

Planning and Partnerships for the Renewal of Urban Neighborhoods

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Abstract

Urban universities are a key resource for municipal government, businesses, community organizations, and citizens to foster partnerships for successful renewal of distressed urban neighborhoods. From its experience over the past decade, the Ohio State University has created a successful model for engagement with its neighborhoods and the City of Columbus. This model is grounded in market-based revitalization and includes community-based planning, a shared vision for renewal, multiple sources of funding, and a focus on long-term results. In turn, this engagement has invigorated the university's mission as a land-grant institution in the twenty-first century.

Introduction

In a time of diminishing public resources, urban universities are being approached by their neighborhoods and by city governments to play an increasingly active role in dealing with the complex challenges of urban revitalization. The urban university, which often is place-bound in a distressed neighborhood, has a significant stake in improving the quality of life on and adjacent to its campus. The university typically is the most powerful institution in the neighborhood, but it alone cannot deal effectively with these challenges. As a result, partnerships are imperative. The composition of these university-community partnerships will vary depending on the local situation, but the experience of the Ohio State University offers a model for strategies that can be employed in a variety of settings.

Ohio State's model is grounded in market-based neighborhood revitalization. Across the nation, the differences between thriving urban neighborhoods and distressed urban neighborhoods can be summarized simply. If people choose to live, work, and invest in a neighborhood, then businesses will succeed, property values will rise, and the population will expand. When a neighborhood is in decline, its private market is not functioning well. People are choosing not to live or invest there. Allan Mallach, senior fellow with the National Housing Institute, described the situation in a report issued in 2008:

When people choose to move into a particular neighborhood, they are likely to act in ways that enhance neighborhood vitality. If people live in a neighborhood because they lack choices, and residents with the resources to do so leave rather than stay and improve their homes, that neighborhood's social cohesion and vitality are far more likely to deteriorate rather than improve. (*Mallach 2008, 2*)

Public or philanthropic investment alone won't change the situation. To foster neighborhood renewal, institutions and citizens must restore the private market by enhancing and promoting the neighborhood's assets and by removing the barriers to private investment (crime, blighted properties, poor schools, concentrated poverty, etc.). These actions over time will validate individual choices to live, work, and invest in the neighborhood. While the differences between thriving and distressed neighborhoods can be stated simply, the barriers to private investment are complex and interrelated and do not lend themselves to a simple solution.

To identify neighborhood assets and to remove barriers, Ohio State's model is built around the following strategies:

- Community-based planning that identifies a shared vision for the neighborhood, builds consensus for a plan of action, and permits trust building among stakeholders.
- Comprehensive approach using multiple partnerships to address key issues, such as housing, education, public safety, employment, and municipal services.
- Strategic revitalization projects of sufficient scale and potential to positively alter the underlying market conditions and shift the public and private perception of the neighborhood.
- Engagement with community stakeholders by both the academic and academic support sides of the university. To sustain these partnerships over time, however, each university unit's mission should have some alignment with the neighborhood's goals.
- Emphasis on long-term results because the issues are complex and require a comprehensive approach.

To illustrate the application of these strategies, let me describe Ohio State's campus, the adjacent neighborhoods, and the major initiatives in this university-community partnership.

The Neighborhoods of the University District

Ohio State's main campus in Columbus is bounded on the north, south, and east by urban neighborhoods built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These neighborhoods collectively are known as the University District and comprise about 300 square blocks. (The west side of the campus, with athletic fields and agricultural uses, abuts an affluent suburb.) According to the 2000 Census (*Center for Urban and Regional Analysis*), Columbus had a population of 711,000 and the University District had a population of 43,700. Ohio State enrolls 52,000 students on its main campus. Approximately 10,000 students live in residence halls on the campus, more than 13,000 live in privately owned housing in the University District, and the remainder commute from outside the University District. University students are concentrated in the neighborhood closest to the campus, while the other neighborhoods of the University District are more diverse. This includes the Weinland Park neighborhood, which is predominantly African American and low-income.

In the decades following World War II, Ohio State's enrollment swelled. As permanent residents of the University District moved to the new suburbs in the 1950s and 1960s, apartments were built and single-family homes converted to rental housing to serve the booming student population, often with insufficient regulatory oversight. Problems with crime, disinvestment, an antiquated public infrastructure, limited parking, and inadequate municipal services grew in the 1970s and 1980s. By the early 1990s, the appearance of residential and commercial structures and the quality of life in the area, including public safety, had become a major issue.

In 1995, E. Gordon Gee, then president of Ohio State, with support from the mayor of Columbus established Campus Partners for Community Urban Redevelopment, a nonprofit corporation to spearhead improvements in the University District. Campus Partners receives ongoing operating funds from Ohio State. The eleven members of the Campus Partners Board of Directors include university administrators, the city's development director, a current student, a permanent resident of the University District, and representatives of the larger community. Over time, Campus Partners has fulfilled three major roles: community planner, coordinator of neighborhoods committees and partnerships, and developer—directing the strategic, transformational projects that help to implement the planning and for which no other entity has the mission or resources.

Initial Planning and Implementation

In 1995 and 1996, Campus Partners led a broad community-based process to develop the *University Neighborhoods Revitalization Plan: Concept Document* (Campus Partners 1996), a comprehensive plan for improving the University District. The planning process itself was an important trust- and consensus-building exercise for all stakeholders to overcome decades of mistrust of the university by some neighbors and to improve cooperation between rental property owners and long-time homeowners, who had often clashed in the past. A critical member of the consulting team that prepared the revitalization plan was the Campus Collaborative, an interdisciplinary body formed in 1994 representing Ohio State faculty and graduate students from more than forty colleges, departments, and offices.

“As a member of the consulting team, the Campus Collaborative conferred widely with the community to prepare recommendations on social services, community health, public education, faculty involvement, and student life.”

The Campus Collaborative was seeking opportunities for engaging Ohio State scholars in critical community issues. As a member of the consulting team, the Campus Collaborative conferred widely with the community to prepare recommendations on social services, community health, public education, faculty involvement, and student life. Participation by the Campus Collaborative gave the plan faculty support within the university, rather than having the plan perceived only

as an initiative by the university administration. To validate the planning process, Campus Partners intentionally sought broad approval of the revitalization plan. In 1997, the plan was adopted by neighborhood civic associations, Columbus City Council, and Ohio State’s Board of Trustees.

Beginning in 1997, a dozen priority implementation measures were initiated across the neighborhoods of the University District. These implementation measures included a university-sponsored homeownership incentive program that offered \$3,000 in down-payment assistance to employees who bought homes in the University District. So far, more than ninety employees have used the incentive. In addition, Campus Partners has coordinated a series of standing committees that have initiated ongoing and incremental improvements in municipal services, including refuse

collection, housing code enforcement, street sweeping, public safety, and street lighting. These committees, which continue to meet regularly, include representatives of municipal departments, neighborhood civic leaders, business owners, and university students and staff.

Meanwhile, in 1997, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded a three-year Community Outreach Partnership Center grant to the Campus Collaborative to work with residents of the Weinland Park neighborhood of the University District on programs involving health, small business development, and schools. These activities provided useful services and helped to build cooperation among university faculty and students, residents, and neighborhood agencies, but they couldn't effectively address the fundamental urban challenges of concentrated poverty, disinvestment, and crime. For example, academic enrichment efforts implemented in Weinland Park Elementary School had limited success because the mobility rate of children in the school was so high, due at least in part to transience in the area's highly concentrated and poorly managed subsidized housing. A strategy was needed to deal with underlying conditions in the neighborhood.

As community planner and coordinator of neighborhood committees and partnerships, Campus Partners has been central to promoting civic engagement and collaboration and improving municipal services, but these efforts alone were not sufficient to remove deeply rooted barriers and restore the private market. Campus Partners' third role in directing strategic, transformational projects has been critical to sustaining long-term revitalization. Campus Partners has directed three transformational projects, one on the "Main Street" of the University District and two in the Weinland Park neighborhood.

Commercial Revitalization

The revitalization plan (*Campus Partners 1996*) identified a potential redevelopment project along High Street in a blighted three-block area near the university campus. High Street is the "Main Street" of Columbus and the primary commercial corridor through the University District. Urban planners and real estate consultants said that High Street wasn't failing, but it was performing far below its potential. Students, university employees, residents, and visitors were spending their money elsewhere. Many retail stores had moved to the suburbs. Bars and fast-food restaurants remained, but not a range of other businesses to draw customers. The area lacked

convenient parking. Most buildings were too small to accommodate modern retail.

Campus Partners spearheaded a second planning process in 1997 and 1998 to prepare a master plan for High Street (*Campus Partners 2000*) and development and design guidelines (*Campus Partners 2002*), both of which were adopted by Columbus City Council in 2002. The High Street plan also tested the market feasibility and delineated the size and scope of the redevelopment project that became South Campus Gateway. This \$154 million mixed-use project along High Street, adjacent to both the university campus and Weinland Park, is rebuilding the University District's commercial vitality.

In 1999, as the developer of Gateway, Campus Partners conducted a design competition for Gateway and negotiated an economic development agreement with the city in which the municipal

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government committed to public infrastructure improvements on the site and use of eminent domain, if needed, to assemble the 7.5-acre site. Site assemblage was completed in 2002, infrastructure improvements done in 2003, and construction of Gateway begun in 2004. Gateway opened in mid-2005 within a series of buildings whose architectural quality exemplifies the best in “Main Street” urban design. The

project includes 225,000 square feet of retail, 88,000 square feet of office space, 184 apartments, and a 1,200-space parking garage. The retail anchor is a Barnes & Noble university “super-store,” and the entertainment anchors are a seven-screen arts cinema and an array of 10 restaurants.

When Gateway opened, Campus Partners held job fairs specifically for neighborhood residents interested in employment at Gateway’s retailers. An assessment by Economics Research Associates (2005, 6) concluded that Gateway has improved job opportunities, tax revenues, and public safety; generated more than seven hundred full-time equivalent jobs; and drawn more than half its employees from qualified low-income communities. *Business First* newspaper reported in early 2008 that Gateway has sparked millions of dollars in private investment in renovation and new construction of commercial buildings along High Street and of apartment buildings in the adjacent neighborhood (*Ghose, 2008*).

Renovation of Housing

The revitalization plan (*Campus Partners 1996*) recognized the challenges of concentrated poverty, deteriorated housing, instability, and crime in the Weinland Park neighborhood, but it offered general goals rather than a specific strategy. The crime and disinvestment in Weinland Park bled into the predominantly student neighborhood immediately to the north. Despite the efforts of the Campus Collaborative, Campus Partners recognized by 2000 that the challenges in Weinland Park had to be addressed more comprehensively and more boldly if revitalization were to succeed.

Weinland Park is a predominantly African American neighborhood with 4,800 residents, based on the 2000 Census (*Center for Urban and Regional Analysis*). Few of the residents are university students. More than half of the population is below the poverty level. The annual median household income in Weinland Park in 1999 was \$15,831, compared with \$37,897 for Columbus as whole (*City of Columbus 2006, 52–53*). Weinland Park also has the highest concentration of project-based, Section 8 government-subsidized housing in the city. Most of these subsidized, privately owned housing units were badly managed and poorly maintained. The 50 percent annual turnover rate in this housing contributed to neighborhood instability and a mobility rate of more than 85 percent among the students in Weinland Park Elementary School. This mobility undermined any efforts at educational enrichment. Clearly, further public and private investment in Weinland Park would have little or no impact until the subsidized housing was turned around.

The breakthrough for Weinland Park came in 2001 when Campus Partners negotiated a purchase agreement for a complex Section 8 portfolio that was the nation's largest scattered-site housing portfolio entering the federally mandated "mark-to-market" restructuring program. The majority of the portfolio, now known as Community Properties of Ohio (CPO), consisted of 1,300 units in 250 buildings in seven urban Columbus neighborhoods (*Housing Credit to Help Fund Renovation 2003*). Campus Partners sought control of the portfolio because 550 of the CPO units are in Weinland Park, representing a significant portion of the neighborhood housing stock. Neither the city nor local nonprofit housing developers had the capacity to deal with this distressed housing portfolio, which had a reputation of "housing of last resort." The CPO residents, of whom 89 percent were single females between

the ages of nineteen and twenty-four with children, earned a median annual income of between \$5,000 and \$7,000 (*Community Properties of Ohio Management Services 2004, 1*).

Campus Partners convened a broad group of stakeholders, including neighborhood leaders, affordable housing advocates, local, state, and federal offices, social service agencies, and the university, to fashion an innovative restructuring plan. This plan proposed massive renovation of the housing, improved management, and supportive services for the residents. To implement the restructuring plan, Campus Partners assigned its purchase agreement to Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing (OCCH), which finances affordable housing projects throughout Ohio. OCCH acquired the portfolio in 2003, installed new management, and began extensive renovation of the properties in 2004. The units remain low-income housing, but OCCH is investing \$100 million in interior and exterior improvements with more than a third of that investment in Weinland Park. OCCH also has implemented a public safety program associated with the housing that has cut the crime reports in Weinland Park by 25 percent. As a result, CPO's occupancy rate has risen, children are staying in school, and the neighborhood is stabilizing.

The acquisition of the CPO portfolio was a daunting challenge that neither the city nor other housing providers were prepared to take on; Campus Partners and Ohio State provided the credibility needed to address the challenge. Although Campus Partners did not possess the staffing and experience to implement the restructuring plan, it was able to bring OCCH to the table as the development partner. Although not involved in the day-to-day management of the CPO properties, Campus Partners and Ohio State have continued to work with the management company on a number of initiatives, including federal grants for "gap financing" to complete the housing renovation and to support CPO's public safety program.

Additional Planning and Development

In response to the substantial progress made with the CPO housing, public and private interest in Weinland Park began to grow. In 2004, the City of Columbus joined with the Weinland Park Community Civic Association, Campus Partners, and other neighborhood stakeholders to prepare the *Weinland Park Neighborhood Plan*. Adopted by Columbus City Council in 2006, the document is based on extensive community-based planning and envisions the neighborhood as evolving into a true mixed-income community

with a supply of well-managed subsidized housing, as well as opportunities for renovation and new construction of market-rate housing. Campus Partners secured funding to employ consultants to work with neighbors and the city planning staff to give greater depth to the market research and urban design incorporated in the plan. As Weinland Park attracts greater private and public investment, the plan will guide renovation and new construction to protect the neighborhood character and ensure benefits for the whole community.

Campus Partners became involved in a second transformational project in Weinland Park when an old industrial plant, Columbus Coated Fabrics, closed its doors in the neighborhood in 2001. The twenty-acre “brownfield” property soon became a major visual blight and public safety hazard in the neighborhood due to arson, illegal salvaging, and building deterioration. After extensive negotiations, Campus Partners in 2006 was finally able to reach a purchase agreement for the property through the bankruptcy court. In partnership with the city, Campus Partners performed detailed environmental assessments of the site, led the successful effort on behalf of the city to obtain a \$3 million state grant for environmental remediation, and under contract with the city oversaw demolition of the existing buildings in 2007.

Campus Partners engaged a private developer, Wagenbrenner Development Company, to prepare a redevelopment proposal for the site consistent with the *Weinland Park Neighborhood Plan*. In 2008, Columbus City Council approved an economic development agreement with Wagenbrenner under which the city will contribute \$14 million in infrastructure improvements on and adjacent to the site. In turn, Wagenbrenner plans to invest \$80 million in construction of more than five hundred units of market-rate housing on the site. Wagenbrenner will oversee remediation on the site in 2009 with the possibility of new construction beginning in 2010. This will help to meet the Weinland Park plan’s goal of creating a mixed-income neighborhood without displacing existing residents.

The city, the university, and other stakeholders are making other significant investments in Weinland Park. These include:

Education. With the neighborhood stabilizing, Ohio State’s College of Education and Human Ecology developed a nationally significant partnership with Columbus City Schools and the city’s Recreation and Parks Department. The new Weinland Park Elementary School opened in early 2007. Colocated with the elementary school, Ohio State built the Schoenbaum Family

Center, which opened in mid-2007 as the nation's first early childhood education laboratory in a low-income neighborhood. More than half of the eighty-eight children served by the center are drawn from Weinland Park. Scholars representing a variety of disciplines are using this laboratory to study child development among diverse populations and to engage the elementary school and the neighborhood in a variety of urban issues. The city has upgraded the adjacent recreation park to serve the family center, school, and neighborhood.

Public safety. The city and the university jointly constructed a "neighborhood policing center" at a total cost of \$4.4 million. The policing center opened in 2008 in a central location in the University District on the border of both Weinland Park and the predominantly student neighborhood.

Grocery expansion. The Kroger Company has committed to a major renovation and expansion of its thirty-year-old grocery on High Street in Weinland Park. As the only grocery store in the

University District, it has been criticized for its outmoded facility and limited selection. The renovated store will meet the High Street development and design guidelines.

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Employment and skill building. The university has engaged neighborhood residents in a number of programs. For example, an OSU Extension educator assigned to the University District has worked diligently to share information about university employment processes and specific skill requirements for various jobs with neighborhood residents and agencies so those residents can compete more successfully

for entry-level staff positions at the university. The educator also has worked with university departments to extend their job recruitment efforts directly into the neighborhood.

Impact on the University and Neighborhoods

In evaluating the impact of Ohio State's engagement in urban neighborhood renewal through its Campus Partners initiative, three interrelated measures are paramount: the university's insti-

tutional image, the public perception of the University District neighborhoods, and the ability to attract private investment in the University District.

Ohio State's commitment through Campus Partners is grounded in its institutional image, its enlightened self-interest, and its heritage of public service. In describing the importance of image, Bromley (2006, 8) wrote:

Colleges, universities, neighborhoods, local governments and metropolitan regions are enormously dependent on their "images." A positive image is an attraction for most people and investors, while a negative one attracts only the desperate, the mal-intentioned and the foolhardy. . . . A great variety of "rankings" purport to measure institutional standing, but just as important to many potential students, faculty and donors is their perception of the place where the college or university is located. A good place contributes to the standing of a good college or university, and a good college or university contributes to the economic development and cultural vitality of the place in which it is located.

In the early 1990s, Ohio State committed to significantly improving its academic reputation and attracting better-prepared students. Campus Partners' initial planning document (1996) noted, however, that "prospective students and their parents, especially high-ability students, are deciding not to attend Ohio State due to a setting that is perceived as disintegrating and unsafe" (p. II-2). News reports of serious crimes in the University District were carried statewide. Students already enrolled at the university were more and more choosing not to live in the adjacent neighborhood. Based on university-generated enrollment data maintained by Campus Partners, the number of students living in the 43201 zip code, which includes most of the University District, dropped from more than 14,000 in 1986 to about 10,500 in 1995. This weakness in the student housing market led to further disinvestment on the fringes of the neighborhood.

To meet its academic goals and to respond to concerns of students and parents, Ohio State—not unlike many other urban universities—recognized an enlightened self-interest in neighborhood revitalization. Again, Bromley (2006, 11) described the situation more broadly:

Faced with the reality that they cannot move, many colleges and universities have increasingly come to see themselves as “local stakeholders”—institutions which have an enlightened self-interest not only in improving their own campuses, but also in improving the neighborhoods around their campuses and in strengthening the economy and image of their municipalities and regions. . . . Recognition of stakeholder status thus serves as a rallying call, both to commit resources and to form strategic alliances with other organizations.

Once Ohio State was committed as a stakeholder, then local government, neighborhood civic organizations, and property owners responded positively because they perceived the university as a partner with resources and influence.

Critical to Ohio State’s long-term engagement in neighborhood renewal is its heritage as a land-grant college. The nineteenth-century land-grant mission was to teach agriculture and the mechanical arts, as well the classics, and to benefit society through research and public service. Through much of Ohio State’s history, this public service tended to focus on agriculture, but the late twentieth century brought increasing attention to society’s urban problems. Ohio State President Gee in the mid-1990s chaired the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities. This commission issued a seminal report in 1999 that called for higher education to renew its commitment to the larger society. The report emphasized that “an engaged university must put its critical resources (knowledge and expertise) to work on the problems the communities it serves face” (10).

Ohio State was determined to be in the forefront of this outreach and engagement movement in higher education, and Campus Partners was one focus of its efforts. Over the past decade, this engagement has resulted in Ohio State’s expansion of its image from that of a major public research institution to include a vision as an urban university. In 2000, Ohio State adopted its far-reaching, strategic *Academic Plan*, which included an emphasis on Ohio State’s expanded role as a land-grant university and on community engagement. The plan notes: “While strengthening our work in these traditional areas [as represented by Ohio State University Extension’s work in agriculture and rural development], we need to bring a similar sense of commitment and leadership to issues that greatly challenge Ohio’s urban communities in the 21st century” (7).

Ohio State's engagement through Campus Partners has improved the public perception of the university and the neighborhoods of the University District, according to student indicators. Ohio State has been very successful in recruiting high-ability students over the past decade. The average ACT composite score for first-year students who entered in 1995 was 22.8; in 2007, this score had increased markedly to 27.0 (*Ohio State University 2007*). The reasons for this successful recruiting are many. The improved perception of the University District may have played only a small and difficult-to-quantify role, but the perception is not hindering recruitment. The number of students choosing to live in the University District had dropped significantly by 1995 when Campus Partners was formed. That decline leveled off after 1995 at about 10,500 students. The number began to rise again early in this decade as private rental property owners, reassured by the engagement of Ohio State and the city, made significant investments to improve their units. The opening in 2005 of Gateway and a new recreation center on campus also played a role. A student housing survey in spring 2008 estimated that more than 13,000 students now live in the University District (*Vogt Williams Bowen Research 2008*).

Another measure of the perception of the University District is the greatly improved housing stability rate in the more than 500 units of subsidized housing in the CPO portfolio in Weinland Park. When CPO took control of the housing in 2003, the annual turnover among its residents was 50 percent, but in 2007 and 2008 the turnover averaged 19 to 22 percent (*Community Properties of Ohio 2008, 1*). This reflects both the renovation of the properties and the improved conditions in the neighborhood.

The Campus Partners initiative has been successful in attracting private investment to the University District. South Campus Gateway is an important anchor that has enhanced the commercial vitality of High Street and greatly strengthened the surrounding student housing market. In addition to building improvements made by owners of privately managed student housing, private and public investment in and commitments to projects along High Street and in the neighborhoods since 1995 total more than half a billion dollars.

Strategies for Success

Over the past fourteen years, the Campus Partners staff has found that the structure and function of university-community partnerships around the nation are quite diverse, reflecting the

local conditions that shape the expectations and needs of all parties, the constraints of the existing built environment, and the resources available. Thus, the composition of university-community partnerships will vary, but the experience of Ohio State suggests a model for the strategies to be employed if these partnerships are to be successful. These strategies include:

Community-based planning. This first step is critical for articulating a shared vision for the neighborhood, identifying the neighborhood's market strengths and barriers to revitalization, and building a consensus for specific actions. The planning cannot be rushed because it also serves as a trust-building exercise among stakeholders with different interests and who may have little history of cooperation. If the stakeholders can't agree on a common plan and develop mutual trust, then it is unlikely in a time of scarce resources that revitalization will move forward. Agreement on a shared vision and a plan also allows the parties to move much more quickly when market opportunities arise.

Comprehensive approach. Urban decline can be attributed to many factors, so no one solution or one project is likely to work. From the planning effort should come multiple partnerships to address employment, housing, public safety, education, and other issues. These partnerships need to be targeted to reinforce each other. As an example, the well-managed CPO housing is helping to stabilize neighborhood residents and reduce the mobility rate in Weinland Park Elementary School. In turn, efforts at educational enrichment in the school will become more effective.

Transformational projects. Through the planning process and in light of market conditions, the revitalization effort must identify strategic projects of sufficient scale and potential to positively alter the underlying market conditions and shift the public and private perception of the neighborhood. South Campus Gateway has brought new uses, a cleaner streetscape, and additional parking to rejuvenate the High Street market. Millions of dollars in private investment up and down the street have followed.

University engagement. To maintain university commitment over the long term, the university-community partnership must have support from both the university administration and the faculty. If the partnership is viewed as only an administrative initiative, then the pressures for additional resources for the university's core academic mission over time may erode support for the partnership, particularly if there is a change in administration. In the same vein, the strongest university-community partnerships will

align the mission of the academic unit with the neighborhood's goals. For example, Ohio State's College of Education and Human Ecology built its Schoenbaum Family Center as a child development laboratory in Weinland Park precisely because the college believed its teaching and research would be enhanced in a neighborhood setting.

Focus on the long-term. Urban neighborhoods declined over decades, and most won't be revitalized in a few years. For Ohio State, its neighborhood involvement is not a project with a specific timeline, but this engagement represents a new and ongoing relationship with its neighbors. Even as revitalization moves forward, new challenges and opportunities will arise. The University District revitalization plan (*Campus Partners 1996*) did not anticipate the potential to acquire a large portfolio of subsidized housing, but the vision in the plan certainly propelled Campus Partners to take advantage of this opportunity.

Apart from the strategies that are a part of Ohio State's model is the role of Campus Partners. In this case, Campus Partners has functioned well as a separate entity, but affiliated with Ohio State. With a relatively small board and staff, Campus Partners can respond quickly to market opportunities, buy and develop properties without going through the more cumbersome university processes, and serve at times in the capacity of "honest broker" among the divergent interests of the university and neighborhood stakeholders. With its Ohio State backing, however, Campus Partners also has the credibility to take on the complex challenges of government-subsidized housing and brownfield redevelopment.

Conclusions

Ohio State's engagement in urban neighborhood renewal through Campus Partners and related initiatives has proven to be transformational not only for the neighborhoods of the University District, but for the university itself. With its long and distinguished agricultural heritage and a relatively large and not fully developed central campus, Ohio State did not envision itself as an urban university in the mid-1990s. The deterioration of its adjacent urban neighborhoods, however, required university involvement to protect students living in the area and to ameliorate the effects of blight on student recruitment. At the same time, university faculty members and administrators recognized that a logical extension of Ohio State's land-grant mission involved a deliberate engagement of the challenges facing America's cities. Over the last decade, the

university's involvement in the neighborhoods of the University District has created strong partnerships among neighborhood civic associations and local government, but it also has helped shape Ohio State's own conception of itself as an urban university that is integral to the urban fabric and vitality of the Columbus metropolitan area.

The market-based approach that Ohio State and Campus Partners have applied to neighborhood renewal has become clearer and more focused as community planning moved to project implementation. Public investment by the university (i.e., Schoenbaum Family Center) and by the city (i.e., Neighborhood Policing Center) has been a critical component of implementation, but it does not define neighborhood renewal. The public investment is required to build the confidence of the private sector to invest in a neighborhood, which is the key to sustained positive change. In the predominantly student neighborhood, private investment in new and renovated apartment buildings has accompanied improvements in municipal services and public safety. Student renters have returned to that neighborhood, and the rental housing market is strong.

In Weinland Park, however, the results so far have been mixed, in part because the mortgage foreclosure crisis has substantially increased the number of vacant and abandoned properties, dramatically lowering property values. The real estate depression, however, may permit the acquisition at a low cost of a significant portfolio of residential properties, which in turn could be renovated for homeownership and well-managed rental housing at a sufficient scale to change the market. In the spring of 2009, Campus Partners is discussing with other major stakeholders just such an intervention in the real estate market, perhaps using federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds. In addition to buying properties, the stakeholders would invest in neighborhood residents through employment and education programs, public safety initiatives, and measures to productively engage Weinland Park youth and young adults.

Ohio State's model for engagement with its neighborhoods has revitalized a significant portion of the University District, but this model is not a panacea for all urban neighborhoods. The model requires a university, major hospital, or other institutional stakeholder whose presence and engagement nurtures the private market in its neighborhood. University students or hospital employees, as examples, help to sustain the neighborhood housing market and support local businesses. Through public-private partnerships, neighborhood amenities are enhanced and barriers to investment

are removed to build and expand the market. In many urban neighborhoods, however, there is no major institutional stakeholder and the private market is dysfunctional. With limited public resources, cities must choose whether to invest in neighborhoods with potential partners and nascent markets or in neighborhoods in desperate need but with little prospect for long-term private investment. Those are difficult political decisions affecting the lives of real people.

A strong university-community partnership can be enormously beneficial for both the university and its neighbors. Through an authentic partnership, the university stakeholders can enrich their teaching, research, and service through observation and participation as agents of change. For neighbors, the hard work in building trust and a partnership with a large, Hydra-like university can be worth it. As an ally, the university—with its status and political power in the community—can be instrumental in building credibility for the partnership and in bringing other stakeholders—government, businesses, institutions, foundations—to the table to help address the issues of urban revitalization.

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