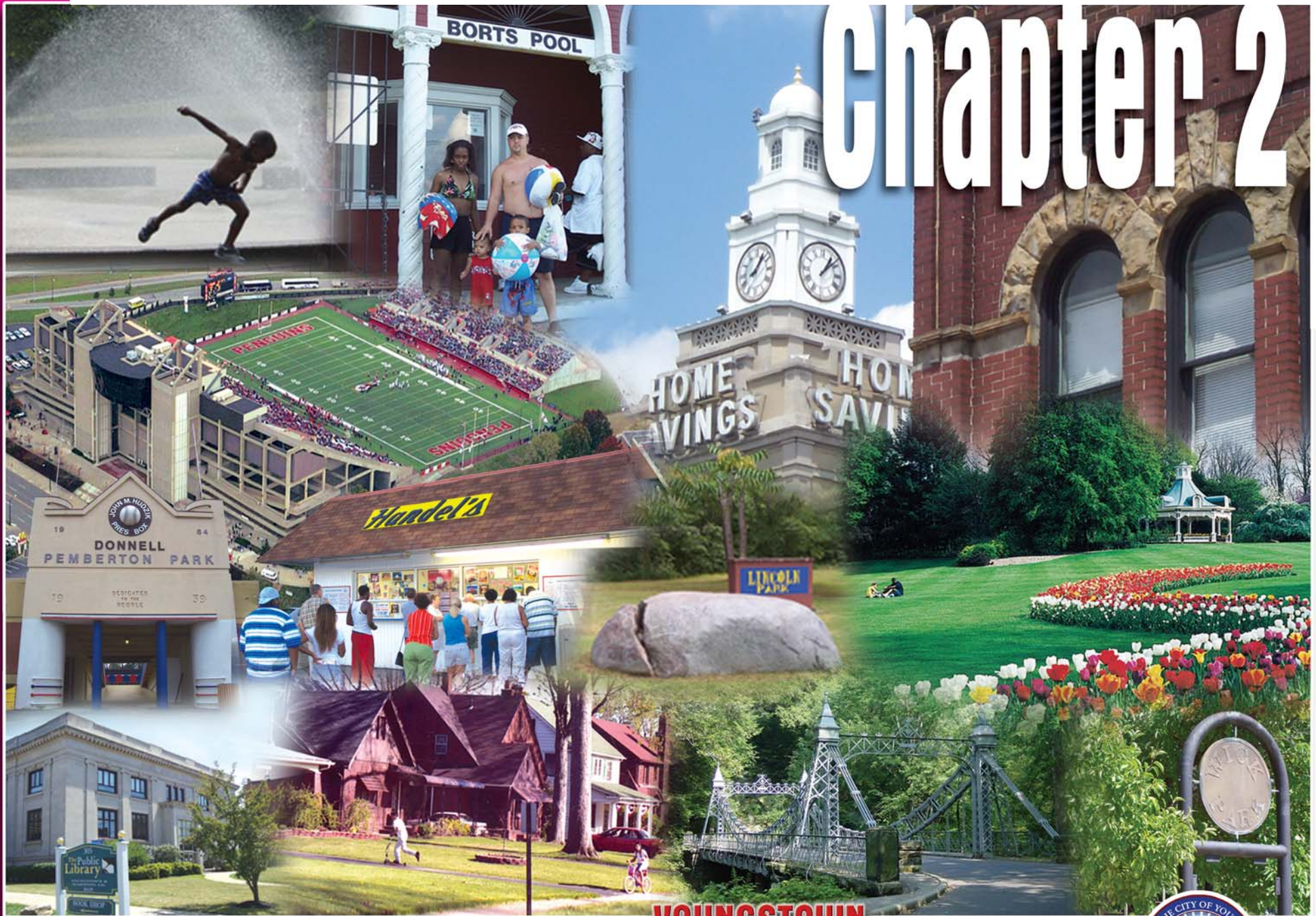
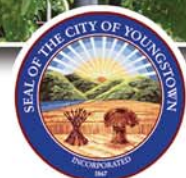


Chapter 2



YOUNGSTOWN
2010

Youngstown
STATE UNIVERSITY





Youngstown 2010 is the City's first citywide planning process in over fifty years. This process is nothing short of a paradigm shift. Former knee jerk reactions to events outside of the City's control have failed. A proactive approach toward the future is the last chance for sustainability, perhaps even survival. To be proactive involves a clear vision of what the future can be and a road map towards that end. This planning process supplies both a Vision and a Plan that will give direction to Youngstown through 2010 and provide the foundation for a future beyond that point.



Focus group workshop at Youngstown State University

The City of Youngstown and Youngstown State University (YSU) came together in a unique and inspiring 'town-and-gown' union. YSU was in the process of rethinking and updating its Campus Plan while the City was about to embark on the first review of its Comprehensive Plan since 1974. It was clear to both that these initiatives could not be undertaken in isolation. It was even more evident that the planning process could only proceed if both entities worked together to meaningfully engage the community in a way that would help reverse the City's pattern of cynicism and pessimism.

The Visioning Process

Youngstown 2010 began as a community engagement and civic education process meant to gain public participation but also educate people about the importance of planning. With the assistance of consultants – Urban Strategies, Inc. of Toronto, Ontario – the community engagement and civic education process occurred over a seven-month period in 2002. It involved a series of workshops with over 200 community leaders – representing neighborhoods, local governments, non-profit agencies, business groups, religious groups, trade unions, educational institutions and the media. Initial workshops were held where opinions and ideas about the future of Youngstown were shared. A new Vision for the City emerged, through discussions among a diverse group of community leaders on the salient issues. A dozen workshops in all; structured as a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) with a final thought from each participant. The Vision became a guide for defining common ideals about the future and identifying matters to be addressed through further planning and implementation.

and initiated a new public discourse. Beyond the formal workshops, many discussions took place in church basements, high school and university classrooms and community-group meetings. The evolving Vision took center stage in the local media and among elected officials as the community became thoroughly engaged in the planning process and excited about the possibilities it held.

The community engagement and civic education process culminated in a public meeting on December 16, 2002 where 1,400 people (in a city of 82,000) attended. One of the great successes of that night was the number of people who made a personal commitment to volunteer their time; nearly 100 people left their contact information to get involved. Attendees left the auditorium with a new level of optimism and interest in planning for the future of their community.

Having built and shaped a new Vision, the community leaders had a considerable stake in overseeing its success. They became the voice for Youngstown 2010



Youngstown 2010 Vision public meeting at Stambaugh Auditorium with 1,400 people in attendance.

Chapter 2 — The Youngstown 2010 Planning Process

Youngstown's Vision

The Youngstown 2010 Vision is a guiding document that sets out a framework for understanding and addressing the issues that Youngstown faces. It provides a community-based agenda for change organized around platforms:



- **Accepting that Youngstown is a smaller city.**

The dramatic collapse of the steel industry led to the loss of tens of thousands of jobs and a precipitous decline in population. Having lost more than half its population and almost all of its industrial base in the last 30 years, the city is now left with an oversized urban infrastructure. (It has been described as a size 40 man wearing a size 60 suit). There are too many abandoned properties and too many underutilized sites. Many difficult choices will have to be made as Youngstown recreates itself as a sustainable mid-sized city. A strategic program is required to rationalize and consolidate the urban infrastructure in a socially responsible and financially sustainable manner.



- **Defining Youngstown's role in the new regional economy.**

The steel industry no longer dominates Youngstown's economy. Most people work in different industries today. The city must align itself with the present realities of the regional economy. This new positioning means support for a more diverse and vibrant economy founded on the current strengths within the city and region, such as the university, the health care sector, industrial clusters and the arts community.



- **Improving Youngstown's image and enhancing quality of life.**

Youngstown must become a healthier and better place to live and work. Over time people have grown accustomed to seeing rundown buildings and streets. Urban decay is a constant and demoralizing reminder of Youngstown's decline. It is important that Youngstown begin to "fix its broken windows" and support initiatives to improve neighborhoods, the downtown, the river, and the education system. The city must also begin dealing with difficult issues such as public safety and racism.



- **A call to action.**

The people of Youngstown are ready for change. The city already has a large number of local leaders who want to involve others and make a contribution. The comprehensive plan must ensure that the excitement and optimism fostered through the visioning process is maintained and advanced. To that end, the city needs a practical, action-oriented plan and a process through which local leaders can continue to be empowered and the city's successes constantly celebrated.

Youngstown City Council unanimously adopted the Youngstown 2010 Vision by resolution at its February 19th, 2003 meeting (see Appendix A for complete version of Youngstown 2010 Vision).

The Planning Process

Once the Vision was established from the community engagement and civic education process and adopted by City Council, phase two of the planning process began – develop a plan.

The City and YSU, understanding the amount of work left to do and the limited staff support, seized the momentum from the Vision presentation with volunteer help. A number of volunteer working groups were set up to help create the plan and promote the planning process (see Table 1).

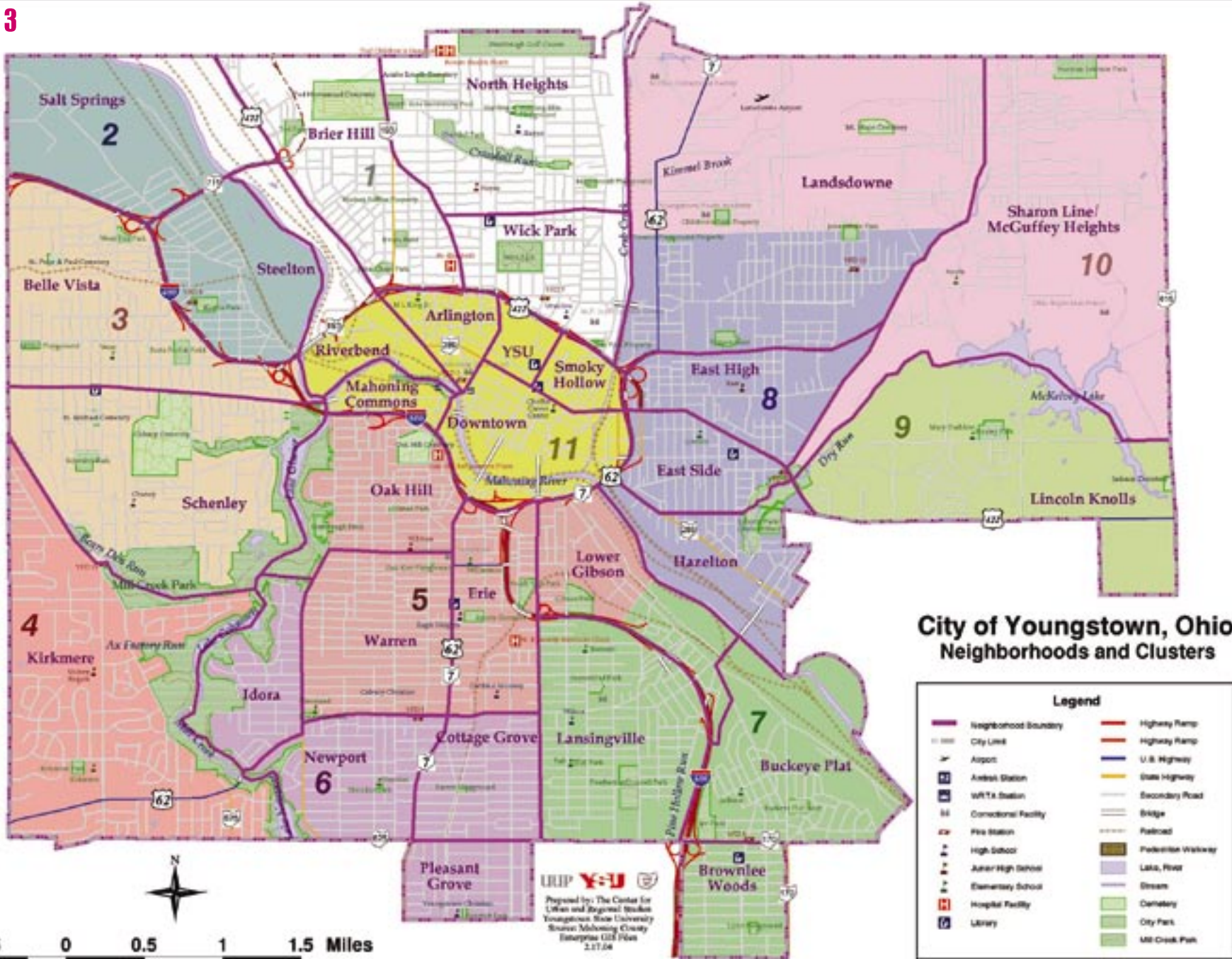
Planners and historians list 31 distinct neighborhoods in Youngstown. Some have historical significance; others were conveniently created as justification for census tract designations. Several of the neighborhoods share similar demographics and housing characteristics that allowed them to be combined into neighborhood clusters. The result was eleven neighborhood clusters (see Map 3).

Table 1

Engaging Volunteers to Achieve the Youngstown 2010 Vision		
Four main working groups, made up of subgroups, were formed with over 150 volunteers performing specific tasks to help develop the Youngstown 2010 Plan.		
Working Group & Sub-groups	# of Volunteers	Mission
Youngstown's New Economy		Define Youngstown's Role in the New Regional Economy.
Creating Economic Wealth and Jobs in the Valley and City	15	Achieve a shared understanding and vision of the new regional economy and the city's economic opportunities.
Reinvest in City Retail and Service Commercial Centers	10	Create commercial centers in the City to compete for consumer spending of city households.
Vision for the Downtown Economy	25	Define a business development strategy for the downtown.
Youngstown Clean and Green		Improve the attractiveness of Youngstown as a place to live and do business.
Fix-up, cleanup, and beautification	40	Create a livable city by eliminating blight, increasing property maintenance, and beautifying public spaces and gateways.
Enjoy our natural amenities	20	Achieve a shared vision of the city-wide network within the regional network of greenways and outdoor amenities, and restore/protect the river and streams.
Youngstown's New Neighborhoods		Create a shared vision for Youngstown's neighborhoods using grass-roots groups and residents.
Neighborhood-based planning	15	Engage broad-based participation of residents and groups in planning for the city's authentic neighborhood areas.
Housing for Emerging Markets	15	Define a housing strategy for each neighborhood area for improving the supply of quality housing.
New Image for Youngstown	25	Create a marketing strategy to promote Youngstown 2010 and establish open communication for the Youngstown 2010 planning process.

Chapter 2 — The Youngstown 2010 Planning Process

Map 3



0.5 0 0.5 1 1.5 Miles

A series of eleven neighborhood cluster planning meetings were held throughout the City during the summer and fall of 2004. The purpose of these meetings was to reinforce the Vision principles, emphasize the importance of planning, present background data for the neighborhoods and find out from the residents and business owners how they see their neighborhoods developing in the future. To prepare for these neighborhood meetings, volunteer working groups were organized as follows:



Neighborhood cluster planning meeting on the south side.

- The *Fix-up, Cleanup and Beautification* working group had 40 trained volunteers that surveyed every parcel of land in the city for structure, property and sidewalk conditions. A simple survey form was prepared and volunteers canvassed the city to record the conditions of each neighborhood. The surveys were entered into a database and then mapped. The maps were used to visually show the neighborhood conditions at the neighborhood cluster meetings.
- The *Housing for Emerging Markets* working group analyzed census information as well as the conditions surveys and made recommendations for the plan. Those recommendations were presented at the neighborhood meetings and gave the neighborhood people an opportunity for comments and to refine the recommendations.
- Recreational and green space land use and projects were identified by the *Enjoying Our Natural Amenities* working group. Their suggestions were mapped and presented at the neighborhood meetings too.
- The *Youngstown's New Economy* working groups had intentions of analyzing the city economy in relation to the regional economy, with a more detailed analysis of commercial centers and downtown economic functions. But budget constraints and timing have pushed this component of the plan to an identified project in Youngstown 2010.
- The *Neighborhood-Based Planning* and *New Image for Youngstown* working groups were vital to the success of the planning process because part of their mission was to engage broad-based participation of residents and groups in planning for Youngstown's authentic neighborhood areas.

Over 800 people participated and provided input at the eleven neighborhood cluster planning meetings. This analysis gave a realistic account of the current neighborhood conditions and helped keep expectations, goals and projects for the future within reach. Development ideas and project suggestions fit into one of six sections: recreational activity in your neighborhood, residential activity in your neighborhood, retail activity in your neighborhood, industrial activity in your neighborhood, transportation and accessibility issues in your neighborhood and improving the quality of life in your neighborhood. The input from the neighborhood meetings was used to generate a draft land use plan.

The Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan was unveiled at Stambaugh Auditorium on January 27, 2005. Two years since the unveiling of the Vision, the continued enthusiasm of the City and region for this planning process led to 1,300 people attending the public meeting.

Public Participation & Marketing Efforts

Public inclusion was a top priority in the Youngstown 2010 planning process from the beginning. The visioning process brought in representatives from every possible business, community, government and education group that was within the city limits and the region.

The media (i.e. television, print and radio) were viewed as a vital link to the public and they responded with excellent coverage of the planning process. During the visioning phase, the media covered Youngstown 2010 multiple times and the main newspaper ran a four-part cover story leading up to the Vision unveiling at Stambaugh Auditorium in December 2002. A full-page ad was placed in the newspaper for four days leading up to the meeting, explaining the purpose of Youngstown 2010, inviting the public to attend and stressing the importance of their involvement.

Two volunteer working groups were established to engage the community in the Youngstown 2010 planning process and help create the plan. The first working group, called New Image for Youngstown, was to concentrate on developing marketing initiatives. Their mission was to promote Youngstown 2010 and to establish open communication for the

Chapter 2 — The Youngstown 2010 Planning Process

Youngstown 2010 planning process. The volunteers met regularly and came up with a variety of ways to educate and engage the community. Their work included recommendations to the Youngstown 2010 planning team in the areas of marketing, advertising, event coordination, memorabilia, public relations and website design and content. In addition, they developed the billboard and t-shirt slogan, “It’s your future... get involved!”

The other working group, Neighborhood-Based Planning, mainly focused on getting public participation for the neighborhood planning meetings that took place in 2004. This working group distributed the informational brochure developed by the New Image for Youngstown working group to businesses, neighborhood organizations and residents in order to inform them about the neighborhood planning meeting schedule. The volunteers contacted these groups and individuals again as the individual planning meetings approached in their neighborhoods.

Keynote Media Group, a marketing firm, was used to handle the technical components of the marketing strategy. Keynote coordinated the spring 2004 news conference that released the neighborhood planning meeting schedule and marketing strategy to the public. The firm also produced two television public service announcements (PSA’s), which appeared on the three local television networks in the area over a nine-month period. The first PSA was a brand awareness spot about Youngstown 2010. The second PSA had a more specific purpose of inviting the public to the January 2005 public meeting to see the unveiling of the plan. Additionally, the firm coordinated the marketing of the January 2005 event itself.

The last and most interesting marketing component is the involvement of our local public television station WNEO/ Channel 45 and WEAO/ Channel 49, known as PBS 45 & 49. PBS 45 & 49 are jointly operated public television stations serving the northeastern Ohio region. The station became interested in Youngstown 2010 because its policy has been to own and operate the airwaves in the interest of its member communities. The station took an active role and promoted the public meeting at Stambaugh Auditorium in December 2002 and rebroadcast the event the following month. A few months later, PBS made a commitment to produce and broadcast a live program, “2010 Moving Ahead: A Forum for Reporting Progress” to keep citizens informed about the progress of Youngstown 2010 and related issues. In its continuing support of Youngstown 2010, PBS 45 & 49 has produced eight additional Youngstown 2010 programs on a quarterly basis (See Appendix B).

The local public radio station, WYSU-FM Classical 88.5, has complemented the PBS 45 & 49 Youngstown 2010 programs with live simulcasts of each event. Our public television and radio stations continue to be partners and are scheduled to continue live broadcast updates of Youngstown 2010.

Over 5,000 people participated directly in the Youngstown 2010 planning process between the visioning process and the Vision presentation, the neighborhood cluster meetings, the PBS live broadcast audiences, presentations to neighborhood groups and surrounding communities, and the Youngstown 2010 Plan presentation at Stambaugh Auditorium. The emphasis of Youngstown 2010 is about the people of the city and the surrounding communities. The future viability of the city and its successes will only be achieved if people contribute to the plan. Therefore, public participation and awareness will continue to be a top priority as we move from planning to implementation.

