With election issues and holidays now concluded, Fonda Williams stated that Mayor Bernabei has given him the go ahead to move the Comprehensive Plan process forward for final legislative approval. Several steps will take place within the next few months. First, four new members will be appointed to the City Planning Commission to replace members who are not returning. Then, presentations of the Plan will be made to the Planning Commission and City Council members, respectively, in order to allow for discussion and have questions answered that may not have been previously addressed. City Council will have three readings of the ordinance before voting. During the same time frame as the above noted presentations are taking place, a roll out to the business community and community government officials is planned.

Although a number of questions were asked, and answered, following community meetings in July there were no significant changes proposed by citizens to the concepts of redevelopment and direction of strategies presented. The Plan’s contents have not changed since it was submitted by the CZB consulting firm to the City in August 2015.

The Comprehensive Plan carries importance for several reasons and its urgency of adoption critical. 1) It creates the blue print and
MARKET SQUARE to enter design phase

The Downtown Canton Special Improvement District (SID) continues to work with the city of Canton to develop a very special space in our center city. Canton City Council has passed an informal resolution supporting the Market Square development project in the amount of $2,000,000, contingent on the delivery of a design plan acceptable to the city.

In the meantime, the SID has been busy raising funds to be used for the soft costs associated with the project. Donations will be used for design, plans, surveys, etc. The SID has already raised $175,000 toward the effort, with a goal of $200,000 or more. Contributions have been received from the Rotary Club of Canton, Henry and Louise Timken Foundation, Hoover Foundation and the Stark Community Foundation.

The Market Square planning committee, consisting of the city of Canton and the SID, will begin meeting immediately in order to deliver a design scheme for Market Square. The committee will complete the design plan with the assistance of landscape architects, MKSK of Columbus, Ohio, during the winter months and hope to begin construction mid-2016.

Michael P. Gill
Vice President of Economic Development
Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce
February: First Friday gets frosty on February 5th as we celebrate Frosty Frolic. It may be cold outside, but we’ve got plenty of things to keep you warm. Stop in to Cultured Coffee for a hot beverage and the sounds of Saxy Rob. Duck into the Palace for a respite from the cold to catch the free flick, “Jack Frost.” Or, check out some hot smoking new art from the newly reopened Journey Studio and Snarky Art.

March: It’s time to March Forth on March 4th to support the arts in our community. It’s the official kickoff of the annual arts campaign and what better way to start than with First Friday? Make First Friday your first stop on your weekend full of arts activity. Start your night at 5pm at the Canton Museum of Art with free admission to their galleries and lots of fun activities. As you make your way downtown, stop in to the library for their mini maker faire. Head to the Arts District to see all that the arts are doing for our downtown.

April: It’s all about the mystery and we’ve got plenty of it as we celebrate Masquerade on April 1st. Come to the Arts District office to make your own mask. Stop in the galleries to see what new treats they have on display. And you won’t find a better meal anywhere than in our downtown at places like Lucca, Benders, or Basil.
The Escape Room
203 Market Avenue S
Escape Room Downtown opened Thanksgiving weekend in 2015 and is already booking up quickly! The Missing Detective’s Office is a “quest” room where guests search for clues in a themed room, working puzzles to attempt to solve the case of missing private eye Charlie Swope. Like the game Clue, guests will search for hidden answers and piece them together to find their way out of the room. The catch? Guests have 45 minutes to beat the game!

Open Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings, Escape Room Downtown accepts reservations online through their website: EscapeRoomDowntown.com and is located on Market Avenue S above the Canton Flower Shop.

Juilliard Arts Center 3rd Space Art Gallery
600 Market Avenue N
The 3rd Space Art Gallery, a project of the Juilliard Arts Center, is a collaboration of Plain Local, Canton Local and Canton City School Districts. The idea is that the space is a student-led, student-run Art Gallery featuring student work. In addition to the Gallery, the students can participate in and lead workshops in the classroom portion of the space.

The 3rd Space Art Gallery had its soft opening December 3, 2015, as part of Canton’s Light Up Downtown. The Gallery is initially open to the public on a limited basis but expanded hours are planned for the future. First Fridays will find the Gallery opening a new show each month featuring two and three-dimensional artwork created by students from all of the collaborating districts. Musical entertainment, drama, dance and spoken word performed by students will also be featured on these First Fridays. The visual work can also be viewed on Thursdays from 4:30–6:30 pm. The Juilliard Arts Center has the classroom space open during this time for free art activities. In addition to First Fridays and the Thursday night Art Activities, the Juilliard Arts Center currently offers Saturday morning classes covering various art techniques and topics. Follow Juilliard and Gallery offerings and activities by searching Juilliard Arts Center on Facebook.
**Just Imagine**  
201 Sixth Street NW  
Just Imagine Gift Gallery offers handcrafted art and gifts produced by adults with developmental disabilities. The gallery, which is operated by The Workshops, Inc., allows adult artisans with disabilities to discover their creative side and sell their products at affordable prices.

These individuals are offered the opportunity to learn, create and display original artwork. Just Imagine is an outlet for these artists to express themselves, create happiness, and share the final product with the general public. The gallery supplies the materials, and the artists provide the rest. A portion of all sales goes to the artists. Find them on Facebook at facebook.com/JustImagineGiftGallery, or stop by Mon-Fri 10:00 am – 5:00 pm.

**Print and Press**  
Opening Soon! 429 Fourth Street NW  
On Friday, May 6, not only will visitors to downtown Canton’s arts district enjoy a “Nifty 50s” themed First Friday celebration, but will mark the grand opening of Print & Press • Shop & Studios.

Two local maker brands—Little Chicago Clothing Co., run by Amy and Greg Eibel, and Letterpress Jess, run by Jess and Doug Bennett—will join forces to launch Print & Press, a combination of retail shop and fully-functioning printing studio, featuring handmade letterpress and screen printed goods on textiles and paper.

The front retail space will be transformed into a creative, eclectic boutique featuring paper goods from Letterpress Jess and wearable t-shirts and other creations from Little Chicago. In the future, the duo hopes to curate other product lines for sale within the shop, create collaborative products between the two brands, curate salon-style exhibits of regional artists and host workshops.

The shop will be open pop-up style at the February, March and April First Fridays from 6 to 10 pm while the boutique and workshop layouts are being finalized. Look for more details on the grand opening event online at LittleChicagoClothing.com and LetterpressJess.com.

**The Next Chapter Bookstore**  
Opening Soon! 310 Fourth Street NW  
Rising Hope – Canton, a Christ-centered community with a heart for the city of Canton, is opening The Next Chapter bookstore in the heart of the Arts District. The Next Chapter is a space where people of all backgrounds will be free to dream, learn, share, collaborate, encourage, inspire, think, grow and discover (or re-discover) themselves. The owners envision a space that provides the Canton community with curated content centered on the idea of “literature that leads us to goodness, beauty, and truth.” Visit Rising Hope at facebook.com/risinghopecanton.

**Twenty After Four**  
Opening Soon! 604 Sixth Street NW  
Looking for an artist space that offers something for everyone? Twenty After Four is your one-stop art gallery, studio, classroom, creative hangout, and tobacco products purveyor. Nolan Klein, who expects to open up shop this spring, plans to offer paintings, clothing, crochet items, wire-wrapped jewelry, crystals, a large selection of hemp products, and more. Oh, and if you’re interested in glass blowing, you can take classes on the premises, too. You can reach Twenty After Four / Nolan at twentyafterfourcanton@gmail.com.
strategic actions that recognize the reality of change needed to mitigate population loss, reduce increasing impoverishment, slow deteriorating neighborhoods in various areas of the City and increase the capacity of retaining and attracting jobs. 2) Nearby cities such as Akron, Green, Cleveland and reinvigorated Youngstown are following comprehensive plan type of strategies to strengthen their Downtowns and neighborhoods in order to make their communities more competitive and attractive for economic development.

Additionally, in a bigger picture, it creates a call for action by the entire area surrounding Canton to be cognizant of research that shows the fate of cities and their surrounding areas are interconnected. A Brookings Institution study showed that weak central cities and weak surrounding areas go hand in hand over time, and that central city decline and wide gaps between the economic health of cities and their suburbs are associated with slow income growth in the larger county wide area.

Moving forward, on the positive side corporate and community leaders who have seen the Plan appear ready to support it. Discussions with regional banks indicate that they are also eager to lend and invest in the broad effort of the Plan but are waiting for the presentation of the specific strategies to review. The Downtown Development Plan is already complete and contains recommendations for implementation. Its enhancement is one of Canton’s most valuable assets in attracting creative talent and economic development opportunities. The Hall of Fame Village, Market Square project and downtown living opportunities provide a strong basis from which to leverage and augment economic development.

We have many opportunities before us. Each day delayed in implementing the Comprehensive Plan is a lost opportunity for the City and County.

Showcase your local products at the 2016 Canton Farmers’ Market
JUNE 18 – OCTOBER 1

In 2015, The About Magazine “Local Faves” Award for Favorite Farmers’ Market went to our very own Canton Farmers’ Market, and we’re looking forward to its return every Saturday beginning in June!

The Canton Farmers’ Market offers a cornucopia of local produce, breads and baked goods, organic cheeses, grass-fed beef, and much, much more, including live music, local artists, health checks, organic gardening tips, and cooking demonstrations.

In order to assure an awesome experience for vendors, growers, and customers, details are still being finalized. More information and vendor applications will be on the website soon, so check it out at www.cantonfarmersmarket.com.

Please contact Erin Thompson, downtown events manager, at erint@cantonchamber.org or (330) 458-2072 with vendor inquiries.
How the Annual Arts Campaign is MAKING DOWNTOWN COOL
BY ROBB HANKINS, CEO, ARTSINSTARK

The 2016 Annual Arts Campaign (March 9 – May 25) will be chaired by Jim Porter, CEO/Publisher of The Repository. From March 9 to May 25 we’re going to raise $1.7 million and the Campaign supports downtown in many ways.

Here are five. 1) Campaign dollars help build the Canton Arts District which today has 26 art galleries and studios. 2) Funding from the Campaign fuels First Fridays and we’ve hosted more than 100 of those monthly parties. 3) Campaign monies have gone towards $3 million dollars in improvements to the Cultural Center for the Arts. 4) Downtown is ringed by elementary schools — all of them get grants from the Campaign so that our SmArts Program can integrate arts and academics. 5) Then there’s the Ballet and Symphony who both perform at the Palace. And Voices of Canton who performs at Timken High School.

Finally, there is Canton Museum of Art and the Players Guild Theatre who call the Cultural Center their home. All six of these major arts organizations are beneficiaries of the Campaign. Lots of good reasons for donating to the 2016 Annual Arts Campaign. Making downtown Canton cooler than ever — is one of the best.

SmArtSplash
Provides Free Family Fun

MARCH 5 FROM 10 AM - 2 PM

SmArtSplash, ArtsinStark’s free family fun event at The Cultural Center for the Arts, has been delighting area families for over 10 years! ArtsinStark, invites children (accompanied by adults) to enjoy a day at The Cultural Center for the Arts. This year’s event is inspired by the children’s book “Commotion in the Ocean.”

Live performances by the Canton Ballet, Big Pat, Saxy Rob, and Ballet le Reve will entertain amid booths set up with a “Commotion in the Ocean” theme that’s both fun and educational. The Massillon Museum, VOCI, Palace Theatre, and representatives from the SmArts schools will offer a wide variety of make and take projects including shell shakers, shark mouths, sea life duct tape puppets, starfish sand molds, and many more. Several collaborative projects are planned as well.

Participants in the K-5 SmArtSplash Art Show and Competition will have their artwork on exhibit in Wilkof Courtyard, with prizes being awarded for Best of Show and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners in the following age groups: K-1st grade, 2nd-3rd grade, and 4th-5th grade.

The Canton Museum of Art will offer free admission and will also be hosting a scavenger hunt. The Players Guild will be giving “Star-Studded Mini-Tours” and the Canton Symphony will offer a hands-on conducting experience on the main stage. Professional face painters and a balloon artist will also be part of the entertainment.

Hot dog! There will be yummy snacks and cool sips as well in the “Surf Shack” located in Cable Hall.

So grab some kids and bring them down to make a splash — a SmArtSplash.
More event information: DowntownCanton.com

The VERY best for your little ones:
YWCA Early Childhood Learning Center
ages six weeks to 11 years!

February First Friday
Canton Arts District
February 5

Comprehensive Plan
Brown Bag Lunch
Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce
February 18

March First Friday
Canton Arts District
March 4

SmArt Splash
Cultural Center for the Arts
March 5

April First Friday
Canton Arts District
April 1

Canton Charge
Canton Memorial Civic Center
12 home games in
February and March!