



To: Mayor Smith and Honorable Councilmembers

From: Tom Carroll, Village Manager *Tom M. Carroll*

Date: January 4, 2016

Subject: Annual Report for 2015

Village Council set five broad goals for 2015 at the January 3 goal setting session. The five goals can be succinctly summarized as follows:

1. Roads
2. Jobs
3. Code Enforcement
4. Parks
5. Branding

Below is a recap of the efforts the Village made in 2015 as they relate to each of these Council objectives.

Roads

Silverton received two competitive Ohio Public Works Commission grant/loan projects in 2015. These projects include the complete reconstruction of roads, curbs, and gutters on Sibley Avenue and South Broadlawn Circle. The projects were not finished in 2015 because of the closure of asphalt plants for winter, but the funds to finish the work will be encumbered and the final pavement work will be done in early April of 2016. The Village partnered with the Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW) to include waterline replacements in these projects, an efficient way to share costs and lessen the inconvenience to the adjacent residents.

The Village also partnered with GCWW to replace waterlines on North Broadlawn Circle and Gatewood Lane. Both roadways will be milled and resurfaced, with a considerable portion of the costs of this road repair again being shared with GCWW because the installation of new water mains impacts the roadways. While the road work is less extensive on North Broadlawn and Gatewood, these two streets should also be in excellent condition for a generation when the work is finished. Silverton will also mill and resurface Blue Ash Road between Sweets by LaDawn and the corporate line with Deer Park next spring.

Throughout the areas around the Broadlawns, Gatewood, and Sibley, the Village is replacing sections of sidewalk as needed. This is a forerunner to a new program the Village will start in 2016 to assist residents with sidewalk replacement throughout Silverton. By investing in our pedestrian infrastructure, we make Silverton that much more desirable as a walkable, family-oriented, and active community.

The Village of Silverton also resurfaced Stewart Road north and south of Interstate 71. This project was financed with tax increment financing (TIF) from the 2013 TIF district established in anticipation of the Mini-Cooper expansion. The work itself was jointly bid with Amberley Village in an attempt to reduce costs by pooling our purchasing power. It is not clear that this partnership with Amberley saved money, but Silverton should be proud of trying new procurement approaches to stretch our residents' tax dollars further. Finally, our Public Works Superintendent Rick Lehmkuhl successfully advocated on behalf of the Village to encourage Duke Energy to resurface much of Montgomery Road west of Plainfield following an extensive natural gas main replacement project. We appreciate Duke's excellent corporate citizenship and Rick's effective stewardship of our roadways.

Road Summary

During the years 2014 and 2015, Village Council provided funding to resurface or reconstruct one out of every six lane miles in Silverton. This figure includes 2014 work completed on South Avenue, Elm, North Fordham and West Fordham. We have plenty more work to do and many other Silverton roads need similar attention, yet this progress has been quite remarkable.

Jobs

In slightly more than 15 months, the Village executed 17 contracts to purchase property to assemble a 10.6 acre site at the southwest corner of Montgomery and Stewart. In 2015, Silverton razed five residential structures and two commercial structures on this site. The Village obtained competitive federal grant funding through Hamilton County to pay for the razing of 7434 and 7446 Montgomery Road in support of our major redevelopment project. Silverton used local resources to pay for the demolition of 6835, 6841, 6849, 6853, and 6861 Stewart Road.

The financing of this project is complex, with several advances from the General Fund, the issuance of bond anticipation notes three times in 12 months, and reimbursements of prior advances back to the General Fund. The Village earned \$117,000 in rental income in 2015 which defrayed a significant portion of our carrying costs, legal fees, and maintenance expenses. In 2015, the Village had to subsidize the redevelopment project with a net transfer of approximately \$125,000 from the General Fund to the Job Creation Fund. This subsidy should be recovered once the Village resells the land it has assembled. Even with this transfer and subsidy, the Village has been able to exceed its target fund reserve levels of \$1 million in the General Fund throughout 2015.

In September, the Village invited a selection of area developers to submit qualifications and received submissions of interest from four highly-qualified teams in October. Council selected Miller Valentine with Jeffery R. Anderson Real Estate as our developer of record, and the Village signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the developers on December 18, 2015. The developers are in the process of studying Silverton's site.

The proposed redevelopment contemplates approximately 85,000 square feet of mixed-use office, retail, and restaurant space, as well as 200 upscale apartments. The developers anticipate investing approximately \$43,000,000 in Silverton starting in 2016. If it performs as planned, the Village should receive approximately \$300,000 per year in additional income tax revenue from the new residents, businesses, and employees on this site. By creating job opportunities and luxury apartments for our community's empty nesters and young professionals, the Village will position itself very well for subsequent growth and job creation projects to the west along Montgomery Road and north along Plainfield.

It is important to point out that while the pace of redevelopment has been rapid in late 2014 and 2015, the foundation for this project was laid in 2008 and 2009. First, a mixed use redevelopment on the former school site was an articulated goal in the Silverton 2008 Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Second, the Village forged a unique partnership with Cincinnati Public Schools in 2009 which led to a cashless land swap, the opening of the new Silverton Paideia School in 2013, and the conveyance of the 5.8 acre former school site to the Village in February of 2015. The work undertaken in 2015 builds on the previously laid foundation, work begun in the midst of the worst financial crisis our nation has experienced since the Great Depression. It is particularly gratifying to see that, like a proverbial flywheel, this redevelopment project has been slow to get moving but its momentum is building on itself and gathering its own energy.

Jobs Summary

Silverton is poised to start a potentially catalytic redevelopment project that could transform our commercial corridor. The Village may return to city-status in 2020, and it could grow our income tax base by 10%. A great deal of work lies before us in 2016, but we are well positioned to execute a development agreement and sales agreements with our developer in 2016.

Code Enforcement

Our code enforcement efforts in 2015 focused on the highly visible and intractable exteriors of residential and commercial structures. In 2015, Silverton issued more than 160 orders for property maintenance violations, including over 100 orders to property owners to paint some or all of their structures. Thanks to the hard work of our Code Enforcement Officer, Jim Replogle, more than 90% of the orders have been voluntarily complied with by the property owners. Jim has been very accommodating to property owners who request additional time, working with compassion and understanding of property owners' needs. He even took his efforts one step further by finding faith-based partners to assist two home owners who lacked the financial and physical ability to comply with his order. In the end, Jim secured Christian volunteers to help two elderly households, strengthening the social fabric of our community as well as improving their homes.

Staff is in the process of reviewing our procedures for the handful of property owners who refuse to comply with lawful orders. Our Management Intern, Connor Wood, is leading this effort, supported by Bryan Pacheco and Jim Replogle. Silverton needs fair yet strict enforcement procedures to address the few property owners who are non-compliant and non-communicative.

Code Enforcement Summary

Silverton is tackling increasingly complicated enforcement of our community standards, yet the approach is cooperative with the vast majority of our property owners. Over the upcoming winter,

Jim Replogle will notify a number of additional property owners that their properties will be the subject of an enforcement action in the spring to give the property owner more time to prepare for compliance.

Parks

The Village received a highly competitive NatureWorks grant for \$73,000 to restore the baseball diamond at Ficke Park and install a barrier-free playground. The project was hampered by a wet early summer and by contractor problems, but in the end both new features were completed in September and are wonderful finishing touches to the revitalization of Ficke Park undertaken in partnership with Cincinnati Public Schools. The Village also installed a needed drinking fountain at the new shelter and made inexpensive yet impactful improvements to the public works building at Ficke Park. Thanks go to Councilman Franklin Wilson for continuously advocating for the drinking fountain, and to Vice Mayor Mark Quarry for assisting the Village with obtaining a \$5,000 Baseball for Tomorrow grant through the Cincinnati Reds.

The Village also engaged the public in planning for a new Veterans Plaza at Silverton Park. In July of 2015, over 25 residents participated in a design plan review on site. The participating veterans spanned a wide range of service eras, including: World War II, the Korea War, Vietnam, Desert Storm, and Operation Enduring Freedom. Veterans who attended served in the Army, Navy, Marine Corp, Coast Guard, and even one who served in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corp in World War II. The resident feedback improved the project, but increased its costs as well. Having obtained \$100,000 grant for the project, the Village sought a private donation to pay for the balance.

In December, the Village was told that a private individual generously agreed to contribute an additional \$100,000 to the project and Council awarded the construction contract at its December 10 meeting. The project will start in the winter of 2016 and will be completed before Memorial Day in 2016.

Park Summary

Two important and long-sought projects—the restoration of the baseball diamond at Ficke Park and the construction of a Veterans Plaza at Silverton Park—were substantially advanced in 2015. The baseball diamond was completed, and the Veterans Plaza was planned, funded, and bid in 2015. Silverton should also be very proud about building a playground which, by its very design, welcomes special needs children. Silverton is, above all else, about inclusivity, and our community can be proud that this has broadened to include all children, regardless of physical ability.

Branding

The final Council goal—branding—is the goal with the greatest opportunity to make big strides in the upcoming year. Branding is the process of raising the visibility and recognition of the Village of Silverton's name, logo, and community assets within our region and within our community itself. Council members know Silverton has many fine assets that make this a special place to live. Silverton's well-built homes, legacy of inclusion, convenience, safety, walkability, and rich history make this a wonderful place to raise a family. Because we are small, though, we are not well known. Through branding, we will make our current residents more aware of the special features in our community and invite prospective residents to move to our community. Below are several steps the Village has taken to advance the branding goal in 2015.

1. In May, the Village installed new street banners on Montgomery Road and Plainfield Road to make the motoring public aware of when one enters or leaves Silverton.
2. In June, Silverton hosted its first “Taste of Silverton” event with Meier’s Winery. This event was very well received, and featured live music and food from five of our finest restaurants. Plans are already underway for next year’s second annual Taste event.
3. In February, the Village began sending out weekly electronic newsletters called the e-Connector. Approximately 100 individuals have signed up for this free and timely service.
4. Silverton hosted four monthly curbside chat meetings where Village Council and staff meet with residents on selected streets on summer evenings. The Village also continued to publish *The Silverton Circle*, a quarterly newsletter launched in 2014.
5. In November, Silverton engaged a consultant to assist the Village with social media, branding plans, business promotion, and other activities. Silverton will be launching a Facebook page in January.

This goal will be more important in the coming months because of our major redevelopment project planned to get underway in 2016. I believe it is time that the broader region discover or rediscover what Silverton has to offer because this is truly a special place to call home.

Other Issues

The above report speaks to the goals and objectives Council set for 2015, yet Village activities were not limited to these goals only. Below are several other issues of note.

Energy Aggregation

Council implemented a natural gas and electricity aggregation program following voter approval of this initiative in November of 2014. The aggregation programs were launched in April of 2015. In the first six months of the program this year, Silverton’s aggregation programs saved residents and small businesses just under \$100,000 on utilities. This program was launched by the Village not for the Village’s benefit, but to save our hard-working residents and small businesses money.

Personnel

Police Chief Bruce Molett was the last Silverton Police Department employee when he retired in April of 2015. The Silverton Police Department proudly served this community for 110 years. While our service model for law enforcement has now changed, I am sure all will agree that Chief Molett ensured the transition to Hamilton County was done with dignity, integrity, and efficiency. I personally am grateful for his service, as well as the service of all the other Silverton police professionals who preceded him.

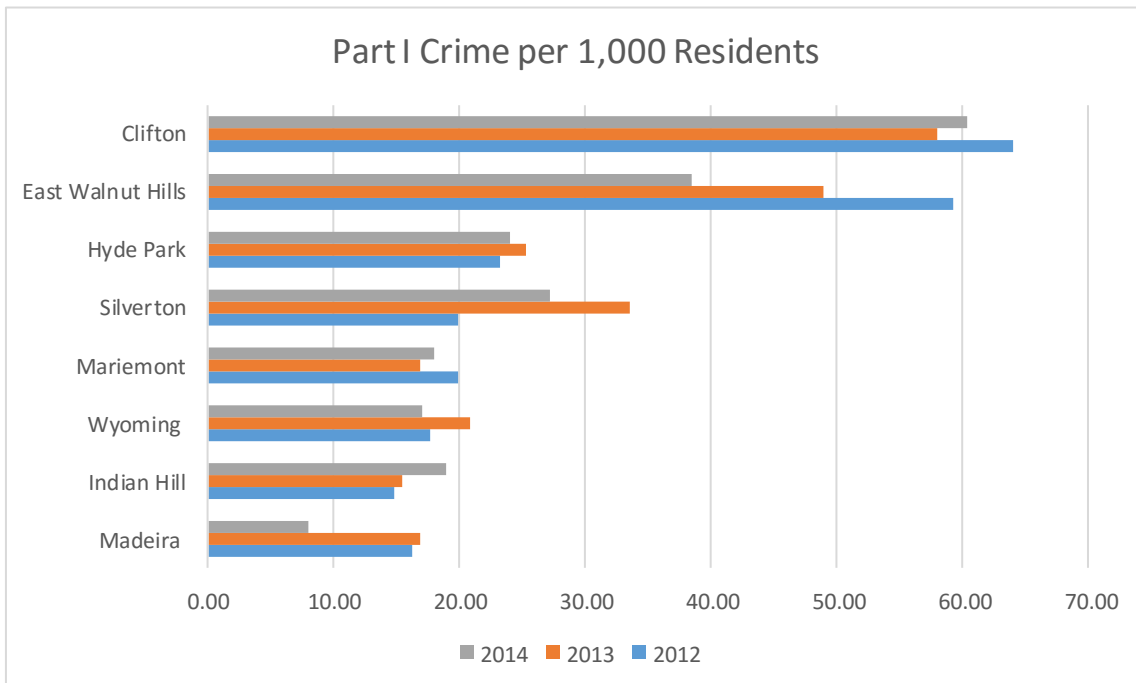
The Village hired a new Finance Director, Patricia Wirthlin, in February. Since joining the team, she has found a number of ways to reduce the Finance office’s costs (e.g. cash basis financial reports, better software for less money, etc.). She has quickly developed a veteran’s understanding of our finances, mentored our interns, and challenged us to find ways to save money in several key areas. She has helped Council by providing timely, complete, and readable quarterly financial statements in 2015.

Silverton also engaged four bright, college-aged interns at various times in 2015. Juwana Brown was Silverton’s first SWEL intern in 2014, and she continued to serve over the 2014-2015 academic year. She left us when she graduated from Xavier University in May, and is now working for a non-profit organization in Cincinnati. Tori Knueven, a junior at Ohio University studying journalism, assisted Silverton with the data conversion to our new financial software in April and May. Jazmine Johnson was Silverton’s second SWEL intern, and left our service when she returned to Clark Atlanta University for her junior year. And Connor Wood, a pre-law student at the University of Cincinnati, is working on a part-time basis during the 2015-2016 academic year. Silverton has been fortunate to hire such capable young professionals, and through grants and demonstrated cost savings they have implemented, their wages in 2015 were more than paid for.

Law Enforcement

This was the first complete year of service for all law enforcement functions by the Hamilton County Sheriff’s Office. One of the ways we will be measuring the overall success of our partnership will be to examine what is commonly referred to as Part I crime. Part I crime is reported to the FBI using standard definitions. Part I crime consists of the following serious offenses: murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, breaking and entering, theft/larceny, and motor vehicle theft. These are the generally agreed upon crimes that are most serious in nature and which adversely impact residential quality of life. By dividing annual total Part I crimes by 1,000 residents, we can make apples-to-apples comparisons to larger or smaller communities.

The chart below captures 2012 to 2014 data collected from public records requests of selected communities.



One can see that, in 2013, Silverton was experiencing a rather sharp increase in Part I crime. This is correlated with the loss in personnel the Silverton Police Department was experiencing that year. One can see that Part I crime in Silverton dropped in 2014, a trend correlated with the transition of

law enforcement functions to the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office. It is not clear that there is a causal relationship between what law enforcement does or doesn't do and Part I crime, but it is very positive that the spike in Part I crime Silverton experienced in 2013 was reversed the next year. We should have final 2015 statistics in the coming weeks for Silverton, and staff will gladly compare these to other selected neighborhoods or communities in our region.

Tree Giveaway

The Urban Forestry Board launched a new program in 2015, providing residents free trees. The Village recognizes that our urban tree canopy faces many challenges, and we must start replanting trees now to benefit the next three or four generations of residents. More than 45 trees were delivered to Silverton households, and the Village assisted with the planting of approximately half of these. This program will continue and expand in 2016.

Belkenton Avenue Rezoning

A considerable amount of time and resources were devoted in 2015 to the review of an application for rezoning for a 5.198 acre site at 6760 Belkenton Drive, the former St. Theresa's care facility. Because this is the subject of an active lawsuit, this matter will not be addressed at length in this report. Silverton does look forward to being vindicated in court in 2016.

Conclusion

As 2015 draws to a close, I believe Mayor Smith and Council can rightfully be proud of the progress we made on our goals. It is an absolute honor and blessing to work for this Council, to serve the Silverton community, and to work side by side with such outstanding women and men as we have in our organization.

I believe firmly that our best days are before us.