



**MIDTOWN PLANNING REPORT  
(Libbey-Owens-Ford/SSOE)**

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**PROPOSED MIDTOWN TEAM**

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- SSOE, INC.
- TOLEDO LUCAS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
- CITY OF TOLEDO
- LUCAS COUNTY
- PARKING OWNERS
- BROOKS
- TOLEDO VISION
- YWCA
- TAYLOR

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PRELIMINARY REPORT

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1. GOAL

It is the goal to provide an environment in the Midtown area that is both conducive and beneficial to businesses and to the staff and public that utilizes these facilities. This is further broken down into specific objectives that correlate to physical changes and improvements that serve this overall goal.

To validate the need of achieving this goal one need only look at the alternative. This being a continual decline in any attributes achieved by this location, which will ultimately force relocation of companies and services to locations that are more economical, visually and functional attractive, and more conducive to attracting supporting, and maintaining a work force. This alternative scenario is repeatedly represented by locations in suburban corporate parks. For all practical purposes this becomes the "benchmark" to evaluate against.

2. OBJECTIVES

These objectives, which are positively supported in the suburban corporate park concept include issues of security, capacity (growth), mission support, appearance, employee access (traffic/parking), assets deterioration rate, and the environment in general. The question that arises is, can positive attributes associated with these issues be obtainable in the Midtown in a manner comparable (or competitive) with the benchmark.

In making this evaluation it is important to note that the "Midtown" district involved in this study is not the Central Business District (CBD) itself (even though current zoning extends the CBD to this area), rather this is part of an outlying "belt" district that is traditionally a much lower density region, which is historically the case in this region, which matches the urban geography in other similar size cities. The emphasis is that this is not the CBD and should not try to adapt the same criteria as the CBD's. The companies and services in this district have provided or used a combination of owned, rented, and pay parking facilities to accommodate staff and users.

For many years, these functions carried on very well in this district. More recently the indications of the decline of this area has become very apparent. The issue of security is apparent first with the increased level of incidents occurring for the most part in remote parking areas where public eye is limited. This brings with it the cost of hired security, which is costly and limited in its level of protection. The appearance of the area and environment itself becomes less attractive with each abandoned building added to the list and the general disrepair of the neighborhood, which is not only unattractive to staff but also to clients and associates from around the world who are brought into this region.

The general lack of quality parking in terms of maintained, aesthetic, and close proximity is an attribute that cannot be down played. The security and convenience of parking that is provided in suburban corporate/industrial parks is a definite positive. The "benchmark" presented provides corporate facilities that have a low asset deterioration and better serve the mission of corporation in today's total quality and total customer satisfaction environments which in terms of facilities treat staff as "internal customers." In a facility senses, the Midtown companies are not being good to their "internal customers" not to mention external.

With a dedicated effort there is no reason that things can not be changed in the Midtown region, so as to match up to the recognized "benchmark." We need to plan for the Midtown region as a "low density" belt around the CBD that does provide sufficient proximity parking and aesthetic surroundings that have an ambience of quality in design, detail, and cohesiveness.

There are additional advantages with the recognized treatment and improvements. There is, first the potential to maintain existing business in the area rather than loose this urban customer to a suburban location which will most likely reduce the cities tax base. Next, it could turn the whole thing around and actually attract companies pursuing these same objectives to obtain them by locating in this region.

The actual treatment of the region provides a refined appearance that still provides a lower density belt around the CBD and provides an attractive buffer (rather than a typical appearance of radial decline) and even serves as a market radius for CBD enterprises (the Midtown region is very much within walking distance of the CBD). Just as in suburban corporate parks where anchor companies and additional support companies act as catalyst for further growth, so can the same type of dynamics in the Midtown Region further enhance what can happen in the CBD.

3. APPROACH

Specific direction in turning this district around includes:

- a. Providing amenities and "quality of life" features similar to suburban office parks.
- b. The planning should incorporate all traffic arteries remaining as they are today and work the plan around this parameter.
- c. Provision for "proximity" surface parking (one per 300 GSF ideally) clearly identified and related to each building (Midtown should not become a parking reservoir for CBD).
- d. Enhance facility grounds with "front yard" landscaping (15' to 20' minimum).
- e. Enhance design quality and cohesiveness of region in treatment of sidewalks and curbs, and asthenic amenities (street lights, trees, landscaping, etc.)
- f. Maintenance/repair of sidewalk, curbs, and streets.
- g. Demolition of existing vacant buildings.
- h. Procedure/resolution on acquiring properties with active businesses that are needed to develop the overall plan. (Focus on creating a "relocation" procedure.)
- i. Determine locations for new businesses and reinforce a plan for potential development.