

1850-'75 1875-1900 '00

People,  
Wright Bros,  
Duckworth, P...  
William...  
"I'll never lose hope in our community. We are strong people, and we have pride. We will overcome." -Resident

Jan  
Riv. D

Accomplishments,  
Innovations,  
Creativity

Poetry, Art

Flis

"It's time we changed our story. What people outside of West Dayton think about us isn't the truth. We are so much more than what people see on the news."

-Resident

Milestones,  
Events

Show  
1913 F

Sense of Place,  
Spirit

- '25	'25- '50	'50- '70	'70- '80	'80-
T. S. A. Parsons De Soto Buss	Melvin Edwards Mabel Evans Lelia Mrs Francis	Judge Russell Luther Carter Roy McCarver Marshall Rock Jones	Bing Davis → Lloyd Lewis	
Art, Art	Art CLASSIC PALACE THEATRES NightLife on Fifth → + Bank St.	Stainless Steel	Art, Funk Music Blues Music Classic + R+B RB Funk	Art, Mus R+B
Cleaners Food	GM, Delco De Soto Buss McCalls		Factories close closes	
	Dorton uplifting, booming, healthy Linden Center - cultural center SWATS CWB		Economy worsens	Decline, blight

## Chapter 5

# Identity

“What you hear on the news isn’t a true reflection of who we are. We are so much more than that.” -Resident

“If we can change our image, people will have a better sense of belonging to something. Now is the time to do that.” -Resident

“History is on our side. So many great things have come from this neighborhood – musicians, artists and inventors – we’ve got to start telling the story from the African American perspective.” -Resident

## Chapter 5

# Identity

### The community is proud of the neighborhood, and others recognize it as a positive place.

Throughout this planning process, residents have expressed their concern regarding the overall negative perception of West Dayton generally and of public housing residents specifically. Many people who live in West Dayton are proud of their community and its history and easily recall fond memories of what it once was. West Fifth Street was once the cultural center of West Dayton, with theaters, music clubs, and restaurants, and Germantown St. was a thriving business district. The area was home to artists, poets, inventors, laborers, and business leaders, all of whom made contributions to the region, state, and country. There is even a home that was part of the Underground Railroad that moved slaves from the south to free states north.

Abundant employment opportunities also existed in West Dayton during the peak of the manufacturing heyday. These manufacturing jobs allowed residents to make good wages and to take care of their families, own their own home, send their children to college, and retire with financial security. In conversations, especially with older residents, there is concern that this legacy will be lost.



Capturing stories from residents at Community Cookout.

While West Dayton does face its share of crime, that crime is only a piece of the community's story. Unfortunately, the negative press outweighs positive news, particularly in Greater Miami Chapel. This negatively impacts the future of West Dayton and its ability to attract new residents and to grow the job base. It also feeds a sense of despair and concern among residents that they are fighting an uphill battle regarding their image.

Progress toward the goals, objectives, and activities of this chapter has begun with the support of Choice Action Funding.

### **Goal 1:** Provide an opportunity for residents to tell their own story and rebrand their community.

Through conversations with community residents, it is clear that they have a great sense of pride, strength, and perseverance. They do not want to be defined by the decline of the last several decades. Instead they are ready to push forward toward a new beginning – a new normal.

Senior residents of DeSoto Bass have fond memories of the sense of community they once had in their neighborhood. Over the years, some feel that this sense of community has been lost and that “outsiders” have shaped the perceptions and community brand. During extensive community outreach, a theme of wanting to take back the brand or story of the area emerged. Residents understand that they have a voice in shaping and telling their story. Developing an authentic and genuine brand story will give people a sense of belonging and purpose, and building capacity around telling this story will begin to counter-balance

the negative narrative that currently drives perceptions. Enhancing the brand and sense of community will positively affect the success of the transformation plan.

**Objective 1:** Create a West Dayton “brand” with the community.

The Great Miami River not only physically divides the City of Dayton into a western side and an eastern side, but also creates a cultural and racial divide. “West Dayton” is a both a term of pride and divisiveness. Reshaping the narrative and establishing a positive identity will lead to the long-term success of the transformation plan. Working with the community to capture their voice and vision of the future is integral to the success of developing a West Dayton brand that can instill and fortify pride in the community. Furthermore, creating positive associations with West Dayton will help shape the narrative in ways that will begin to change perceptions throughout the region. The West Dayton brand will be defined by the people and be crafted into a story that can be told in a consistent manner, resulting in a new narrative. A community brand becomes a rallying point – a catalyst – a battle cry of sorts. It becomes a stake in the ground that creates a sense of belonging and purpose and contributes to the sense of pride and hope for people, replacing fear with optimism.



Example of other Dayton area murals

## Activities

1. Engage a marketing professional who works directly with residents and community stakeholders to facilitate the development of a story and brand that captures the essence of Greater Miami Chapel.
2. Develop a Neighborhood Branding Kit that describes the story and establishes a common visual language, including logos, fonts, colors, etc.
3. Develop a targeted early activation plan for storytelling that shapes future efforts and brings positive attention to the community.
4. Develop a communication plan that helps to share and advance rebranding efforts with external stakeholders and media outlets.

**Goal 2:** Use public art and placemaking to preserve history, express community vision and to positively impact outside perceptions.

Dayton, specifically West Dayton, has a thriving arts and culture environment. Many prominent artists call Dayton home, and their skills, talents and experience can be harnessed to help tell the West Dayton story and the Renew Miami Chapel vision through public art. Public art is intended to express the residents’ collective dreams for their community and to bring attention to and activate underutilized sites that have development potential.

**Objective 1:** Use public art opportunities to enhance the branding efforts.

The City of Dayton is embracing the emergence of murals throughout the city. While primarily focused downtown, murals have started popping up in many locations on both publicly and privately controlled infrastructure.



Vision for Germantown and Broadway intersection (partially funded)

In Greater Miami Chapel, murals and other forms of public art will be used to change the public narrative about the area; to revitalize spaces; to improve the first impressions along Germantown Corridor; and to catalyze further corridor improvements. Public art in Greater Miami Chapel will be used to tell a story about the community that is driven by residents and to change the way targeted spaces are viewed by both residents and visitors to the area. As the brand guidelines are developed, artists can consider how their art could capture the spirit of the brand to help reinforce the narrative.

### Activities

1. Partner with the Dayton Visual Arts Center, City of Dayton, Sinclair Community College, and residents to develop a series of murals in highly-visible locations.
2. Through a community-driven process, select artists to create a cohesive narrative along the Germantown corridor that tells the story of the community and, as one resident put it “celebrates the past while looking to the future.”

**Objective 2:** Use public infrastructure projects as placemaking opportunities to enhance the branding efforts.

Along Interstate 75, in the more affluent suburban areas, interchanges are being transformed into placemaking opportunities. Where one could previously only find grass, concrete, and the typical blue or green highway signs, these interchanges have interesting landscaping, native grasses, hardscaping, and identity signage that help to create a sense of place, public pride and consumer confidence. These placemaking efforts do not only happen around highways: in neighborhoods, they happen through coordinated street lighting geared to the pedestrian scale, generous tree lawns, street trees, gateway signage, and street furniture. In Greater Miami Chapel, these types of physical branding elements will be developed in coordination with the brand guidelines as further reinforcement of the brand.

### Activities

1. Work with City of Dayton Civil Engineers and the Ohio Department of Transportation to incorporate placemaking efforts into infrastructure projects at highway interchange and major intersections.
2. Work with other project partners to identify additional sources of leverage to better position these projects for public funding.
3. Work with other project partners to identify opportunities to further the goals; for example, partners can incorporate signage and wayfinding into planned bike route extensions and key corridors.

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**Goal 1.** Provide an opportunity for residents to tell their own story and rebrand their community.

	Metrics	Lead Agency/Partners	Timeframe	Leverage Resources
<b>Objective 1.</b> Create a West Dayton “brand” with the community.	Community consensus on brand concept along with activation plan.	Align 2 Market Resident Leaders CityWide	ST	Choice Action Funding WDDF
	Neighborhood Branding Kit developed.	Align 2 Market Neighborhood Assoc. COD	ST	City of Dayton Mini Grant

**Goal 2.** Use public art and placemaking to preserve history, express community vision and to positively impact outside perceptions.

<b>Objective 1.</b> Use public art opportunities to enhance the branding efforts.	Four murals created in the GMC development area.	CityWide GMC Arts Committee	ST	Choice Action Funding DDF Private Philanthropy
<b>Objective 2.</b> Use public infrastructure projects as placemaking opportunities to enhance the branding efforts.	Add placemaking elements to all transportation projects proposed for GMC	COD CityWide	ST, MT, LT	Private Philanthropy Choice Partners

