Old West Neighborhood Action Plan

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The Old West End Neighborhood Action Plan (OWENAP) was created as an immersive learning collaboration between the Urban and Neighborhood Analysis Studio from Ball State University's Urban Planning and Development Department and the City of Muncie's Old West End Neighborhood Association (OWENA). The OWENAP was completed in congruence with the 2009 Muncie Action Plan (MAP), which can be found at http://muncieactionplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/MAP_Report_FINAL.pdf. Similar to the MAP, the OWENAP is a strategic guide that expresses the residents' aspirations for their neighborhood and serves as an instrument for achieving their aspirations. With a heavy emphasis on public participation, the OWENAP uses planning principles and processes to complete the residents' goals for the neighborhood. The OWENAP addressed all of the goals set forth by the OWE's residents, but improving the neighborhood's quality of life and establishing the neighborhood as a positive image within the community were two of the main goals associated with the project. The OWENAP has a variety of functions but the purpose and completion process for four of these functions stand out amongst the rest.

The first function of the OWENAP was to guide current and future growth within the neighborhood. There are numerous factors that contribute to this function but physical analyses of the neighborhood's current state were the most significant factors. A series of maps were compiled to depict a variety of items, such as vacant properties, property conditions, damaged sidewalk sections, malfunctioning street lights, prime locations for street trees, current and potential locations of way-finding signage, etc. These observations and maps were utilized in the second function of the project.

The second function of the OWENAP was to pinpoint what improvements the residents needed and wanted to see achieved. This information was gathered through a handful of methods: public neighborhood meetings, residential and commercial surveys, direct communication with the residents, and a list of pre-determined goals supplied by the neighborhood association. Once this information was collected, the next step was to identify the initiatives that would address each improvement. Expanding on each initiative formulated the third function of the project.

The third function of the project was to provide the neighborhood with additional information essential for each initiative's implementation. While every initiative offers the reader a different source of information, common topics were addressed within each of them. Priority ratings, implementation process, potential results, funding sources, contact information, and case studies were some of the common topics of information that was presented. Many of the initiatives included suitability and priority maps to visually depict what areas of the neighborhood were most susceptible to the neighborhood's efforts.

The fourth primary function entails the action plan serving as a tool for the community to direct changes for the foreseeable future. The project was completed so that the recommendations hold merit not only in the present but years to come as well. Since information is liable to change and impact the successful implementation of the plan, the steps and processes to gather and update this information were provided. The project also included an implementation workbook to accompany the physical

action plan. The workbook is to be used as a guide book for the OWENA to go about setting the foundation, within its organization, for implementation of the action plan. The project also established a five-year correspondence period between both parties of the collaboration. During the first month of each year following the publication of the action plan, the Urban and Neighborhood Analysis Studio will meet with the OWENA to discuss any progress they have made, answer any supporting questions they may have, and offer additional assistance in the implementation steps for the upcoming years.

This project received the College of Architecture and Planning (CAP) Immersive Learning Mini Grant in which the reward amount was $400.00. This grant supported the printing two copies of the Old West End Neighborhood Action Plan for the client.