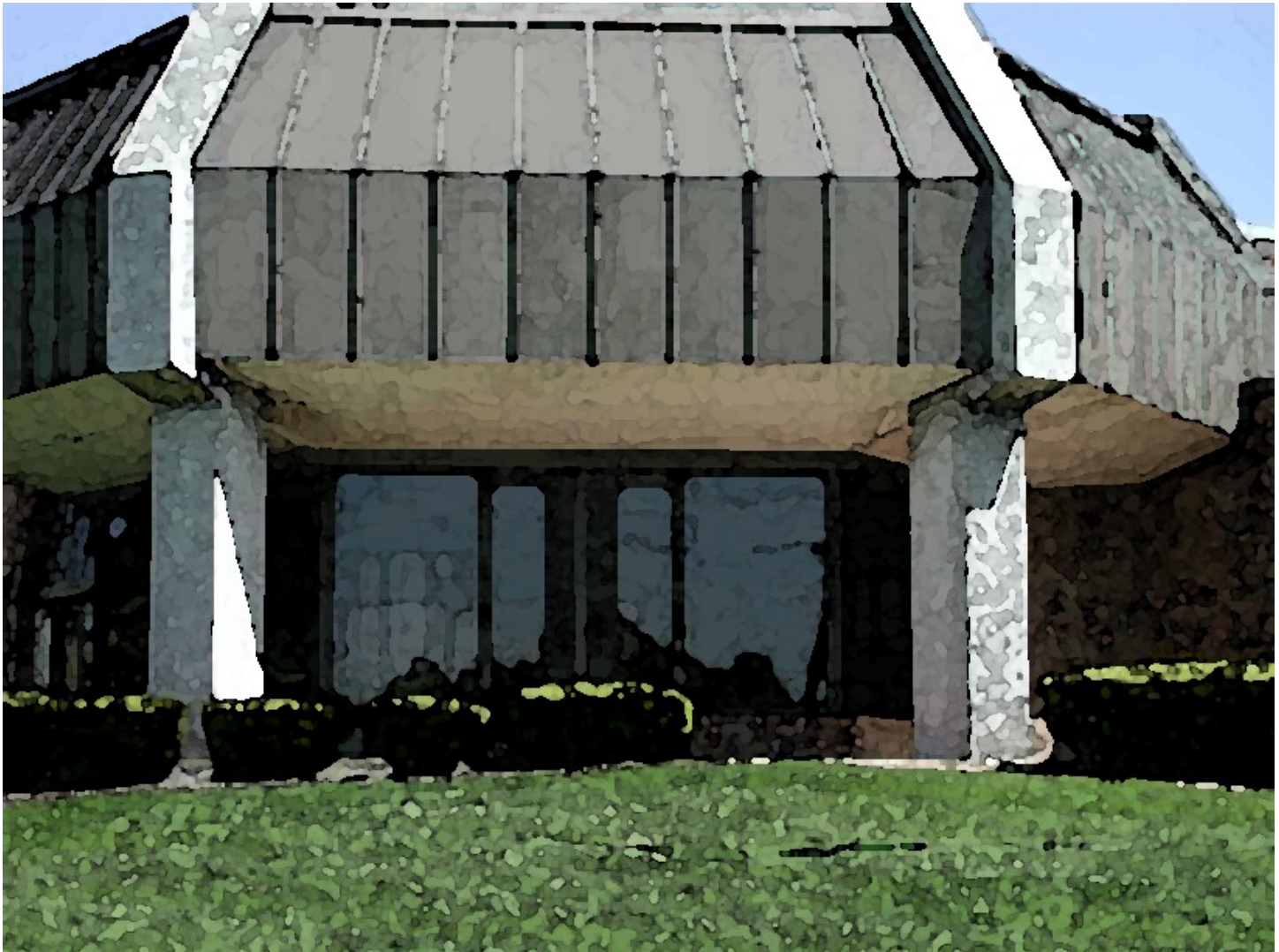


OUR PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

City of Brooklyn Master Plan



March, 2006

Prepared by the
Brooklyn Master Plan Advisory Committee
With assistance from the
Cuyahoga County Planning Commission

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March 2006

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INTRODUCTION



"To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe."

~Anatole France

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INTRODUCTION

For most communities, a master plan is the physical manifestation of putting down on paper the hopes, dreams and goals a community holds. Local planning is one of the most direct and efficient ways to involve the members of the general public in describing the community they want. A community with a balance of land uses has long-term economic stability. Yet it takes vision, foresight and determination to achieve such a balance.

The City of Brooklyn embarked on the preparation of a comprehensive Master Plan in August, 2004, taking a proactive role in maintaining and enhancing the quality of life of its residents, businesses, and many other stakeholders. Brooklyn's proximity to downtown Cleveland, quality of city services, housing variety, availability of commercial and industrial opportunities, quality schools, and both natural and man-made attributes help to define the City as a strong and vibrant community. At the same time, the City of Brooklyn has recognized the need to plan for its future so as to remain competitive within the region.

The purpose of developing a Master Plan for the City of Brooklyn is three fold. First, to document the numerous and complex changes occurring within the City and the region. Second, to devise an overall strategy that will recommend the best approaches for the City to take in addressing any problems, issues and opportunities it is likely to face within the coming decade and beyond.

Third, a Plan provides predictability to the private property owner because planning results in a statement of how the local government intends to act over time with respect to its physical development and redevelopment, public investment strategies and land development controls. The private land owner can use this information to guide and shape his/her development decisions, which then results in complimentary private investments.

The master planning process was undertaken to ensure that as new development and redevelopment continues throughout the region, Brooklyn will continue to be a resilient residential community with strong commercial, industrial, recreational, and institutional offerings. The Master Plan serves as a practical guide to base future decisions involving the City's zoning map, its zoning district regulations and the City's development review procedures, as well as a guide for capital improvements, recreational programming, and natural resource management.

Adoption of the Master Plan by action of Brooklyn City Council is a critical objective to be achieved once the Plan is finalized. Adoption institutionalizes the Master Plan, so that future elected officials, City staff, board members, residents, and other stakeholders will have a guide to direct their decisions. Their decisions will be in response to thoughtful consideration of issues related to the development and redevelopment of the community in order to achieve the shared "vision" of the City's future.

The ultimate success of the Plan, however, will be measured by the community's implementation of the recommended strategies outlined in the final chapter of this report. Numerous strategies, and appropriate action steps are identified, including a mechanism to increase public awareness of the Plan's goals, recommendations, and other findings.

Some of the policies in the Plan involve changes to the zoning code that can be undertaken in a relatively short time. Others are long-range policies, some of which will take considerably more effort and funding to achieve. And yet other policies, especially those dealing with redevelopment, are very far reaching and will need to occur in incremental steps.

The adoption of this plan establishes guidelines to aid the City in making future land use decisions. No laws or ordinances are changed by this Plan. The Brooklyn Planning and Zoning Code is a very important tool the City has to carry out the policies of this Plan, and this Plan includes specific recommendations for updating and modifying the existing zoning regulations. However, in order to actually adopt the recommended changes, a formal zoning amendment process will need to be undertaken as a separate and distinct action.

METHODOLOGY

The City of Brooklyn commissioned the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission (CPC) to undertake a comprehensive Master Plan, to be completed during a 15-month period. At the outset, the City and the CPC agreed that in order for the Plan to be the guide it is intended to be, it must be tailored to the unique characteristics, needs and desires of the community, and ultimately, must reflect the goals of the community and its residents. This belief underscored the need to include a strong public participation component comprised of an advisory committee (a small, structured working committee) along with periodic community-wide public meetings.

The Master Plan Advisory Committee (MPAC) was constituted at the start of the plan preparation process. It was comprised of 15 members who were appointed by the City Administration to serve in an advisory capacity to the Mayor, City Council and the City Planning Commission.

Committee members met on a regular once-a-month schedule with the County Planning Commission and were joined by various Council Members and Administration staff throughout the planning process. Analyses of physical and social conditions were shared with the MPAC members at each meeting which lead to the identification of focus areas. This project included three additional levels of public participation.

Individual Interviews. "Conversational" interviews were conducted with nearly all of the MPAC members, City Council, Mayor and other administrative department heads. The purpose of these interviews was to gather general opinions and observations of the development issues confronting the City of Brooklyn from the perspective of the interviewee. These interviews helped the County Planning Commission staff gain a full understanding of the range of issues that should be addressed in the Master Plan.

Community Survey. A community survey of a random sample of 20% of households in the City was conducted in the Fall of 2004. The 13 page survey included 45 questions that covered a wide range of issues, including questions on residents' opinions on the strengths and weaknesses of the City. A copy of the Community Survey and its findings are included as Appendix A.

Community-Wide Public Meetings. In order to communicate and create a dialogue with the community as a whole and to test the directions being considered, general public meetings were held at two strategic points in the process.

- ▶ The first two public meetings were held at the time the basic development objectives were formulated and alternative policy directions being considered. These meetings were conducted on June 7 and July 21, 2005. Recorded information was presented on display maps suitable for public review. The purpose of these reviews was for the public to comment on the observations made, the conclusions reached, and the alternative directions being considered and help identify any areas for further detailed analysis.
- ▶ Once a Draft Plan was completed, it was presented at a second community-wide public meeting on January 19, 2006. Feedback from the general public was considered by the MPAC at follow-up meetings.

It is intended that the Plan will serve as a strong and powerful guide for the City. However, it is also understood that the recommendations put forth are largely based on current conditions and assumptions of future trends. The City should continually refer to and periodically reevaluate the Master Plan to reflect changing conditions and ensure that it remains a useful document for guiding key decisions.

GOALS OF THIS PLAN

The fundamental goal of preparing this Master Plan for Brooklyn is to address the constant change and evolution of the City. In doing so, this plan document meets six basic requirements of planning:

1. It is comprehensive.
2. It is long-range – some goals will take years to accomplish.
3. It is general.
4. It focuses on physical development.
5. It relates physical design to community goals and social and economic policies.
6. It is a policy guide first, and a technical instrument only second.

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