OLD BROOKLYN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

2016-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN
INTRODUCTION

Dear community member and friend of Old Brooklyn,

Old Brooklyn 2020 (OB2020) is a five year organizational plan that will be used to guide Old Brooklyn Community Development Corporation (OBCDC). Created in partnership with more than 1,000 stakeholders, this roadmap builds off the fundamental understanding that the status quo no longer serves in the best interest of this community and OBCDC must engage and lead to create a better future.

In 2015 OBCDC began and completed a strategic planning process to assess the current needs of Old Brooklyn within the broader context of Cleveland with special attention paid to trends in community development. This was done ultimately to determine how the organization could best add value to the neighborhood going forward. The process was led by a professional facilitator and passionate task force and driven by inquiry of residents, business owners and other stakeholders. We are proud to share OB2020 with you – the culmination of several months of hard work, dedication, research, and informed decision making.

As the backbone of the Old Brooklyn neighborhood, OBCDC takes on the responsibility to tackle complex, neighborhood-wide challenges that require community partnerships, strategic allocation of resources, and a culture of innovation to achieve success.

OBCDC will not seek to merely replicate best practices in community development but to discover next practices that set a new tone for the work of CDCs.

To all who make Old Brooklyn a great place to grow, thank you for your commitment to the neighborhood.

John G. Young    Jeffrey T. Verespej
President,        Executive Director
Board of Directors


Old Brooklyn and Cleveland are changing, and that change is the result of many factors. Many of these factors: demographics, the regional economy, and market sensitivities, lie outside the control of individual organizations. OBCDC is the entity best positioned to respond to these changes in Old Brooklyn and OB2020 outlines goals along with efficient and effective strategies that address the many challenges facing us now and in the future.

Cleveland is experiencing a transformation featuring substantial demand from young professionals and baby boomers for housing in its neighborhoods. As the city responds to these changes, residents will demand services and opportunities be available to all. Quality and accessible education, recreation, healthcare and transportation mark the next wave of progress. Old Brooklyn is primed to respond to these needs.

Shrinking municipal budgets, a national housing crisis, the great recession and global economic shifts have left many neighborhood needs unmet. It is critical to break from reliance on the conventional playbook; a focus on people and people-within-place creates far more opportunity for OBCDC. OB2020 uses new organizational strategies to affect positive impact over the next five years and beyond.

These elements were used as a backdrop for the strategic plan. The neighborhood is young, diverse, multi-generational and able to provide Cleveland with a healthy, world-class neighborhood for future and current residents. OBCDC believes that Old Brooklyn’s assets position it as Cleveland’s most accessible, family-friendly neighborhood. OB2020 sets the strategy for promoting the neighborhood to the increased numbers of families, young professionals and baby boomers choosing Cleveland.
A MODEL CDC

Foster a Healthy Community in Old Brooklyn

- A focus on quality of life ensures that all in Old Brooklyn can live rewarding and healthy lives; the neighborhood is enhanced as a community of choice and opportunity.
- Great communities thrive because of social networks that are supportive, inclusive, and meet neighborhood needs.
- Collective impact of housing, safety, education, and organizing can be leveraged through collaboration, partnerships, and a focus on coordinating neighborhood services.

OBCDC STRIVES TO LEAD THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FIELD WITH THESE CORE PRINCIPLES AS GUIDANCE:

ADAPT: Be responsive to community needs, use data to inform outcomes & activities.
GROW: Provide more value to Old Brooklyn through innovation and partnerships.
LEAD: Model and empower leadership to meet evolving neighborhood needs.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Foster a Healthy Community in Old Brooklyn

Lead Smart Neighborhood Development for Business and People to Grow

- OBCDC has an obligation to lead, sell, coordinate and deliver a vision for comprehensive physical development within the neighborhood.
- There is significant opportunity throughout the neighborhood with diverse properties available in commercial corridors, residential corners, and community main streets.
- The organization must strengthen existing assets and aggressively pursue new development including comprehensive and accessible housing policies that embrace Old Brooklyn’s unique position within Cleveland.
Put Old Brooklyn on the Map by Increasing Awareness of the Neighborhood

- OBCDC will act as the voice of the community promoting it throughout the region encouraging visitors, new homeowners and new businesses to locate in the community.
- A comprehensive communications effort will use social media, publications, the website and other materials to effectively and consistently tout Old Brooklyn's assets.
- Through dedicated marketing efforts, strengthen a sense of community pride in the neighborhood and organization.

Ensure that OBCDC is a Strong, Responsive Community Backbone

- Deliver maximum value to the evolving neighborhood. Be adaptive to respond to unpredictable needs beyond the short term
- OBCDC must increase its capacity, remain connected to community needs, and develop a culture of learning to adapt, grow, and lead
- Develop a deliberate attention to fund development, revenue generation, and organizational partnerships
The creation of this document is only the beginning of OBCDC’s strategic plan work; and, it represents the organization’s transition to the action phase of the process. This plan is not entirely prescriptive nor is it static—it will evolve in the near-term and the long-term.

ROLE OF OLD BROOKLYN CDC
At 6.2 square miles, over 12,000 distinct buildings and over 30,000 residents, Old Brooklyn is the largest neighborhood in Cleveland. It is impossible for OBCDC to be “everything to everyone” with a stake in the neighborhood. Additionally, OBCDC does not have the authority or resources to repair city streets, sidewalks or street lights; however, OBCDC can advocate on behalf of the neighborhood’s best interests.

Through a focus on the four strategic objectives and the primary organizational responsibilities of Adapt, Grow and Lead, OBCDC will help build a stronger Old Brooklyn for everyone to grow.

OB2020 is a strategic plan for OBCDC as an organization, not a Master Plan for the neighborhood of Old Brooklyn.

MEASURING SUCCESS
OBCDC’s leadership must balance long term goals with daily actions. This requires cultivating – by repeated, deliberate practice – a mindset to reframe challenges as opportunities for positive impact in line with its strategic objectives. The organization must consider emerging threats to the success, sustainability or relevance of OBCDC instead as opportunities to Adapt, Grow, and Lead; ultimately adding more value to Old Brooklyn.

EQUITY AND INCLUSION OF ALL
A community is not a place where diverse individuals live side-by-side but rather one where they live together. A neighborhood is strengthened by the presence of different perspectives, cultures and ideas. Whether the consideration is gender, ability, ethnicity, race or sexual orientation, equity and inclusion in our neighborhood is a priority for this organization.

It is imperative that OBCDC applies an equity and inclusion lens to all its activities. Any organization aiming to impact social outcomes needs to be aware that not everyone starts at the same place. Though OBCDC cannot solve the problems of equity in Cleveland, it can, should and will be a leader and strive to create an exemplary Cleveland neighborhood and a model for others.

FACILITATION VERSUS PROVISION
The role of facilitation does not mean that OBCDC will provide these services directly—it has neither the resources nor expertise to do so. Rather it will act as a backbone for the neighborhood, being both the leading advocate and the conduit for Old Brooklyn, to receive the human services integral to fostering a strong, connected, healthy community.
STRATEGIC PLAN TASK FORCE

SUE ALLEN
OBCDC Board member; Old Brooklyn resident

NELSON BECKFORD
Old Brooklyn resident; St. Luke’s Foundation

FATHER DOUG BROWN
Old Brooklyn resident; Pastor, Mary Queen of Peace

EVELYN BURNETT
Cleveland Neighborhood Progress

DENISE KAHWAGI
Owner, Cake Royale; Old Brooklyn resident

TOM KEOE
Owner, Kehoe Printing; former Old Brooklyn resident

RICHEY PIIPARINEN
OBCDC Board member; Old Brooklyn resident

TIFFANY SEDLACEK
OBCDC Board member; Old Brooklyn resident

KRISTEN WILSON
OBCDC Marketing Committee; Old Brooklyn resident

Strategic planning facilitated by:

JGL Strategy

JGL Strategy, LLC is a Cleveland-based consulting firm delivering long term strategy and capacity building services to help organizations make better decisions for the future.

For more information visit jgstrategy.com.

660
SURVEY RESPONSES

90
INTERVIEWS

16
FOCUS GROUPS

2
PUBLIC MEETINGS

1,000
CO-CREATORS OF THE OBCDC 2016-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

APPROXIMATELY

2016-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN