

North End Community Economic Development Plan

Executive Summary

In 2008, the North End Community Improvement Collaborative completed a four year strategic plan, which identified as a primary goal the creation of a community economic development “campaign” building upon the organization’s existing work and addressing the complex and intersecting housing, workforce, and business development opportunities and challenges on the North End.

In 2010 NECIC’s first North End Community Economic Development (CED) Plan was unveiled to the public. The first plan of its kind in the City of Mansfield, NECIC’s CED plan was unanimously adopted by Mansfield City Council in 2011.

In 2015, NECIC began the process of updating the plan to ensure that the data, and recommendations articulated in the document were current, responsive, and aligned with, not only the realities of a post-industrial, rust belt economy, but with the dreams and visions of the people who live and work in Mansfield’s North End neighborhoods.

To that end, a series of community conversations were held to gather input on the types of revitalization activities residents and stakeholders felt were needed to improve the North End. The results of these conversations were used to construct a comprehensive plan for the North End. The document serves a number of purposes: to convey the shared values of the community, to document its history, to illustrate the area’s opportunities and challenges, and finally, to guide and direct all future redevelopment efforts occurring on the North End.

The North End Community Economic Development Plan consists of two distinct chapters. Chapter 1 is an Economic Base Assessment (EBA) of Mansfield’s North End. The EBA has seven distinct sections:

1. Geographic and Demographic Profile
2. Income
3. Consumer Trends and Food Access
4. The North End Economy
5. Barriers To Prosperity
6. Education
7. Housing

Overall, the EBA is a collection of data and analysis that provides a “snapshot” of the state of the North End community in 2015/2016, particularly the current state of the local economy.

Chapter 2 of the document is the Community Economic Development (CED) Plan. Chapter 2 is broken into seven distinct sections:

1. Purpose and Vision
2. Historical Summary
3. Past Planning Efforts
4. Resident Input – Community Surveys
5. Plan Components
6. Target Areas
7. Appendix

Of particular importance in chapter 2 are the **Plan Components, and Target Areas**. The plan’s seven component areas include: land use, housing, economic development, education, public infrastructure/transit, community spaces, and health and safety. Plan component area recommendations include:

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Land Use Recommendations:

1. Improve the public information process.
2. Decrease housing density.
3. Create mixed-use, housing/commercially zoned districts.
4. Prohibit environmentally harmful commercial enterprises from locating in residential neighborhoods.

Housing Recommendations:

1. Increase housing code enforcement.
2. Reduce land speculation.
3. Develop affordable housing options, particularly for single childless adults, seniors, single parent families, ex-offenders, artists, residents in need of supportive housing, and youth aging out of the foster care system.
4. Continue targeted demolitions.
5. Ensure that demolitions are being done in such a way that is conducive for future new construction.
6. Increase the availability of housing related educational resources for residents including: financial literacy, personal credit, buyer readiness, foreclosure prevention, home maintenance, and tenants rights.
7. Increase the capacity of local housing practitioners to improve all aspects of local housing: affordability, availability, health, and safety etc.

Economic Development Recommendations:

1. Surveyed North End residents indicated that the most needed business on the North End is a grocery store. Moreover, residents indicated that business development efforts should focus on the following: 1) more locally owned and operated businesses, 2) businesses that create jobs, particularly those that pay a “living wage,” 3) more African-American owned businesses, 4) the creation of affordable, recreation businesses for kids of all ages, 5) more businesses within walking distance of the neighborhoods.
2. Redevelop vacant commercial properties and land.
3. Encourage small business development through micro-lending, new market tax credits, etc.
4. Target resources to use the Arts as an economic development strategy.
5. Develop commercial nodes in well-traveled intersections, and target areas.
6. Prioritize workforce development.
7. Explore worker owned business ownership models

Education Recommendations:

1. Address systemic barriers to equity in education by adopting the strategies presented in the “Opportunity Youth Playbook.”
2. Increase resident financial literacy.
3. Increase resident civic engagement through education.
4. Increase after-school programming for young people.
5. Increase mentor opportunities for young people including career based, vocational apprenticeships, and entrepreneurial mentorship.
6. Increase entrepreneurship by utilizing new and existing entrepreneurial educational approaches that will provide students with strategies, resources and tools to start and sustain profitable businesses.

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Public Infrastructure/Transit Recommendations:

1. Improve and maintain streets and sidewalks.
2. Prioritize the replacement of portions of the North End's aging sewer system.
3. Improve and update street and sidewalk infrastructure to increase bicycling and walkability of neighborhoods.
4. Increase public transportation options by expanding the hours of operation, and the areas served by current bus routes.
5. Increase local match dollars to increase the federal support for public transit.
6. Prioritize a flood mitigation strategy such as the Upper Touby Run Dam Project.
7. Prioritize Brownfield remediation to improve redevelopment options and to increase property values of surrounding properties.

Community Spaces Recommendations:

1. Maintain the natural environment.
2. Prioritize public art projects.
3. Prioritize the creation of community centers, particularly as a strategy for reusing vacant buildings.
4. Prioritize beautification throughout the North End, but particularly in entrances and major thoroughfares.

Health and Safety Recommendations:

1. Address the current opiate addiction crisis as an issue of public health, deemphasize the use of the criminal justice system as a means to treat drug addiction. There is zero evidence that the "war on drugs" is effective, the number of addicts has steadily increased in spite of decades of mass incarceration, and trillions of dollars spent to wage war on the American people. A local priority is to increase the access to residential/in-patient addiction treatment centers in Richland County.
2. Prioritize continued efforts to provide education, resources, and tools for the remediation of housing related health and safety issues like lead based paints and asbestos, so prevalent in older homes like those on the North End.
3. Prioritize decreasing minority health disparities through culturally competent community engagement, and intentional data collection by health care practitioners.
4. Prioritize violence reduction and address the underlying educational, and socio-economic conditions that lead to violent behaviors in our community.
5. Explore the viability of Instant Mutual Aid agreements between local emergency service providers to improve emergency response times across jurisdictional boundaries.

Target Areas:

1. Sixth and Bowman
2. Woodland Avenue
3. Longview Avenue
4. West Fourth Street Corridor
5. North Main Street Corridor