

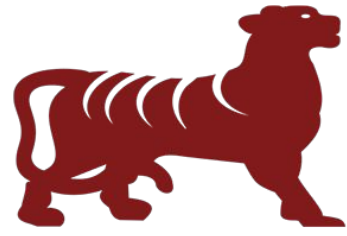
Rediscover  
**DEER PARK**

# COVID-19 Impact Framework Plan

December 2020 - February 2021







*Red Tiger Investments, LLC*

**Red Tiger Investments** focuses on inspiring catalytic economic development through planning, real estate, public- private partnerships and collaboration. We imagine and create catalytic strategies for economic prosperity.



**KEI™** is a research and insight institute. Our strategy is to use data analytics to measure the positive impact of place on people, with the ultimate goal to drive better business results.

# Executive Summary

Kolar Experience Institute and Red Tiger Investments were engaged to develop a COVID-19 Impact: Framework Plan for the Blue Ash Road Business Corridor. The plan includes data-driven analysis on the impact from COVID-19 from the businesses, the residents and city perspectives.

Recommendations include methodologies for Civic Brand Building-- placemaking, gateways, wayfinding and celebrating unique community assets to drive economic recovery.

The plan concludes with a Business District Activation Program that uses proven methods to create an environment attractive to end-users by crafting the process around existing regional industries and economic opportunities that Deer Park possess a clear “right to win” in the marketplace.



# Key Findings & Recommendations

**Businesses have been hit hard by COVID and could benefit from financial stimulus, delivery adaptations, and synergistic revenue boosts.**

Businesses and landlords in Deer Park will experience continued layoffs and further economic decline if nothing changes. Deer Park leadership should strategically identify businesses that add to its future vibrancy and desired business mix in order to provide prioritized assistance.

Most businesses that are hurting, were already hurting prior to the economic downturn. Businesses have a sense of complacency and are focused on surviving the short term rather than looking to the future.

As part of the prioritization process, Deer Park should insist on a mindset shift of current businesses with the assistance of the business association. This will help Deer Park leadership identify businesses on the trajectory for recovery and vibrancy.

Assistance could look like the following:

- Knowledge of and application assistance for business grants
- Business Association initiatives aimed at developing opportunities to innovate or adapt for future community conditions in order to create additional revenue streams
- Synergistic partnerships among current and future businesses

“

*[Deer Park's priority should be] bringing in new "different" businesses. We have plenty of barber shops / salons. We desperately need more food and entertainment options. Residents are going to Kenwood, Blue Ash and Cincinnati for those*

”



**3 in 5**

*businesses are concerned about closing permanently if economic decline continues.*



Photo by Tim Mossholder on Unsplash



# Key Findings & Recommendations

**“Family”, “Together” and “Neighborly” should be expressed through all implementations of revitalization. Deer Park needs a clear civic identity and storytelling in order to reveal its differentiator and create a sense of place.**

Deer Park will be at its most vibrant when its differentiation of “a place for families to grow” is made apparent. Deer Park’s story needs to be explored, refined and told through brand activation and placemaking. Rather than trying to replicate the look and feel of vibrant, nearby cities, Deer Park must make it evident that the commercial, residential, and public spaces in the city are for all kinds of families-- those just starting out and those who have been in Deer Park for generations. Thus, attention should be paid to new businesses recruitment and public placemaking in order to fit the local flavor.

## **Promote Deer Park as one of the safest communities in the region.**

Deer Park is one of the safest small cities in Ohio. This is a clear differentiator from its three most competitive business districts: (i) Silverton; (ii) Pleasant Ridge; and (ii) Madisonville. Deer Park should continue to promote its strong safety attributes. There should be a concentrated focus on continuing to provide a safe environment for the community and businesses through youth recreation opportunities and programming. Keeping it’s identifier as one of the safest places in the region is paramount to Deer Park’s differentiator of family-orientation.



Credit: Deer Park Community City Schools Facebook

“

*Focus on attracting and **KEEPING** young families. [I] would love to see...events for young children...upgrades to playground/park, [and attraction of] business for young families*

”

# 42%

of survey respondents reported that “events / things to do in Deer Park” were **poor or very poor**

# 100%

of prospective Deer Park business owners surveyed view the community as **family-oriented**.





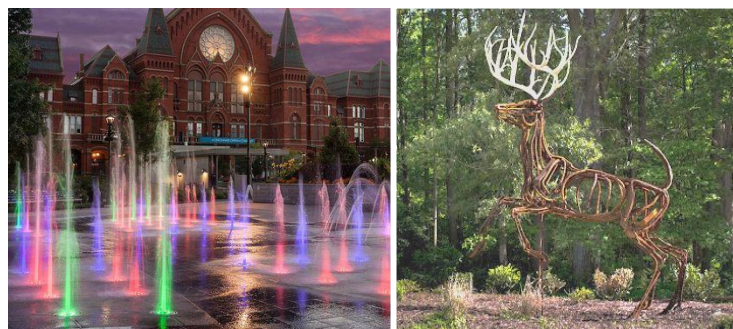
# Key Findings & Recommendations

## Optimize Chamberlain Park to become the primary gathering hub of the City.

Children and teens need safe and entertaining activities for after-school in addition to spaces in which to gather for these activities. The following are resident-suggested ideas for safe and fun gatherings: biking and walking trails, after-school park events, a community pool, recreational center, and ice cream parlors/trucks.

## Energize Chamberlin Park to attract new businesses and create increased pedestrian foot traffic for existing businesses.

With its proximity to the Business Corridor, Chamberlin Park is primed to be a catalytic node for commerce and civic identity building. A successful business corridor will need to connect Deer Park businesses, recreation amenities, civic facilities and cultural resources by integrating walkable and pedestrian friendly-pathways and bike paths. Chamberlin Park is one of Deer Park's greatest assets. Enhancements to the park should be made to compliment corridor revitalization and emphasize civic identity and storytelling.



Engaging Public Art



Celebrating Together



Pop-Up Local Vendors



Civic Performance Venue



# Key Findings & Recommendations

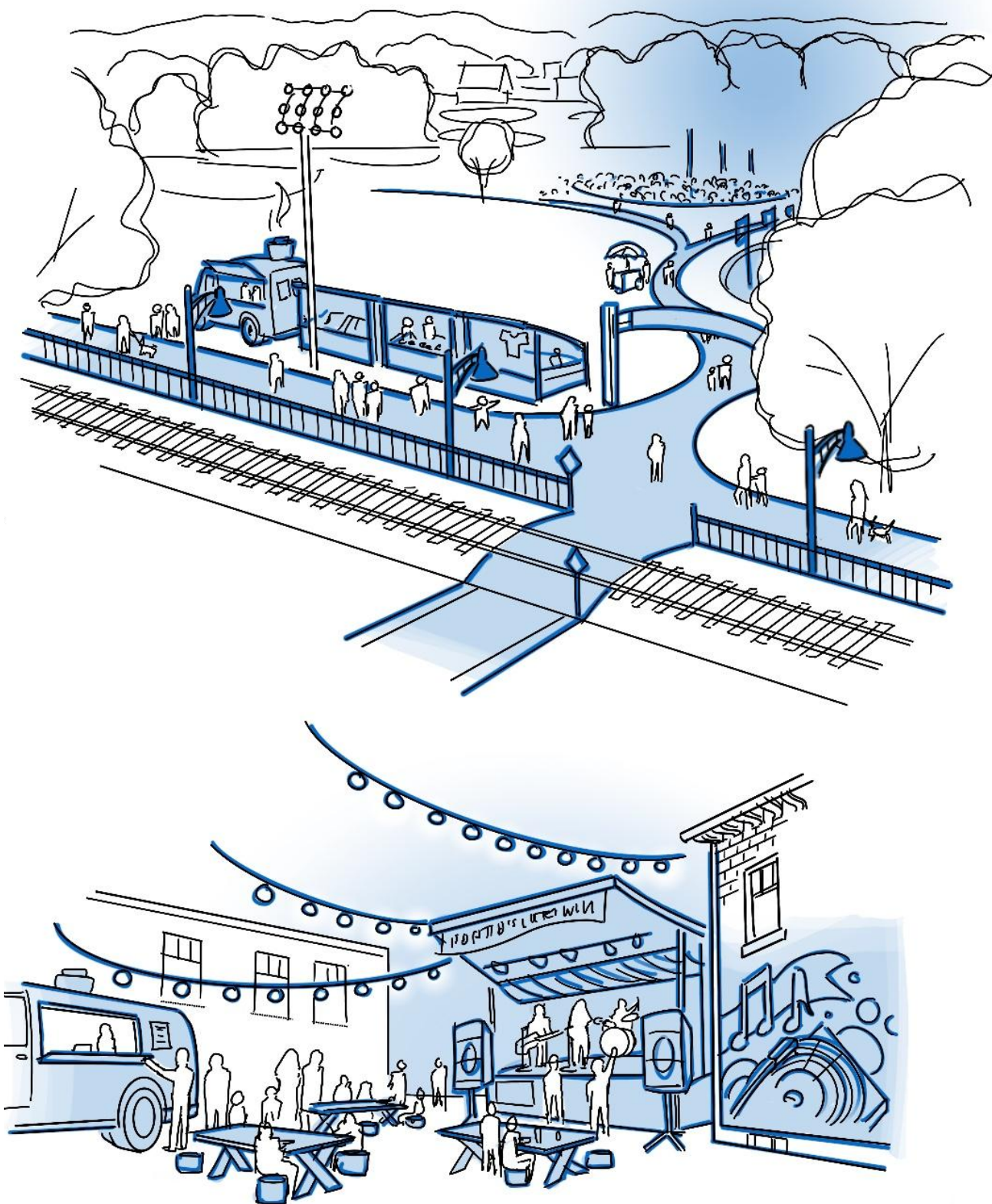
## **Position Deer Park as the leading destination for start ups and second-stage companies.**

Being near both Kenwood and Blue Ash—the top suburban office markets in the region—the Business Corridor is already well-suited for this task. Second stage companies are defined as those that have advanced past the startup stage but have not reached maturity. Focusing on these types of companies will allow Deer Park to attract, support, retain and grow successful startups and second stage companies that want to be near Blue Ash and Kenwood but can't afford the rent.

## **Use localism as a key driver to create an authentic experience and make Deer Park a destination that stands apart from competing business districts.**

Locally-owned business have historically been the backbone of small business districts. People continue to “buy local” and often prefer small business over chain or national stores. Localism is a developing trend and economic development model centered on the community, small business, essential jobs, and responsible corporate citizenship. At the core of localism, too, is recruiting, supporting and growing startups and second-stage businesses.

“ I would like to see more small businesses , local shopping, and also beautification of sidewalks and corners ”



Sketches for Educational and Conceptual purposes only



Red Tiger Investments, LLC

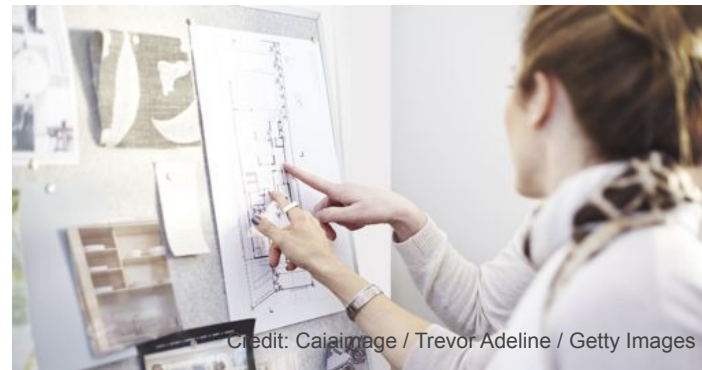
kolar  
experience  
Institute™



# Key Findings & Recommendations

## Explore making the Business Corridor a “Makers Market & Arts” Destination.

A growing trend in small business corridors is focusing on becoming a “destination district” where synergistic startups, shops, restaurants, bars and industries cluster and connect. Comparable districts include the Reading Bridal District, Loveland’s Historic Downtown District, Old Milford and OTR Gateway. La Terza Coffee, an artisan coffee and espresso roasterie that specializes in freshly and expertly roasted coffee beans, approached Deer Park about locating and serving as an anchor to a Deer Park “Makers Market,” focusing on food manufacturing, retail, entrepreneurship, shared business systems and a business innovation center. An energized Chamberlin Park could serve as an anchor for an arts themed business district where creative businesses, including art galleries, designers, architects, painters, marketing firms and others could locate with other boutique shops, restaurants, and entertainment venues.





# Key Findings & Recommendations

## **Continue strengthening the relationship with HCDC Business Center and other locally based accelerators and incubators.**

This strategy will allow Deer Park to attract, support, retain and grow successful startups already in the region, many that have emerged out of the HCDC Business Incubator and other locally-based accelerators and incubators.

## **Focus on emerging and post-COVID industries, to attract millennials and well-paying jobs that will support the growth of quality housing, retail, local businesses, mixed-use housing, and other amenities in the community.**

Post COVID-19 industries such as pharmaceuticals, food manufacturing, healthcare and other “essential” products and services are likely to prosper. Increased domestic productions of these products and services are likely to be on-shored and relocated to the U.S. Given that over 28% of employed Deer Park residents are in the healthcare and manufacturing industries, Deer Park is positioned to attract businesses in these industries that can provide employment for its residents.

## **Place emphasis on attracting young entrepreneurs and empty-nesters to the Business Corridor through distinctive gathering spaces.**

As reported in the Blue Ash Road Corridor Market Analysis (2018), future Deer Park residents are likely to come from young first-time home buyers (single and married) and downsizing seniors; this coupled with the higher living cost in Kenwood and Blue Ash, provide Deer Park the opportunity to become a destination for young professionals and empty-nesters, both of whom are gravitating more towards walkable urban environments for both home and work. Furthermore, businesses desire to locate and invest in cities with a young workforce. Deer Park should focus on creating a vibrant and walkable district with restaurants, bars, shops and interesting places to live.



*Sketches for Educational and Conceptual purposes only*



# Key Findings & Recommendations

## **Strengthen the relationship between Deer Park Community Schools and local businesses to create mutual benefit.**

Deer Park Schools are a source of entertainment and connection throughout the city. Having its own school district is a major differentiator for Deer Park as it also has a walkable business district and is likely to attract young entrepreneurs looking to start a family. Deer Park schools are the cornerstone of the community. Local business partnerships can play a crucial role by offering internships, apprenticeships, and mentoring opportunities to help students explore career options and develop technical skills for their future.





# Key Findings & Recommendations

## **Maximize the CIC's power through issuing bonds, acquiring properties and establishing public private partnerships.**

Deer Park should continue to evaluate CIC membership and add the proper private-sector participation. Private-sector members should add invaluable professional expertise and capacity. The CIC should be a powerful conduit for advancing, encouraging and promoting the advancement of the Business Corridor. Deer Park should explore ways the CIC can be used to control strategic properties to advance “game changing” projects.

## **The Business Association should take an active and progressive approach to revitalization.**

The current Business Association could take a more targeted approach to helping businesses, providing marketing, small matchmaking procurement, and identification synergistic partnerships in both the public and private sector. Additionally, the Business Association should take an active role in the Chamberlin Park Commercial initiatives, such as providing coordination and implementation efforts to get “appropriate” businesses slated into pop ups for the right events.



Credit: Deer Park Veteran Memorial | [www.deerpark-oh.gov](http://www.deerpark-oh.gov)





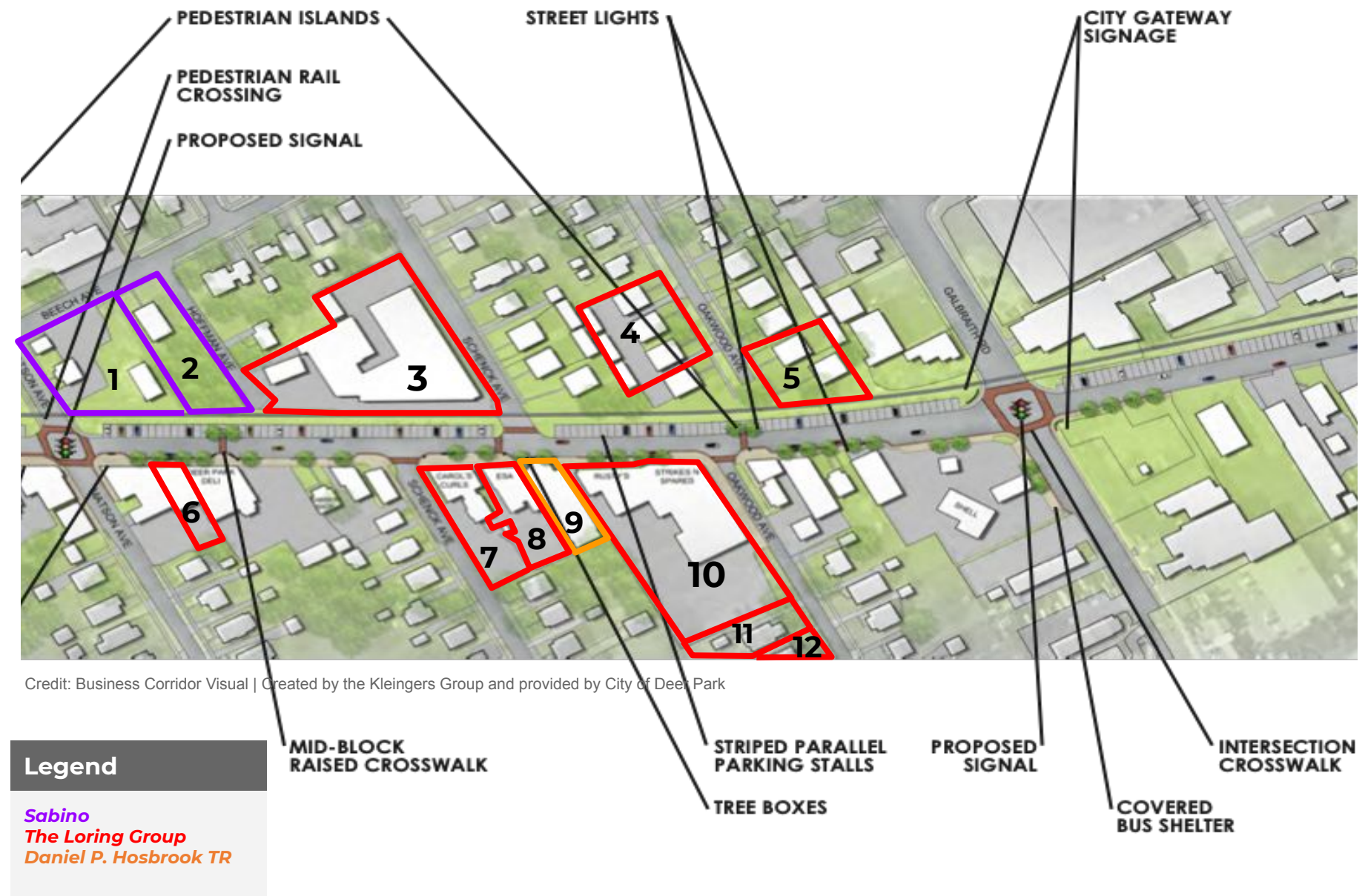
# Key Findings & Recommendations

**Given the lack of developable land along the Business Corridor suitable for a site large enough for a catalytic development, Deer Park should serve as a market intermediary to coalesce property owners for the cohesive planning, marketing and implementation of a “game changing” project.**

Developers are vastly sensitive to minimizing risk related to site development and zoning. Parcel consolidation and demolition of existing buildings will be prerequisites to any new substantial Deer Park development. The Business Corridor revitalization requires focused investment in a concentrated, walkable urban area. A catalytic project will help reshape the Business Corridor and spur additional growth. Deer Park’s northern gateway is primed to be a collaborative business district. The adjacent property owned by the Sabino’s and The Loring Group on the west and east sides of Blue Ash Rd., provides the density for such a project. Both the Sabino’s and The Loring Group are amenable to collaborating on a development plan. The immediate next step is for the aforementioned along with Deer Park, La Terza Coffee and other potential end-users is to enter a memorandum of understanding (MOU) memorializing their intent to work together and the related process.

**Deer Park should explore ways the CIC can be used to control strategic properties to advance “game changing” projects.**

A key property that the CIC should initially focus on is the former Strikes and Spares bowling alley (10) which is in process of being demolished.





# Key Findings & Recommendations

## **Deer Park should explore synergistic opportunities of collaboration with adjacent jurisdictions.**

Due to the impact of COVID-19, smaller municipalities, cities and suburbs have become more reliant on state and federal funding. Adjacent cities and suburbs are critically and synergistically connected to Deer Park. By displaying a unified front to the state and federal governments, these smaller municipalities can increase their chances for greater funding and support for regional projects. Deer Park should explore opportunities for collaboration with adjacent jurisdictions such as Silverton, Dillonvale and Sycamore Township.



Credit: Aerials | Hamilton County Auditor On-Line

“

*Filling the Dillonvale shopping center with new businesses and restructuring the businesses on Blue Ash Road would change the entire face of Deer Park*

”



# Implementation

## Implementation Priorities

### 1. Brand Story Development + Chamberlin Park Masterplan & Activation

- Brand Story and Brand Guidelines
- Park programming, concept plans, and marketing efforts
- Concepts and plans that can act as an aide in recruiting new businesses

#### INCLUDES:

- Planning of utilities, fountains, plantings, infrastructure, performance centers, wayfinding, etc.

### 2. Catalytic Project Concept Plan

- Assumes acquisition of the Bowling Alley

#### INCLUDES:

- Clarification / Ideation Community Engagement



Credit: Shutterstock