



# Underground Railroad Center Project

August 2011

## The Oberlin Underground Railroad Center Project Update

The City of Oberlin's plan to preserve and reuse the historic Gasholder building/property as an Underground Railroad Center and Multi-Modal Transportation hub continues to progress. The 2002 NOACA (Northeast Ohio Area-wide 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 Oberlin Underground Railroad Center (OURC) 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 - 08/11

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| <p>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.</p> <p>Aug '10 The URCIT's fundraising team developed a project brochure that will be distributed at the September Community Update.</p> <p>Sep '10 The URCIT hosted a Community Update event at the Gasholder building site with over 200 in attendance (see referenced newspaper articles throughout this website).</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Nov '10 The group agreed to initiate a conversation with Oberlin College to obtain the Dobbins stone &amp; other artifacts</p> | <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Mar '11 A <i>Certificate of Appropriateness</i> for the "restoration/rehabilitation of the exterior shell" of the Gasholder was unanimously approved by the Historic Preservation Commission.</p> |
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## Brief Update since 03/11

- Apr '11      The Bill Long Foundation granted funds to construct an informational kiosk on the Gas-holder site to inform North Coast Inland Trail cyclists and other visitors of the details of the OURC/Park-N-Ride project. Matching funds were also generously offered by local residents Robert Taylor and Theodore Nowick. The kiosk will be designed and constructed by JVS students and it will hold project brochures and information, as well as a map of Oberlin's downtown businesses.
- May '11      Architect Rex Hagerling of Moody-Nolan and ODOT are finalizing bid documents for the re-roof project beginning this summer. We are anticipating requests for proposals to go out within the next 60-90 days.
- The Oberlin Rotary Club has expressed interest in constructing a bicycle shelter on the gasholder site for cyclists who ride the North Coast Inland Trail.
- Jun '11      Clean-up of the gasholder building basement for architectural assessment purposes completed the first week of June.
- City of Oberlin Planning Commission approved the two large yellow/black existing Underground Railroad Center and Park-N-Ride Project signs be moved closer to Rt. 58 for greater project exposure.
- Jul '11      Signs were relocated and brochure racks installed.
- Aug '11      Construction documents finalized by the Architect, approved by ODOT and sent off to FHWA (Federal Highway Administration). The documents anticipated approval date is approximately August 23. Requests for proposal are anticipated during the last week of August and first three weeks of September. If all goes well, we could award a bid by the end of September and the roof could go up in early October.