



“YES, YES, YES”

This is the headline that appeared in the Wednesday November 4, Findlay Courier newspaper. As you know, on the November ballot, Hancock County had Sales Tax issue (half of which is for our flood control project); the City of Findlay had a ¼% income tax increase on the ballot; and Findlay City Schools had a 4.3 mill bond issue on the ballot to build two new middle schools. In these times of economic uncertainty, the community came through and approved all three measures. This is truly an historic moment in the future of Findlay.

As for the flood control project, the passage of this sales tax will generate approximately \$25 million dollars over 10 years for the non-Federal share for this project. We have received \$3 million from the State Legislature, with a promise of an additional \$6 million over the next four years, for a total of \$9 million over six years. We are now poised to present a “water-tight” case (excuse the pun) to our senatorial and congressional delegation to secure the federal share of funding. We are fortunate to have tremendous support from Members of Congress Jordan, Latta, and Kaptur, Senators Voinovich and Brown, State Representatives Hite and Wachtmann, State Senator Steve Buerher, and our local officials.

Property Acquisition

We designated a Findlay target area north of the river on the east and west sides of Main Street to be acquired with state funds. (See chart at the end of this report.) We had appraisals completed on all properties and began signing purchase agreements with all willing sellers (strictly voluntary sale). I am happy to report that all willing sellers’ properties have been put either under contract or acquired.

Here is an update of the properties:

- A total of 18 properties have been acquired in the target area,
- two properties outside the target area have been acquired,
- two properties are under contract, and
- one property has been referred to Regional Planning for possible FEMA grant.

Target Area

Eight of the nine commercial buildings on the east side of North Main Street between the river and Clinton Ct. have been acquired. The other 10 are residential properties on the south side of Clinton Ct., west side of Taylor St., or North Cory between the river and the railroad tracks.

Outside the Target Area

Properties on East Main Cross Street were acquired by the City of Findlay for the flood project, using FEMA grant funds. FEMA requires a deed restriction that will not allow construction of any sort, including flood walls or levees, on these properties. We are currently working with our congressional representatives and Senator Voinovich’s office to correct this situation. In the mean time, the City had two additional properties on their list to be acquired with FEMA funds. To demonstrate our understanding of the process, the Partnership acquired these two properties.

Under Contract

The two properties we have under contract but have not yet acquired are 120 North Main (Heuerman’s) and 131 North Cory (Kresser’s).

Environmental assessment revealed that Heuerman’s property required a Phase II to be completed. Inside the structure were two hydraulic lifts with oil drums in the ground. In addition, the parking lot area in front of the building was previously a filling station, raising concerns about potential contamination. We are awaiting the results of the Phase II environmental report before finalizing the purchase.

Larry Kresser, owner of the other property, asked that we delay closing until January 30, 2010. He is trying to build a new facility. We are not in immediate need of this property, so we agreed. We may have to extend this closing date again since he is running into a few snags in new construction.



NORTHWEST OHIO

Flood Mitigation Partnership, INC.

Possible FEMA grant

The property located at 203 Clinton Court has been referred to Regional Planning for inclusion in their grant process. Since the structure will be demolished, the vacant land can sit either inside or outside a proposed flood wall or levee. This will not cause the same problem as East Main Cross.

Additional Acquisitions

I recommend that we not acquire additional properties until a more definitive flood control project footprint is determined, with two exceptions:

1. The four properties between Blanchard Street and Eagle Creek on the north side of East Main Cross. The addresses are: 104 South Blanchard, 430, 440, and 450 East Main Cross Street. 104 South Blanchard was re-purchased by Commercial Savings Bank at Sheriff's auction. 440 East Main Cross is on the City's list to be purchased with FEMA grant funds.
2. The other exception would be a property in foreclosure that is determined to be needed for the project.

These additional acquisitions should be purchased using Sales Tax funds.

Environmental Assessments

Phase I environmental assessments have been completed for all properties prior to acquisition by American Structurepoint of Columbus. Only one property has needed a Phase II assessment; 120 North Main Street. It had been the site of a gas station in the 1930's until sometime in the 1960's. The Phase II assessment was done by Malcom Pirnie of Columbus. Malcom Pirnie has a contract with the City of Findlay through a USEPA assessment grant.

Asbestos Assessment/Remediation

All of the assessments have been completed. Rader Environmental of Findlay was the contractor. The project was divided into two parts, residential and commercial/Industrial parcels. When we receive the reports, we will bid out the remediation contract.

Demolitions

Paul Schmelzer of Van Horn Hoover is acting as our "demolition manager". He will be responsible for creating the bid specifications and managing the process, including acquiring necessary permits and project oversight. Because the properties acquired for demolition are part of the larger federal project, we first must go through the Ohio Historic Preservation Office for approval. Mannik and Smith Group will help us through that process. The first properties should be demolished by spring.

Ottawa Acquisitions

Now that a conceptual design has been completed for Ottawa, we have identified two areas to begin property acquisitions using funds from the State of Ohio. Requests for proposals from appraisers, buyer's agents, and title companies are currently being received. Once an appraiser is selected the process will begin.

Archeological/Architectural Study

Mannik & Smith Group, Maumee, is conducting an archeological/architectural study of the project area (Hancock and Putnam counties). Mannik & Smith has completed the predictive model section of Phase I. The predictive model is a search of all available information that predicts the degree of probability of the location of early settlements and therefore more action may be necessary.

Mannik & Smith Group is currently working to determine the Area of Potential Effect. This area will become the study area for both the archeological and architectural tests that need to occur. The predictive model is then examined in the Area of Potential Effect by the Ohio Historic Preservation Office. They will determine where "shovel testing" needs to occur for the archeological portion. Concurrently, Mannik & Smith is conducting the architectural study, which will be overlaid in the Area of Potential Effect to determine if buildings of historical or architectural significance exist.



NORTHWEST OHIO

Flood Mitigation Partnership, INC.

This information will become the Cultural Resource section of the existing conditions report incorporated in the project Feasibility Study.

Mussel Survey

This study was completed by URS Corporation in conjunction with Dr. Hoggwarth of Ohio State University. The study has been submitted to U.S. Fish and Wildlife.

Wetland Delineation

The wetland delineation has been completed by Van Horn Hoover, a local engineering firm, and submitted to the Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps has verified the accuracy.

FEMA

In September, 2009, a meeting was held in Findlay with the following participating:

- Northwest Ohio Flood Mitigation partnership
- Ohio Emergency Management Agency
- FEMA Region V representatives
- Hancock Regional Planning
- Congressman Jordan's representative
- Congressman Latta's representative
- Senator Voinovich's representative Columbus
- Tara Shaw, Senator Voinovich's representative Washington (on phone)
- FEMA HQ representatives Washington (on phone)

The topic was to determine a solution to address the deed restrictions placed on properties purchased with FEMA grant funds. (The deed restriction prohibits structures of any kind, including floodwalls or levees, being built on these properties.) We have several properties that will be needed for the flood project that fall into this category. It will literally take an act of congress to solve this issue, but it has been done in the past. We have added this item to our Federal Agenda for FY2011.

Hydraulics and Hydrology Study

The study was completed in early December and alternatives currently are being evaluated. We should have some determinations by May, 2010.

Conceptual Design (Findlay)

The Partnership created an Urban Design team to meet with local stakeholders to develop a conceptual design for the flood reduction project. The Urban Design Team and their respective roles are summarized below:

- **URS Corporation:** Project Administration, hydraulic modeling, and ecological restoration experience, and interface with USACE.
- **Kinzelman, Kline Gossman:** Lead Urban Design & Planning, Design Coordination with USACE, Public Engagement and Consensus Building, Regulatory Review, Implementation Strategy.
- **RCM Architects:** Community Expertise.

Throughout the summer, local stakeholders met with our Urban Design team and, through a series of meetings, developed what we call the "locally preferred" plan. On September 28, the unveiling took place on the campus of the University of Findlay. Presentation participants included the Flood Mitigation Partnership, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, County Engineer Steve Wilson, and City Engineer Brian Hurt. Visual displays were available for the public to examine in the vestibule. Approximately 300 area residents were in attendance.



NORTHWEST OHIO

Flood Mitigation Partnership, INC.

2010

The Partnership is slated to be dissolved by the end of 2010. We have several key issues that need to be addressed for this dissolution to occur.

Formation of a Public Entity

The Partnership's purpose is to expedite the planning part of this flood project and then hand off the design and implementation responsibility to a public entity. The entity formed will become the "local" non-federal sponsor. The type of governance should be determined by the responsible elected officials.

In order to facilitate the process of determining what type of governance works best in this case, Baker Daniels, an Indianapolis law firm, has been engaged to develop a compare/contrast document identifying the entities under Ohio law that could serve as a flood control district. This report will be forwarded to the various responsible public officials for their review. The Partnership agreed to commission this independent study. We should have the report by the end of January 2010.

Transition to General Investigation Study

Our goal from the beginning was to create one solution for the entire watershed. In order to begin the planning process for our project, we had to do something a bit unorthodox. If you will excuse the metaphor, we had to push Humpty Dumpty off the wall and break him into pieces. Now we must put him back together again. The pieces were the Findlay 205 project, the Ottawa 205 project, and the rest of the watershed. How we put him together again is the General Investigation Study.

The General Investigation Study encompasses structural as well as nonstructural solutions. Nonstructural solutions include flood-proofing properties, wetland restoration, removal of structures. The General Investigation study is the vehicle by which our project gets authorized by Congress. Putting Humpty Dumpty back together will be complicated and sometimes painful, but it should not take all of the king's horses and men to accomplish this task.

Our goal will be to transfer to the General Investigation study about the same time the public entity is formed. We will be working with the Corps to determine a mutually agreeable schedule.

Federal Agenda

A copy of our Federal agenda is attached.

State Agenda

The Partnership requested \$9 million from the State of Ohio over a six year period for our flood project. We received \$3 million from the Ohio Capital Improvements budget in 2008. We are in the process of contacting Representatives Hite and Wachtmann and State Senator Buehrer to assist in requesting the second installment of our request. The Capital Budget will be authorized by June 30, 2010.

Conceptual Design (Ottawa)

On October 21, 2009, the consultant team met with the advisory committee to develop a conceptual flood protection system sketch plan. The consultant team will refine the sketch plan and develop a preliminary flood protection system plan.

The Consultant Team met with the Advisory Committee on November 18, 2009, to review the team's initial thoughts presented graphically in the Issues and Opportunities Plans. Preliminary urban design, waterfront and land use concepts for the study, including opportunity sites, were exhibited in draft form. The URS/KKG team facilitated this meeting in conjunction with the Partnership.



NORTHWEST OHIO

Flood Mitigation Partnership, INC.

The Partnership, with assistance from the Consultant Team, facilitated a coordination meeting with the USACE Engineers on December 15, 2009, to review feasibility of work to date. The Consultant Team will incorporate USACE comments into Conceptual Plans. The full URS/KKG team facilitated this meeting in conjunction with NWOFMP.

The next step will be a Public Presentation and will consist of a brief presentation to attendees followed by a pin-up exhibition of the footprint of the conceptual plans and the preferred preliminary design concept for each community/study area. Opportunities for public input and comment will be provided through this venue. Representatives of the Consultant Team will be in attendance to assist in the collection and documentation of that public input. The URS/KKG team will facilitate this meeting in conjunction with the Partnership.

Final Conceptual Design (Findlay and Ottawa)

The Partnership will begin “kitchen table” meetings with residents to discuss the conceptual design of the flood project within the residents’ area. They will have a chance to ask questions and make suggestions as to the aesthetics of the project. Once we finish these neighborhood meetings, we will incorporate any pertinent changes into the final conceptual design. This will become the “locally preferred” plan. The Army Corps will be putting together the “Corps” plan, which will incorporate many of our ideas. We then will reconcile the two plans to come up with the mutually accepted plan for ultimate design.

Economic Damage Survey

This is the process by which flood damage data is collected for use in the Benefit/Cost analysis. Commercial and industrial properties with the expanded 100 year floodplain were identified to be surveyed.

In Ottawa, 135 properties were identified, with approximately 100 respondents. The Ottawa Flood Coalition Steering Committee recruited volunteers to meet with business owners to gather the necessary data. Each survey took about one hour to complete. The volunteers’ time will be submitted as Work-in-Kind towards the non-federal share of the project. The final properties will be surveyed by February.

We are beginning the same task in Findlay. Approximately 1,000 properties have been identified to be surveyed. With the large number of properties to survey and the need to complete the project timely, we are looking at a little different approach. Work on this project will begin during the first quarter of 2010.

Northwest Ohio Flood Mitigation Partnership

101 West Sandusky Street, Suite 200

Findlay, Ohio 45840

567-251-3802 office • 567-251-3803 fax

www.floodpartnership.org