

*City of Monessen  
Westmoreland County  
Pennsylvania*

**SUPPORT OF THE MIDTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT  
and  
REVITALIZATION EFFORTS FOR THE CITY OF MONESSEN**



Artist's Rendering: The transformation of Third Street Plaza

**Spring 2012**

Prepared as a reference guide for

The Honorable Mary Jo Smith, Mayor  
John Harhai, City Administrator

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# MIDTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT and REVITALIZATION EFFORTS FOR THE CITY OF MONESSEN

## IMMEDIATE

### I. START THE PROJECT

#### A. Adopt the Plan

1. enact zoning changes
2. new streets/alignments
3. map the parks system
4. secure development sites

#### B. Initiate Design Programs

1. create formal framework for design review and coordination (a "City of Monessen Design Czar")
2. design of the Third Street Plaza
3. 'Main Street' streetscape guidelines for Donner and Schoonmaker
4. design Rostraver Stairs and the Fourth Street stairs Parks
5. design of the East Entry Park

#### C. Initiate Programs

1. ARTIST RELOCATION HOUSING PROGRAM to be coordinated with the MON-ARTS Incubator at Building 3
2. public art program: installations around the Midtown Project Area
3. AWSO building site and program negotiations
4. Regional Planning and Transportation Initiatives
  - a. regional connectivity and land transportation alternatives
  - b. regional connectivity via the Monongahela River

#### D. Administrative, Further Study

1. feasibility Studies for each of the 'dirty dozen' and Key Development Sites
2. RFP's for Significant Buildings
3. RFEI's for Key Development Sites
4. Negotiations with the Sewage Authority on placement of their facilities

## II. ROLL OUT MARKETING/BRANDING MECHANISMS

Whenever the City of Monessen sponsors any event, send notice to any and all affiliated groups/associations in Pittsburgh (and regional). Any City-related blogs or web-sites should be scheduled for frequent up-dates: site activity (hit-counts) advance the site in the Google-search hierarchy. To that end, ask the Historical Society to author a "This week in Monessen" or, better still, "Today... " blog; similarly, different student groups (elementary, jr/high) could produce regular submissions, thereby promoting Monessen and student academic achievement and civic pride.

#### A. web site and social media design and implementation

1. City of Monessen web site redesign
2. develop and promote Monessen's presence in social media (Facebook)
3. Create and post a Monessen "sim-city"
  - a. elicits feedback from Monessen's future: teens and young adults
  - b. puts Monessen "on the map" for world-wide audience
4. produce info-mercial style video: Mon Valley Magic! or similar... post to you-tube, promote "hits"

## III. EVENTS: ENERGIZE THE PEOPLE

#### A. Street (Re) Namings

1. Sixth Street to Rev. MacDormand
2. "Riverside Drive"
  - a. solicit entries on Monessen web-site
  - b. actively promote "buzz"

B. Magical, Majestic, Magnificent, Marvelous... Monessen:  
a medley of Monessen marketing:

1. Dedication of Fire Museum

- a. ride/explore a vintage fire truck
- b. re-dedication of the Municipal Building Clock
- c. sound the old air-raid siren (minatory Monessen?)
  - i. why is a siren important? -it marshals the citizenry! rally around the Monessen revitalization; blast the siren as part of a musical welcome to the arts

*press/hype:* in addition to notices in Mon Valley/Pittsburgh, reach out to regional groups: firefighters, clock-makers, etc. Engage them by asking if they have informational materials or speakers available.

*furthermore:* immediate action serves to secure this site for uses consistent with the plan.

2. Dedication of new caboose at Key Site "I"

Two important demographics: children and adult train-freaks...

- a. American Folk-music: Monessen-as-cultural center...
  - i. connect with Pittsburgh, Morgantown music departments
- b. youth-group (scouts, eg.) could design a welcome party/initiation? encourage ownership.

*press/hype:* seek out sponsorship/connections - railcar manufacturers, unions. Lionel. Brett-Allcroft, producer of Thomas the Tank Engine. Golden Books: The Little Engine that Could. Colleges should get directions and contact info so they can easily extend invitations to their contacts. Send press releases to publications serving geographic area of any and all respondents.

### 3. Summer Concert Series

- a. start at HM Park, ultimately move to Third Street Plaza
  - i. Jazz, Big Band, Classical
  - ii. young adult genres
  - iii. mid-day children's shows

*press/hype*: local press for performers. "Parent" magazines. columns, for children's performances; perhaps propose a "fun day in Monessen." If possible, book a month/season in advance: printing a calendar concretizes Monessen as a culture center.

### 4. Street Painting

- a. Midtown Monessen: amateur and professional artists create original works using only sticks of chalk or other temporary media, using asphalt and brick as canvas.
  - i. Traffic on Donner Avenue and Schoonmaker Avenue will be temporarily slowed down to 15 mph, providing drivers with a front row seat to the exhibition.
  - ii. different categories for entries, such as mythic/fantasy, abstract, mechanical/stream punk, replicas of the masters, etc.

*press/hype*: Street painting is performance art: the process of creating the piece is as important as the finished product. Street painting is traced back to 16th century Italy, when itinerant artists would use chalk to transform cobblestone streets into makeshift canvases. Use rubric "*watch art emerge as Midtown Monessen begins transformation into a Cultural District.*" Web site should use "Best in Category" photographs to illustrate start of transformation - and promote artists (who may be future citizens of Mon, via Artists' Housing Program?)

## 5. Bicycle Race/Tour

- a. route - maps should depict FUTURE as well as present
- b. awards for most interesting conveyance, most interesting costume, best-decorated helmet, etc. (art, art, art!)

*press/hype*: get e-mail addresses for all entrants, send invitations for them to forward. Apply all other publicity mechanisms.

## GOING FORWARD

### ROLL THE PROGRAM

Every stage presents a marketing opportunity. Cultivate, utilize, and expand on connections in media, arts and business. Broadcast success!

#### A. Community Garden, Green Market

1. tie in to anniversary of Mon Cooperative formation - believe this was one of the first in the north-east? publicize via co-op association groups
2. contact 4-H, community gardening groups for support and suggestions

#### B. Evolving the Mon Valley Bicycle Race/Tour

1. consider TRIATHALON, kayaks rather than swimming
2. consider team scavenger-hunt-style (significant points in Mon, rhymed clues on map)

#### C. Promote Stakeholder Engagement

1. Contests
  - see Oil City youth posters
2. "Naming" Opportunities
  - "Riverside Drive"
  - skating rink

#### D. Miscellanea

- Keep a look out for classic cars, things of that nature. Perhaps recreate historic periods?

- Latch on to designated holidays: Women's history month: Women in Monessen Industry month, eg (vision of Rosie the Riveter)
- Environment: Alive in Monessen - monthly how-to's.... how to build a rain barrel. How to leach lead out of your garden.... connect with state/regional environmentalists. Check EPA site.
- Environmental Education Workshops - EPA funding available
- Consider retail placement in Giba Bldg: wine, cheese, picnics-to-go
- Additional Events to Consider:
  - Panama Canal 100 yr anniv is 8/15/2014... Page Fence of Monessen sent wire for the project per 9/26/1911 Daily Independent...
  - "international" days - Louhi Band/Sibelius Society, e.g. provides a nice connection with League of Nations inauguration (centennial?)
  - Artists' Kite flying competition: design/build/fly.