E4: Approaches to Align Plans and Market Demand
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Planning Director, Erie County, PA
How Did We Get Here?
Blight’s Causes and Effects
A Coordinated Approach
Karen Pooley, PhD - czb & Lehigh U.
Planning for Hard Choices

• How can planners approach communities, where comprehensive plans and housing strategies need to...

  • manage decline rather than accommodate growth?

  • make hard choices and reset expectations?
Planning for Hard Choices

- Responding to challenges when resources are unlimited – or we can get almost everything we want – is easy and requires little discipline, but...
- Often, resources are far less than the demands placed upon them – and we can get few of the things we need.
- Planners have to lead a serious conversation about the work to be done and its trade-offs.
Planning for Hard Choices

This work requires starting with **market-based measures**...

→ Understanding **existing strengths and weaknesses**...

→ Fully grasping the **cost of intervening**...

→ **Getting strategic** (identifying the biggest assets) and...

→ Establishing clear **priorities** and planning **principles** to guide future decision-making.
Market-Based Measures, Strengths and Weaknesses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCORE</th>
<th>VERY HEALTHY</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>VERY UNHEALTHY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Best in class; ready to sell; top of the Erie market</td>
<td>Modest investment needed for property to move into the “best in class” category</td>
<td>Good, solid home but tired and needing upgrades</td>
<td>Troubled property with significant issues and trending downward; still recoverable</td>
<td>Blighted property with high risk of abandonment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Staying on top of the details” “Doing well” “Could go either way” “Several red flags” “Red flags overwhelming”
Market-Based Measures, Strengths and Weaknesses
Neighborhood Typology

**HIGHLY DISTRESSED**
- East Bayfront
- Trinity Park

**DISTRESSED**
- West Bayfront
- Little Italy
- Pulaski Lighthouse

**TRANSITIONAL, AT-RISK**
- Lakeside
- Fairmont
- McClelland
- Academy
- Marvintown
- Arbor Heights

**STABLE, AT-RISK**
- Greengarden
- East Grandview
- Mercyhurst

**HEALTHY**
- Frontier
- Glenwood

**TRANSLATING SCORES INTO IMPACTS FOR THE COMMUNITY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARKET STRENGTH</th>
<th>WEAK</th>
<th>MIDDLE</th>
<th>STRONG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MARKET STRENGTH</strong></td>
<td>Properties tend to have negative equity and often too expensive to recover in a weak market.</td>
<td>Middle market houses that often represent good “buy low” opportunities that -- with sweat equity and creative financing -- can turn around a market.</td>
<td>Can generally be counted on to hold value, attract buyers, and generate positive cash flow if a rental property.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RISK</strong></td>
<td>Exerts a major drag on the market</td>
<td>Major risk of decline</td>
<td>Little to no imminent risk of decline, but risk that owners may move if frustrated by nearby decline.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cost of intervening

With $11 million in state and federal grants and $1.2 million in city funds to spend...

**Choice 1:** Demolish poor and rehabilitate fair properties until the average field survey score is “good.”
(Total Cost = $250 million)

**Choice 2:** Rehabilitate one-third of fair properties and demolish all poor buildings.
(Total Cost = $140 million)

**Choice 3:** Demolish all poor buildings and clean-and-green the newly vacant land.
(Total Cost = $60 million)
Erie Refocused:
Comprehensive Plan & Community Decision-Making Guide for Erie
## Strengthening the Core

### Why start at the core?

### CORE STRENGTHENING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multiple Projects</th>
<th>Shaping Tomorrow Grants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DOWNTOWN</strong></td>
<td><strong>EAST BAYFRONT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulate market-rate residential and mixed-use development at targeted nodes</td>
<td>Establish a network of new parks via targeted demolition &amp; land assemblage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build consistent, high quality downtown streetscapes — starting with State Street</td>
<td>Re-focus public and private investment around historic landmarks and newly created parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize downtown spaces using “district” geography</td>
<td>Utilize demolition and vacant land management as job training and development opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin relocation of human service functions to areas beyond the central business district</td>
<td>Invest in streetscape improvements along gateway corridors and downtown edges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BAYFRONT</strong></td>
<td><strong>WEST BAYFRONT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create an iconic connection between the Bayfront and downtown</td>
<td>Encourage reinvestment by homeowners on stable ‘middle market’ blocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritize mixed-use, pedestrian-focused redevelopment on Bayfront property</td>
<td>Perform targeted demolition and rehab in proximity to assets and stable blocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leverage Bayfront property as an income-generating resource for the city</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Working Together
Builds a city team that can help redevelopment efforts
Breaking Down the Actions

Creation of Action Plans
The Downtown Partnership
Identified the districts but how will implementation occur?

Erie Refocused to
Erie Downtown Master Plan
Connecting the Dots
Alins public and private priorities
Connecting the Dots
Aligns public and private priorities
1. Create a City Action Team (CAT)
2. Build Core Competencies for Creative Financing Incentives
3. Create a Focused Place Making Program
4. Strengthen Planning Partnerships
5. Establish Downtown Master Plan Districts
6. Increase the role of the Waterfront District’s Design Review Committee
7. Establish an Innovation District
8. Create a Land Bank
9. Advocate for Local Demolition Funding
10. Advocate for a City/County Social Services Needs Study
11. Finalize the Bayfront Parkway Study
Erie Refocused Action Plan
Neighborhood Strengthening and Stabilization Initiative

Erie’s 17 Planning Areas

Steps to incorporate planning within Erie

1. ERA and Neighborhood Growth Partnership lead effort
2. Partner with ECDP to develop neighborhood planning model
3. Strengthen Planning Partnerships
4. Identify 2 neighborhoods to start in year 1
5. Develop robust GIS and database system to assist with community analysis and planning
6. Work with neighborhood leaders to develop strategic plan
7. Work with CAT to help align City resources on community driven priorities
8. Approach funders to help execute the plan
9. Continue planning process within other neighborhoods in the City
Thriving and Surviving in Uncertain Times

• Embrace your challenges, don’t run from them
• Be ready to change ... Change is hard
• Focus on the outcome, not outputs
• Keep moving forward
• Understand your piece of the puzzle but don’t forget the picture on the box