA.





fill this role, but the organization needs funding in order to expand its scope. City staff alone cannot fully satisfy the specialized operational needs of downtown such as event costs, sidewalk cleaning/plowing, landscaping maintenance, etc. Therefore, a separate funding source is needed.

Some downtown organizations utilize a geographically targeted property tax called a special improvement district (SID) to fund specialized maintenance, beautification, promotion and event costs, as well staff to coordinate these activities. In many cases, communities rely on volunteer labor and private donations to cover costs. Private contractors are another option, funded by the City and/or Downtown Xenia Now.

SC3 Redevelop Xenia Towne Square

Residents selected this particular strategy as a top community priority. Xenia Towne Square served an important purpose, putting multiple city blocks back into productive use after the 1974 tornado.

However, the square's signs of obsolescence and out-of-scale suburban form stand as a stark reminder of the tornado's devastating impact.

Public input and the 2008 Downtown Strategic Plan called for infilling portions of

Why is Downtown Mixed Use Important?

Downtown Xenia would benefit from near-equal parts of retail, office, entertainment, residential, parks and public uses as part of its revitalization strategy. Each use in a mixed use environment has a specific and necessary function. As explained below, the synergy between uses is essential to attracting a broad range of people downtown, at all hours of the day and evening.



Restaurants and cafes attract people during lunch and dinner hours. These uses promote downtown foot traffic and opportunities for socialization, particularly when combined with outdoor seating.



Retail and personal services drive ground floor pedestrian activity and attract daytime/weekend traffic. Interesting storefront displays, etc., contribute to a positive pedestrian experience.



Residential supports retail during evening and weekend hours and provides evening supervision. Residential can be standalone apartment or townhouse buildings or on upper floors of mixed-use buildings.



Office uses support retail and restaurant uses during work hours when residents are not around. To the extent practical, promote upper-story office use, leaving ground floors for retail.



Open spaces and formal urban parks provide needed space for pedestrian comfort, leisure time and a brief escape from the urban environment. Parks and open space offer opportunities for play and socialization and can attract residential development.



Public and institutional uses like the Library, YMCA, XACT and bike trails attract residents on a regular basis. Keep these uses in the Community Core as resident attractions.



the parking lot with buildings placed close to the street, re-establishing the street grid and incorporating open space.

Redevelopment is challenging and should be guided by a master plan. A master plan phases redevelopment in a logical and fiscally responsible sequence. The master plan can also estimate project revenues/expenses and identify funding sources.

SC3.1 Visualize options by preparing phased redevelopment concept alternatives. Build on the concepts developed in the 2008 Downtown Strategic Plan and create multiple alternative concept plans. Since Xenia Towne Square still contains viable tenants, a phased approach is critical. Existing tenants can and should be incorporated into the redevelopment plan.

SC3.2 Form a coalition of interested partners and resources. The City owns the land on which Xenia Towne Square sits, although private companies hold land leases. Therefore, the City must work to build consenses with the leaseholders in order to effect change. Initiate meetings with leaseholders, outside developers, area institutions and potential financial assistance providers with the goals of (1) evaluating leaseholders' future plans and potential interest in redevelopment, and (2) identifying outside partners and resources that the City can bring to the table.

SC3.3 Create a market- and financially-feasible vision. After obtaining preliminary buy-in from leaseholders and external interests in SC3.2, conduct a market and financial feasibility analysis. Conduct a public visioning process within the framework of market and financial feasibility.

SC3.4 Issue an RFP for a master developer to implement the project. Create a review committee comprised of City leaders, leaseholders, existing/prospective tenants and residents. Hire a master developer to work with

the City and its partners to identify a detailed sequence of actions and financing required to implement the project.

SC4 Create a Welcoming and Comfortable Pedestrian Environment

Downtown populations are increasing across the country. Many people are drawn to the vibe of living in a walkable, mixed use environment.

Downtown Xenia has wide sidewalks, decorative streetscapes, and four regional bike trails that converge on the community core. Yet, bicycle and pedestrian traffic are limited. More needs to be accomplished as follows:

SC4.1 Create areas for outdoor seating in downtown public spaces. Outdoor seating areas for food service establishments help to create a vibrant public space. Identify areas of sidewalks and other public spaces in which outdoor seating could be accommodated safely and effectively. Amend ordinances to allow outdoor seating in public rights-of-way once potential seating areas are identified.

SC4.2 Enhance parking lot appearance and access. Wayfinding signage and landscaping enhancements have greatly improved City-owned parking lots. Expand upon this success by screening other parking lots, expanding wayfinding signage and installing more mid-block pedestrian paths.

- **Urban screening walls.** Screening walls separate parking from sidewalks and maintain the urban fabric. Urban screening walls typically consist of a masonry and/or decorative metal fence that is no more than four feet tall.
- **Additional wayfinding signage.** Add wayfinding signage for the Xenia Towne Square parking lot, which is a public lot.
- **Mid-block pedestrian paths.** Identify opportunities through building



rehabilitation projects to construct lighted mid-block pathways leading to rear parking lots. Such an opportunity may exist on the south side of East Main Street between Detroit and Whiteman Streets, where a mid-block alley or pathway once existed.

SC4.3 Replace unneeded roadway width with widened sidewalks, bike paths and green areas. Downtown Xenia’s streets are wide and favor automobile traffic. Downtown traffic must be balanced with pedestrian needs for safety and comfort. Some congestion in downtown may be welcome. Traffic speeds are higher than desired, creating a slightly uncomfortable feeling for pedestrians. Specific ideas for potential projects include:

- **Remove excess pavement on Detroit/Main Streets.** Portions of West Main Street and South Detroit Street have excess roadway width that is not used for either parking or travel. Extend curbs in order to widen sidewalks and treelawns.
- **Reduce travel lane width.** Travel lanes in some areas could be reduced from 12 feet to 11 feet. This would maintain safe vehicular operation but discourage speeding, while providing space to widen sidewalks.
- **Reduce number of travel lanes on Detroit and/or Main Street.** Analyze traffic flows and determine feasibility of eliminating a travel lane on one or both sides. Extend curbs and/or create bike lanes/bikeways in the former travel lane space (see Strategy SC5.3).

SC5 Make Downtown the Bicycle Hub of the Midwest

Xenia markets itself as the Bicycle Capital of the Midwest. Take steps to make downtown a Bicycle Hub of the Bicycle Capital.



SC5.1 Develop and administer an annual bike path user survey. Work through MVRPC and FOXS to develop a survey instrument and annually survey trail users to measure usage, determine where users live, and ask users what can be done to enhance their experience while visiting Xenia.

SC5.2 Add and promote annual trail-related events. Work through Downtown Xenia Now and Greene County Parks and Trails to add more bike events and encourage biking advocacy in order to attract people to Xenia, promote biking and further enhance Xenia’s image. Bike events could include:

- A **road race and/or regional triathlon** that starts in Xenia and ends in Cincinnati.
- An **“X-games”-style bike festival** and rallies with competitions and trick riding, etc.
- A bike-based **“treasure hunt.”**
- A **bike art festival** allowing kids to decorate their bicycles, enter a parade and ride through obstacle courses, etc.
- **Other trail-related events** that take advantage of Xenia’s bike paths such as the **ORRRC Marathon.**

SC5.3 Improve bike access to and through downtown. Xenia has more regional trails than any community its size in Ohio, and even



perhaps the Midwest. Yet, downtown sees few bicyclists. This is due, in part, to a critical path gap that exists in the heavily-used Little Miami Scenic Trail between 3rd and Church Streets.

The designated space for cyclists in this area is the sidewalk on Detroit Street. However, there is inadequate space for both cyclists and pedestrians and there are multiple obstructions such as benches, trees and light poles. Cyclists can share the road but there is no shoulder or designated bike lane. This situation may cause some cyclists to bypass downtown via the Creekside Trail and connector on Church Street.

Attracting bike path users to visit downtown requires infrastructure that brings them **to and through** downtown, not around it.

One solution is to install a “cycle track” – a two-way bike path designed for urban street sections (see photo example above).

SC5.4 Recruit bike service-oriented businesses and help existing businesses capture bike traffic. Xenia’s downtown economic development strategy must include steps to make downtown a true destination and service center for the thousands of bicyclists that visit each year.

Downtown can offer a place to rest (greenspace, benches, outdoor seating), grab a meal or refreshment (restaurants, coffee houses ice cream) or get bike repairs and equipment (outfitters, bicycle shop).

Work through Strategies SC2.2 and SC2.6 and target recruitment and marketing efforts toward cycling organizations, visiting cyclists and trail-oriented businesses.

SC6 Reposition Vacant Properties

Many properties in the Community Core are vacant or underutilized. Notable examples include the Eavey Building, the former Greene Park Plaza and several downtown buildings.

Repurposing these properties with new uses will improve the image of Xenia’s core and embolden nearby property owners. See the Community Core Plan for additional land use and development guidance. The locations of many underutilized properties are identified on Map 1.

SC6.1 Evaluate and adopt a vacant property registration ordinance. Communities across the country are utilizing registration and penalties for vacant buildings that are not being actively marketed. The purposes are to (1) keep track of owner contact information in case code violations need to be addressed, and (2) discourage owners from “sitting on” and neglecting vacant buildings without engaging in any kind of maintenance or marketing activities.

Such a program could be targeted initially in the community core and expanding to a citywide program at a later date. A vacant



RiverPlace (left) and adaptive re-use of an industrial building into an event pavilion (below) in Greenville, SC
Sources: FallsPark.com and Tom Eblen, kentucky.com



Confluence Park activities in Denver (source: Denver Post)



Concept for revitalization of the Eavey Building and adjacent properties (location unknown)

Concepts for Hub District Revitalization:

RiverPlace and Falls Park, Greenville, SC

Greenville, South Carolina (population 61,600) transformed an underutilized and blighted “dead zone” to an award-winning “Best Places in America.” Public and private investment transformed a formerly inaccessible gulch and underutilized industrial zone to a downtown natural park and a pedestrian-focused mixed-use development known as Riverplace.

The city created a catalyst for the project through property acquisition, streetscape improvements, development of Falls Park, parking accommodations, and trail connections.

Confluence Park, Denver, Colorado

This river park in northwest Denver was once an industrial site along a polluted river. Gradual cleanup and acquisition efforts created a greenway along the narrow river with a regional trail, event spaces, and urban water rapids. The combination of outdoor recreation activities attracted adjacent development, including the R.E.I. flagship store.

Although both of these examples are located in regions that are far different from Xenia and greater Dayton, they offer the following basic concepts to guide revitalization of the Hub District:

- **Greenspace and trails can spur development activity.** Properties that face excessive contamination or other constraints may be best utilized as public greenspace. The planned greenway behind Xenia Station is an example. With its adjacency to Xenia Station and downtown, this greenway could serve as a recreational amenity for downtown and Xenia Station visitors, as well as programmed event space.
- **Improvements initiated by the City can encourage private investment.** The City should build upon the investments already made in the Hub District and acquire properties as they become available. This along with the planned greenway will help to create a catalyst for private investment in key properties such as the Eavey Building.
- **Older structures creatively preserved can create an attractive destination.** The Eavey Building and former coal gasification plant are examples. Adaptive reuse and renovation of this building could create a unique destination and “connect” downtown to Xenia Station.



property registration ordinance typically utilizes a multi-departmental approach and is paired with a robust code enforcement and building inspection program.

SC6.2 Implement a proactive, systematic code enforcement program downtown. Deferred maintenance diminishes downtown’s image, discourages investment by other property owners and sends a negative signal that an area is unsafe. Worse yet, neglect can quickly lead to the destruction of historic structures. Utilize the process explained in Strategy NG3.1 (Chapter 4) to organize comprehensive, systematic “sweeps” of downtown. Unlike residential neighborhood efforts, a downtown sweep will require a significant amount of coordination with and involvement by the Fire Division and Greene County Department of Building Regulation.

Partner with the Development Department and Downtown Xenia Now to identify incentives or relationship-building that can help achieve compliance.

SC6.3 Prepare “Hub District” properties for redevelopment. The “Hub District” is loosely defined as the area between Xenia Station and downtown and the South Detroit Street corridor between Third Street and Miami Avenue. This area was historically the industrial heart of Xenia due to the convergence of railroads (now bike paths). Consequently, many of these properties (known as “brownfields”) may possess some level of environmental contamination that may complicate future usage and/or redevelopment. Chemical spills, leaking underground tanks, and asbestos are common with older industrial sites.

Today, this area has been identified in X-Plan and the concurrent Brownfield Action Plan as a high priority for revitalization. The Hub District represents a southern extension of and gateway to downtown Xenia for vehicles and

cyclists.

The City has already identified grant programs that can assist with environmental assessment and cleanup. Work cooperatively with property owners to perform environmental assessments. Obtain site control through acquisition or agreements with property owners. Analyze structures to determine whether demolition or rehabilitation makes the most financial sense. Prepare redevelopment concepts to guide efforts.

SC6.4 Seek funding and end users for cleanup and redevelopment of the “Hub District.” Once necessary assessments have been completed, pursue cleanup and redevelopment grants and end users for the brownfield properties. Focus initially on properties fronting on South Detroit Street and those adjacent to Xenia Station.

SC6.5 Prepare remaining properties identified in the Brownfield Action Plan for redevelopment. Multiple potential brownfield properties exist outside the Hub District. These properties are generally located in residential areas without the access and visibility provided by South Detroit Street. Redevelopment potential is therefore longer-term in these areas. Work with property owners and pursue assessment and cleanup grants as opportunities arise.

SC6.6 Work with owners of the former Greene Park Plaza and Perkins to facilitate redevelopment. These two relatively large sites are highly visible and accessible locations and have significant redevelopment potential. Work through the strategies of Objective CC5 (Chapter 2) to connect prospective businesses and developers with these sites’ owners and identify redevelopment incentives. Work with owners through Strategy SC1.2 to identify branding, enhancement and redevelopment concepts to assist with planning and marketing.



SC7 Leverage Downtown's Historic Assets

Downtown buildings have essentially stayed the same over the past 100 years while real estate markets have changed substantially.

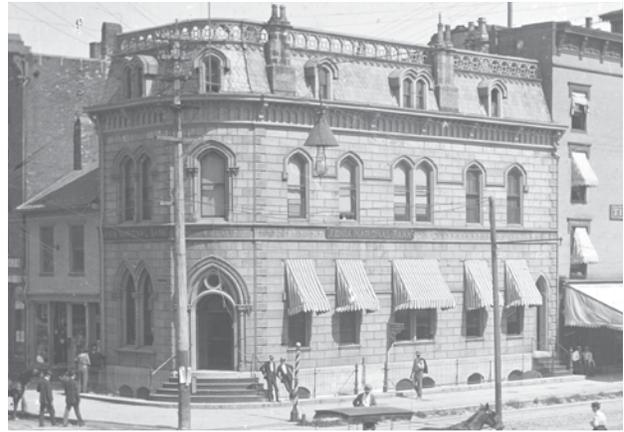
Overcoming structural and functional obsolescence is often difficult and costly. Would-be investors often walk away from downtown housing because costs to bring older structures up to code and/or tenant standards can be high. A variety of tools and techniques are needed to overcome structure-related market barriers.

SC7.1 Achieve Historic District status for downtown. National Register Historic District status qualifies a building for potential state and federal historic tax credits for qualifying rehabilitation costs. These tax credits are a powerful financial incentive for substantial rehabilitation projects. Furthermore, Historic District status can qualify a project for added expertise in identifying ways to exempt historic buildings from certain costly building code provisions.

Prepare a property inventory of downtown structures consistent with Department of Interior standards as needed to submit a Historic District application covering the majority of Downtown's older building stock.

Contrary to popular belief, National Register Historic District status does not introduce a new layer of design regulations that all property owners must meet. Only projects benefitting from federal or state historic tax credits must comply with the Secretary of the Interior's standards for historic building renovation.

SC7.2 Restore and promote the City's Facade Loan program. The City's Facade Loan program was highly successful and resulted in a transformation of some downtown blocks. Apply for CDBG funding to re-instate this program. Work through Downtown Xenia Now





to aggressively promote the program and build interest among property owners.

SC7.3 Seek and promote incentives to rehabilitate building upper floors and interiors.

Interior renovation costs, particularly involving upper floors, are often a primary stumbling block for downtown projects. Identify City and/or grant funding to help property owners with the costs of performing structural analysis, preparing designs and/or performing the work.

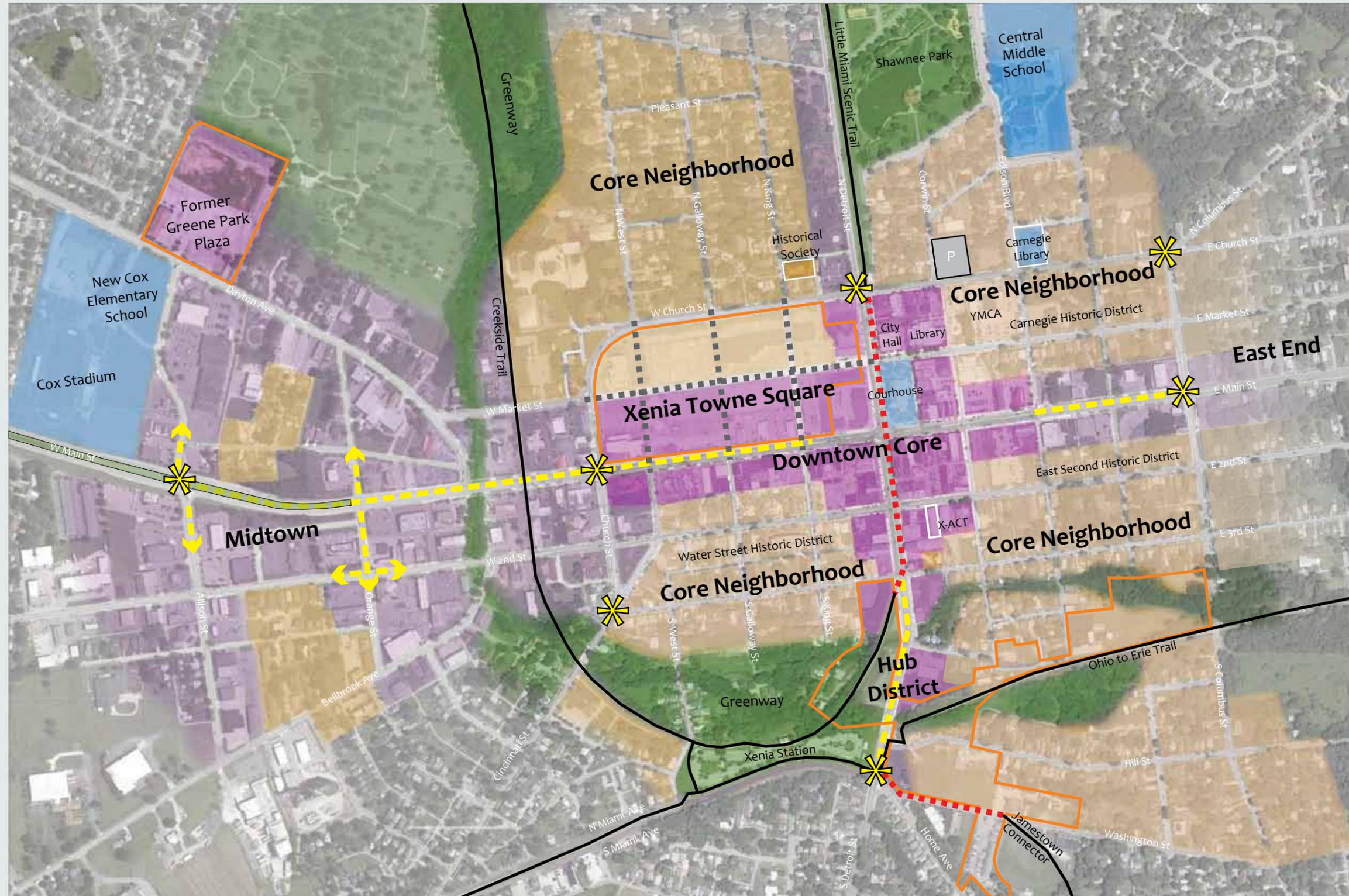
SC7.4 Obtain site control. Identify cooperative property owners and jointly pursue projects. Consider acquiring high-profile properties when attempts at cooperation and code enforcement efforts fail.

CC7.5 Seek funding and end users for rehabilitation of the old Carnegie Library.

Residents identified restoration of this architecturally and historically significant structure as a priority during the X-Plan process. Work with Greene County to develop a marketing strategy and identify potential funding sources.

Community Core Map

The Strengthen Our Core Map (Map 5.1) on the following page visually summarizes the objectives and strategies recommended in the Strengthen Our Core chapter.



- Downtown Core**
 - Maintain “street wall” and historic integrity
 - Attract retail/arts/entertainment/upper-floor residential
 - Widen sidewalks/reduce roadway width where possible
 - Improve bike access, amenities and events
 - Proactive code enforcement
 - Rehab incentives
 - Core Neighborhoods**
 - Maintain historic character
 - Restore/reuse Carnegie Library
 - Proactive code enforcement
 - Neighborhood marketing/branding
 - Mixed uses on thoroughfares
 - Housing rehab incentives
 - Midtown**
 - Streetscape/branding strategy
 - Mixed-use redevelopment of former Greene Park Plaza
 - East End**
 - Revitalization Master Plan
 - Neighborhood businesses on E. Main St.
 - Proactive code enforcement
 - Housing rehab incentives
 - Hub District Redevelopment**
 - Greenway with trails and event space
 - Commercial and/or residential reuse of Eavey Building
 - Extend downtown streetscape
 - Brownfield cleanup
 - Improve connection to Jamestown Connector
 - Increase utilization of Xenia Station
 - Xenia Towne Square Redevelopment**
 - Restore street grid
 - Mixed-use redevelopment
 - Buildings close to street
- Existing bike trails
 - Improved bike path connections
 - Extension of streetscape enhancements
 - Extension of street grid
 - Gateway/wayfinding location

Map 5.1: Strengthen Our Core Map

