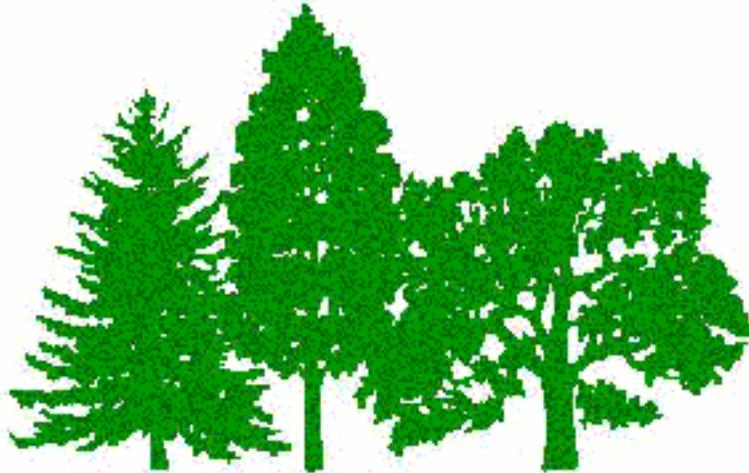


Forest Park Redevelopment Plan



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I. Introduction

A citizen-based effort to modify the City of Forest Park's income tax structure was approved by the voters on February 6, 2007. Two priorities of this effort were to provide funds to hire an additional five police officers, and for a comprehensive community redevelopment program for Forest Park.

Immediately following the election, the Forest Park City Council directed the staff to prepare this Redevelopment Plan so that the City could move forward in a timely and orderly manner, one that makes the best use of our taxpayer's dollars and provides the greatest return in economic viability, quality of life, and service-load reduction.

It is important to note that the City Council and administration were

not simply standing still while awaiting the result of the election. The City has long been encouraging private redevelopment of obsolete or underused property, with some notable successes, including Cincinnati Mills and Parkwood Plaza. More directly, the City purchased the long-vacant former K-Mart property at Hamilton and Waycross in November, 2006, with the express intention to redevelop the property.

The Redevelopment Plan is the result of contributions by many on the City staff, but especially Lois Reynolds, Dan Burke, Paul Brehm, Tye Smith and Chris Anderson. City Manager Ray Hodges provided guidance and direction to the staff throughout the project, and was closely involved in developing its priorities and recommendations.

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II. Six Guiding Principles

1. Reverse The Trend

After over 40 years of growth and tangible progress, Forest Park has experienced some downward trends on a number of well-being and quality-of-life indicators, including housing foreclosures, crime, retail vacancy and disinvestment. These negative trends have not occurred uniformly throughout the community, but rather are concentrated in identifiable geographic areas, and in the long run could threaten the socio-economic diversity of the community. Continued progress in one part of Forest Park is not enough, however, if other parts lag behind or worsen. This will eventually lead to a two-tier community, something that Forest Park has never been and that we seek to avoid. Residents and businesses always have a choice of where to locate, and it is important to our future that Forest Park is a viable choice of location. Fortunately, none of these trends is so far along as to be inevitable, and the City of Forest Park can use its Community Redevelopment Program to reverse negative trends before they become irreversible.



This check-cashing store was once a Burger King Restaurant

2. Attract Desirable Development That Has Gone Elsewhere Lately

Part of the quality-of-life in Forest Park has been access to varied and convenient shopping, recreational and medical services. Forest Park's more recent evolution into a center of employment has likewise benefited the community and helped fund a full-service municipal government. Lately, however, we have seen multiple examples of commercial development, which once sought the I-275 area, skip over us and locate in Butler and Warren Counties.

Our demographics remain strong. Other advantages related to but also transcending raw income numbers are our location and access to transportation, our population density, and our daytime workforce.

Part of the problem is simple lack of development-ready sites. We are both land-locked and nearing build-out. We have numerous sites for redevelopment, and a few successful redevelopment projects either planned or completed, and funded entirely by the private sector. Unfortunately, however, it is much tougher to sell a development concept for property with obsolete or derelict buildings than it is for a fully development-ready site. Few have the vision or the time and wherewithal to deal with the challenges of redeveloping a site. This is where Forest Park can act through its Community Redevelopment Program to change a failed, vacant or deteriorating target area into a site that will attract the kind of development that we are currently watching go elsewhere.

3. Leverage Private Investment

Our redevelopment dollars are limited, and dwarfed by the amount of money available for investment by the private sector. Except in correcting an obvious development mistake (i.e. the Quaker State facility on Winton Road), we should target and prioritize land acquisition for both a return on the City's investment and the opportunity to leverage a small public investment with a large private investment, as well as its impact on our service needs. This not only maximizes the effectiveness of the Community Redevelopment Program, but also returns the property to productive use and enhances the City's tax base.

Looked at another way, there will be instances in which the best course for the City is to forego putting public money into redevelopment. If, as in the case of Parkwood Plaza, the property can be redeveloped entirely by the private sector, then there is no need for the City to use scarce dollars in subsidizing that outcome. Other, more traditional, economic development tools are sufficient in that case. Every potential property should be analyzed to determine whether the desired outcome can be achieved by the private-sector before we include it in the Community Redevelopment Program.

With the understandable attraction to development-ready sites, it is important that we maximize these options in Forest Park, or the development will continue to go elsewhere.



*Vacant K-Mart Property
Acquired by the City in November, 2006*

4. Implement The Housing Strategy

The City conducted a residential market study in October, 2006 and identified a two-tier housing strategy. The study showed that there are people inside and out of Forest Park who would like to move up or move in, but may not do so because we lack the housing product that they desire. In summary, the housing strategy includes support for existing neighborhoods to maintain a good quality-of-life and a high level of maintenance and improvement. Growth in housing values, meeting or exceeding the overall Tri-State market, is key to maintaining stable neighborhoods and a setting where maintenance and investment is rewarded by the housing market. The strategy also includes filling the gaps in our housing supply as identified in the study through development of new for-sale housing in the price ranges and styles that the current housing supply lacks. Both of these objectives can be enhanced with the Community Redevelopment Program.

5. Identify and Treat Districts Strategically

Different districts or geographical areas of the City will require different strategies. This can apply to the level of investment as well as the method of redevelopment. A proven method for government to support business districts is in infrastructure, streetscape, district identification and establishment of gateways. This approach can also apply to acquisition and redevelopment, in selecting the most visible sites—those that make a lasting impression on the public—while placing a lower priority on less-visible interior sites. The object should be to intervene where necessary to foster the image of a district and stimulate private investment. The level and method of intervention will vary from district to district.

6. Right-Sizing

Forest Park began as a bedroom community but has transitioned into a mixed community of residents and businesses. The Tax Modification Plan was

successful, in part, because it changed our tax structure to be consistent with that reality. The implication for the Community Redevelopment Plan is that simple population numbers are nearly immaterial to our situation and prospects. Forest Park can be successful, perhaps stronger, with smaller population numbers and renter-to-owner ratio, provided that we have a strong housing market and a dynamic business community. Therefore, the focus of the Community Development Program should be on enhancing both of those things. Our housing should attract a capable, responsible population, regardless of household size. Our business districts should compete at a higher level with sites in Butler and Warren Counties. We can increase value by reducing some burdensome or over-supplied land uses, thus achieving a more balanced community. This not only allows the City to continue providing a high level of municipal service, but also enhances the confidence of those considering locating or investing in Forest Park.

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III. Commercial Redevelopment

The Redevelopment Plan focuses on the Northland Business District and the Hamilton-Waycross Business District. It also includes the apartment complexes in the vicinity of each, although it makes no specific recommendations for acquisition of particular apartment properties.

Northland Business District

The Northland Business District redevelopment area includes the properties between Waycross Road and Southland Road, as well as the vacant BP and Burger King corner properties. The area is zoned Office on the north side and planned business on the south side. BP is zoned highway service and Burger King is zoned manufacturing. Redevelopment in general will follow the current zoning, with the exception of the BP property, which is an unusual “spot zone.”

BP Station

The BP station at 702 Northland has been closed since Summer, 2006¹. The property is owned by BP-Amoco, and the company has not been forthcoming about its intentions or plans for the property.

BP and its predecessor Standard Oil have operated a gas station at this location since 1968. Its location is unusual for a Forest Park business because it is in a single-property “spot zone.” Adjacent properties to the north and east are offices; to the south and west, residential. Only diagonally across the corner at Forest Park Plaza are there other retail businesses. The spot zone is Highway Service, and it is the only

Highway Service zone located away from I-275. The zoning district, while appropriate for a gas station, is potentially problematic because it is the least restrictive of all business zoning districts. It is also considered bad planning and zoning practice to spot-zone a property, as it provides zoning benefits or restrictions to single property and not its neighbors.

The property has caused problems for the area in recent years, including poor maintenance of landscape areas, litter, and teens hanging out. Probable re-use scenarios, without City intervention, include another brand of gas station, convenience store, auto service, or other small retail, such as discount cigarettes. None of these would contribute to the redevelopment of Northland Boulevard.

The plan recommends three steps in addressing the BP property:

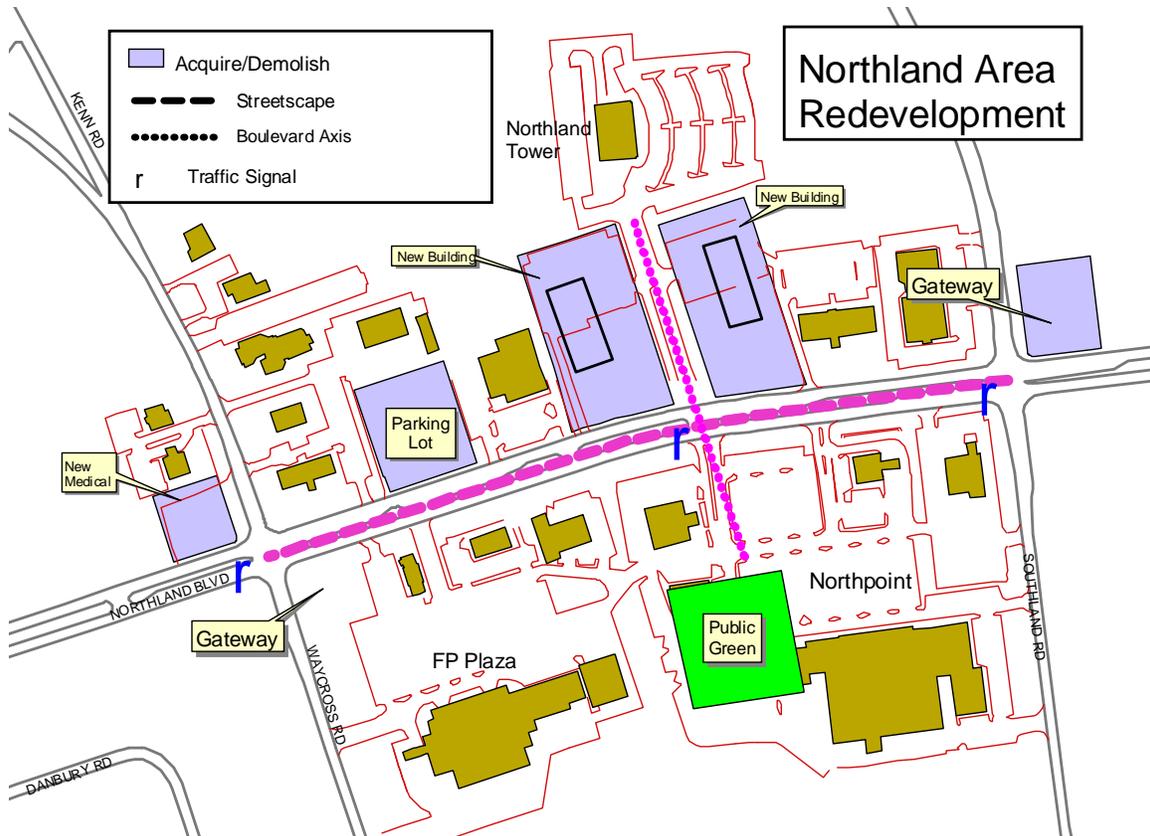
- Place a 90-day moratorium on issuance of permits for the property, for the purpose of evaluating and enacting a change of zoning. The placement of a moratorium is a Council action.
- Initiate a change of zoning from Highway Service to Office, which would be an extension of the zoning found on the north side of Northland Boulevard. The zoning would be compatible with redeveloping the property as part of a larger office campus (see Waycross Medical Campus section.)
- Pursue the purchase of the property for demolition. As mentioned above, the owner has not placed the property for sale or indicated any reuse. They have also passively

¹ For a full property description, see the property fact sheets in Appendix A.

resisted all attempts by City employees to obtain information or discuss the future of the property. Nonetheless, the property should be closely monitored for any change in

this position by the company. If necessary, the City should use eminent domain to acquire the property.

Map 1



Northland Office Properties

The three most distressed office properties are located at 640, 660 and 680 Northland, and all have the same owner. The properties are over 90% vacant and show the effects of long-term deferred maintenance. Acquisition of these properties will help support the area economically and aesthetically.

680 Northland is located immediately west of the Parkdale branch post

office and is the smallest of the three properties. This property should be acquired to support the long-term retention of the Parkdale branch on Northland Boulevard. The US Postal Service has looked at the possibility of moving this branch in the past due to it being somewhat cramped in its current location. According to Postal Service criteria, there are no other locations in Forest Park that would be suitable, and if the

branch were moved, it is highly likely that it would be outside of Forest Park. The post office is a large employer and key driver of activity in the area, and its retention is very important.

In the short run, the 680 property should be converted to a parking lot, owned by the City and open to post office customers and employees. This will alleviate some of the crowding in the post office's small parking lot and help keep the current branch viable. In the long run, the property should be held by the City for the purpose of expansion of the post office. By having this property ready for sale or donation, the City can affirmatively support the concept of expanding and renovating the Parkdale branch in its current location.

The 660 and 640 properties are located on either side of the boulevard entrance to the Northland tower. Any redevelopment of these buildings would support the area economically, but acquisition and demolition by the City opens up several possibilities for enhancing the district both economically and aesthetically.

Currently, the buildings obscure the view of the tower, which is the most prominent feature of the district, and should be featured more prominently. As shown on Map 1, the properties should be demolished, and the rebuilt offices should be set back farther from the boulevard entrance as well as oriented toward the boulevard entrance rather than Northland. Strong consideration should be given to redeveloping each of these properties as build-to-suit buildings for single users. Doing so will reduce the amount of multi-tenant office space in the district, of which there is currently a surplus. A study by the Forest Park Economic Development Department found that the three properties

only had 12 employees total, a condition that is partly the result of high vacancy but also the nature of the small businesses that do remain on the properties. The larger companies that would occupy build-to-suit buildings on the redeveloped properties would help provide customers to support the restaurants and other businesses in the district, as well as help anchor the district as an office location.

Upon acquisition and demolition, the City should use a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to identify the development partner best suited to achieve the goals outlined above. Consideration should be given to either providing the land at reduced cost, or structuring the partnership to share the risk between the City and developer. This will help stimulate developer interest in the properties.

Burger King Property

The Burger King property is vacant and for sale. The property is part of the larger Manufacturing zoning district on both sides of Northland Boulevard from Southland Road to the Springdale city limit. This is important because a restaurant use is permitted, but other retail or financial service uses are prohibited. That restriction has limited the simple² reuse prospects for the property. The most viable reuse for the building is another fast-food restaurant, although no serious prospects have emerged.

The value to the City in acquiring the Burger King property is in its role as a gateway feature the Northland Business

² "Simple" meaning a business that would simply reoccupy the property and put up its own signs. This happened to the Burger King at Waycross and Hamilton, which was reoccupied by a check cashing business. The zoning of the Northland Burger King has to date prevented a similar outcome.

District. It is the first property in the transition from the industrial land uses to the office and commercial land uses. Its current gateway value is negative, providing a poor first impression of the Northland commercial district. By acquiring and demolishing the property, the City can convert the negative into a positive. This is the same approach the City took in acquiring the vacant Q-Lube property on Winton Road and converting it into part of our greenbelt.

The property should be landscaped and mounded on the north side. The purpose of the mound is to obscure the view of the car wash property to the north. Signs or other features from the Northland Connection branding plan³ can be located on this property. The property can continue in this use indefinitely, but the City should also keep the property available for purchase and redevelopment to an office use that would support the rest of the district.



Vacant BP Station on Northland Blvd.

³ See Appendix C for Northland Connection conceptual drawings.

Shopping Centers

The two shopping centers on Northland Boulevard provide the majority of retail space in the district. Both shopping centers have a dated appearance and have periodically struggled with occupancy.

The Redevelopment Plan makes no recommendation for acquisition of either shopping center, due both to the cost of acquisition and the fact that both properties are currently financially viable for their owners. Rather, the City should monitor the ownership and occupancy status of the properties. Unfortunately, it is the continued decline of properties such as this that makes them candidates for redevelopment, as has been seen both at Cobblewood Plaza and on Hamilton Avenue. Neither property is yet at this level of decline. It is clear, however, that the owners are not investing any substantial money to upgrade or fully maintain these declining properties.

If the City can acquire the Northpoint Center property for a reasonable price, or work in partnership with the owner, then at least the east wing of the shopping center should be demolished. In its place should be a small public green, with the adjacent portions of each shopping center remodeled to face this green. It would provide a north-south access from the Northland Tower to the public green through an extended north-south boulevard. It would enhance the lackluster aesthetics of the area. The design features of recent lifestyle center developments also suggest that the space adjacent to the public green would be attractive to restaurants with outdoor dining.

The City should work with the owner of Forest Park Plaza to implement the Northland Connection improvements on the Northland Waycross corner. Cur-

rently, this portion of the property has only the shopping center sign. It can accommodate the Northland Connection gateway feature, as well as an updated shopping center sign.

Waycross Medical Campus

Waycross Road from Northland Boulevard to the fork at Kenn Road has a small concentration of medical offices. Most are small, single- or two-practitioner buildings. If acquisition of the BP property is successful, then the City should approach these property owners and professionals regarding an updated and expanded medical office campus along Waycross Road.

The goal is retention of valuable small business and medical services for the City, as well as making better use of the available land in the vicinity. If there is interest from the property owners regarding the development, then the City should also approach the Winton Woods School District to add a portion of their undeveloped land on the Waycross Elementary School site to the development area.



Northland Office Property

Northland Boulevard Streetscape

Up to now the City has done a good job with the aesthetics of Northland Boulevard, recognizing that this work was done with very tight budgets. Trees, banners and seasonal flower planting all give the boulevard a pleasant appearance. This is a good starting point for higher-impact improvements—there is little that needs to be undone, and the presence of the landscaped median should not be undervalued. Other communities (Fairfield, Evendale and Norwood) have attempted to retrofit medians to their main commercial thoroughfares with mixed results. Forest Park is ahead of where those communities started with their streetscape projects.

Streetscape improvements can include new traffic signals, streetlamps, trees and other plantings, sidewalks, benches and trash receptacles. The City should work with an experienced designer and with the businesses and property owners in the area to develop a streetscape plan for implementation in 2009. Special attention should be paid to distinguishing the Northland Business District from the remainder of Northland Boulevard, and to improvements that will make the median more than just a divider for traffic.

The streetscape should also include some form of the recommendations for the Northland Connection branding study conducted by ISI through the economic development commission.

Hamilton-Waycross District

The Hamilton-Waycross area consists of the former K-Mart shopping center and outlots, the Civic Center Plaza shopping center and outlots, and the undeveloped Oberer property. This area forms the western gateway to the City.

K-Mart Shopping Center

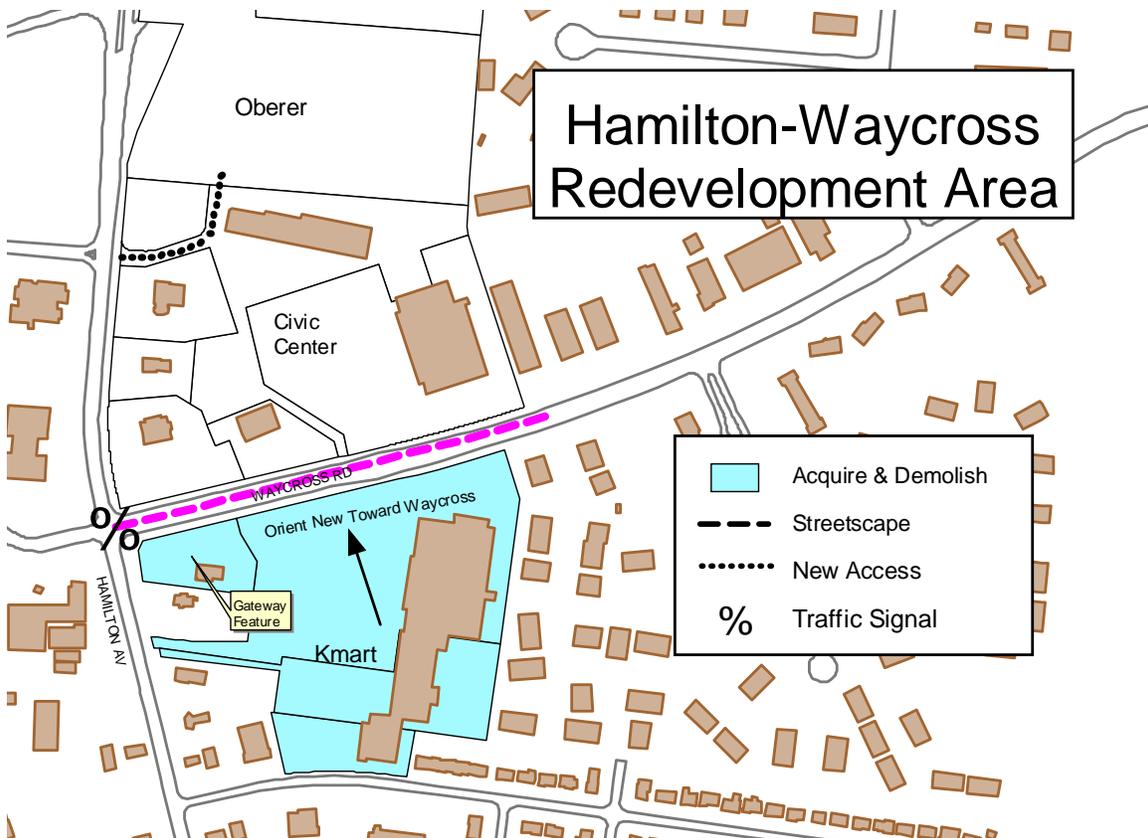
The City has acquired the former K-Mart property and is in the process of acquiring the adjacent shopping center. The only tenant is a church and its affiliated organizations. Both buildings should be demolished and the property made available for development.

The goals for these properties are to eliminate the current blight, return them

to productive uses, and develop them in a manner that physically and visually separates them from the area to the south, in order to create a gateway into Forest Park along Waycross Road.

The new building(s) on the property should front primarily on Waycross Road. The presence of a new and aesthetically-pleasing retail center on Waycross Road will do much to correct the current poor impression that this property provides upon entering Forest Park. The City should also study a mixed-use approach to the development, with retail in front and office or flex-space development in the rear. This would allow the full re-use of the property while preserving its function in separating the area from the rest of Hamilton Avenue.

Map 2



Cashland

The City should acquire the former Burger King restaurant that now houses a check cashing establishment. This corner property is the first impression that a visitor gets upon turning onto Waycross Road, and the current impression is a negative one. The City should demolish this building and install a gateway feature on part of the property. The property is also the location of the Waycross Point shopping center sign, which is a large, outdated pylon sign that no longer serves its purpose. This sign should also be demolished.

Civic Center and Oberer Properties

The Civic Center shopping center is not planned for acquisition. The City should, however, coordinate its efforts on the K-mart property with the owner of the Civic Center property, with the goal of making both properties compatible with one another, and supporting the owner's efforts to replace the former Thriftway anchor. The City can also use this partnership to encourage renovation of the Civic Center property in a way that gives improved access to the undeveloped Oberer property to the north.

The Oberer property is adjacent to I-275 and has a development plan for

mixed office, hotel and restaurant uses. Two impediments to the development of the property have been access and topography. The road frontage for all of this property is ODOT limited-access right-of-way, meaning that no driveways are permitted. The only access to Hamilton Avenue is through the Civic Center property. The second impediment has been the steep topography of the site, which limits the actual acreage that can be developed and increases the cost of building a road.

The challenges to developing the Oberer property notwithstanding, the City has neither desired nor had the funds to provide a direct subsidy to the developer. The redevelopment plan, however, offers an opportunity to aid in the development, by encouraging greater cooperation from the Civic Center owner on access, and the possibility of a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district to support the development of the infrastructure on the property.

The City took a similar approach using a TIF to develop Carillon Boulevard. A TIF district that includes the K-Mart, Civic Center and Oberer properties provides the greatest potential tax increment for the area.

Waycross Streetscape

The City should fund a streetscape project that distinguishes Waycross Road and the Waycross-Hamilton intersection from the rest of Hamilton Avenue. Due to the Hamilton Avenue widening in 2008, the streetscape improvements should be done in two phases. The City should immediately take the steps necessary to provide a local contribution to the State widening project to provide an enhanced, mast arm traffic signal at the Hamilton-Waycross intersection. The State is willing to do this if the local community fully funds the design cost and the difference between the enhanced signal and the standard signal found in a typical ODOT project. The second phase of the street-

scape on Waycross Road should be timed with the redevelopment of the K-mart property and occur concurrently or shortly after.

Multi-Family Properties

Both commercial redevelopment areas have adjacent apartment complexes which are either in need of redevelopment or conversion to a different use. The Plan makes no specific recommendation for acquisition of a specific property. It is recommended that the City monitor the sale price of the apartment complexes in the Hamilton-Waycross area and the Northland-Waycross area for possible purchase.

IV. Residential Redevelopment

The City of Forest Park commissioned a residential market study⁴ to better understand our local housing market. The study described Forest Park as a “capable housing market frozen in time,” with about 80% of the housing stock developed between 1956 and 1976. This has led to some structural weaknesses in our local housing market, not based upon household wealth and capacity (which are quite strong), but rather based upon the kind of housing available in the community. In short, the study found that many of the most capable households “have settled for housing that does not meet their needs in order to live in Forest Park.”

The study’s conclusions are summarized as follows (emphases added):

1. Forest Park is a city whose housing growth is held in check, not by its household makeup or location as seen in most submarkets, but rather by its **aging and typically one-dimensional housing stock**.
2. The household demographics and their relative concentrations in Forest Park are unlike most first-suburban submarkets, resembling emerging-suburban contexts in their household incomes, spread of ages, familial status, employment centers, and out-bound daily commuters. **For most households, their home purchasing power exceeds their choices.**
3. The current housing market is ripe with steady transfer activity just short of our typical submarket trends.

The bulk of activity is seen in older single-family homes on small lots with pricing from \$75,000-\$150,000. Above \$150,000, there are few choices and only one new home subdivision priced well ahead of any resale price strata. There is also an unusual balance between median and average household incomes that can be attributed to the lack of upper-end housing.

4. Bound by its aging housing stock, Forest Park is now seeing a rash of home foreclosures that are found in most of the subdivisions. These **foreclosures not only erode the neighborhood values in the short run, but also impact the pride of ownership and neighbors’ confidence in their home investment.**
5. Strategic city planning should include well-placed pockets of new attached for-sale housing to address both the housing affordability issues and the unmet demand for such housing by several psychographic segments already in Forest Park. Given the lack of attached for-sale housing, **initiating very visible and incremental attached housing will update and “re-brand” Forest Park as a great place to live among a capable and influential segment of the population.**

The residential component of the redevelopment plan is designed to address the highlighted problems and opportunities identified in the residential market study.

⁴ *A Residential Market Study for the City of Forest Park*, Michael J. Dinn, September 9, 2006.

Provide Incentives for Owner-Occupied Housing Investment

The residential market study concluded that there are many homeowners in Forest Park who are living in a lower-priced home than they could otherwise afford. It also found that the socio-economic status of these residents was on par with the surrounding communities. Furthermore, 80% of the employed population in Forest Park works outside of the City. This indicates that most of these residents have chosen to live in Forest Park, but also have the means and mobility to live elsewhere, including the communities surrounding Forest Park. Given that many residents are living in relatively modest houses and can afford more, it is important to the redevelopment program to provide these residents with an incentive to further invest in and upgrade their homes.

Currently, Forest Park homeowners have access to two programs that provide an incentive or subsidy for repair and upgrades to their homes. The Forest Park Home Improvement/Small Repair Program provides a small grant (up to \$500) to eligible homeowners for repairs or improvements to the exterior of their houses. This program, funded by a federal Community Development Block Grant, is limited to low and moderate income homeowners. While this program provides a helping hand to homeowners of limited means and supports the City's property maintenance program, it is insufficient in its funding and target population to make a difference in the overall housing market.

Hamilton County has a home improvement loan program, which provides all property owners access to loans that are discounted 3% below the interest rate that the owner would otherwise get with conventional bank financing. HIP

Loans, as they are known, must be used for home improvement, have a time limit of 5 years, and are obtained through selected banks in the same manner as a home equity loan or second mortgage. The expressed goal of the HIP Loan program is to stem the population loss in Hamilton County, by providing an incentive to homeowners to stay in their homes rather than move to an outlying county. This goal is completely consistent with the City's redevelopment goals, but the HIP Loan program has only made a small difference at the margins, and as recent Census numbers show, it has not stemmed the population loss from the County.

For the residential component of the redevelopment plan to succeed, the City needs a more direct and attractive incentive program than the two programs already in place. In order to enhance the local housing market by improving and diversifying the 80% of the housing stock built between 1956 and 1976, we need to provide an incentive that can generate higher participation than the Hamilton County HIP program, and is available to homeowners of all incomes.

Forest Park should use a portion of its redevelopment dollars to fund a "Major Home Improvement Program." This program would have the following features:

- For home improvement projects of \$5,000 to \$50,000, based upon the building permit data.
- For houses built prior to 1995, which would exclude homes that have no need of updating.
- For owner-occupants of single-family houses.

- A subsidy of 20% of the cost of the project, in the form of a grant or forgivable loan (see below).
- Limits on speculation, either by requiring a minimum time as owner (such as one year) or by structuring the grant as a forgivable loan⁵ so that it must be paid back if the house is sold soon after the improvement is made.
- Architectural review, in order to ensure that the proposed renovation or addition does enhance the property.
- A fixed time period of 10 years in which the program would operate.

Implement a Spot-Purchase Program in Targeted Areas

The residential market study identified home foreclosures as a drag on selling prices in some Forest Park neighborhoods. These properties are sold under a distress condition, which means a sale price 20% below the average price for the area. This has two effects on the surrounding area, first reducing the price obtainable for similar homes due to competition, and second reducing the confidence of other property owners regarding the investment value of their own property.

A prior analysis of purchasing whole neighborhoods for redevelopment

showed the whole-neighborhood approach to be unfeasible for two reasons. First, the analysis chose three areas of the City where property values were the lowest for Forest Park. Each area had 190 to 220 homes. The simple assessed valuation of these small areas was between eighteen and twenty million dollars, as shown below:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u># of parcels</u>	<u># of owners</u>	<u>Valuation</u>
Area 1	46.55	221	220	\$20,602,900
Area 2	46.43	225	220	\$19,687,130
Area 3	42.44	188	175	\$18,257,700

The actual market price of these properties can reasonably be expected to be 10-25% in excess of the amounts shown above. Simply put, the City could spend its entire redevelopment budget for the next 30 years on one relatively small project. The second reason to de-emphasize the whole-neighborhood concept is that the State of Ohio, in reaction to the Norwood eminent domain controversy, has taken steps to eliminate the use of eminent domain for this kind of redevelopment project. The chance of acquiring hundreds of properties in a concentrated area through negotiated sales at a reasonable price—without the threat of eminent domain—is vanishingly small.

Furthermore, where residential blight⁶ exists in Forest Park, it is overwhelmingly spot blight, involving an individual house or a few houses in

⁵A “forgivable loan” is recorded as a mortgage on the property for the full amount, with no payments due, and a timeline for reduction of that amount. For example, a five-year forgivable loan would reduce in amount by 20% per year until at the end of the fifth year nothing is due. If a homeowner sold the home right away, then 100% would be due, after a year, 80% due. Thus, it functions as a grant because payment would only be required from the sale proceeds of the house, if that house were sold quickly.

⁶ Our definition of blight is considerably more stringent than typical urban definitions. As used here, a blighted property is one with repeated maintenance violations, fire damage, vacancy beyond one year, or constituting an attractive nuisance. A property does not have to be unsafe, boarded or unsanitary to be considered blighted, and indeed, almost none in Forest Park ever reaches that condition.

proximity. The effects of spot blight, however, can disrupt the quality of life on an entire street. Therefore, the Redevelopment Plan provides for the purchase and renovation, or purchase and demolition of blighted residential properties.

The preferred areas for spot-blight removal are shown on Maps 3 and 4 below. These areas were identified by mapping properties with the following conditions:

- Past Year Sales Price below \$80,000
- Auditor Valuation below \$100,000
- Known Foreclosures
- Property Maintenance issues on more than 50% of Block
- Rental Properties above 25%
- Section 8 Properties

The maps showing these conditions are in Appendix A.

**Map 3
Preferred Redevelopment Areas
Western Forest Park**



**Map 4
Eastern Forest Park**



These areas are referred to as “preferred” because the conditions identified above are favorable for acquisition by the City, and the neighborhoods with these conditions are more at risk of developing blighted properties that private owners cannot or will not resolve. As an example, a foreclosed property in a neighborhood with strong values and sales prices, while still a problem, is more likely to attract an owner who will repair or renovate the property to the good condition of the surrounding properties in order to maximize its value. A foreclosed property in an area with lower values and sales prices may attract a different kind of investor, either quickly flipping the property, or converting it to a rental, but in neither case bringing the property up to the prevailing standard.

While spot acquisition is possible for any blighted property within the City, within the preferred areas, the City should attempt to assemble property so that an entire group of properties (i.e. 10-40 properties on a block or street) may be redeveloped with new housing.

Forest Park can take some simple steps to implement a spot-purchase program:

- Close monitoring of home foreclosures and vacant property.
- Inspection of such property for blighting conditions.
- Analysis of the cost to acquire and to renovate to a standard condition.
- Selling the renovated house, or if demolition is indicated, the vacant land.
- With spot acquisition and demolition, and where the City is *not* assembling property, consideration should be given to one or more of the adjacent property owners if they are interested in purchasing the property for increased yard space.

The proposed budget for this program is \$300,000 per year for 10 years. This budget allows the City to acquire four to six properties per year, with a portion of the money spent recovered through the sale of renovated houses or vacant land. A further supplement to this budget is Spot Blight Elimination funds available through the Hamilton County Community Development Department, for properties that are to be demolished.

Develop Attached For-Sale Housing

The residential market study found that attached for-sale housing (i.e. condominium or townhouse) is in very low supply in Forest Park compared with other communities. The study further identified this as a weakness in the local housing market, particularly because of two effects. First, Forest Park has a highly desirable socio-economic group (referred to in the study as “young cosmopolitans”) who rent housing primarily in the three Kemper Meadow apartment communities. This group favors attached housing as a move-up option, and in its absence, Forest Park loses some of these residents to other communities as they move into home ownership. Second, the study identified a below-average level of sales activity for the City, which signals that some homeowners are staying in their houses although they might prefer a different living situation. An example would be an older homeowner who wants to stay in Forest Park but would like a lower-maintenance or single-level alternative to their current home. With the lack of such an option, the homeowner stays in that house. The result across the City is that the level of sales activity is below optimal. This of course only applies to homeowners who place a priority on staying in Forest Park—the others simply depart the community if the kind of housing they are looking for doesn’t exist here.

Map 5



The study identified the best location for developing attached housing for sale as the adjacent properties owned by the City and School Board at Sharon and Waycross Road. Both properties are in transition and will no longer be used for their original purposes⁷. The site, as shown on Map 5 below, is approximately 15 acres in size, and slopes down in a south- southeast direction from the Sharon-Waycross corner.

Preliminary indications of the residential market study are that this site and location would be highly marketable for attached for-sale housing. The slope

⁷ The Activity Center swimming pool closed in 2005. Cameron Park school is planned to be closed permanently by the Winton Woods School District following the conclusion of the 2006-2007 school year.

of the site, which is a barrier for single-family development, is a potential asset for attached housing, allowing garages to be placed underneath the home. In addition, the site has excellent views of the West Fork valley, and has nearby amenities including the library, Winton Woods Park, and convenience shopping.

Several steps need to be taken in order to pursue the redevelopment of this property:

1. A Visioning session with both the City Council and the School District, to develop a consensus for development of the property, including general site layout features, architectural styles, and connectivity to the surrounding properties.

2. Negotiations with the Winton Woods School District to determine a sale price or partnership structure for the land.
3. A site market study to analyze the number, size and type of housing units and amenities to constitute a marketable project.
4. Requests for Proposals to developers with the specifications determined in the market analysis.
5. Rezoning of the property, if necessary, and Planning Commission review of the development plan.

The above steps can be expected to take about one year.

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3.28.07 added 300,000

added 300,000 contingency to be used for general fund balancing. If not needed, will revert back to plan.
 reduced 100,000 for 2 years from the residential redevelopment plan
 reduced Polaris properties from 750,000 to 725,000
 reduced royal 1 from 400,000 to 350,000 ion 2008
 reduced royal 2 by 100,000 to 700,000
 removed first principal payment on Patriot in 2010

Explanation of asterisks

- * The revenue of \$2.1 million for the Winton Road/ Muni Expansion are expected to be financed by TIF proceeds. These proceeds would be received one year after the project is completed. This revenue is not included in the plan. The TIF is expected to generate about \$1.0 million over 10 years. The \$5.0 million borrowing for municipal campus upgrade is to be funded by TIF proceeds. If a TIF is not created to provide this debt service, it is likely the project would be vacated.

The revenue to be generated by these TIF's is currently not included in the plan.
- ** The Patriot properties are included as a placeholder for the acquisition of a multi-family development. The overriding concept is to reduce some of the multi-family stock. However, the target property could change; Patriot is included to represent a multi family acquisition.
- *** The ending balance for 2014 is negative. It is anticipated this negative balance will diminish as actual costs are captured and will be monitored but is not a major concern as all numbers in the plan are estimates.

Note: Please keep in mind that the locations and projects listed that have not yet been finalized and represent a concept in the redevelopment plan. The targeted properties and projects are included as there appears to be an opportunity to acquire and redevelop. However, another site could become available and one target could be vacated and another added to the plan.

	<u>Debt remaining 2016</u>		
In 2016 , the debt balances are as follows:	<i>Waycross Pointe</i>	<i>Patriot</i>	
The annual repayment for a 10 year bond for this amount is approximately	2,412,000	4,000,000	6,412,000
Source of funds- income tax transfer of 800,000	-	820,332	
If there is a desire to bond earlier, the bond issue should be for 10 years or less, if possible.			

Municipal update is not included above as the debt will be retired by TIF proceeds and not operating funds.

VI. Summary of Recommendations

Commercial Redevelopment

1. Change the zoning of the BP property from Highway Service to Office.
2. Pursue the acquisition of the BP property, up to and including the use of eminent domain. Upon acquisition, demolish the property.
3. Acquire and demolish 640, 660 and 680 Northland.
4. Use an RFP process to redevelop 640 and 660 Northland as build-to-suit offices.
5. Build a city-owned parking lot on 680 Northland and hold the property for future expansion of the Parkdale branch post office.
6. Acquire and demolish the vacant Burger King property on Northland. Use the property for a gateway feature, and hold the property for future development.
7. Monitor the status of the Northland shopping center properties for possible acquisition or public-private partnership.
8. Develop a north-south axis from the Northland Tower to a new public green area in the vicinity of the Northland shopping centers.
9. Explore the development of an updated expanded medical campus on Waycross Road between Northland and Kenn.
10. Implement a streetscape improvement project for Northland Boulevard beginning in 2009.
11. Implement the “Northland Connection” district branding plan, using the Burger King property as an east gateway location and seeking cooperation of Forest Park Plaza for use of their property for a west gateway.
12. Demolish the K-mart and shopping center properties and use an RFP process to develop a retail/mixed use project that is oriented toward Waycross Road.
13. Acquire and demolish the Cashland property, and remove the Waycross Point Sign. Develop a gateway feature on the property.
14. Coordinate efforts on the K-mart property with the Civic Center property, in support of the effort to replace the former Thriftway anchor at Civic Center.
15. Encourage cooperation between Civic Center and Oberer regarding road access.
16. Establish a TIF district for the K-mart, Civic Center and Oberer properties.
17. Implement a two-phase streetscape project for Waycross Road, with phase I in conjunction with the Hamilton Avenue widening and Phase II timed with the redevelopment of the K-mart property.
18. Monitor the adjacent multi-family properties in both the Northland and Hamilton-Waycross areas for possible purchase.

Residential Redevelopment

19. Begin a 10-year Major Home Improvement Program for owner-occupied properties.
20. Implement a spot-purchase program of single-family properties, for either renovation or demolition, depending on the condition of the individual property.
21. Use the spot-purchase program to work toward assembling groups of 10-40 adjacent properties, in order to redevelop an entire street or block with upgraded housing.
22. Develop attached for-sale housing on the Cameron Park/Activity Center property.

Appendix A
Site Data Sheets

Burger King Northland & Southland



Address:	610 Northland Blvd
Property Size:	0.741 Acres
Owner:	Mackids, Inc
Value (Auditor):	\$410,000
Property Tax:	\$10,877/year
Use:	Restaurant/Food Service
Status:	Vacant
Code Enforcement:	Boarded, Delinquent on Taxes & Stormwater
Zoning:	M-Manufacturing
Surrounding Land Use and Zoning	
North:	Car Wash, M—Manufacturing
East:	Business, M-Manufacturing
South:	Gas Station/Convenience Store, M-Manufacturing
West:	Day Care, O-Office
Visibility:	High
For sale/price:	Yes/\$475,000
Re-Use:	Gateway Feature
Zone Change Required:	No
Private Sector Ability:	Low
Leverage Potential:	Low
Do Nothing Option:	Medium
Carrying Cost:	\$2,000/year
Demolition Cost:	Unknown

640 Office Building



Address:	640 Northland Blvd
Property Size:	1.85 Acres
Owner:	Great Miami Real Estate
Value (Auditor):	\$598,000
Property Tax:	\$15,867/year
Use:	Office Building
Status:	Vacant
Code Enforcement:	Delinquent on Taxes & Stormwater
Zoning:	O—Office
Surrounding Land Use and Zoning	
North:	Office Building, O—Office
East:	Office Building, O—Office
South:	Bank, PB—Planned Business
West:	Office Building, O—Office
Visibility:	Low
For sale/price:	Yes/\$800,000 (includes 660 & 680 Northland)
Re-Use:	Office
Zone Change Required:	No
Private Sector Ability:	Low
Leverage Potential:	Medium-High
Do Nothing Option:	Low-rent, high-vacancy office
Carrying Cost:	\$20,000/year
Demolition Cost:	\$40,000

660 Office Building



Address:	660 Northland Blvd
Property Size:	2.061 Acres
Owner:	Great Miami Real Estate
Value (Auditor):	\$544,300
Property Tax:	\$14,439/year
Use:	Office Building
Status:	Vacant
Code Enforcement:	Delinquent on Taxes & Stormwater
Zoning:	PO – Planned Office
Surrounding Land Use and Zoning	
North:	Office Building, O—Office
East:	Office Building, O—Office
South:	Restaurant, PB—Planned Business
West:	Post Office, O—Office
Visibility:	Low
For sale/price:	Yes/\$800,000 (includes 640 & 680 Northland)
Re-Use:	Office
Zone Change Required:	No
Private Sector Ability:	Low
Leverage Potential:	Medium-High
Do Nothing Option:	Low-rent, high-vacancy office
Carrying Cost:	\$20,000/year
Demolition Cost:	\$40,000

680 Office Building



Address:	680 Northland Blvd
Property Size:	1.092 Acres
Owner:	Great Miami Real Estate
Value (Auditor):	\$626,000
Property Tax:	\$16,594/year
Use:	Office Building
Status:	Vacant
Code Enforcement:	Delinquent on Taxes & Stormwater
Zoning:	O—Office
Surrounding Land Use and Zoning	
North:	Office Building, O—Office
East:	Post Office, O—Office
South:	Restaurant, PB—Planned Business
West:	Office Building, O—Office
Visibility:	Low
For sale/price:	Yes/\$800,000 (includes 640 & 660 Northland)
Re-Use:	Office
Zone Change Required:	No
Private Sector Ability:	Low
Leverage Potential:	Medium-High
Do Nothing Option:	Low-rent, high-vacancy office
Carrying Cost:	\$20,000/year
Demolition Cost:	\$40,000

BP at Northland & Waycross



Address:	702 Northland Blvd
Property Size:	0.51 Acres
Owner:	BP Oil & Exploration
Value (Auditor):	\$381,000
Property Tax:	\$10,100/year
Use:	Gas Station/Convenience Store
Status:	Vacant
Code Enforcement:	Boarded, Delinquent on Stormwater Assessment
Zoning:	HS—Highway Service District
Surrounding Land Use and Zoning	
North:	Medical Office, PO—Planned Office
East:	Administrative Office, O—Office
South:	Single-Family Residential, R-2, One Family Residence
West:	Multi-Family Residential, PR-3, Planned Multi-Family Residence
Visibility:	Corner Lot/High
For sale/price:	Unknown/unknown
Re-Use:	Greenspace/Gateway, Office, Residential
Zone Change Required:	Yes
Private Sector Ability:	Low
Leverage Potential:	Low alone, High w/other property
Do Nothing Option:	Other gas station/other convenience store/other retail
Carrying Cost:	\$12,000/year
Demolition Cost:	Unknown due to underground storage tanks

Revere Village Apts.



Address:	704 Northland
Property Size:	7.918 Acres
Owner:	Stratford Income Properties
Value (Auditor):	\$3,789,500
Property Tax:	\$100,456/year
Use:	Apartment Complex
Status:	Occupied
Code Enforcement:	Delinquent on Stormwater
Zoning:	PR3—Multi-Family
Surrounding Land Use and Zoning	
North:	School, R-2—One Family
East:	Gas Station, HS—Highway Service
South:	Single and Two-Family Residential, R-2—One Family
West:	Single-Family Residential, R-2—One Family
Visibility:	Medium
For sale/price:	Yes/\$5,100,000
Re-Use:	Office
Zone Change Required:	Yes
Private Sector Ability:	Low
Leverage Potential:	Medium
Do Nothing Option:	Continued mid-market apartment units
Carrying Cost:	Depends on Occupancy
Demolition Cost:	Unknown

Cameron Park School



Address:	628 Waycross
Property Size:	9.921 Acres
Owner:	Greenhills Forest Park
Value (Auditor):	\$2,604,900
Property Tax:	(Exempt)
Use:	Elementary School
Status:	Planned for Closure, June 2006
Code Enforcement:	None
Zoning:	R-2—One Family
Surrounding Land Use and Zoning	
North:	Activity Center, R-2—One Family
East:	Single-Family Residential, R-2—One Family
South:	Single-Family Residential, R-2—One Family
West:	Single-Family Residential, R-2—One Family
Visibility:	Low
For sale/price:	Yes, Unknown
Re-Use:	Attached For-Sale Housing
Zone Change Required:	Yes
Private Sector Ability:	Medium
Leverage Potential:	High
Do Nothing Option:	Day-care or charter school
Carrying Cost:	\$10,000/year
Demolition Cost:	\$50,000

K-Mart



Address:	2215 Waycross
Property Size:	8.162 Acres
Owner:	City of Forest Park
Value (Auditor):	\$1,000,000
Property Tax:	\$14,439/year
Use:	Discount Store
Status:	Vacant
Code Enforcement:	Boarded
Zoning:	PB – Planned Business
Surrounding Land Use and Zoning	
North:	Various Retail
East:	Retail
South:	Residential/Retail
West:	Hamilton County Sheriff/Public Library
Visibility:	High
For sale/price:	Purchased/\$806,000
Re-Use:	Retail/Mixed Use
Zone Change Required:	No
Private Sector Ability:	Medium
Leverage Potential:	High
Do Nothing Option:	N/A
Carrying Cost:	\$20,000/year
Demolition Cost:	\$120,000

2219 Waycross



Address: 2219 Waycross
 Property Size: 3.074 Acres
 Owner: Daffin Jolly Investments
 Value (Auditor): \$776,500
 Property Tax: \$17,503/year
 Use: Shopping Center
 Status: Vacant
 Code Enforcement: Delinquent on Stormwater
 Zoning: PB – Planned Business

Surrounding Land Use and Zoning

North: Vacant, PB—Planned Business
 East: Multi-Family, PR3—Multi-Family
 South: Residential (Springfield Township)
 West: Hamilton County Sheriff (Colerain Township)

Visibility: Medium
 For sale/price: Under Contract/\$725,000
 Re-Use: Retail/Mixed-Use
 Zone Change Required: No
 Private Sector Ability: Low
 Leverage Potential: High
 Do Nothing Option: N/A
 Carrying Cost: \$20,000/year
 Demolition Cost: \$40,000

2299 Waycross



Address:	2299 Waycross
Property Size:	1.208 Acres
Owner:	J & E Investments Limited Partnership
Value (Auditor):	\$639,300
Property Tax:	\$8,473/year
Use:	Shopping Center
Status:	Occupied
Code Enforcement:	Delinquent on Stormwater
Zoning:	PB – Planned Business
Surrounding Land Use and Zoning	
North:	Restaurant, PB—Planned Business
East:	Vacant, PB—Planned Business
South:	Restaurant, PB—Planned Business
West:	Hamilton County Sheriff (Colerain Township)
Visibility:	High
For sale/price:	Unknown
Re-Use:	Gateway Feature
Zone Change Required:	No
Private Sector Ability:	Low
Leverage Potential:	Medium
Do Nothing Option:	Continuation of present use
Carrying Cost:	\$10,000/year
Demolition Cost:	\$20,000