

# XENIA AVENUE CORRIDOR PLAN



PREPARED BY  
CITYWIDE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

03

INTRODUCTION

10

FINDINGS

19

CORRIDOR PLANNING

37

DEVELOPMENT NODE

46

NEXT STEPS

49

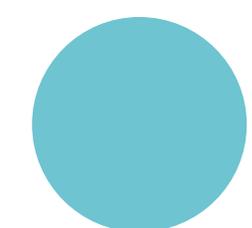
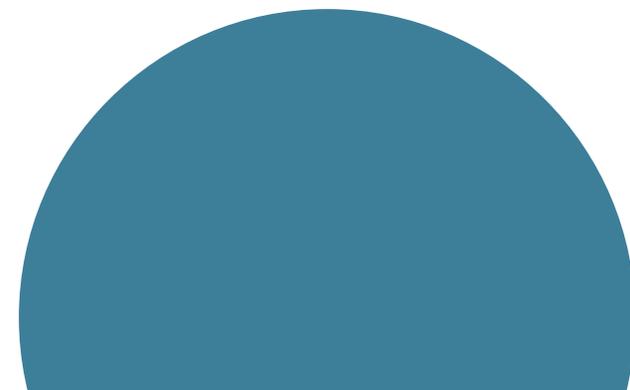
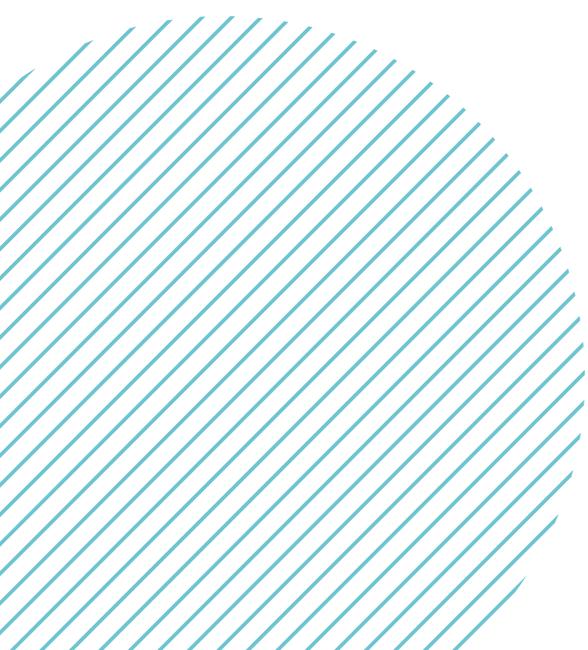
CONCLUSION

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# INTRODUCTION



FORWARD  
ABOUT CITYWIDE  
OBJECTIVES  
EXISTING PLANS



# INTRODUCTION

In early 2020, East End Neighborhood Development Corporation, in partnership with CleanEnergy4All, engaged CityWide Development Corporation to do a planning study of the Xenia Avenue corridor, the main transportation route through the Twin Towers Neighborhood. East End and CleanEnergy4All both believe the revitalization of this corridor is key to the neighborhood's economic success.

For more than 30 years, East End has provided youth, family, and neighborhood development programs to East Dayton residents in order to break the cycle of generational poverty. East End has a stalwart reputation of community engagement and works directly with neighborhood leaders to solve problems, build pride, and develop strategic partnerships that advance the improvement of the community and meet the needs of residents. One such partnership is with CleanEnergy4All. CleanEnergy4All seeks opportunities to build sustainability into urban design and revitalization.

**The goal of the Xenia Avenue Plan is to offer insights and actionable items that can physically improve the corridor and increase the economic viability of the district so that it can better serve the residents in Twin Towers and attract additional investment to the neighborhood.**

Xenia Avenue has long been a vital corridor serving Twin Towers and other neighborhoods in East Dayton. As Twin Towers continues to evolve, there is additional opportunity for growth and improvement along this corridor.

CityWide staff has completed interviews, collected data, and evaluated housing and property along the corridor. Based on this analysis, a list of recommendations regarding property use and potential design concepts has been developed. It is the intention of CityWide to create an actionable corridor plan that can be carried out in phases as partnerships or funding is realized. The work in this report suggests some practical ways to incrementally change the aesthetic of Xenia Avenue and create more economic opportunity.

# FOCUS AREA

This corridor plan focuses on the segment of Xenia Avenue from the Keowee Street intersection to the Dover Street intersection.



# INTRODUCTION

## ABOUT CITYWIDE

CityWide is a leader in the creation and implementation of comprehensive neighborhood development strategies and programs in urban neighborhoods in Dayton, Ohio. With a dynamic team of six professional staff, passionate about community building and neighborhood revitalization, we bring a diverse skill set to every project. CityWide's approach to neighborhood development begins by identifying neighborhood assets and strengths. CityWide practices consensus organizing, which seeks to identify and harness mutual self-interest towards the greater goal of creating a healthy community. CityWide's team is involved in all aspects of community and economic development in neighborhoods across the City.

## CORRIDOR STUDY OBJECTIVES

- 1 Evaluate parcel conditions along the Xenia Avenue corridor and make recommendations that positively impact the corridor.
- 2 Improve the entrance to Xenia Avenue from Keowee Street creating a business district and neighborhood gateway.
- 3 Introduce incremental steps to create a development node around some of the corridor's strongest assets.
- 4 Identify potential opportunities to address food insecurity and other retail needs for Twin Towers residents.
- 5 Identify opportunities to make Xenia Avenue a "destination" for people outside the neighborhood.
- 6 Support East End and CleanEnergy4All leadership with prioritizing plan elements and determining how to share supported recommendations with larger Twin Towers community.

# INTRODUCTION

## EXISTING PLANS

### District Diagnostic Findings: Xenia Avenue Corridor

District Diagnostic Findings: Xenia Avenue Corridor is a report prepared by LISC for East End Community Services in 2015. This work identifies the Twin Towers convenience trade area borders as Keowee Street, US-35, Wyoming Street, and Steve Whalen Boulevard; this is the area from which most customers will come. CityWide’s planning work expands on this idea by considering ways to also make Xenia Avenue “destination retail” for a broader audience, specifically residents of Historic Inner East. As the original LISC report notes, a significant increase in population and/or residential demand would be necessary to support successful retail along Xenia Avenue. Since the population has remained largely stagnant since the report was issued, CityWide sought to identify other ways to create successful market opportunities.



The LISC report also addresses the lack of food access in Twin Towers, which remains a concern of residents. The success of Mission of Mary and the University of Dayton’s Hanley Sustainability Institute at growing food in the neighborhood bodes well for potential partners to address this issue as part of a corridor strategy. East End’s success in acquiring a nuisance property along the corridor, along with achieving a high rank for funding in the recently announced PDAC process, increase the likelihood that an entrepreneurial venture related to food insecurity could occur on Xenia Avenue. While the LISC report suggests a focus area of McClure Street to Dover Street, CityWide recommends a more modest first step on Xenia Avenue between George and Allen Streets to activate the former convenience store and other parcels, and enhance the viability of the McClure Street bridge that connects Twin Towers to St. Anne’s Hill Historic District and other Historic Inner East neighborhoods.

# INTRODUCTION

## EXISTING PLANS

### Twin Towers Neighborhood Vision

Several years ago, through a robust community engagement process, East End developed a vision for Twin Towers around three themes: creativity, diversity, and sustainability. East End envisioned a neighborhood that would attract young creatives, celebrate diversity, and support sustainable physical development.

The opportunity to attract young creatives was grounded in the idea that Twin Towers has available housing in need of rehabilitation without the restrictions of a traditional historic district, thus making rehabilitation more affordable. This provides a less expensive point of entry for artists, musicians, and other budding entrepreneurs who might welcome the chance to access affordable housing while building their business.

Diversity emerged as an important goal during the community engagement process because of the ways in which the East Dayton population has changed in recent years. While the residents of Twin Towers in recent decades had been primarily

Appalachian, the area has seen an increase in Hispanic households, as well as refugees from Africa, the Middle East and some Ahiska Turks; Ruskin Elementary School is now one of the most diverse in Dayton. East End leadership believes that this diversity is a unique feature of Twin Towers and strives to celebrate and promote the growing ethnic change in the neighborhood, while still supporting the families who have historically lived in East Dayton.

Finally, sustainability has always been part of East End's core thinking and practice, demonstrated in part by their close relationship with Mission of Mary Cooperative, which has actively addressed food insecurity in the community. Among other efforts, the two organizations have been working in partnership to develop a sustainable, multipurpose urban agriculture and community green space within Twin Towers. Assisted by MKSK, a Columbus-based landscape architecture and urban design firm, the team created a vision for Lincoln Hill Gardens at the site of the former Lincoln School. The site offers major growing opportunities with the addition of hoop houses and high tunnels, space for education programs, community garden beds, a fruit

# INTRODUCTION

and nut orchard and a nature playscape area. Through this effort, East End and its partners are leading the way in reutilization of land for food production.

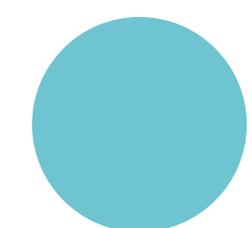
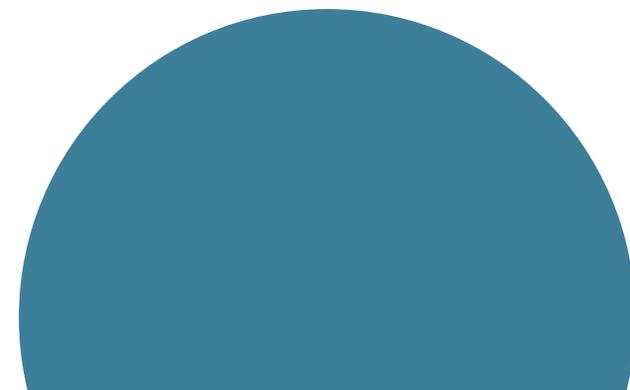
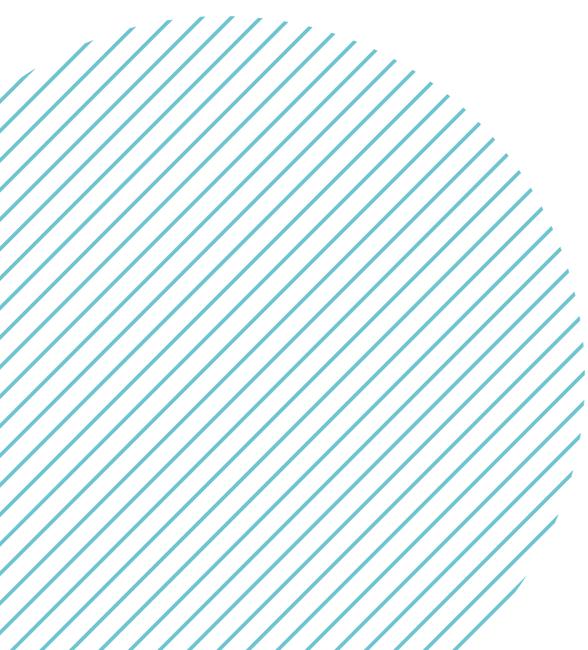
East End has furthered this sustainability mission through its partnership with CleanEnergy4All; a major initiative was conducting energy audits and improvement to 84 units of affordable housing East End built with local affordable housing partner, Oberer. CleanEnergy4All has also installed a rooftop solar system on East End's office building, which has drastically reduced their energy costs and provides a visible example of this technology. More recently, CleanEnergy4All has begun to explore the idea of creating an EcoDistrict as a way to brand the area and develop more projects that promote sustainability.



# FINDINGS



DEMOGRAPHICS  
BUILDING CONDITIONS  
STAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENT



# FINDINGS

## DEMOGRAPHICS: TWIN TOWERS

Twin Towers has a population of 3,027; 77% of the population is white, 10.2% is black, and 5.6% is another race. 10.3% of the population is Hispanic. The median household income is \$18,315. The median age is 34.8, and approximately 10% of the adult population has received a Bachelor's Degree or higher

### EMPLOYMENT



White Collar



Blue Collar



Services



Unemployment Rate

### EDUCATION



No High School Diploma



36%

High School Graduate



23%

Some College



10%

Bachelor's/Grad/Pr of Degree

### KEY FACTS

3,027

Population



Average Household Size



Median Age

\$18,315

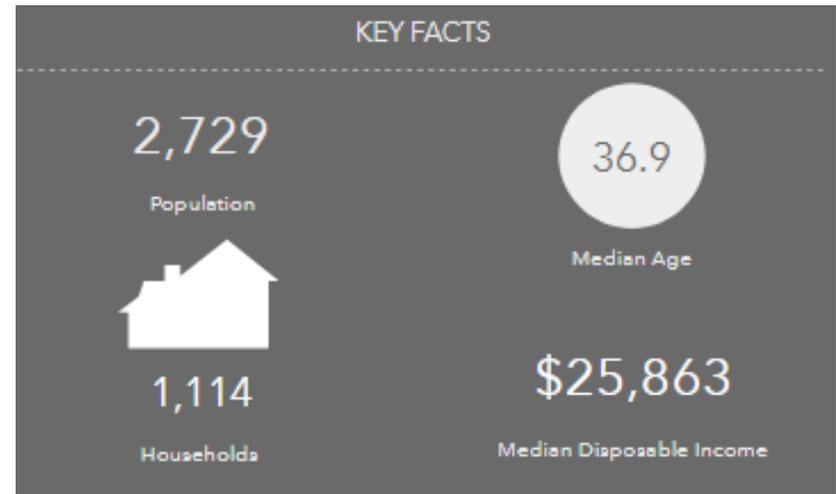
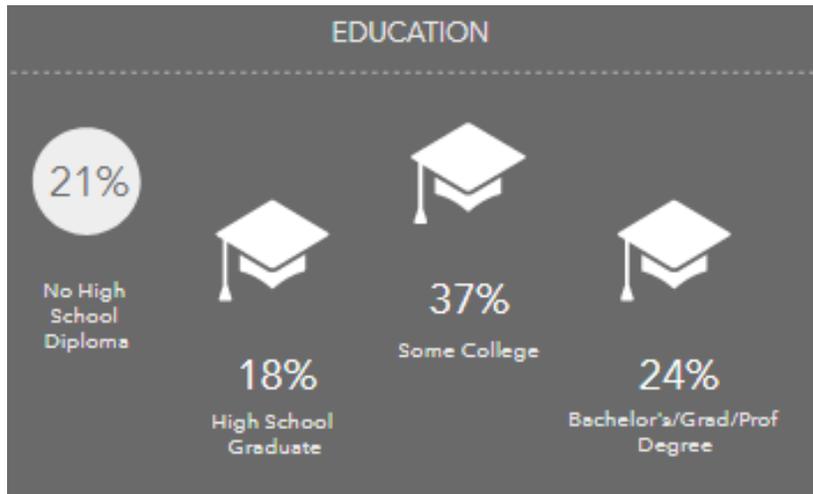
Median Household Income

Source: Esri

# FINDINGS

## DEMOGRAPHICS: HISTORIC INNER EAST

Historic Inner East has a population of 2,729; 81.5% of the population is white, 8.3% is black, and 5.5% is another race. 9.6% of the population is Hispanic. The median household income is \$29,278. The median age is 36.9, and approximately 23.7% of the adult population has received a Bachelor's Degree or higher



Source: Esri

# FINDINGS

## BUILDING CONDITION

CityWide staff analyzed building condition and land use on Xenia Avenue in the study area, examining 69 individual structures. Approximately 57 percent of structures along Xenia Avenue are residential, while 36 percent are commercial, and 7 percent are exempt.

There are also 16 vacant lots with no structures on them. Of those lots, 12 are residential and 3 are commercial. There is one exempt vacant lot, which is The Children’s Orchard in front of Ruskin Elementary School.

All buildings were rated using a condition scale based on the City of Dayton’s Housing Assessment Scale (see right). The majority of buildings on Xenia Avenue (80 percent) received either a 2 or a 3 condition rating, which means that they are in decent condition but had some issues—for example: a broken window or two, missing paint or siding, missing or falling gutters, missing roof tiles, or general damage to the façade.

### Building Condition Results

Condition 1	7
Condition 2	26
Condition 3	29
Condition 4	7
Condition 5	0

Rating	Description
1-SOUND	The Structure, Yard walks and steps are well maintained, and no exterior code violations are apparent.
2-MINOR REPAIR	Minor Maintenance task(s) need to be performed; spot painting of exterior siding, trim, doors, gutters, and/ or downspouts; the replacement of rusted gutter and downspouts; minor repair to steps, yard walks, driveways and/or fences.
3-MAJOR REPAIR	More extensive repairs need to be made, such as painting the complete building, re-roofing, installing all new gutters and/or downspouts, new porch posts or flooring, and all new yard walks or steps.
4-REHABILITATION	The repairs are more costly than the Major Repair category, but reinvestment may still make sense. Replacing such items as window, doors, roof sheathing, or porch and the rebuilding of sections of the foundation and chimney may be necessary.
5-DILAPIDATED	Rehabilitation of these structures is generally more expensive due to interior deterioration; extensive repairs like those cited in condition 4 structures are usually required.

# FINDINGS

## HOUSING STUDY DATA

### Land Use - Parcels

Residential	39
Residential - Vacant	12
Commercial	25
Commercial - Vacant	3
Exempt	5
Exempt - Vacant	1
Total Number	85

### Current on Taxes - Parcels

Residential - Current	26
Residential - Delinquent	25
Commercial - Current	20
Commercial - Delinquent	8
Exempt - Current	5
Exempt - Delinquent	1
Total Current	51
Total Delinquent	34



### Owner Occupied - Structures

Residential - Owner Occupied	9
Residential - Rental	30
Commercial - Owner Occupied	8
Commercial - Rental	17
Exempt - Owner Occupied	2
Exempt - Rental	3
Total Owner Occupied	19
Total Rental	50

# LAND USE



# TAX DELINQUENCY



# FINDINGS

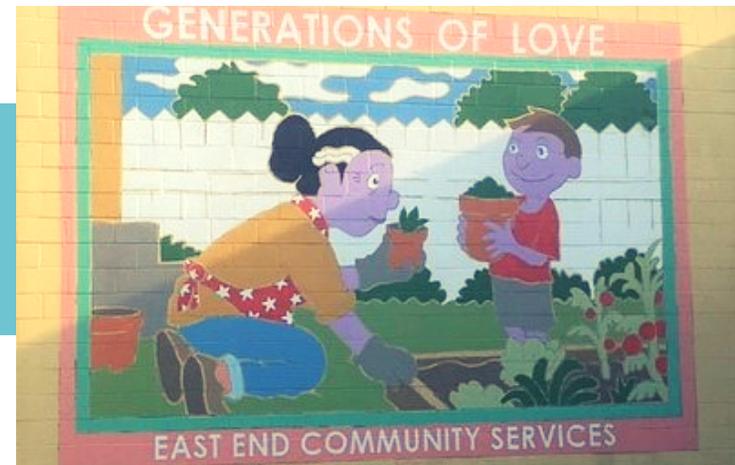
## STAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENT

One of Xenia Avenue’s strongest assets is its wealth of institutions located along the corridor. Several of the stakeholders have been a part of the neighborhood fabric for decades, offering services to the community residents including education, social services, places of worship, and businesses that serve everyday needs. This collection of resources creates a strong base on which to build and grow the corridor and continue to enhance the economic vitality of the Twin Towers Neighborhood.



## East End Community Services

East End Community Services has been providing vital services to the Twin Towers community since 1998 and is an important anchor along Xenia Avenue. Services include the Miracle Makers after school and summer program, developed in partnership with Ruskin Elementary School; a range of workforce development and job training programs; community gardens and food access programs; and housing rehab. Most recently, in 2017, East End became an affiliate of the WestCare Foundation, a national health and human service organization; this merger has allowed East End to provide a new range of health care and substance abuse/addiction treatment services to the community.



# FINDINGS

## CleanEnergy4All

Founded in 2014, [CleanEnergy4All](#) originally focused its efforts on working with individual non-profits, including East End Community Services, to provide solar systems that both support sustainability and provide cost savings. It is currently engaged in a comprehensive project in the Twin Towers neighborhood focused on increasing sustainable energy sources and educating residents about energy usage. CleanEnergy4All is also working to promote the EcoDistrict model in Dayton through technical assistance and support.

## Wright-Patt Credit Union

[Wright-Patt Credit Union](#) (WPCU), which has a branch on Xenia Avenue, is one of the few credit unions or banks in all of East Dayton. Having a physical presence in the community allows WPCU to build stronger relationships and better understand/serve community needs. WPCU also works to invest back into the community through support for local organizations.



## St. Mary's Catholic Church

Another longstanding anchor on Xenia Avenue, [St. Mary's Catholic Church](#) has been integral part of the community for more than a century; the imposing church building, built in 1906, is on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition to drawing traffic to Xenia Avenue for its weekly masses, St. Mary's also provides a variety of services for the surrounding neighborhood, including a food pantry and social activities such as fish fries.

## New Hope Church

When New Hope Church first began holding worship services on Xenia Avenue, they were operating out of a community room at East End Community Services. From the beginning, they had a focus on service and outreach to neighborhood residents. As they began to grow, they first rented space in the old Federation Theater building on the 500 block of Xenia Avenue, before eventually purchasing the building in 2012. Today they regularly see more than 180 people at their weekly services and are an important community anchor.

# CORRIDOR PLANNING



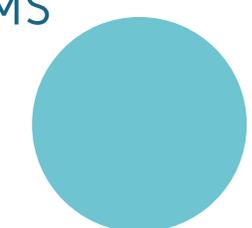
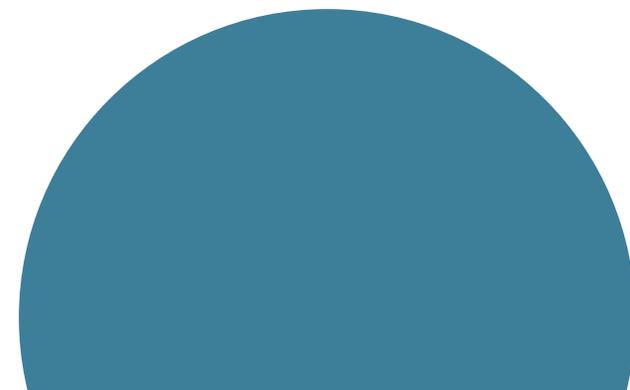
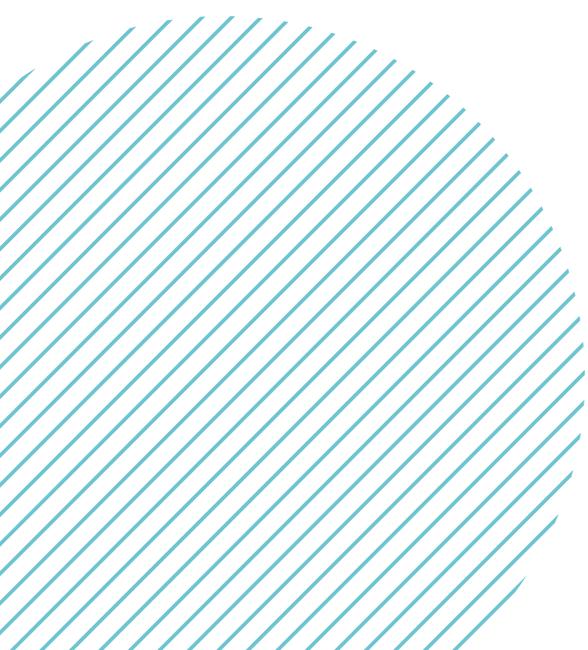
OVERVIEW

GATEWAYS/PLACEMAKING

PHASING AND NEXT STEPS

GRANTS AND FUNDING

REAL ESTATE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS



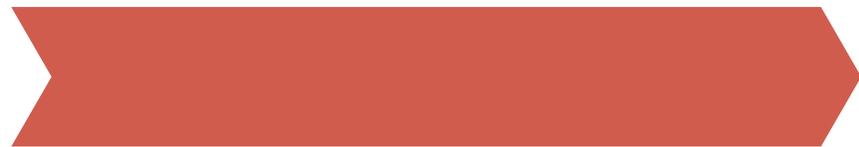
# CORRIDOR PLANNING

## OVERVIEW

Xenia Avenue is a compact, mixed-use corridor that carries nearly 5,000 vehicles daily. The structures located along the street have a narrow setback with limited spaces for trees or tree lawns within the public right of way. The roadway allows for one lane of traffic in each direction with some on-street parking located on either side. Sidewalks along the corridor are varying in width depending upon the location, and many of the curbs and aprons need repair or replacement.

The City of Dayton has committed to repaving Xenia Avenue in 2023. This repaving will also include the construction of on-street bike lanes on Xenia Avenue that will connect the corridor from McClure Street to Steve Whalen Boulevard.

Xenia Avenue also serves as a Greater Dayton RTA route, with four outbound stops on the south side of the street and three inbound stops on the north side of the street. The stops near the intersection of Keowee Street and Xenia Avenue see significantly higher ridership numbers (up to 38 riders a day on average). Further east on Xenia Avenue, the ridership numbers fall and average between 3-15 riders a day. There are two shelters along this route that see significant usage and would benefit from repair or replacement.



# CORRIDOR PLANNING

## GATEWAYS & PLACEMAKING

The Xenia Avenue corridor planning study outlines several recommendations to consider, and many of the proposed projects focus on improving entrances and access points along this key corridor. Enhancing gateways and corridors can have a significant impact on both the perceptions of the immediate area and the surrounding neighborhood. Visible physical investment is a display of confidence, and these types of investments improve neighborhood image, create distinct neighborhood branding, and help promote both business growth and attraction as well as residential marketability.

While a long-term goal could be developing district-wide changes like linking spaces together with common elements such as pedestrian scale lighting, decorative crosswalks, banners, and signage, this is a costly endeavor. In the short-term, there are other opportunities for corridor and gateway improvements that could be considered.

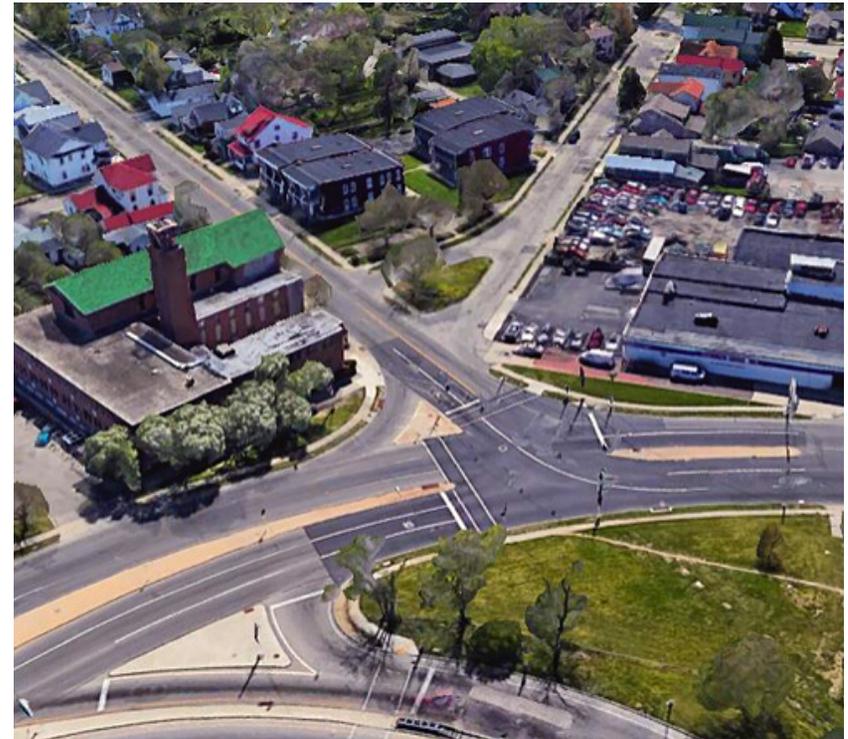


# CORRIDOR PLANNING

## Xenia & Keowee

The Xenia Avenue and Keowee Street intersection is one of the major entry points into the business district and the Twin Towers Neighborhood, but the road configuration is awkward and can cause confusion to vehicular traffic. Keowee Street is a large artery roadway, and the adjacent entrance onto US-35 creates a high-volume of traffic that navigates this intersection daily.

The challenge is determining how to capture some of this vehicular traffic and draw it into the Twin Towers business district and neighborhood. Creating a clear “entry” point and gateway into the neighborhood will help this effort. A thriving business district requires business that draw locally, but also attracts customers who live outside the neighborhood.



The intersection has significant right-of-way spaces and green pockets, both of which can be enhanced to create a sense of place that is thoughtful and deliberate. The rendering on the following page demonstrates how the addition of gateways, signage, and more consistent streetscaping elements can help tie a space together. Costs can be significant for some of these features so either phasing or determining the most impactful elements on which to focus may be necessary

# XENIA & KEOWEE



# CORRIDOR PLANNING

## Xenia & Dover

The Dover Street and Xenia Avenue intersection, while not as prominent as Keowee Street, should serve as a secondary gateway location. Expanding gateway and branding elements to this location alerts vehicular and pedestrian traffic that they are entering the portion of Xenia Avenue with the highest concentration of business and services. This deliberate separation can call out the “business district” segment, creating a space that is unique from the rest of the corridor.

Similar streetscape elements should be considered for this location as were suggested at the Keowee Street location but at a smaller scale. The fact that this intersection also has significant green spaces owned by Mission of Mary and East End, allows for additional visibility of these elements and potential to bring partners to the project.

Adding pedestrian-scaled lighting with banners and branding signage at this location would add needed vibrancy and bookend two ends of Xenia Avenue highlighting the business district in between.



# CORRIDOR PLANNING

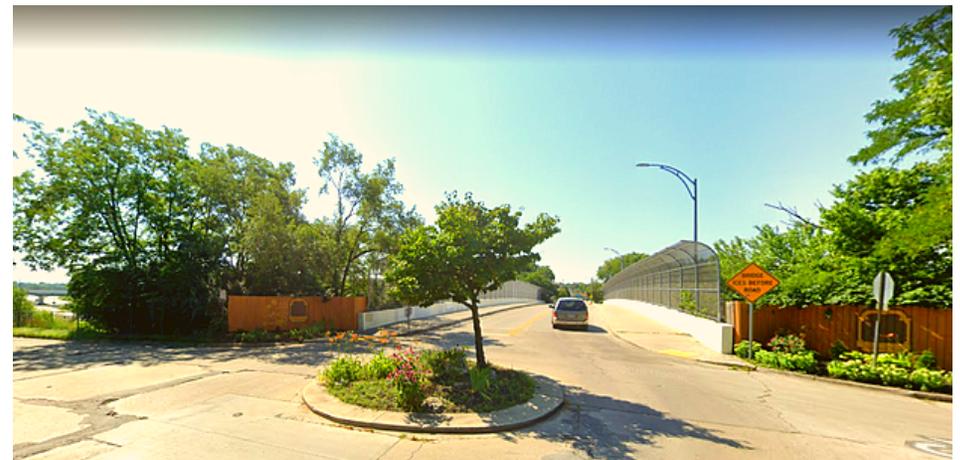
## McClure Street Connection

McClure Street is a highly significant corridor within the Twin Towers Neighborhood. Not only does it serve Xenia Avenue and Ruskin School, but it also provides a north-south connection over US-35 and a direct connection into St. Anne's Hill Historic District and other Historic Inneareast neighborhoods.

This connection has not been utilized to its full potential as a way to move additional traffic in and out of the Twin Towers Community. As was previously mentioned, the success of Xenia Avenue will hinge on its ability to attract additional people from outside of the Twin Towers Neighborhood to patronize local businesses. McClure Street is an untapped opportunity to draw residents living in St. Anne's Hill, Newcom Plain, Huffman Historic District and beyond to Xenia Avenue.



Twin Towers



St. Anne's Hill

# CORRIDOR PLANNING

Creating enhancements to the McClure Street bridge is an opportunity for a joint project between Twin Towers and the St. Anne's Hill Neighborhood focused on creating a new gateway in and out of their neighborhoods. This unique space would not only carry vehicular traffic but could now also serve as a new on-street bike connector.

Dayton has a very strong bike and trail system composed of a world-renowned, 340-mile regional trail system; the City of Dayton is continually working to better connect neighborhoods to this network by extending bike trails, sharrows, and dedicated lanes throughout the city. In 2023, the City will be both repaving Xenia Avenue and adding on-street bike lanes on Xenia Avenue from McClure Street to Steve Whalen Boulevard.

Adding additional sharrows on McClure Street that would further connect Historic Innereast to Twin Towers and is an opportunity for both communities to enhance their connectivity to each other and their unique individual assets.

On the following page is a rendering depicting what the McClure Street Connector could look like. This project is straightforward and includes joint branding and signage, murals, painted on street bike icons, and potentially improved fencing on top of the bridge. There is ample public right of way to serve as locations for placemaking elements on both sides of the bridge.



# MCCLURE STREET CONNECTION



# CORRIDOR PLANNING

## PHASING AND NEXT STEPS

The proposed corridor improvement options listed within this document can make dramatic physical changes within the corridor but will undoubtedly take significant planning and fundraising efforts. It is important to recognize the value in taking a phased approach and identifying priorities based on which elements have the highest value to the neighborhood and funding sources available.

CityWide has worked in many neighborhoods across the city that were faced with similar challenges around creating a sense of place unique to their neighborhood in which businesses and residents could grow and thrive.

Below are a list of next steps or creative ways that services and funding can be coalesced to achieve these improvements.

## Socialize Plan Goals

After receiving feedback from businesses and residents within the neighborhood, it is important that East End and CleanEnergy4All prioritize the most important elements within the plan and develop a workplan that includes leadership and funding responsibilities. After priorities are agreed upon, the plan should be socialized with the City's Planning and Community Development Department, as well as other groups and organizations as necessary.

Sharing the overall vision for Xenia Avenue and the elements that are most important to the advancement of the corridor and asking for feedback, support, and suggestions on how to begin to execute plan objectives is an important early step.



# CORRIDOR PLANNING

It is also important to engage City of Dayton Housing Inspectors. Using code enforcement tools along the corridor can address blight or negligence. The completed property survey can help identify problem properties where code enforcement will have an impact and affect the overall appearance of the corridor. Focus on property owners who have the ability to make changes and choose not to.

The Civil Engineering Department should also be made aware of the plan. If the department understands the long-term goals of the corridor, they can better align future projects with the priorities of the neighborhood.

The Montgomery County Land Bank (MCLB) can also be a valuable partner in this process. They offer numerous programs that could help stabilize the corridor further, such as their DIY Renovation program. Making property owners aware of some of their options would also be beneficial. The MCLB can coordinate residential donations that can help property owners to responsibly resolve their real estate issues, tax liabilities, and maintenance obligations while helping to stabilize neighborhoods by avoiding foreclosures and vacancies.

## Coordinate with Surrounding Neighborhoods

The McClure Connector is a great example of a joint neighborhood project that could serve as an opportunity to connect both Twin Towers and St. Anne's Hill neighborhoods in a more meaningful way. As unique neighborhood businesses have become more popular in recent years, building connectivity between neighborhoods is equally important to continue the support and success of those operations. St. Anne's Hill has numerous local restaurants and businesses that have a regional following and is proving to be a good model for how small, neighborhood-centric businesses can succeed on a more regional level.

The creation of the McClure connector celebrates this physical connection while providing another link in Dayton's expanding bike network. As the Xenia Avenue thoroughfare grows, this link will undoubtedly provide multi-modal options for those outside of Twin Towers to visit and patronize business along the Xenia Avenue business corridor.

# CORRIDOR PLANNING

## Partner with Local Universities

Creating a brand or identity for a neighborhood can be a time-consuming and expensive endeavor but is an important element of generating street-level excitement and vibrancy. Dayton is fortunate to have many college and university students always looking for ways to build their portfolios and resumes with “real world” experience who can help with these types of branding efforts.

CityWide has worked with numerous graphic design classes at a university level that have adopted a neighborhood branding enterprise as part of their class syllabus. Students engage with the neighborhoods to understand what makes each community unique and then create several different possible graphic applications that could be used along the corridors.



Wright Dunbar Inc. recently engaged a graphic design class at the University of Dayton for a branding effort, ultimately choosing a student design as the new Wright Dunbar Business District brand. Colorful banners now line West Third Street, as do building wraps that add vibrancy to vacant storefronts awaiting redevelopment.

# CORRIDOR PLANNING

## Utilize the City of Dayton Urban Tree Program

The City of Dayton began the process of growing their own trees to use in the public realm nearly 10 years ago. Utilizing vacant land parcels, the City has numerous farms throughout Dayton that are cared for by partner organizations. Because of these efforts, the City can make trees available to re-canopy commercial corridors and residential streets.

Working in concert with the City of Dayton arborists and the Department of Public Works, the community can identify areas along the Xenia Avenue corridor and the Xenia Avenue and Keowee Street intersection where new trees would help soften the abundance of hardscape and create a sense welcoming sense of place. In certain sections of the Xenia Avenue right-of-way, there is already ample space for a row of new trees.



# CORRIDOR PLANNING

## GRANTS AND FUNDING

Opportunities for funding often come through grants or other funding tools. What follows is not an exhaustive list but rather a series of examples of funding options that CityWide has had success with during other community development projects.

### City of Dayton Neighborhood Mini-Grant

The City of Dayton is committed to continuing their Neighborhood Mini-grant Program. These grant applications are submitted to the City of Dayton by neighborhood associations for projects totaling up to \$5,000. The grant is awarded to projects such as physical improvements, marketing materials, community events, and other initiatives that benefit the community and increase organizational capacity. Recipients are required to use mini-grant funds to leverage a 50 percent match from other funding sources and in-kind contributions.

The mini grant program is an excellent source for neighborhoods to complete smaller-scale projects. Leveraging this grant with others could help complete a project in its entirety and should be considered.

### Greenlight Grant

The Dayton Foundation is now offering Greenlight Grants to local, nonprofit organizations for funding of special projects, program expansions, capital improvements, or capacity building. These small, "quickly awarded" grants are given multiple times a year to qualified recipients and range in size from \$500 to \$7,500. This grant opportunity could be applied for through the East End Neighborhood Development Corporation for a number of different elements listed within this plan depending on project priorities.



# CORRIDOR PLANNING

## Transportation Alternatives Program

Transportation Alternatives (TA) is a community-driven program that facilitates the development of non-traditional transportation projects with the goal of providing choices for non-motorized users that are safe, reliable, and convenient. Eligible projects include community improvement activities; construction, planning, and design of on- and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians and bikes or non-motorized transportation; or the design and construction of infrastructure-related projects that will provide safe routes for non-drivers (children, older adults, individuals with disabilities) to access daily needs or public transportation and enhanced mobility.

The applications for such projects will need to be coordinated and completed in conjunction with the City of Dayton Department of Engineering and submitted to Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (MVRPC). In approved projects, MVRPC will provide up to 80 percent (federal) of the project cost, and the applicant provides a minimum of 20 percent of project cost as (non-federal) matching funds.

CityWide worked with the Old North Dayton Neighborhood through the DaVinci Project to submit a successful TA Project through the City on Troy Street. This corridor is similar to Xenia Avenue as it is the neighborhood business corridor with a mixture of commercial, services, and residential. The \$400K project focused streetscape elements on three intersections along different point in the corridor. This strategy allowed for a concentration of elements that would make an impact and alert travelers along this street that were entering and leaving a “district.”



# CORRIDOR PLANNING



Traffic-calming bumpouts, landscaping, banners, pedestrian-scale lighting, decorative street-sign toppers, and bollards were added to Troy Street, creating a more recognizable business district.



TROY ST.  
EXAMPLE

# CORRIDOR PLANNING

## REAL ESTATE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS

The Xenia Avenue corridor is a mix of residential and commercial buildings. While several of the properties are in good repair, 89 percent need at least some exterior improvement. East End and partners could consider developing programs aimed at incentivizing owners to improve their property. A few options that have worked in other neighborhoods are detailed below.

One important feature to note is that in the past, some of these programs have been funded through federal dollars such as Community Development Block Grant. Federal rules associated with this money can make these programs more challenging. If a federal source can be paired with a less restrictive source, it allows for greater creativity and more improvements.

### Landlord Assistance Program

If key properties along the corridor are rentals, a special program to engage landlords in repair and investment should be considered. One option is a program that requires a dollar-for-dollar match, up to a certain amount. The lead organization on the project would work with the business owner to define the scope of work, and the owner would identify contractors and get quotes. Once a project is selected, the owner's match is the first money in, with the balance being paid to the contractor via a two-party check at the end.



# CORRIDOR PLANNING

## Business Façade

This grant program requires a business-owner match and could improve exterior conditions of key properties. Activities eligible for the program could include painting, window repairs, awnings, signage, lighting, and landscaping. This program could be paired with other CityWide lending programs if larger scale renovations are desired. A similar business facade program was implemented along Germantown Street and has resulted in a more uniform look to that corridor.



## Home Improvement Loans

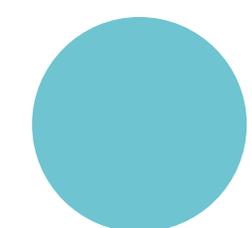
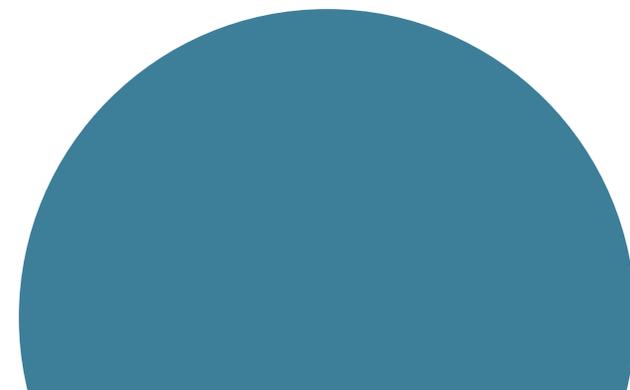
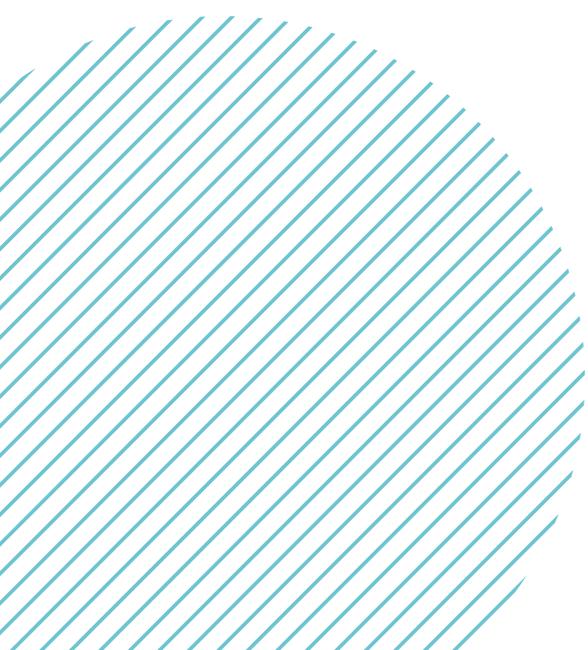
In several of CityWide's community development target areas, home improvement programs have been a key piece of neighborhood stabilization or corridor improvement projects. Often the home improvement loans are structured as forgivable over a period, typically 20 percent over five years, or deferred. With the latter, the loan is repaid at the time of title transfer, and the funds can be revolved into another project. These programs are typically targeted to homeowners.



# DEVELOPMENT NODE



OVERVIEW  
405 XENIA AVENUE



# DEVELOPMENT NODE

## OVERVIEW



The planning work looked at each section of Xenia Avenue, determining the best and highest use for properties as well as locations for visible projects that would enhance the corridor and help define the street.

One such project is a development node focusing on the section of Xenia Avenue between George and Allen Streets. A first step in rethinking this segment of the corridor is determining the end-use for 405 Xenia Avenue. Because this property is controlled by East End, there is an opportunity to galvanize the neighborhood around that location and its future reuse. The following pages lay out two options for this site: renovation of the building or demolition of the building and determining a new use for the site.

This node also includes other properties that could have an impact on the corridor. It is recommended that East End and

partners meet with all existing property owners to better understand their long-term goals for business development, building improvement, or relocation. This especially pertains to the three adjacent properties located at 501, 505, and 509 Xenia Avenue that are controlled by the same owner and serve as another opportunity to potentially form a partnership for positive change.

Dayton Public Schools and Ruskin Elementary School should be integrated into all future conversations regarding this node. The school is a significant anchor within the community but continues to have challenges surrounding parking, circulation, and visibility. A meeting with Dr. Lolli and Principal Bryan Ertsgaard will help get a clearer picture of their long-term needs in regard to their campus and could help formulate a plan for future growth.

# DEVELOPMENT NODE

## OPTION 1: ADAPTIVE RE-USE OF 405 XENIA AVENUE

The former convenience store at 405 Xenia Avenue was acquired by East End in 2019, eliminating a long-standing eyesore and problem property in the neighborhood. The cinder block building is nearly 3,000 square feet, with an adjacent parking lot. Water, sewer, and electric utilities remain in place and, although the structure itself is solid, there are remediation needs, and the roof will need to be replaced.

Initial conversations with the community about this space focused on addressing food insecurity. A long-term goal could be to develop a co-op grocery store; however, that type of project will require a significant investment of capital and time. In the short-term, it is advisable to find ways to activate the space through more temporary measures that still fulfill community goals (access to healthy food, community gathering space, etc.). These could serve as pilot efforts to test the retail market in modest ways and build toward a more ambitious project.

The rendering on page 42 depicts possibilities for the transformation of the property, especially focused on building a vibrant gathering space that provides access to healthy food and other retail options for the whole community.



# DEVELOPMENT NODE

## Community Events

Twin Towers has a strong neighborhood association with active involvement in the community's improvement. This group could play an important role in the activation of this space by sponsoring events in the parking lot adjacent to the store. Creating a festival-like atmosphere can draw residents to the site and begin to create support for indoor operations. A simple first step could be a small food truck rally in the parking lot to promote what is happening at the location. Resident ideas on how to bring this space to life should be an important part of the development planning.



## Farmer's Market

One possible short-term opportunity is an indoor farmers market, that could offer a site to buy and sell produce from growers in the community like Mission of Mary or Ruskin community gardens. If successful, it could also potentially attract other growers from outside the neighborhood. The fact that it offers indoor space ensures that the market could continue in any type of weather. A consistent, indoor market focused on fresh produce could be appealing to the surrounding neighborhoods as well as Twin Towers.

This market could potentially be operated at different times than 2nd Street Market, thereby providing the entire area with another option for locally grown food.



# DEVELOPMENT NODE

## Small Business Pop Up

405 Xenia Avenue could also provide space for small entrepreneur businesses that do not yet have a physical space but do have a loyal following of customers.

A recent example of this type of pop-up space is the Entrepreneur's Marketplace in Wright-Dunbar. Located at 1109 West Third Street, the Marketplace houses 8-10 small businesses selling clothing, soaps, jewelry, and handbags. There is also a variety of food vendors selling prepared foods, such as salsas, bakery items, and jams, and hot foods with easy serve and go packaging. Many of the business owners who sell at the Marketplace have active social media feeds and have been selling their wares online but are still trying to develop their business. In this model, they are able to rent space from the operator of the Entrepreneur's Marketplace as they grow.

The Wright Dunbar marketplace focuses primarily on minority- and female-owned businesses. and has engaged the community in the design and operation of the space. It uses social media and local news to promote its vendors and schedule.

While the manager of the Entrepreneur's Marketplace is responsible for ensuring a clean, attractive building and driving customers to the location, the vendors manage their space and keep profits from their sales. In Wright Dunbar, the effort was deliberately started slowly on the weekend for four-hour periods. As a constituency of loyal followers became familiar with the location, the days and hours of operation have been expanded.

This slow-growing and community-focused model could be useful on Xenia Avenue with adaptations for the specific priorities of the Twin Towers community.



Entrepreneur's Marketplace in Wright-Dunbar

# MARKETPLACE



# DEVELOPMENT NODE

## OPTION 2: DEMOLITION OF 405 XENIA AVENUE

The acquisition of 405 Xenia Avenue relieved the neighborhood of a long-standing problem property that often produced crime and vagrancy issues. This defensive purchase also created the opportunity to consider how the site could be used in the future. While discussions around the re-use of the building thus far have centered on the potential to address food insecurity in East Dayton by creating a market, the cost to rehab the structure as well as to manage and operate retail at this location may exceed the capacity of East End and its partners. Such a project would take dedicated staff and a significant fundraising effort to address not only renovation and build out for retail, but also ongoing subsidy of operation costs. This is a complex and expensive endeavor and a difficult project to complete.

Another option to consider is demolition of the building. Demolition would clear the 0.2 acres site and provide a viewshed to the front door of Ruskin and its iconic tower. It also creates a “blank canvas” to help residents, businesses, and other stakeholders envision the space in a new way.



The demolition of 405 Xenia Avenue does not preclude East End, CleanEnergy4All, and other partners from pursuing a community gathering space, farmers market, or pop-up retail elsewhere along the corridor. In fact, as noted in previous leadership discussions, there are other storefronts along Xenia Avenue that may need fewer physical improvements, providing a space at less cost to accomplish the same goals. As the lead partners build consensus around community development strategies to advance the neighborhood, consideration of alternate locations should be part of the conversation.

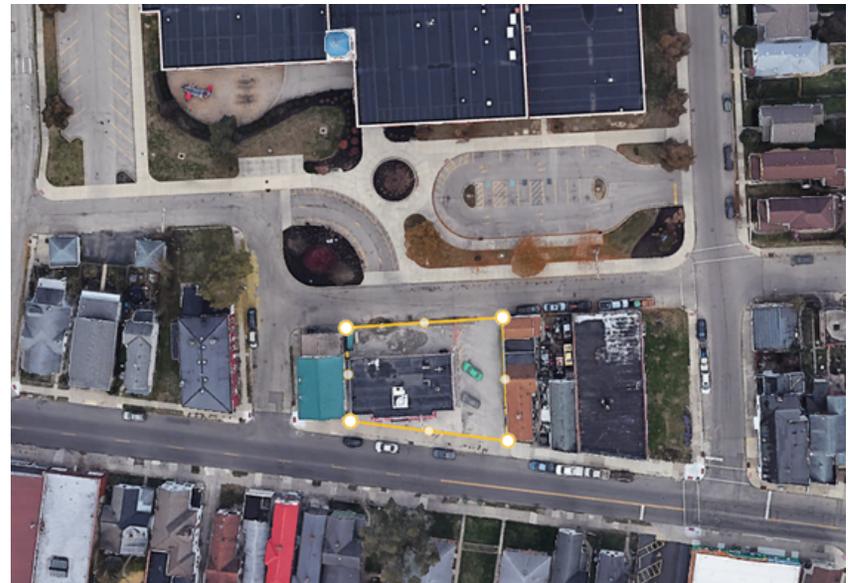
One such example is the building owned by New Hope Church, which takes up much of the 500 block of Xenia Avenue. The church currently occupies the western portion of the building, including the two-story space where the Federation Theater used to be; several of the store front spaces in the eastern half of the building, near Steele Avenue, are unoccupied, and the church is interested in renting them out. Some maintenance work is needed, but all spaces have working HVAC and electric.

# DEVELOPMENT NODE

## OPTION 2: DEMOLITION OF 405 XENIA AVENUE

Demolition of 405 Xenia Avenue could be an incremental first step in creating a space that serves both the Twin Towers neighborhood and Ruskin School while providing the opportunity to work together to jointly determine the best long-term use that enhances the community vision for the future.

If the neighborhood decides to explore this option further, conversations with the City of Dayton would also be helpful. While the City has limited resources, it does control the Community Development Block Grant program (CDBG) and demolition is an allowable activity under CDBG.



405 Xenia Ave. Site: 0.2 Acres



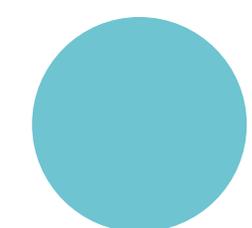
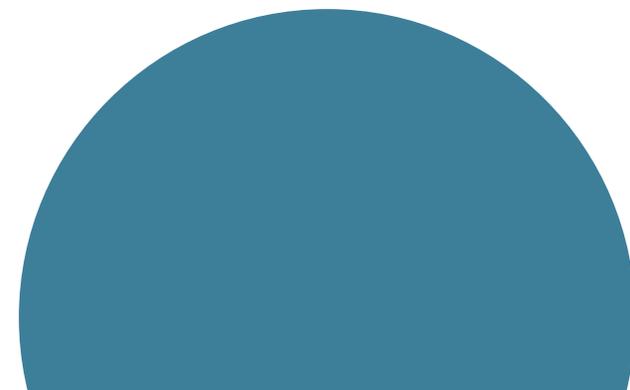
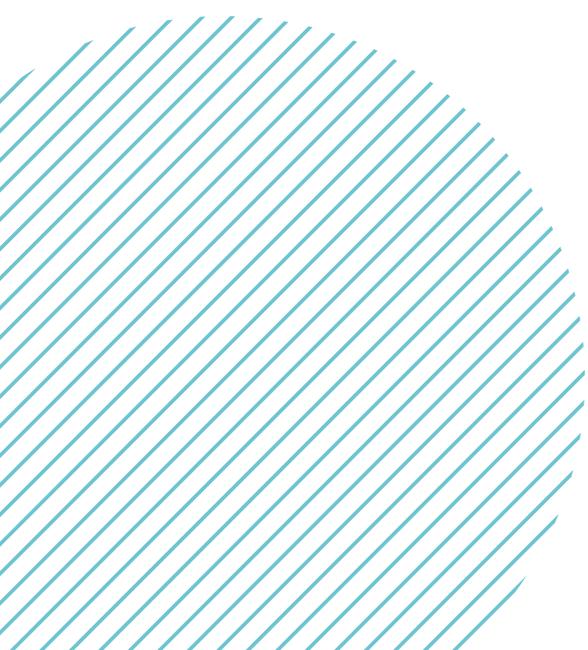
# 405 XENIA DEMOLITION



# NEXT STEPS



405 XENIA AVENUE END USE



# NEXT STEPS

## 405 XENIA AVENUE: DETERMINE END USE

Once East End, CleanEnergy4All, and other partners have identified which strategy for 405 Xenia Avenue that they wish to pursue, it will be important to identify a project coordinator to keep momentum going, secure funding, and implement next steps. Partners will need to build consensus with corridor stakeholders and the broader neighborhood to ensure that there the community agrees on the vision for moving forward. Both of the potential strategies for this site will be most successful with strong leadership and broad community support.

### Option 1: Adaptive Re-use

- 1 Evaluation of the building in relationships to the plan suggestions. What improvements need to be made? What will they cost? Can any work be done by volunteers?
- 2 With East End, Clean Energy for All and the Twin Towers Neighborhood Association, create plan to ready the space for commercial activity.
- 3 Acquire funding needed to make improvements and manage the facility.
- 4 Explore the potential of a microloan through CityWide or another entity to help pay for repairs.
- 5 Initiate plan to improve the building with paid labor and volunteers.

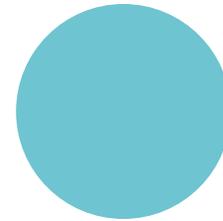
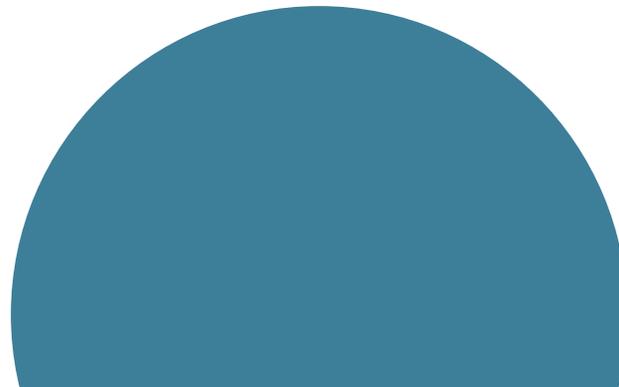
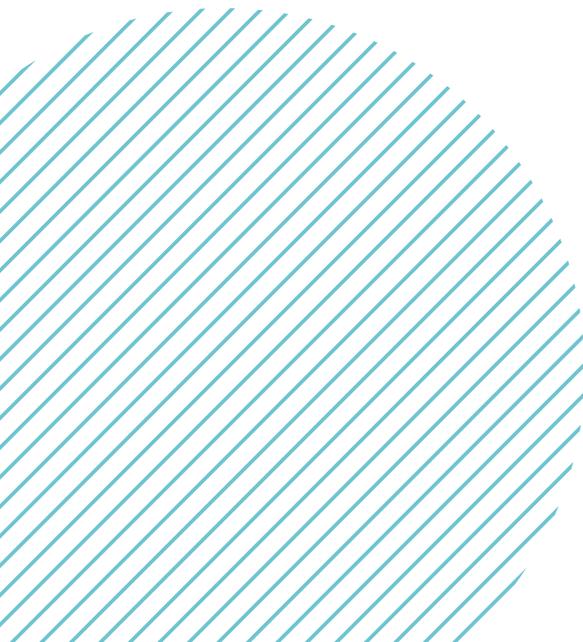
# NEXT STEPS

## 405 XENIA AVENUE: DETERMINE END USE

### Option 2: Demolition and Future Reuse

- 1 Discuss demolition plans with the City of Dayton Planning Department regarding potential use of CDBG funds.
- 2 Hold a visioning session with Twin Towers Neighborhood Association, Ruskin School, East End, CleanEnergy4All, and other partners to explore options for the site.
- 3 Acquire funding to make improvements.
- 4 Determine the potential of acquiring additional property along Xenia Avenue.

# CONCLUSION



# CONCLUSION



This planning study was limited to examining Xenia Avenue, the key corridor within Twin Towers. East End, CleanEnergy4All, and partners must determine how to discuss the proposed strategies with the larger community and identify alignment with the neighborhood vision. In CityWide’s experience, integrating community organizing and first-step small projects into longer-term planning efforts is critical to building consensus and creating sustainable community change.

The study suggests incremental first steps to bring vitality to the Xenia Avenue corridor and build stronger links to adjacent neighborhoods. A number of these recommendations are low-cost and have the potential to attract partners and funders. For example, the City of Dayton bikeway improvements planned for Twin Towers in 2023 are funded, and the engineers will engage the community in its design. This is an opportunity to expand upon the current planned improvements to include the McClure Street connector. Other suggested projects are longer term and require a deeper discussion within the neighborhood, such as the potential re-use or demolition of 405 Xenia Avenue.

Organized discussions with neighborhood leadership will be a critical first step to gathering community feedback and building

consensus around the ideas presented within this plan. Based on this discussion, the partners may wish to form a small steering committee to prioritize projects and create a workplan for implementation. CityWide is prepared to provide more detail on the costs of projects based on past work on similar projects. Having clarity on neighborhood priorities will help the partners socialize the ideas with a wider audience, including the City of Dayton, adjacent neighborhoods, and local funders. Understanding neighborhood priorities now will also position Twin Towers for participation in a larger effort underway to create a new Master Plan for the City.

Urban Design Associates (UDA), a national urban design firm, was hired by the City of Dayton in 2018 to create a vision for the future of Dayton neighborhoods. Working with City staff, CityWide, residents, businesses, and institutions within the different quadrants of the City, UDA has helped capture broader visioning for the City’s neighborhoods, while “knitting together” planning work that is already underway. UDA will begin looking at the Southeast portion of Dayton later this year, including Twin Towers. The Xenia Avenue Corridor Plan could significantly influence the larger Southeast community development planning process based on the priorities selected.