



INTRODUCTION



“Democracy is built on the ability of its citizens to share and discuss ideas. Many political scientists believe Americans have lost the ability to have civil discourse. Too often the merits of an idea are not discussed. Nothing demonstrates democracy in action better than citizens joining together to discuss a problem and to find solutions.”

- David Burton, MU Extension

Writing a Master Plan

The people of Herculaneum have mounted a Herculean effort to overcome the tragic dichotomy that has befallen this once idyllic community: a benevolent industry that has sustained the community for over one hundred years, whose product has harmed the most innocent – the children. Even though federal and state government agencies are actively involved in the situation, the residents know it is up to them to create the Herculaneum they want for the future – the government cannot do it for them. Regular citizens have had to pull themselves up from the depths of despair to become the defenders and advocates for their children, their homes, their livelihoods and their community. The struggle has been long and difficult, but the people of Herculaneum are up to the challenge and will “stay the course” until their City has overcome its adversities and moved forward to become the regional leader it was meant to be.

The Herculaneum Community Master Plan has been written by the people, for the people and for future generations who call Herculaneum “home”. In March 2005, Mayor John Chamis and the Herculaneum Board of Alderpersons contracted the University of Missouri Extension Service to help the community write this Master Plan. B.J. Eavy, MU Extension Community Development Specialist began working in June 2005 with a steering committee of Herculaneum residents who spearheaded the effort. During the nine-months of work, there were numerous committee meetings, two Town Hall meetings, and a community survey created to determine what the interests and concerns are of the community at large. Information from community meetings held with Herculaneum Today & Tomorrow (HT&T) was also included in the work of this committee. When all the information from the research was compiled the following were the issues residents determined as priorities for Herculaneum to address in the next ten years.



It is not the intention of this committee to try to dictate policy to the leadership of Herculaneum, rather to make recommendations. It is understood that the Board of Alderpersons must determine what is best for the entire community and must be fiscally responsible. Therefore, once the Plan is approved, the recommendations will be prioritized, beginning with what the community and leadership consider most critical for Implementation, and whether funding is available. This is a “Living Document” and will be reviewed regularly to be certain it is always accurate and current.

These are the basis for this master plan and its recommendations:

- Contamination & the Buyout Zone
- Economic Development
- Education
- Government
- Infrastructure
- Land Use (Planning & Zoning)
- Public Safety
- Quality of Life
- Tourism & Identity

Within each of these broad categories were many specific details. The reports on each of these categories were written by several of the steering committee members with editing for inclusion in the completed document by B.J. Eavy. The steering committee includes:

Mike Abram	Chris Baker	Sarah Baker
Bill Haggard	Gary Hartmann	Dan Henke
Jim Kasten	Ken Marler	Larry O’Leary
Pat Parsons	Mike Peterein, Sr.	Sally Peterein
Chris Pigg	Gene Thompson	JoAnn Thompson
Leslie Warden	Shirley Williams	

Recent History

With people like these as residents of Herculaneum, the First Capital of Jefferson County will not fall to the circumstances that surround it due to the concerns about lead; rather it will rise out of the dust of potential destruction, taking its place in the 21st Century. This same “Phoenix” phenomenon happened in Herculaneum in 1840 when the town was rebuilt from a “ghost town” into the leader of commerce it became.

Doe Run is what it is, a lead smelting plant. As a result of the smelting process, there are toxic byproducts and waste. Lead and other heavy metals have been spewed into the environment, the air, the water, and the soil at toxic levels for years due to this process. This causes a terrible conundrum for everyone. Doe Run and its predecessors have resided in Herculaneum for over one hundred years, providing City tax revenue, employment, housing, and other social amenities; they have been a big part of the community. They have contributed immensely to the “soul” of the community and helped define Herculaneum’s identity in the region.

When people began to realize that Herculaneum’s children were exhibiting signs of lead poisoning, a sense of panic, grief, and disbelief ensued; then began the great division of Herculaneum. Residents tried to find answers and those with small children just wanted

out, while others just wanted Doe Run out. Meanwhile, Doe Run went into a “Survival Mode”, trying to stay alive through all the controversy, bad press, environmental guidelines, and financial disaster. Weighing the financial costs against the environmental and community costs has to have been keeping Doe Run executives awake at night for a very long time.

A report from the committee working with “E²” will be added to the section titled “Contamination & the Buyout Zone” when their process is completed. This process is being undertaken by a steering committee of representatives from the community, Doe Run, and federal, state and local governmental agencies to determine the future use of the land surrounding the lead smelter.

Perhaps Herculaneum and Doe Run can come to a place where they can live together without a divorce, but it will require a great deal of work, expense, flexibility and caring on the part of Doe Run and a lot of patience, education, fortitude and strength on the part of the residents. The government agencies will be monitoring forever, but the residents will also need to be forever vigilant, and Doe Run will need to be forever transparent, cooperative, and very honest in its dealings with this community.

A House Divided

Herculaneum is divided both physically and emotionally in several ways, which can be overcome, but it will require time and valiant effort on the part of all residents, businesses, local government and the regional community to make it happen. Divisions that have been identified are listed here; there may be others:

- Doe Run stay or go; friend or foe; good neighbor or adversary?
- Old Town/New Subdivisions (East/West)
- Three school districts claim the families of Herculaneum and divide their loyalties.
- The economic base is weak; therefore, earnings of residents do not remain in Herculaneum. It is difficult to “Shop Herculaneum”.
- There is no sense of community and no gathering place for residents.
- There is competition, neighbor against neighbor, for limited resources.
- Old wounds of dislike or competition resurface between groups and individuals under the burden of the current stressful situation.

Much like the Civil War, “the house divided will fall”. Rather than staying together, united and strong through all the heartache, pain, disagreements, and sorrow, segments of Herculaneum have chosen to go their separate ways, which has resulted in loss of community, loss of a united vision, and loss of power.



One Vision/One Voice

Due to the contamination issues that have emerged in the last few years, many local, state and federal agencies, universities, and organizations have offered their help and resources to the City and its people. This assistance will go far to help Herculaneum residents do that which is necessary to improve such things as

infrastructure, economic development, tourism, contamination, entrepreneurship, quality of life, environmental design, and other social, political and economic issues. There are people from many places in the world and all walks of life who care about the future of Herculaneum.

In the 21st Century, Herculaneum has the opportunity to be the giant its name infers. That Herculean effort must continue and it must be done with one vision/one voice, so that Herculaneum will emerge triumphant in the end. This master plan is written for that purpose; to act as a guide when making decisions about the future of this fine City, whose history reverberates with the strength and vision of pioneers who met every challenge, never faltering, and established a City of trade and commerce on the mighty Mississippi River that helped to make possible the great country we know today as the United States of America. We can do no less today; we must move forward with the tenacity, determination and enthusiasm necessary to create the best Herculaneum ever known.