



Underground Railroad Center Project

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The Oberlin Underground Railroad Center Project Update

The City of Oberlin continues progress to preserve and reuse the historic Gasholder building/property as an Underground Railroad Center and Multi-Modal Transportation hub. The 2002 NOACA (Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency) grant application, which was originally approved for \$1.14 million in transportation enhancement funds was reaffirmed in whole on April 16th, 2010. The City of Oberlin will be receiving \$917,600 (which requires \$229,400 in matching City funds) from NOACA when the project constructs later this year. Phase I will consist of stabilization and rehabilitation of the historical gasholder building, Phase II will consist of establishing a multi-modal Park-N-Ride facility and Phase III will consist of establishing an Underground Railroad Center.

Please continue to watch for upcoming Underground Railroad Center (URC) Project newsletters as a way to keep up with the regular Underground Railroad Center Implementation Team (URCIT) meetings. It is via this newsletter, as well as published committee minutes, that we will continue to communicate the project's progress to those in the community, who may be unable to attend and participate in URCIT meetings and related events.

As the person coordinating efforts on this monumental and vital community project, I continue to invite and encourage you to contact me with any suggestions, questions, or concerns regarding the project.

Warmest Regards,

Darlene Colaso, Assistant City Manager

Timeline of Events from 07/10 - 03/11

- Jul '10 Architect Rex Hagerling of Moody-Nolan visited the URCIT members and reviewed a revised set of construction plans with URCIT suggested changes. Plans to have Moody-Nolan develop and provide visual renderings for a September "Community Update" were made.
- Aug '10 The URCIT's fundraising team developed a project brochure that will be distributed at the September Community Update.
- Sep '10 The URCIT hosted a Community Update event at the gas holder building site with over 200 in attendance (see referenced newspaper articles throughout this website).
- Oct '10 A Facebook page was established for the Oberlin Underground Railroad Center Project and the City purchased several domain names for future websites specific to the center. The Planning and Organization sub-teams agreed to meet to finalize proposed design details for the next phase of the construction documents to be drawn up by Moody-Nolan. The fundraising sub-team designed donation cards for the project to compliment the project brochure.
- Nov '10 The group agreed to initiate a conversation with Oberlin College to obtain the Dobbins stone & other artifacts for eventual display in the URC. The Organization sub-team is working on syncing the Vision Council summary document and a 2004 FOURC (Friends of the Oberlin Underground railroad document) with proposed design plans. Silent fundraising campaign begun.
- Dec '10 Adjoining gasholder property owner Ted Barr joined the group to express his interest in assisting in whatever way he can. Design plans finalized for submission to Moody-Nolan. MLK Jr. Day event planned.
- Jan '11 Silent fundraising campaign progressing. The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center approached City Management with the idea of collaborating. ACM Colaso/City Manager Norenberg will be meeting representatives at the center in Cincinnati to discuss. MLK Jr. Day event a success! Request for "1889" to be placed on the gasholder roof when it is replaced.
- Mar '11 A *Certificate of Appropriateness* for the "restoration/rehabilitation of the exterior shell" of the gasholder was unanimously approved by the Historic Preservation Commission.