

Are you proud of downtown Mantua? Are you happy with the way it looks? Is there anything you would change?

Last March, the community had no doubt – downtown Mantua needs a facelift!

That was the overwhelming response at a meeting hosted by Mantua Village Planning Commission and the Mantua-Shalersville Area Chamber of Commerce, where community members were asked to list strengths and weaknesses of the area.

Since that meeting, a small group of people have been researching how to help. After pouring over information from a variety of sources, the group decided to focus on a “streetscape” of the “commercial corridor” in the Village. You may have heard a bit about this. For details, go to www.MantuaShalersvilleChamber.com/Revitalization and review all the background information.

Right now, we’ll focus on questions you may have...

What is a streetscape?

A *streetscape* involves visual and physical improvements of public areas. *Streetscaping* can include traffic management, utility upgrades and burial of lines, sidewalk conditions, landscaping, street furniture (benches, garbage cans, streetlights), and parking improvements.

Streetscape improvements can provide a variety of economic, social and environmental benefits.

- Improved walking and cycling conditions.
- Increased traffic safety.
- More compact development vs. sprawl.
- Improved community livability, interaction and cohesion.
- Increased property values.

What is the commercial corridor?

The Village of Mantua’s *commercial corridor* runs the length of Main Street within Village limits and also includes portions of Prospect, High, and all of First Street.

Why focus on just that area?

Most of downtown’s “public spaces” are within the commercial corridor. Focusing on that area benefits the most people while still being manageable. It will give downtown businesses an incentive to follow suit and improve their spaces. It will also help link Main Street to Buchert Park and the Cuyahoga River.

Who decides what it should look like?

You will. Your input is crucial. There will be a series of public meetings where you can learn about what’s being done and vote on ideas. Information will also be posted to the website mentioned earlier, included in Mantua Matters, and covered in other publications. The more you get involved in the process, the more satisfied you’ll be with the outcome.

Will it cost me anything?

The last thing anyone wants is another “tax.” Several local residents, business-people, and property owners have already offered contributions toward the effort. A concentrated fund-raising drive will get this thing off the ground. Grants will be used to pay for as much of the construction as possible. Finishing touches (trees, benches, bricks) will be purchased through sponsorships. Everyone will have an opportunity to donate time, money, and experience. If voluntary funding can’t be secured, there won’t be a streetscape.

Will it affect my property?

Streetscapes focus on public property. Private property owners within the project area will have the opportunity to upgrade utilities and make repairs that go along with the overall project. Property outside the project area is rarely affected; although property values in general tend to increase when public appearance is improved. We will learn more when we get into future phases (that is, after we know if we can raise money to do a streetscape).

Who will do the work?

Typically, a design consultant is hired to gather community input, propose the work to be done, secure grants, and oversee the project. When bids go out for supplies and services, local businesses are given priority, to encourage reinvestment in the community.

Why do this now?

Is there a better time to make improvements? No one ever has “enough” money or “enough” time...and those are certainly concerns for a project of this scale! But, sitting back and hoping that things will get better on their own only ensures that Mantua will continue to show signs of neglect. Making improvements now will protect the historic character of downtown Mantua and lead to better opportunities in the future.