

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Craig A. Stough 9/10/2020

"Downtown Market Analysis and Master Plan"

The City of Sylvania is engaged in a study analyzing the recent growth and redevelopment of our downtown, and developing a vision for future potential needs and opportunities to continue improving our downtown. We are also addressing what permanent changes may be needed as a result of the pandemic.

We are working with Michelle Johnson of Environmental Design Group of Akron. Michelle grew up in Sylvania, and brings experience and expertise in what makes downtowns successful for both businesses, residents living there and the community as a whole.

The process has been underway for about a year and is continuing with a public review and input session on Tuesday, September 15th. Downtown businesses and property owners have been invited to review the progress to date and offer their ideas and input.

The study contains an analysis of the mix of downtown businesses and living opportunities, and suggests what is needed and possible to continue the recent growth and success. Five downtown areas are studied for possible redevelopment, as well as potential infill improvements.

Studies such as this have occurred in Sylvania about every ten years, and have proved useful for taking stock of where we are and what the future could hold. They create discussion and ideas. The masterplans are visions and possibilities to encourage current property owners, businesses and developers to invest in downtown Sylvania.

The first studies I remember date back to the seventies and eighties. I can remember downtown Main Street still serving as the US 223 truck route. Heavy trucks rumbled through downtown, utility poles and wires obscured the buildings, many of which were being used for little more than warehousing.

That first study resulted in removing the semi-truck traffic, the poles and the wires. The decorative sidewalks and street lights were installed and building facades were improved with a combination of public and private grants, loans and investments.

The next study envisioned a way for downtown Sylvania to compete with the new shopping malls being built in the area. Mayor James Seney promoted building anchors at each end of the downtown, much like shopping malls have anchor department stores. In his plan, the south end would be anchored with a new hotel and the north end with a local history museum complex.

It took a long time, but what great progress has been made! Our downtown is thriving with new investment, new businesses, reconstruction of historic old downtown buildings and the construction of new buildings. It has become a hub of community business, cultural activities and civic pride.

We are fortunate to have a great core of property owners, business owners, downtown organizations and civic minded residents. They are working together as never before, and great things are to come for our downtown and all of Sylvania.