

Camden Downtown Enhancement Plan

Celebrate Camden





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Camden Downtown Enhancement Plan, *Celebrate Camden*, was commissioned by the Camden Village Council to a group of Miami University Urban and Regional Planning students to provide a vision and strategy for revitalizing Camden's downtown. It highlights the rich history of Camden while creating a long term vision for success. It outlines potential strategies that are practical and achievable for revitalizing the downtown environment both economically and aesthetically. The plan considers demographics, technical analysis, best practices, and community input applied to a small town context. This document separates four initiatives including Branding & Placemaking, Wayfinding, Streetscape Enhancement, and Economic Development into achievable time frames, with strategic priorities. *Celebrate Camden* can inform community leaders in making knowledgeable, concise decisions.

Celebrate Camden is a tool that will:

- Facilitate the creation of a downtown that is more vibrant, accessible, and livable
- Outline actions, partnerships and timeframes that will facilitate revitalization
- Inform and guide potential public-private partnerships, funding decisions, development plans and future programs



Historic photos collected from Camden Bicentennial Facebook Page.

2 INTRODUCTION

A. The Village of Camden

Small towns are an integral part of our country. They are full of heart and grit; exemplified through years of resilience to urbanization and neglect. They are places for manufacturing and farming; home of hardworking individuals. Small towns are a home base for those commuting to larger cities; fast paced worlds that overlook and overshadow them due to a lack the resources, manpower, and support to invest in their towns as much as they invest in the industries that keep our country moving.

The Village of Camden has always catered to the economic needs and necessities of a rural community. In the village's early years many of the industries were dependent on agriculture. Camden was a hub for rail transit, and became a recognizable industrial stop, complete with grain silos and gravel production.

Today, Camden boasts historic charm that can be felt through the bones of countless homes and business that line Central Avenue and Main Street. Walking the sidewalks of the town one feels the same sense of civic pride and potential that was catalyzed with the restoration of the historic Village Hall.

In February 2019, the Village of Camden initiated a planning process in collaboration with the local community to undertake the development and creation of a Downtown Enhancement Plan.



Historic photo collected from Camden Bicentennial Facebook Page.

B. Scope of Work

Our team was commissioned to develop a Downtown Enhancement Plan to guide public investments and community redevelopment. The focus is on Main Street from Hendricks to Cottage Street and Central Avenue from Seven Mile Creek to US-127.



Map identifying commissioned study area.

The commissioned work includes:

- Site analysis and mapping inventory of existing conditions, including land use and occupancy, property maintenance, and streetscape elements;
- Stakeholder input and visioning to specify community goals and objectives;
- Best practices and aspirational peer research on downtown revitalization and corridor enhancement in small-town and village contexts;
- Proposal and analysis of alternative strategies for streetscape improvement, public and private investments, and possible land use regulations.

With excitement, our team took this request and produced a series of recommendations outlined below:

- **Stakeholder Input:** Undertake an effective planning process that engages a broad range of community members to ensure a unified consensus on the revitalization vision, strategies, and recommendations;
- **Site Analysis:** Maintain and preserve the roots and integrity of historic Downtown Camden buildings and storefronts through the analysis of building grade, use and ownership;
- **Branding & Placemaking:** Create a uniquely identifiable brand for the Village of Camden to use both internally and externally in order to attract residents and visitors to the downtown area;
- **Wayfinding & Streetscape:** Recommend improvements to Downtown Camden's physical environment through streetscape enhancements, landscape treatments and wayfinding signage;
- **Economic Development:** Enhance utilization of Downtown as a catalyst for economic development through the creation of a community development organization;
- **Land Use:** Suggest a framework for changes and creation of downtown zoning and development regulations that promote appropriate land use mix, and high quality building improvements;
- **Public Input:** Develop an implementation strategy that prioritizes specific planning actions, outlines roles of the Village of Camden and other groups and stakeholders that should participate in the implementation of the plan;
- **Strategies:** Create a Downtown Enhancement Plan that becomes the official guidebook and policy for the Village of Camden and the community on how Downtown Camden could develop and revitalize over time.

C. Planning Process

Phase I: Getting Acquainted with Camden

The first phase of the plan began with a request for proposal initiated by the Camden Village Council in February 2019. To launch this project, our team made a site visit with Council members and local leaders to learn more.



View of Central Ave from balcony of Village Hall

Phase II: Community Visioning Session

A community input visioning session to identify constraints and opportunities was conducted on March 6th, 2019. The main goals of the session were to:

- Engage a broad representation of the community
- Educate the community about the purpose of the project
- Garner public input on key issues and opportunities
- Clarify the community's vision for Camden

To accomplish these goals, we conducted:

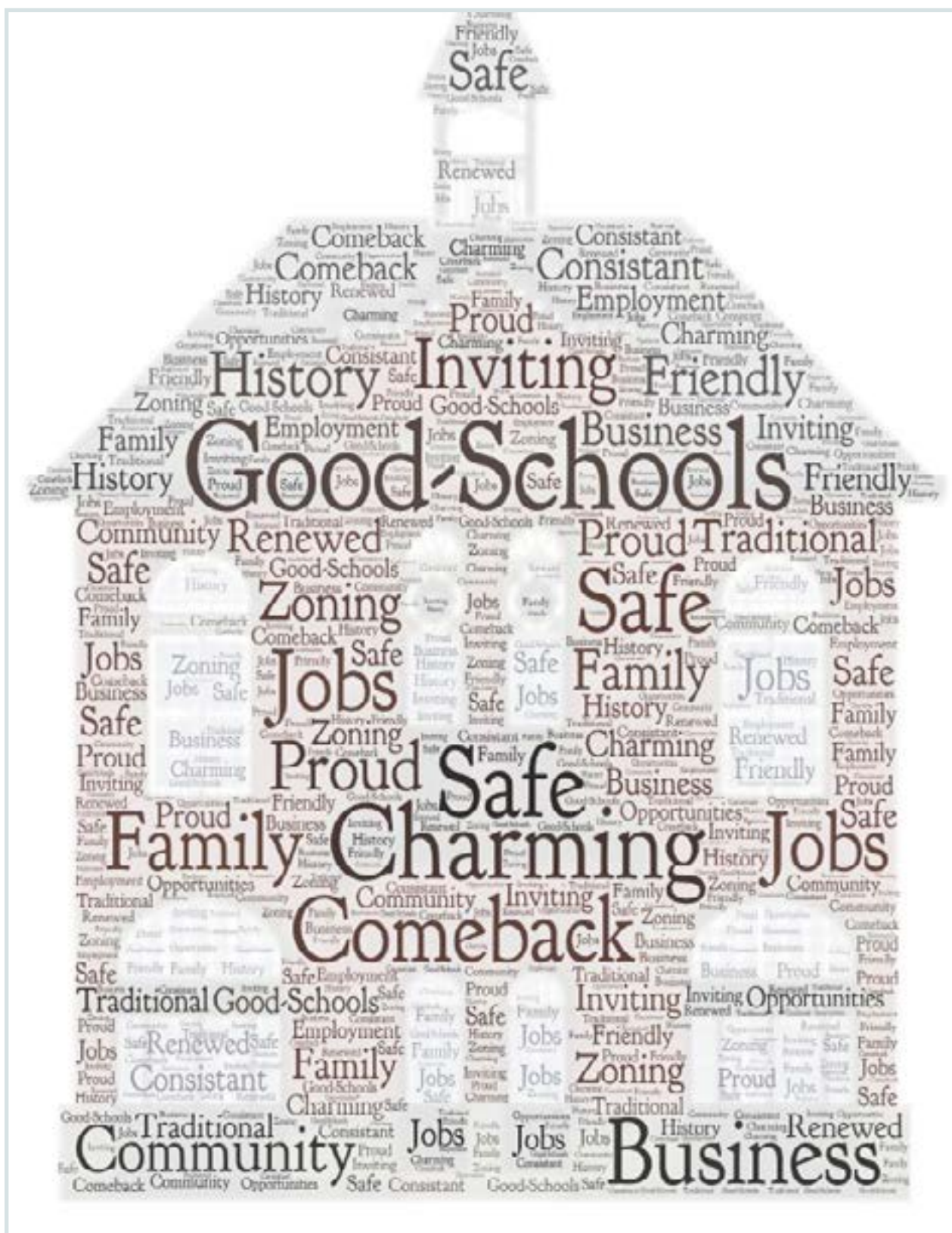
- A word association session with the current state and the ideal state of Camden
- A mapping activity where citizens and team members collaborated to identify specific areas of strengths and weaknesses
- A preliminary ranking of project priorities and tangible goals

Areas of Constraints

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | Inconsistent Land Uses | No formal land use regulation creates disorder in the downtown district. |
| 2 | Building Maintenance | Vacant and privately owned properties provide a space for building degradation and neglect. |
| 3 | Limited Administration Resources | With no village administrator specifically working on downtown enhancement, progress is incremental. |

Areas of Opportunities

| | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Major Regional Crossroad | This amount of through traffic should draw traffic and visitors to utilize the community's assets. |
| 2 | Town Hall Renovation | Town Hall Renovation serves as a rallying point for community support around new and bold initiatives. |
| 3 | Civic Pride | Following the bicentennial, Camden is seeing a outpouring of civic pride and has the momentum that is prime for an ambitious downtown enhancement plan. |
| 4 | Large festival | The annual Black Walnut Festival draws in thousands of residents from the surrounding communities. |
| 5 | Local Control | Camden controls its own destiny. With no current plan or principles in place, Camden has the autonomy to create a future they want with little limitations. |





Mapping exercise with Miami Students and Camden Citizens.

Phase III: Research, Development & Analysis

Based on the analysis conducted in the first two phases of the planning process, the third phase included putting the potential of the city into motion by developing the Downtown Enhancement Plan. This phase included researching best practices and creating strategies and implementation guidelines. To mount our research, the streets of downtown Camden had to be analyzed through multiple lenses. Land uses and building conditions were analyzed to better understand the state of the downtown.

Census Data

| | |
|-----------------------|----------|
| Population | 2,026 |
| Mean household income | \$40,991 |
| Median Age | 37.5 |
| Median Property Value | \$77,200 |
| Poverty Rate | 19.7% |

Land Use Analysis

Below is a map that shows the current land uses of parcels within the study area. The Preble County Auditor has GIS Classification data that has parcels marked as either Agricultural, Commercial, or Residential based on use. Due to the lack of zoning, many areas contain mixed and unorganized uses. This causes inconsistency with the Village as it is not in best practice to have commercial properties mixed in with residential and can easily become nuisances to people who live around them.



Building Conditions

This map shows the 2018 parcel conditions in Downtown Camden, where each parcel is individually given a grade by the Preble County Auditor based upon the condition of the parcel. Grades are updated yearly. From this county data we can see that a majority of parcels were either given A or F level grades along the two main corridors, Central Avenue and Main Street. While most buildings are in excellent condition, the outliers negatively affect the aesthetic of surrounding buildings and the overall perception of Camden's downtown.

Existing Parcel Condition in Camden, Ohio



Legend

- Grade A
- Grade C
- Grade D+
- Grade F

0 0.025 0.05 0.1 Miles





Location identified by community members for having strong potential for redevelopment

Phase IV: Community Feedback on Draft Strategies

A second community review was conducted on April 24th, 2019. Draft recommendations were proposed to community stakeholders to gauge interest and harness feedback. The results of this meeting influenced the final edition and recommendations of the Camden Downtown Enhancement Plan.

Phase V: Final Plan

This document serves as the culmination of the previous four phases into a thorough and phased plan that will serve as a guide for the future of Camden's downtown revitalization and development. The final draft of the Downtown Enhancement Plan was delivered to city council on May 14th, 2019 for adoption.

3 DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES

A. Branding, Visioning & Placemaking

Why Branding?

A community brand is what people say about a place when reflecting on what represents. It is a reaction both emotionally and intellectually about the different experiences a place evokes. Branding is the process a community embarks upon to change, refine or improve its image. While branding is not a fix all approach for revitalization, it can help people focus on a positive differentiator in a community. Comprehensive branding includes the creation and use of a mission statement, vision statement, core values and visual identity.

BRANDING BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS



Mission Statement

A mission statement is a description of a community's fundamental purpose, articulated to be a governing behavior both internally for village government as well as externally for community members. Mission statements are important because it ensures everyone in the community is on the same page. It answers the question of "Who are we as a village right now?" and "What do we value?".

Proposed Draft Mission Statement: "The Village of Camden's mission is to provide citizens, business owners and visitors the opportunity to live, play, and prosper in an inviting and friendly community."

Vision Statement

While a mission statement focuses on a community's present state, a vision statement focuses on a community's future. A vision statement should be clear, aspirational and inspirational for desired long-term change. This statement answers the question "What do we want to become?".

Proposed Draft Vision Statement: "The Village of Camden is a vibrant, charming and safe city. We are a close knit community which prides itself on maintaining strong moral character and inviting demeanor. We strive to celebrate our rich history while encouraging revitalization with business, educational, and recreational opportunities."

Core Values Statement

Core values are fundamental beliefs and behaviors that guide and shape decision making and gives purpose to the brand. Core values establish a relationship between the brand and visitors and residents alike, creating a personal connection to the place. These values should echo those previously established in the Village's goals.

Community members shared numerous stories about amazing things Camden is doing as a community, both past and present initiatives, that are worth celebrating. This mindset of praising the accomplishments of the community lead to the core values statement of Celebrate Camden. This statement can be adopted to highlight different community focuses. For example, Celebrate Community, Celebrate Comeback, Celebrate Commerce etc.

"Celebrate Camden"

Visual Identity

Identity is the most important element of recognition, differentiation, and commodification in the communicative process within which cities position themselves. Identity discovery is reinterpreting existing notions of place until it is in accordance with the target perception. When thinking about creating an accurate visual identity, factors include culture, human and intellectual capital and heritage.

The restoration of Village Hall, marks a historic and iconic landmark for Downtown Camden. By including a graphically represented image of Village Hall in Camden's logo will immediately associate to both citizens and visitors that Camden is a charming and historic village.



Renditions of updated Camden logo.

B. Wayfinding

Why Wayfinding?

Wayfinding allows people to orient themselves in space and helps them navigate places. Camden specifically could benefit from wayfinding that brings through traffic out of their cars and onto the street and sidewalk, as well as signs that encourage citizens to utilize downtown spaces more frequently.

WAYFINDING BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS

***Finding our Place:** bringing traffic out of cars and onto the streets*

Welcome Sign and Right Turn Lane



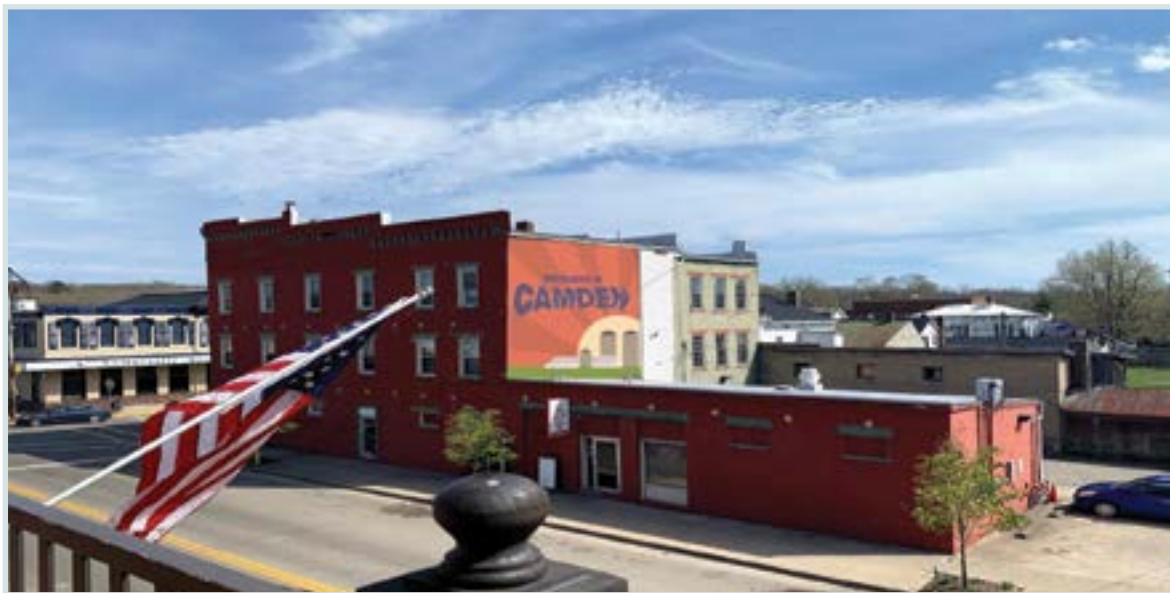
With Camden's placement slightly east of US-127, the village could benefit from a community gateway that attracts visitors, boosting downtown vitality. By designing a gateway that marks the entrance to Camden, vehicular traffic could be rerouted to bring in visitors, which secures Camden as a destination for shopping and leisure. An eye-catching sign could enhance this corridor, while simultaneously allowing for strong branding of the village. In tandem with the sign, beginning the process of approving an additional right-turn lane onto OH-725 from US-127 travelling north, will increase vehicular safety and provide easier access to Camden's downtown.

Arching Gateway



Another possible intervention is the addition a large eye-catching sign spanning over top OH-725.

Building Mural



Once downtown, one opportunity to orient people to their surroundings is with a building mural. By clearly identifying Camden with a colorful and eye-catching mural, people will better locate themselves in the downtown area of Camden.

Downtown Signs

Once on the street, signs that point out landmarks can guide people to historically significant buildings and economic developments.



Online/Social Media

An online presence is a free advertising opportunity for Camden establishments. Social media allows businesses to connect with their customers and grow their brand. Updated descriptions of businesses, hours of operation and websites creates an ease of use for visitors to come and stop in Camden.



The picture to the right shows a featured post identified through #SmallTown hashtag search.

C. Streetscape Enhancement

Why Streetscape Enhancement?

Beautification of the streetscape creates an inviting and safe environment, which can attract and retain businesses downtown. The major goal of these strategies is to make Camden feel like a safe and inviting place by improving the built environment and creating an overall sense of place.

STREETSCAPE BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS

An Inviting Place: People are encouraged to visit spaces that are lively and offer a variety of opportunities for activities.

Welcoming Business Storefronts

Stronger business signage and improved storefronts present an opportunity to invite people to visit Camden by showcasing products and services inside. Signs that highlight the significance of historic landmarks show key attractions people can visit. In addition, as shown in the renovation of Village Hall, increased spending on historical landmarks will not only improve the aesthetics of downtown, but will spur excitement for a revitalized downtown.



Hudson, OH

Sit and Stay a While

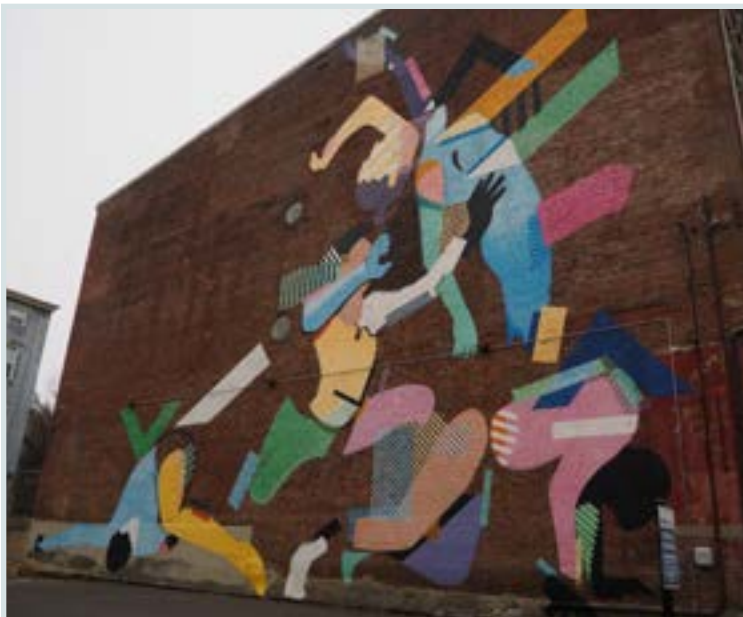
Placing benches along the downtown streets presents an opportunity to invite both citizens and visitors to stay in the downtown area once they have arrived. Intentionally placed benches shaded by trees and in front of businesses allow pedestrians to sit leisurely. Benches allow for many different activities, such as sitting to eat food from a local shop or waiting for a friend.



Edmonton, CA

Capturing Identity Through Murals

Murals are another way to beautify a downtown at a cheaper cost. A mural that is based around the characteristics of Camden can create a sense of community. A mural also gives Camden a great spot for social media posts and a reason for people to visit Camden. Mural ideas include Camden's famous silos, the town hall, and a black walnut mural. The side of the building on 31 South Main Street and the brick wall above Ron's Pizza are ideal spots in Camden for a mural.



Pendleton, OH

A Place to Gather

Downtown parks are a perfect gathering spot and have the ability to connect a city. Parks provide entertainment and a sense of comfort while also creating a center for physical activity. There are multiple options for a downtown park including an amphitheater for concerts, a community garden, a playground for children, or a mixture of the options. In a community with one grocery store, community gardens give citizens another source of fresh produce while also beautifying the downtown. The empty lot on 31 South Main Street is the perfect spot for a downtown park. The central location of the lot would be conducive for meeting place in Camden.

Camden Today





Recreation and Connectivity

Having a different way for citizens to connect is an important feature in creating a welcoming downtown. Parks and trails are key public spaces that connect areas different important areas of the town and serve as bridges to multiple uses. Many peer communities utilize their adjacent green spaces as connecting points of interest and creating these green spaces into points of interest in their own right. The City of Oxford recently passed a new levy and has plans to build an outerbelt of multi-use trails that connects various points of interest from a convenient loop that surrounds the community. Yellow Springs, Ohio has a trail that connects the downtown core of businesses with John Bryan State Park and Xenia, Ohio taps into the traffic from the 78.1 mile Little Miami Scenic trail by routing it directly through their downtown core.

Camden has the opportunity to connect its downtown to the adjacent available green space as well as build out its own downtown green space capacities. The adjacent Sevenmile Creek can be the site of a small trail that could connect to another potential trail in a revamped green space between downtown and US-127. This could create a loop of circulation that would provide a dual role of recreation and connectivity from other parts of town to and through the downtown area.

STREETSCAPE BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS

A Safe Place: *Pedestrians are encouraged to explore downtown areas that are safe.*



Oxford, OH

Uncovering the Historic Brick Streets

One way to increase safety while also reviving a piece of Camden's history is through revealing the red brick underneath Main Street. Not only will a brick street slow down vehicles making it safer for pedestrians, but it will bring back a historic feature that is currently hidden from public view.

Lighting the Way

Lighting the sidewalks will give pedestrians a better view of their surroundings once the sun goes down. While street lighting exists, bringing lamps down to pedestrian appropriate level creates spaces that feel safer and brighter.



St. Louis, MO

Safely Navigating the Streets of Camden

Crosswalks are another way to increase pedestrian safety. By demarcating crossings where pedestrians should walk, vehicular traffic is alerted to slow down and be cautious of people. Crosswalks that are strategically placed can also encourage pedestrians to move toward specific landmarks and businesses. Not only is it important to create prominent crosswalks at the intersection of Main St. and OH-725 but crosswalks at important landmarks will improve safety and walkability. One such example of this would be a crosswalk in front of Village Hall to facilitate safe crossing when parking on the opposite side of the street.



Ann Arbor, MI

Street Parking Made Easier

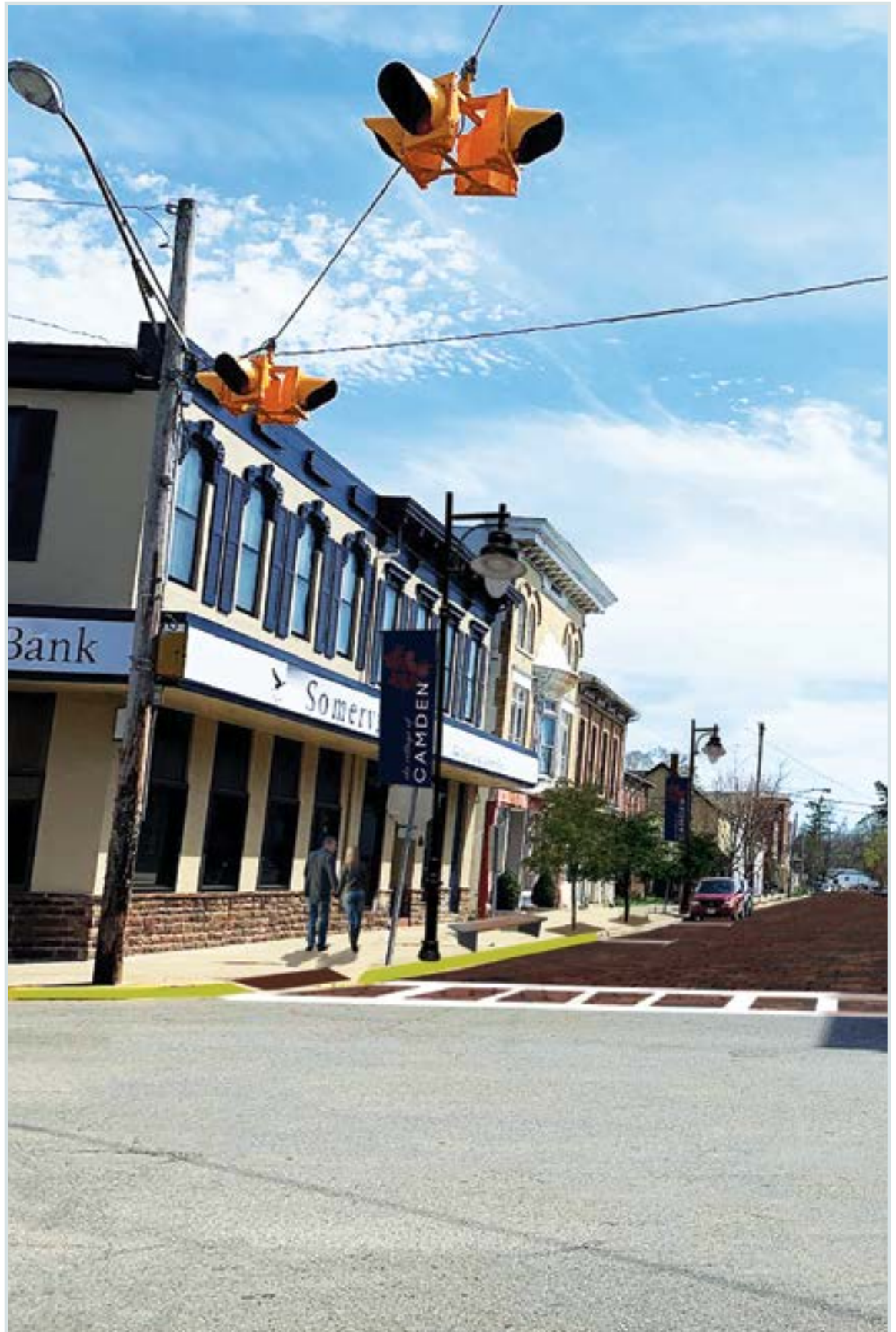
Increasing street parking once again slows down cars making the downtown area safer for people walking around. Open parking space along Main Street and Central Avenue currently exists. Clearly marking where these spots are will invite drivers to stop and explore the town.



Columbia City, Seattle.

Camden Today







D. Economic Strategies

Why Economic Development?

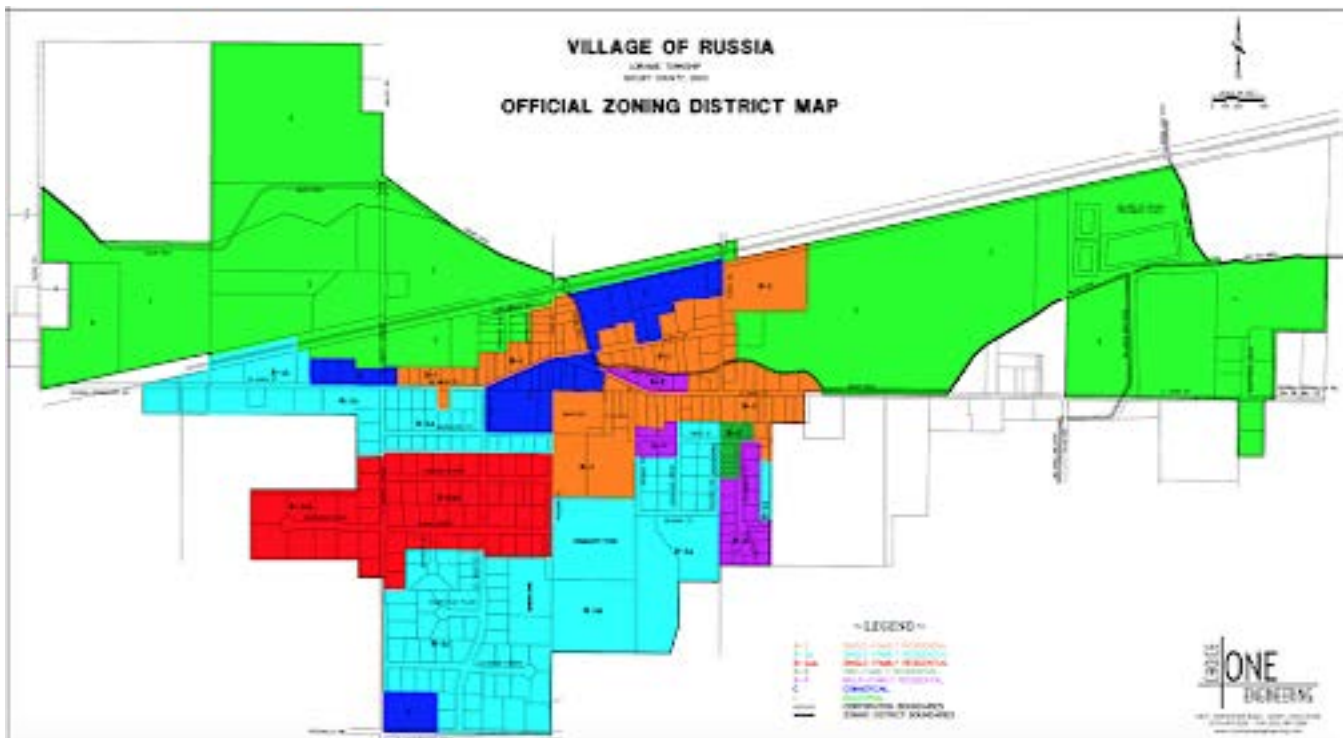
With the development of a sense of place, increased wayfinding, and fresh streetscape, businesses in Camden will thrive. Focusing on the previous recommendations, lends downtown Camden to be a hospitable environment for businesses and residents to shop, stroll and live. The most successful economic development programs create a culture of investment through strategic and cross-sectional organizing.

ECONOMIC STRATEGIES BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Land Use Regulations

Zoning is a vision of what an ideal community would look like turned into law. It is something that can be very simple and is meant to develop and adapt over time. The focus can range from the use of a plot to regulating aesthetics and can even govern building signage and upkeep. Many villages smaller than Camden such as Russia, Ohio have simple zoning codes that outline a community vision.

To build a successful code from scratch, community buy in and key stakeholder support is critical. Camden would need a responsible agent to handle the actual implementation of the code in the village and create a municipal zoning commission.



Russia, Ohio



Some dilapidated properties were identified by stakeholders as having potential for renovation or redevelopment

Leveraging a Historic Past

Historic preservation and restoration is a widely popular and varying tactic of retaining community character by converting the past into points of cultural interest or repurposing uses to meet modern demands. There are a variety of federal and state government grants that can be leveraged by communities to help raise funds to kick start investment in community historic cores. For example, Portsmouth, Ohio partnered with the Heritage Ohio Main Street program in 2007 and has received a \$25,000 grant to launch their Building Improvement Grant Program which serves as a rolling public-private partnership for potential investors. Marietta, Ohio partnered with the same program in 2013, allowing for the restoration of the historic Colony Theatre. The former vaudeville opera house is currently undergoing an \$11 million rehabilitation that utilizes state and federal historic tax credits. This has encouraged proximate growth near the theater in Marietta's business core.

Expanding energy out of the Village Hall renovation and into other historic structures throughout the community will allow Camden to continue to utilize its assets for future economic vitality while preserving its small town charm. Historic neighborhoods near the village downtown are also a critical asset that bring a natural customer-base for local businesses. Camden can advertise the history of its community by registering historic places with national and state registries and expanding the local archives hours. Camden can leverage its history as a key selling point for residents, visitors, and potential investors.

Catalyzing Community Momentum

Community development organizations are locally controlled non-profit entities that usually leverage public and private dollars in a partnership agreement that supports a municipality or neighborhood. Often these organizations use their quasi-public position to apply for grants on behalf of a municipality or access funding and resources. They can also serve as an intermediary in marketing or advertising force for their constituency. They're extremely flexible and are often steered to serve local interests by a board of directors and made up of key local government officials, community leaders, and local entrepreneurs. Further, national partnerships exist with organizations like Main Street America that can provide additional resources in the way of grants-in-aid and professional development workshops.

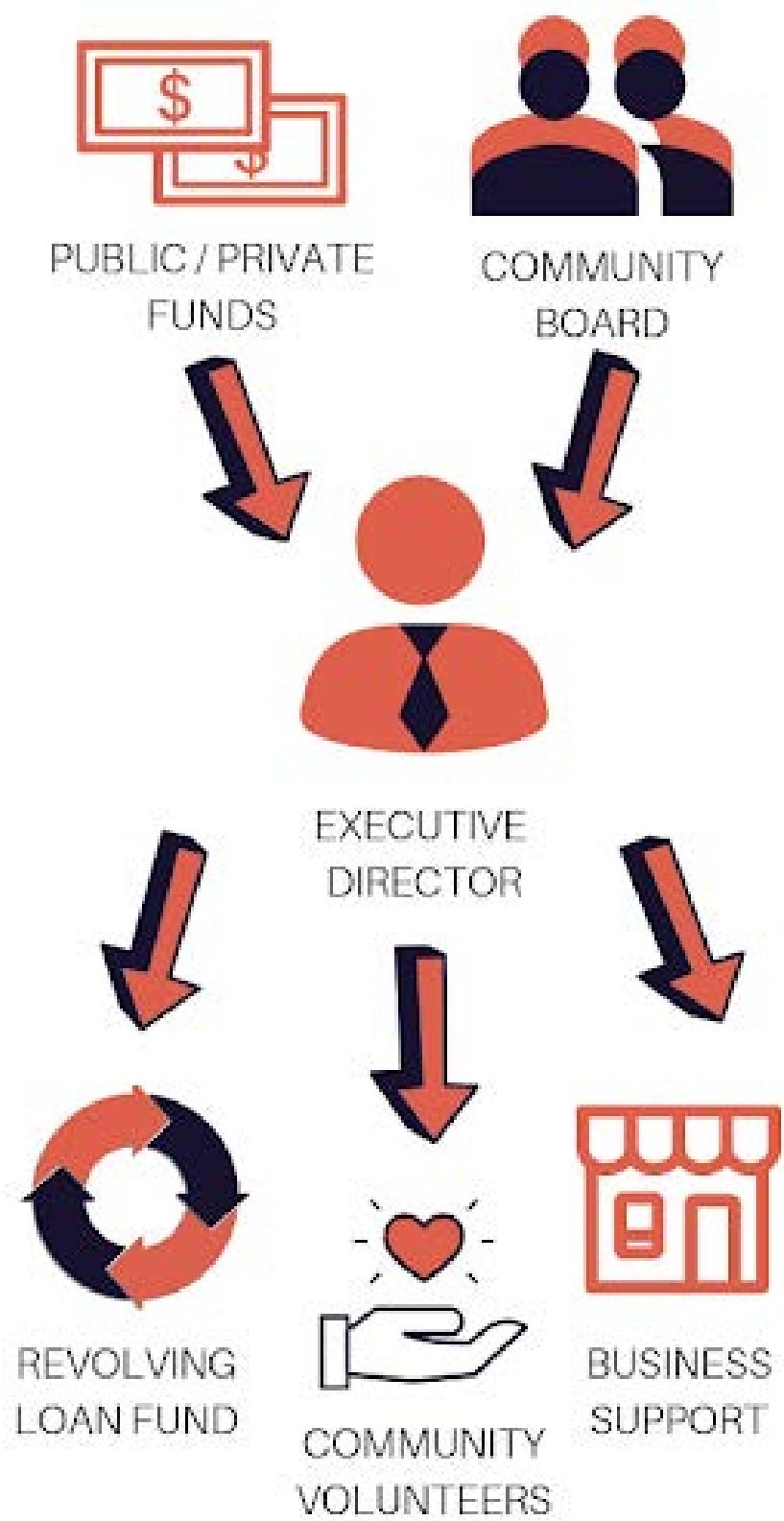
Camden may not need all of the possible functions of a traditional community development association, due to its capacity. However, elements of this organization already exist today. For example, the Village Hall restoration was possible in part by the strong core of volunteer organizers, who utilized small fundraisers and pooled resources together to produce a beautiful community asset. The community development organization can also serve as the go to entity for investor information and business support, grant writing labor, and the home of the administrator of this plan.

Bringing Excitement Downtown

Events and festivals that are held in small downtowns provide a catalyst for residents, visitors, and potential investors to interact with the core of any given community. They showcase historic buildings, local businesses, and other amenities that are available in the downtown cores. They further reorient focus and invigorate smaller towns. Minster, Ohio, for example, hosts an Oktoberfest event in their downtown core which brings over 80,000 people into their downtown main streets every October.

The Black Walnut Festival, for example, would be an ideal event to bring to the downtown core, as a well established event that could draw large crowds into the core of the village. It further establishes the downtown as the central hub for activity in Camden. Relocating the festival and potentially adding smaller community events throughout the year to downtown allows Camden to showcase the ongoing revitalization efforts and its unique history to residents, visitors, and potential investors to focus attention on Camden for the future. Camden can compliment its central proximity to major regional population centers to downtown events as an entree into future visits and investments into the community.

Model Community Development Organization





Historic photos collected from Camden Bicentennial Facebook Page.



Financing Opportunities

Funding strategies vary widely among communities. There is no silver bullet strategy for funding redevelopment in any community, big or small. Grant writing seems like the easiest and quickest way to inject money into the local economy, however grants often require complex applications, have specific purposes, and hoops to jump through in order to receive funding. Topic centered grants can be very effective, but wholly relying on them to fund redevelopment may not bring the most fruitful results.

Some strategies like a revolving loan funds and public-private partnerships can be more flexible and allow a small community to build off of their own existing capacity. Some of the very low barrier and flexible funding options can be implemented early on and be expanded and retracted easily to meet the needs of the redevelopment process as they come. Public-private partnerships are complicated in theory but are simple in practice, especially on the small scale in Camden. Ultimately, funding resources for this redevelopment plan fall on the shoulders of community leaders, taxpayers, and the ability and eligibility of Camden to receive certain state, federal, or private assistance. The community can collectively agree on what combination of these strategies should be pursued.



Historic photos collected from Camden Bicentennial Facebook Page.

4

POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

A. Overview

In order to organize and prioritize the development of Camden's downtown, it is important to step back and create the phases of events. The prioritization allows grouping initiatives and best practices into a theoretical but guiding practical framework. This framework, however, should not be viewed as set in stone or concrete, but more like a rudder to guide development and to measure progress. However, the different recommendations are designed to build off of one another and contribute to a continuing cycle of success. The forecasted life of this downtown development plan is roughly ten years. Upon completion, the community should again come together and review progress to then begin the planning cycle again. This will allow for Camden to build on its new and old strengths, identify where needs improvement, and update to the needs of the future community as they arise.

| Short-Range | Mid-Range | Long-Range |
|---|---|---|
| The focus in the first two years should be on accomplishing the institutionally easy and financially inexpensive initiatives that help build community support and trust, continue the momentum started by the bicentennial committee, and a strong foundation to branch off of towards future goals. | Camden's downtown should begin reach outwardly to the community and potential investors. These projects and initiatives may be more spectacular, but also more challenging and resource intensive. Though these projects may be more intimidating, with years to find support for the project, they are much more feasible. | By now, Camden's downtown should be a buzzing and exciting place prime for larger scale development and investment. Here the community should now leverage the assets they have either improved upon or built out as features that make Camden a great community. |

B. Developmental Stages

SHORT-RANGE

Establish Community Development Organization

Focus early energy on building this organization out to fit the needs of the community and keep momentum going for redevelopment. This will also serve as the central vehicle to display the community's outward branding to residents, investors, and visitors.

Finishing Town Hall Restoration

Finishing the restoration will cement this space as a beacon of what the community can do together. It is a shining and persistent reminder to show as evidence of that public and private partnerships can bring lifelong assets and real economic dividends to the community.

Create Zoning Code

It can start very simply and grow as needed throughout the life of this plan and beyond to fit the needs of the community as they come. It will also bring a more structured and professional representation when presenting space to potential investors or when applying for grants.

Streetscape

The first step in building a safe, inviting, and walkable place is to pinpoint the current barriers preventing this welcoming environment downtown. This should be a heavily community oriented approach that would have community members active and present downtown. A potential strategy would be to facilitate groups of volunteers who maintain a community garden or to donate street plants that will help keep the downtown lively and active.

Wayfinding

In the first phase, create directional signs along the main corridors of Central Avenue and Main Street and along light posts throughout the study area. These signs provide a cohesive and streamlined image of the community.

Downtown Events

An achievable first step could be bringing the annual Black Walnut Festival into the core of downtown to highlight some of the progress being made.

MID-RANGE

Wayfinding

The second step in community wayfinding would focus on be to drawing traffic off of the main thoroughfares, the east and west entrances of the study area on OH-725 and from US-127 with large and grand community welcome signs. This will direct traffic into town and provide an invitation from the community to experience Camden's downtown.

Streetscape

The vacant lot at 31 S Main can be made into a pocket park-- complete with a mural and leisure space. In addition, uncover the historic red brick streets that lie underneath Main Street. Add ornamental planters and trash cans to ensure cleanliness and a welcoming atmosphere for residents, visitors, and potential investors who are in town.

Economic Development

Establishing readily available investment capital will be key to funding the revitalization of Camden's downtown. Use community organization or new village staff begin exploring grant opportunities. Highlight the successes of local business initiatives as a draw for larger scale interest.

LONG-RANGE

Wayfinding

Camden can leverage potential park and recreation opportunities. Potential recreational paths in the greenspace along Sevenmile Creek, or along US 127 can connect the downtown with other areas of activity. This will serve as a draw for people to come and stay in this space, as well as promote an appreciation for the landscape.

Economic Development

There should be a continuing effort of administering and applying for new applicable grants to the trajectory of development that is occurring. The revolving loan fund or other financial strategy should be utilized, which spark the interest of other investors. There should be an ongoing process of assessment and reconsideration of the effectiveness of these financial strategies by the responsible actors of the incentives.

C. Post-Plan Implementation Considerations

After a decade of development based off of this plan, there should be a period of reflection and reconsideration of the past stated goals, the success in achieving them, and their effectiveness of achieving the revitalization of the downtown. This however does not end the planning process, only moves the starting line to where we are now. This will create a fresh look at the community, through the perspective of current eyes, and where Camden is now.

Reassess Downtown Plan

Planning is a fundamentally cyclical process. In the future this plan will be obsolete and will need to be updated to meet current needs. The community will need to critically assess the progress that has been made thus far by again identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges for the future. However, the work that has been put in toward this plan will provide an easier starting point for future plans and will allow the beginning of a planned and focused Village of Camden for future leaders and community members to develop new goals and initiatives.

Draft a New Community Plan

Begin the planning process again, assess the needs of the downtown and build a new vision for what the role of the downtown plan needs to be for the future. Review what contemporary needs are and draw them into a new guiding document that can serve the next decade of investment into the community. This will bring greater relevance and dynamism to Camden as a market for growth and opportunity.

Beyond Downtown

Build off of the success of the downtown and push development to branch out of the downtown core. Leverage the success of a downtown enhancement and revitalization to bring investment to land already in the village or that sits just outside of the municipal boundary in Somers and Gasper Township. This could be residentially focused development focused on the exurban and small town living trend that is growing in popularity today, utilizing Camden's proximity to major employment centers. This could help further stabilize local business markets in the downtown and creating new opportunities for investment in professional offices and other amenities.

5 CONCLUSION



Camden historical marker.

Downtown Camden is the heart of a charming a tight knit community. With a working Downtown Enhancement Plan, Camden has the opportunity to create a welcoming and safe place for citizens and visitors alike to enjoy. This plan provides a professional outward image for Camden to have success in attracting investment and applying for grants by displaying its commitment to a well organized and strategic revitalization and enhancement program that is grounded in sound research. However, it is important to remember that this plan is malleable and has the capability to be flexible to adapt to the needs of the community as they arise. This plan was designed with a combination of peer community best practices and local input and is meant to be a strong starting point that will hopefully serve as a useful and lasting guide for the enhancement and redevelopment of Camden's downtown by Celebrating Camden.

A. Acknowledgements

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Polly Heinkel
Debbie Hickman
Toni Keesler
Bill McQuiston
Judy Michael
Mayor Lisa Moss
Jeff Steele
Shannon Steele
Lenora Ulyshen
Joan Walker
Jeff Wood

And all of the passionate community members of Camden



Iconic Camden Silos.

6 ABOUT US

We are a group of nine students at Miami University excited to couple our passion for communities and our technical skills to work together with the village of Camden toward a revitalized downtown. Through our academic careers, we have researched and learned about the development of American cities, large and small, and what best practices allow for municipalities to plan for cities to be a places of price, community, and meaningful interactions. We appreciate the opportunity to guide the Village of Camden to a successful and revitalized downtown area.



Nick Cicero, 2019
Geography and
Urban & Regional
Planning



Patrick Collins, 2019
Urban & Regional
Planning, Minor in
Supply Chain
Management



Thomas Covault, 2019
Sociology,
Minor in Urban &
Regional Analysis



Jena Drago, 2019
Architecture and
Urban & Regional
Planning



Meg Jones, 2019
Urban & Regional
Planning and
Sustainability, Minor in
GIS and Social Justice



**Charles Kennick,
2019**
Public Administration
and Anthropology,
Minor in History



Luke Leonard, 2019
Urban Sustainable
Business
Development, Minor
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Analysis



Marin Leone, 2019
Urban & Regional
Planning and
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Scott Stefani, 2019
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Planning, Minor in
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