



Communities of the Future Advisory Committee

Recap of the First CFAC Meeting on March 5, 2010

Communities of the Future Advisory Committee

First CFAC Meeting Report (March 5, 2010)

Attendees

Amy Alduino, *Ohio Department of Development*
Biju George, *MSDGC*
Brewster Rhoads, *Governor's Regional Director Region 5*
Brian Wamsley, *Hamilton County Planning and Development*
Cameron Ross, *City Planning and Buildings*
Chad Edwards, *US Green Building Council, Emersion Design*
Charles Graves, *City Planning and Buildings*
Colin Groth, *Metro*
Dave Gamstetter, *Cincinnati Parks*
Dean Niemeyer, *Hamilton County Planning and Development*
Denise Dreihaus, *State Representative for Ohio*
Eric Gruenstein, *Green Partnership for Greater Cincinnati*
Erin Hazelton, *Ohio Department of Development*
Jim Simpson, *Ohio EPA*
Kathy Schwab, *LISC of Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky*
Liz Blume, *Community Building Institute*
Margo Warminski, *Cincinnati Preservation*
Marilyn Wall, *Sierra Club*
Mark Policinski, *OKI*
MaryLynn Lodor, *MSDGC*
Matt Morrison, *US EPA*
Patricia Garry, *Community Development Corp Association*
Quinten Harris, *Ohio Department of Development*
Roxanne Qualls, *Vice Mayor, City of Cincinnati*
Sam McKinley, *MSDGC / Hamilton County Planning and Development*
Sam Stephens, *City Department of Community Development*
Todd Kinskey, *Hamilton County Planning and Development*
Tony Parrot, *MSDGC*
Travis Miller, *OKI*
William Shuster, *US EPA*

Recap

On March 5, 2010, the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati (MSD) and Hamilton County Planning and Development (HCPD) hosted the first meeting of the Communities of the Future Advisory Committee (CFAC). The purpose of the initial CFAC meeting was to create key partnerships and gather expert advice to assist MSD with the Communities of the Future vision – a vision that bonds wet weather improvements to community revitalization goals. Another purpose was to assist MSD to align with ongoing initiatives in the region, such as Hamilton County’s Community Compass and Agenda 360: A Regional Action Plan and the upcoming City of Cincinnati’s Comprehensive Plan Update. The steering committee will also play an important role in guiding the Community of the Future projects and strategically linking MSD efforts to broader community revitalization and sustainable infrastructure goals.

By all accounts, the meeting was a success, introducing new partners to the MSD vision and creating positive feedback from which to base future watershed actions. In developing a broad vision with wide support, CFAC ensures that challenges are addressed, priorities are focused, and that our collaborative future is planned strategically and thereby giving full consideration to all the potential impacts that the Communities of the Future framework of leveraging sewer infrastructure repair into broader community investment can have.

The meeting included thirty minutes of group discussion facilitated by MSD and Hamilton County Planning and Development. The following four questions were posed to the attendees:

1. Since USEPA has mandated that MSD must either build a default tunnel or develop alternatives that would achieve the same wet weather reduction as the tunnel, do you think the community would be receptive to leveraging MSD investments & opportunities to help shape communities of the future?
2. From your perspective, what are some of the biggest challenges for this approach?
3. How can you contribute to the mission of this committee?
4. Who or what can you Inform and Influence to assist MSD in implementing COF projects?

HCPD staff organized the Committee’s answers to these questions into three themes, *Inform and Influence*, *Policy Development*, and *Economic Development*. The committee members were divided into three sub-committees based on their organization’s scope, services and mission. Due to the multi-dimensional nature of the member organizations, there will be opportunities to comment on the product of other sub-committees. We are proposing the next meeting will be Friday, April 30, 2010 at MSD and much of the agenda will involve small group strategy discussions. We have also indentified several recommended members based on comments from the first CFAC meeting.

CFAC Subcommittees

Policy	
	Charles Graves, City Planning & Buildings
	Dave Gamstetter, Cincinnati Parks
	Jim Simpson, Ohio EPA
	Matt Morrison, US EPA
	Roxanne Qualls, Vice Mayor of City of Cincinnati
	Todd Kinskey, Hamilton County Planning & Development
	Travis Miller, OKI
	William Shuster, US EPA
	Larry Falkin, City of Cincinnati OEQ
	Jim Uber, Center for Sustainable Urban Engineering
	Brewster Rhoads, Governor's Regional Director, Region 5
Economic Development	
	Erin Hazelton, Ohio Department of Development
	Kathy Schwab, LISC Greater Cincinnati & Northern KY
	Margo Warminski, Cincinnati Preservation Association
	Mark Policinski, OKI
	Patricia Garry, CDCAGC
	Quinten Harris, Ohio Department of Development
	Sam Stephens, Cincinnati Community Development
	<i>Recommended Members:</i>
	Denise Driehaus-State Representative
	Larry Feist, Cincinnati State Center for Innovative Technologies
	Kim Satzger, Port Authority
	Mary Beth McGrew, UC Architect
Inform & Influence	
	Cameron Ross, City Planning & Buildings
	Chad Edwards, USGBC Cincinnati
	Eric Gruenstein, Green Partnership for Greater Cincinnati
	Liz Blume, Community Building Institute
	Marilyn Wall, Sierra Club
	Amy Alduino, Ohio Department of Development
	Jim Cunningham, HUD
	Colin Groth, Metro
	<i>Recommended Members:</i>
	Laure Quinlivan, City of Cincinnati Council Member
	Terry Elfers, Cincinnati Public Schools
	Robin Corathers, Mill Creek Restoration Project
	Andy Holzhauser, Greater Cincinnati Energy Alliance

Themes

Analysis of the comments revealed three dominant themes: *Inform and Influence*, *Policy Development*, and *Economic Development*. These themes are not necessarily mutually exclusive of each other but comments were placed within the themes they best fit.

Inform and Influence

The Inform and Influence theme is a compilation of ideas and concepts that engage, educate and promote relationships with partners and the broader public toward sustainable decisions. In one sense, this theme is about building networks and sharing ideas from different academic and occupational fields. More importantly, this theme is about building social capital in the community, a spirit of collaboration, and a feeling of community purpose and identity.

One of the questions the CFAC meeting asked is how the community would respond to leveraging MSD investments and opportunities to help shape the community, and address the problem with innovative and sustainable solutions at the source; as opposed to solving the problem with standard but proven, end-of-pipe repair solutions. As some people suggested, the best method for teaching the community about the stormwater issues is to make the solution visible. The majority of answers focused on how to create community “buy in” for new community focused “green infrastructure.” One insightful suggestion was to create a forum to share information about all phases of the process including: physical developments, regulatory/policy creation, as well as to organize and convene working groups, and facilitate stakeholders and partnership development.

Another comment suggested, “buy in will be created when we show lower costs of operations, lower living costs, increased property values, increased tax base, community rebranding, and new housing opportunities.” This comment has a couple of interesting points, including delivering community metrics that everyone can understand and benefit from. Another good point of this comment is that of community rebranding could play a vital role in disadvantaged communities like South Fairmount.

Policy Development

The infrastructure investments by MSD represent a significant opportunity for widespread community redevelopment. Many suggestions centered on public policy changes that would focus redevelopment towards a common vision. The realm of public policy development includes issues such as transportation, land use, parks and recreation, housing, utilities, community facilities and others.

The major infrastructure investment by MSD got some attendees thinking about other ways to expand the Communities of the Future concept, including suggestions of incorporating form-based codes, LEED for Neighborhood Development, or Net Zero Energy development.

Some suggestions included creating incentives, such as tax abatements to help retain residents and businesses.

Economic Development

In recent history, the definition for economic development has broadened from job creation and retention and provision of land and infrastructure for business to promotion of prosperity and quality of life—the idea that with economic growth there should also come broader societal well-being. Thus, economic development is increasingly linked with education, culture, affordable housing, and preservation of the environment. MSD’s employment of the “triple bottom line” form of accounting shows how the expanding definition of economic development is becoming a reality. The “triple bottom line” provides metrics for gauging social equity and environmental conservation in addition to economic development.

Mirroring this change in definition, our CFAC discussions on economic development centered on the financial impacts and opportunities that could be spurred by an attractive water amenity, like a “daylighted stream,” the importance of creating a balanced housing stock, the goal of creating an efficient transportation network, and improving the quality of community facilities. What was remarkable about the comments on economic discussion was the attendants’ grasp on the economic development opportunity created by MSD’s “green infrastructure” improvements and how this could be leveraged and layered with other economic incentives/programs such as: tax abatements for LEED certified buildings, the Neighborhood Support Program, the Community Reinvestment Area Residential Tax Abatement, Historic Preservation Credits, and other tools.

Attendees also recognized the economic challenges facing the community including under-utilized brownfields, disinvestment in the community, and aging infrastructure. Another area of debate was the type of development and density that this neighborhood is cable of supporting. These questions will be a central focus of the next sub-committee meeting.

Specific Comments

Following are the specific comments, as recorded and categorized by HCPD staff:

Inform and Influence

- Create a Citizen Environment Manager.
- Educate the community about the problem; make the solution visible rather than underground
- Buy in will also be created when we can show lower costs of operations, lower living costs, increased property values, increased tax base, community rebranding, and new housing opportunities.
- Combine resources to educate public on energy efficiency and water conservation— Collaborate with proposed Greater Cincinnati Energy Alliance neighborhood blitzes – distribute door-to-door information on water conservation (e.g. rain barrels, low-flow faucets & toilets) as well as energy efficiency retrofits
- MSD can increase partnership development by including, but not limited to, U.S.EPA, DOT, HUD, Office of Sustainability and Livable Communities, Office of Environmental Quality. (Any more suggestions are appreciated.)
- The City Comprehensive Plan will increase intergovernmental cooperation. MSD goals can be tied into Comprehensive Plans working groups.
- Promote Green Development and Education
- Demonstration projects-Job/education fairs
- Green Partnership for Greater Cincinnati has storm water conservation and re-use as a primary project objective in the coming year
- We need to bring all the stakeholders in at the beginning
- Involve the community councils
- LISCS's regional office is in Kalamazoo – could be a good connection for Lick Run project
- There is “new management” creating opportunities for State and Federal help with sustainability projects
- Ohio Urban Development Division, ODOT and OEPA are the “hub” for State implementation of Federal level sustainable community work
- Communities have to have their “local house in order” – they are not going to fund projects in the middle of lots of infighting
- There is HUD, DOT, EPA sustainability grants
- Many of the regional partners are already at the CFAC meeting
- Region V of the EPA and the local EPA facility are doing a lot on these lines already
- UC and Cincinnati State – Student involvement, studio project, volunteer activity
- US Green Building Council – Getting the word out, facilitate discussions,
- MSD needs to create a forum to share information about all phases: development, regulatory, convene/organize groups, stakeholders, partners
- MSD collaboration with Hamilton County Planning & Development and Cincinnati Planning needs to continue and expand
- Cincinnati Public Schools need to be involved in CFAC
- Also CMHA

- The community engagement should be done without the attitude of just telling, “Here’s what we’re going to do.”
- On the other hand, you do not want give the community a completely blank sheet – there is no time. Alternatives and suggestions are the way to go
- We need to get community stakeholders involved and excited about the opportunities for the neighborhood
- The disruption of building a 1.5 mile tunnel
- The money involved in building a 1.5 mile tunnel, and the opportunity cost it represents
- It’s important to get in early with community engagement, consensus-building, and making sure the understanding is there
- Is there even a community in the Lick Run area to build upon?

Policy

- Make the solution beautiful in addition to effective.
- South Fairmount community generally supportive of demolition of poor/blighted properties
- If necessary, historic buildings should be relocated and not demolished
- Put stream in historic channel to minimize impact on historic buildings
- Build so it encourages wild life
- Try to improve Lick Run as a mixed-use and pedestrian/bike friendly neighborhood
- Resolve issues for disconnection of downspouts and use water as gray water for toilets, watering, etc.
- Infrastructure improvements-curbs, walls
- Matrix can be created to identify opportunities and gaps, and to find what stakeholders are needed.
- Community Development Corporations can start to incorporate water conservation and energy efficiency practices in all redevelopment
- Create a matrix of projects that integrate the goals of the federal livable communities’ initiative regardless of what department is officially responsible for it to insure coordination and maximization of benefits. This includes projects that integrate housing, transportation, storm water managements and other infrastructure and will result in increased value capture, land lower cost of business and living.
- Planning, form based code, LEED-ND, Strategies and tactics toward Net Zero Energy for this community.
- City Planning – Share the MSD Vision
- US EPA – Wet Weather Research Initiative, monitoring for effectiveness
- Disconnect, capture and reuse stormwater, rainwater harvesting
- What are the implications of Lick Run daylighting project—property takes, percentage viable—relocation needs?
- Gentrification,
- Old urban form is becoming more auto-centric.

Economic Development

- Develop “incentives” to increase community buy in.
- Create value at the individual level, community level, and regional level.
- Create value by leveraging transportation infrastructure, new infill development, expand the tax base, encourage Brownfield redevelopment.
- Redeveloping historic Lunkenheimer Building as a green retrofit (e.g. green roof) would have support in the historic preservation community
- Industry (new) could be white collar—such as UC, Cincinnati State, hospitals
- Emphasize tax abatements (e.g. LEED) to help retain residents and businesses
- Important to leverage other funding sources-public & private
- Disconnection,
- Disinvestment,
- Under-utilized Brownfield development,
- Lack of Stability,
- Will the sewer improvements allow new development or re-development? Will there be available sewer credits?
- The amenities created will be important
- Should we set out to create a bunch of new residences, are a bunch of businesses supportable there?
- Brownfields program support is possible from the State
- It was once a strong community, maybe we can put the pieces back in
- MSD can develop the needed infrastructure and include green as well as gray, but can they also bring financial resources for the actual redevelopment and revitalization of Lick Run or other problem areas?
- Time is the issue – getting engagement and amenities, when there’s a consent decree timeline

Next Steps

The first Community of the Future Advisory Committee meeting came to reveal three themes that will become the core goals of strategy development. The CFAC will continue to pursue the visioning process, guiding MSD towards sustainable watershed solutions across the larger Mill Creek Watershed. Three action teams grouped by organizational expertise will begin working on individual sub-watershed strategy development.

