

Furniture Bank of Central Ohio Case Study

“Working with Matt Gregory and Andy Dutcher was fantastic. They were both very energetic and knowledgeable, responding quickly to our various needs and questions. Both are personable, understood our needs, and supported our effort to start a social enterprise. I would highly recommend them both.”

-Steve Votaw, CEO of the Furniture Bank



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Project

The Furniture Bank of Central Ohio hired a new CEO who had a vision of opening a showroom and warehouse to the public. The first step was to identify a premier location that could serve multiple markets and demographics at an affordable rate while providing freeway access for deliveries.

Approach

The availability of vacant big box stores that were in move-in ready condition and had proper zoning were few and far between. After touring multiple submarkets and soliciting proposals from three different properties, the numbers were not proving to be economically feasible. After fine-tuning the requirements and focusing on the showroom component only, the team was quickly able to identify a mid-size retail building that would be ideal for the social enterprise. The biggest hurdle was the repair work the building needed to make it ready for the public.

Results

Knowing the client's build-out budget was minimal, we were able to successfully negotiate the landlord to perform all capital repairs prior to turning the keys over to the Furniture Bank. The property was formerly occupied by Rite Rug Flooring and the zoning code had changed over the past decade not allowing furniture sales. Rather than re-zoning, we suggested submitting an application for a Council Variance (CV) as the quickest and cheapest alternative.

Shortly after the 2015 holidays, Columbus City Council approved the Northland Community Councils' recommendation to grant the CV needed to allow the Furniture Bank to proceed. The new store opened in April of 2016.