

Cameron Community Ministries

2021-2025 Strategic Plan

VISION

Creating an equitable and empowered community.

MISSION

Working with neighborhood residents and partners to create a vibrant and thriving community through, empowerment and advocacy while meeting basic needs.



CAMERON COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

2021-2025 Strategic Plan

“What’s Next?”

I. Introduction

Cameron Community Ministries (Cameron) continues its rich journey. We have a great past with many accomplishments. And, we have many exciting challenges and lots of hope as we move into our next five years. This 2021-2025 Strategic Plan will be our roadmap as it guides us to create, chart and move toward our future. The question to answer in the Plan is: What’s next?

Cameron was started in 1983 by the American Baptist regional denomination in partnership with the Genesee Valley Presbytery. Before Cameron, however, the site and its buildings were the Lyell Avenue Baptist Church which was established in 1890. For 130 years, that church, and now Cameron, have served an ever-changing and historically rich community.

Our Plan describes exciting new opportunities to better engage with our community and to work with our various partners to help ensure a vibrant, caring, healthy and safe neighborhood where its residents may thrive. That vision will demand creative foresight, clear vision, thinking “outside the box,” and tough decisions. If our history has taught us anything, it is that living between “the no longer and the not yet” allows Cameron to create an amazing future full of promise, hope and excitement for ourselves and our neighbors. This 2021-2025 Plan will move us forward in fulfilling our almost 40-year legacy of serving our northwest Rochester community.

II. The Planning Process

Once the Board agreed to create the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, it organized an ad-hoc planning committee. Using the talents of its members and selected staff, the committee developed its planning process.

Advancing the Plan and finally adopting it was an enormous challenge. With the restrictions in place due to COVID-19, the committee and Board had to find ways, mostly through emails and Zoom conferencing, to conduct the planning process virtually. Tom Argust volunteered to facilitate the process and wrote various drafts of the Plan with input from committee members, staff and others.

As the Committee completed the draft Plan, it was shared with the staff for their input and then with the Board for review and comment. The draft was again revised incorporating the staff and Board's feedback. After a final review by the Board, it was adopted on _____.

This Plan includes five key areas:

- 1) The Environmental Scan – Understanding the environment or context in which an organization operates is critically important to stay relevant, to set priorities and to track success. The Scan process includes a review of Cameron's present "world," community demographics, partner organizations; current and future economic development trends, challenges and assets along with their possible impacts on our future; surveying the Board and staff and other key stakeholders to learn about their hopes and priorities for Cameron. All this information helped us to understand and appreciate the context for the Plan's development.
- 2) Vision and Mission Statements - Nothing sets an organization's future and direction more than its vision and mission statements. Understanding this, the committee focused sharply on what it believes Cameron should become; why it should exist and what it should be doing.
- 3) Pillars and Strategies. The next step in the planning process is to identify Strategic Pillars (some call these "goals," "priority areas," "impact areas" or "key result areas"). The Pillars are broad statements of our highest priorities for 2021-2025. They describe the means by which the Mission is to be implemented over the next five years.
- 4) Branding - Well beyond creating a simple logo and tagline, the Brand is designed to clearly articulate an organization's target audience, brand essence, brand personality and brand promise. It is what an organization believes about itself.
- 5) Plan Adoption - Once the planning process is complete, the Board will conduct a final review and then adopt the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.

III. Strategic Plan Principles

The planning committee approved the following planning principles to guide and define the nature, content and scope of the 2021-2025 Plan.

- Strategic – The Plan must be intentional, creative and bold, yet realistic.

- Renewable and Flexible – The Plan must have a built-in update process and accommodate future modifications and change, as needed.
- Accountable – The Plan must include ways by which we can determine our success.
- Sustainable – The Plan must be responsibly affordable given our fiscal, physical and people resources.
- The Larger Context – The Plan must take into account the larger external environments within which we operate.
- Collaborative – The Plan must promote and encourage collaborative partnerships with key stakeholders and community groups.

IV. Cameron’s Core Values

Trustworthy: We are often entrusted with the well-being of children and families, and we recognize the sanctity of that trust. We are committed to maintaining that confidence through dependability and consistency.

Caring: Our faith-based tradition ensures that our interactions and services are consistently offered with warmth, sincerity and compassion.

Respectful: Respect for all is one of our top priorities. We are committed to treating everyone with dignity and courtesy.

Dedicated: For decades, we have diligently worked to address and serve our community’s needs. Our commitment to those we serve is unwavering and will continue as long as needs exist.

Effective: We are a results-driven organization that keeps a keen eye on measures as indicators of effectiveness. We are committed to maximizing our resources to provide the most impactful services possible, which is equally important to the people we serve and those who provide us resources to meet our mission.

V. The Environmental Scan

An important part of any strategic planning process is reviewing the present “world” in which an organization operates. Taking stock of what is helps us plan for what may be

ahead. This exercise is the “environmental scan.” It helps us understand our present as a way of helping determine our future.

1) The 2017-2020 Strategic Plan

Over the past three years, Cameron Board and staff developed and implemented a Strategic Plan. That Plan has guided and informed all the services and the opening of a new Teen Center. Another ambitious element in that Plan that was completed was the addition of a social worker position to provide case management services. All the proposed strategies have been implemented *except* one. That one focused on working with the School District to obtain a license for a Universal Pre-K (UPK) class at Cameron.

2) Social Landscape

As we consider Cameron’s next five years, we must face the massive disruption of the novel Coronavirus. We are seeing in real time its harsh realities. This pandemic will present Cameron, its neighborhood and many structures in our city, state and nation with significant challenges. And, our anti-racism efforts will add additional efforts that Cameron will need to focus on and become part of a positive community solution.

Given our social landscape, what should our 2021-2025 priorities be when there are so many unknowns? How will our work change? Will we need to create a different service models? How will we raise funds? How can and will we create our “new normal in the most positive way possible?

Recent publications argue against doing strategic plans at this time. They argue that there are too many variables... that the “unknown” now reigns. However, Cameron cannot afford to wait for whatever may come. Our commitment to doing this Plan is to focus on being in charge of our future... as much as possible.

3) ROC2034

In November 2019, City Council adopted a new Comprehensive Plan, *ROC2034* (rochester2034.com). This Plan, with its goals adopted in city code, will drive the future development of Rochester, including public health and safety, tourism, economic growth, workforce development, transportation, parks, recreation and more. The Plan includes goals and implementation strategies.

One major implementation effort by the city, is the complete revision of the zoning code. This revision will, among other things, focus on various city commercial corridors as described in the 2018 Commercial Corridor Study (cityofrochester.gov). It addressed broad issues of change and existing conditions in Rochester’s commercial sectors to develop

a “theory of change” describing conditions that can support healthy commercial districts and can be leveraged to spur revitalization on corridors such as Lyell Avenue.

The *ROC2034* Plan also recommends goals and strategies focused on Initiative areas. These include: “place making,” reinforcing strong neighborhoods, sustaining green areas and climate change systems as well as fostering prosperity and opportunity. All of these elements will be the foundation for the zoning code revision over the next two or three years. That revision will influence Cameron’s role in helping and influencing the reimagining of the Lyell-Otis neighborhood and its surrounding community.

4) Demographics (See attachment C Footnotes)

Cameron considers its primary service area to be the Lyell-Otis neighborhood although it serves people from the larger northwest Rochester community. However, for the purpose of this Plan, we will focus on the demographics of Lyell-Otis using the website niche.com.

- Population - The City of Rochester’s population is 206,284 (2018) which is a decrease of 2.1% over the past 10 years. The County of Monroe population is 747,474 (2018) which is a decline of -0.691%. Both the city and county are projected to have little or no population growth over the next few years. The population of the Lyell-Otis neighborhood is 8,727.
- Income - The median household income is \$31,476 with 40% having incomes of less than \$25,000.
- Age - 38% are under the age of 24 years with 27% being below 17 years. At the other end of the spectrum, 18% are 55 years and over.
- Educational achievement - Of those living in Lyell-Otis, 29% have less than a high school diploma; 34% have a high school diploma or equivalent; 9% have a bachelor’s degree or higher.

5) Collaborative Partners

Cameron is not alone in its northwest neighborhood arena. Here are just a few key players in our “sandbox:” Lyell-Otis Neighborhood Association, Foodlink, Rochester Police, Charles Settlement House, Holy Apostles Church, Lyell Branch Library, the City, the County, United Way, Rochester Area Community Foundation.

Key to Cameron's success is and will be its ability to engage and collaborate with all our actual and potential partners and the various systems they manage. In fact, "working" those systems will be a talent and skill that we will need to continue to develop and enhance. (see Appendix A for an Area Asset Map)

Two significant funding agencies are the United Way and the Rochester Area Community Foundation. From presentations to and discussions with the planning committee, it was clear that these funders are moving their priorities in both new and similar directions. Under the United Way, the Systems Integration Project is researching ways to shift agencies from vertical, silo-centered services to cross-systems, horizontal-centered services; from "tree-by-tree thinking to forest-thinking." The Community Foundation's priorities include changing systems aimed at closing the academic achievement and opportunity gaps; fostering racial and ethnic understanding and equity; partnering against poverty. The Foundation is focused significantly on structural change through innovation and collective collaboration. To do this, the Foundation has recently decided to give fewer yet larger grants.

VI. Surveys

During the planning process, two surveys were completed. One asked our Board and staff to list Cameron's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Aspirations (Hopes) and Threats (SWOAT). Nineteen out of 25 returned the survey (76% response). After reviewing the many individual comments submitted, the CEO identified the top trends in each category (*see Appendix B for the complete list of responses*).

- SWOAT Analysis
 - Strengths: community focus; dedicated staff and volunteers; valuable programs/services
 - Weaknesses: inconsistent funding; visibility/recognition; need for data; lack of diversity, eg., Board, management, committees.
 - Opportunities: Build upon teen programs; housing; increase community collaboration.
 - Aspirations/Hopes: financial sustainability; increased visibility/recognition; pay staff a living wage; existing program growth.

- Threats: School District troubles; funding; neighborhood conditions, COVID-19.
- Measurable results in the next three years: increase teen center enrollment; increase marketing and communications; new revenue source/sustainability; impact data.
- Client Survey

A few Board members telephoned clients of Cameron to get their opinions on how well we were doing and what additional services might Cameron consider adding. They spoke with persons from zip code areas 14606, 14611, 14613, 14621. The clients had a very positive impression of Cameron and have deep respect for our work. Regarding possible added services, they felt that Cameron could be working on securing more neighborhood affordable housing, serving breakfast, providing a laundry service and access to acquiring furniture.

VII. Emerging Themes, Framing the Vision, Mission, Strategies Discussion

So, what does all this information tell us about how the present might inform our future? First, over the next five years, Cameron will continue to adapt and grow as an agent of change. It will be more active in social movements for equity, such as Black Lives Matter while balancing how to do our work effectively while dealing creatively with the challenges of COVID-19. Second, we have learned that the world of neighbor-focused service is quickly changing, especially related to funding, collaboration, tracking impact and Funders' increasing focus on changing systems.

Given all of the above, four major themes emerged that demand Cameron's priority focus over the next five years. How we define and deal with them will determine and drive our success, sustainability and strength. The themes are:

1. Fiscal Stability - The longer-term financial challenges for Cameron demand an ambitious and realistic plan leading to fiscal sustainability.
 - This will include securing resources for staff to be paid at least a living wage and sufficient operations and capital investments. It will also demand that Cameron raise significantly more funds for operating and capital expenses as well as building an endowment. Further, conversations with the United Way, the Community Foundation, other foundations and the County could help to determine what longer range funding options might be possible. While bowling, golf and other fundraisers are important, such events take

significant staff and volunteer time. And then, when something like COVID-19 hits, all that income and time is lost.

2. Branding and Marketing - Being programmatically and financially successful will demand a robust and engaging digital, social media and online presence.
 - It will also demand a respected brand that is well-recognized and communicated. Given the various disruptors we now face, Cameron will have to continually reinvent itself to be a successful, accountable and active service and advocacy agency with and among neighborhood residents as well as business, charitable and public organizations. The question is: What makes us unique within the human services and neighborhood “ecosystems? How do we live this uniqueness and enhance and market it while, at the same time, be helpful partners and collaborators? And, might the word “Ministries” in our name be changed to “Community,” or “Organization” or to something similar?
3. Operating Effectiveness - In addition to financial stability and marketing/communications, Cameron’s future success will be driven by following management “best practices” and placing a high priority on measurable outcomes (not outputs) including data-driven planning and evaluation.
 - How can Cameron be nimble, innovative, on the cutting edge and open to reinventing itself, even while managing its existing services and expectations? One possible direction might be for the Board to become much more focused on policy issues and outcomes and less on program implementation. Another would be for the Board to be aware of the best practices in non-profit governance, including having a staff and Board succession plan. The adoption of this Plan may mean changes in both Board and staff responsibilities.
4. Providing Strategic Services - Cameron has established itself as a significant, and critically important social agency in and to the Lyell-Otis and close-by neighborhoods. It provides critical youth, food, clothing and counseling services.
 - Should these core services continue and expand over the next five years? Should a greater emphasis be placed on neighborhood planning, organizing, advocacy and developing significant partnerships with neighborhood and other organizations? To that end, might Cameron, in partnership with the Lyell-Otis Association, enable and facilitate a grass-roots strategic planning process and Plan that would create a new vision for the neighborhood?

How might Cameron move from primarily a “tree-focus” to a more “forest-focus?”

VIII. Elements of Cameron’s Strategic Plan

A Strategic Plan guides an organization for a period of time through changing circumstances. It helps guide future leaders as well as current ones.

In challenging or confusing times, it can illuminate and remind. It frames activities and gives them context and meaning. The following key elements are incorporated into our Strategic Plan.

- Vision – A one-sentence short statement describing the clear and inspirational long-term desired change resulting from and Cameron’s work. It is the “Why” behind what we do. It is our “bumper sticker of seven words or less. Ideally, it will not change over time.
- Mission – The clear, concise and useful way we move toward the Vision. It is the reason Cameron exists. It is the “What.”
- Brand Platform - An internal document that describes what is it that we say about ourselves; that we believe about ourselves; that we want the community to know us as. It is the “Who.”
- Personality (Cameron’s heart and soul; its DNA): “Offering hope, serving needs, empowering community.”
- Brand Promise (what only Cameron does that is important to its primary audience): “Only Cameron Ministries uplifts children, families and individuals in a warm environment by providing food clothing education and exposure to new possibilities leading to life-changing results.

In 2017, Cameron went through a branding process. As part of the 2021-2025 planning process, the committee reviewed that 2017 “Brand Platform.” (*see Appendix B for the complete Brand Platform*). It determined that the Platform is still current and does not need to be updated at this time.

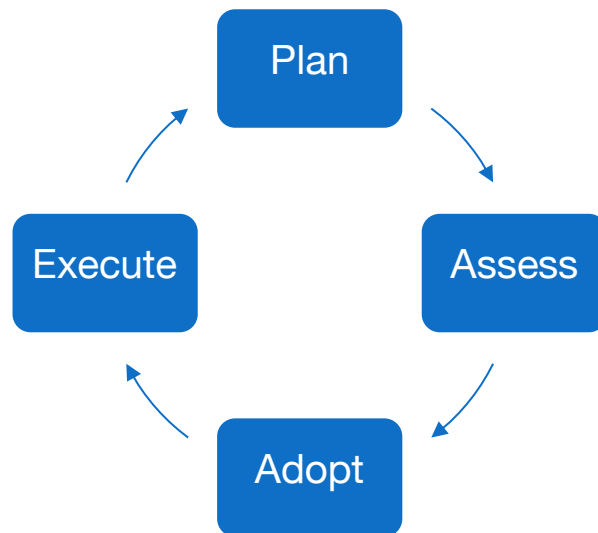
- Pillars (Goals) – The means by which we will implement our Mission. They are the “How.” Because of the long-term nature of the Mission, goals (Pillars)

may span the life of the Plan. While some goals may evolve and change, they will be consistent enough to provide direction over the life of the Plan.

- Strategies – The shorter-term actions by which we execute our goals. Strategies may take one to three years (or more), but they are specific and drive our actions. Strategies include timeframes for completion and those responsible for completing them.

These Plan elements must all be aligned. Strategies will focus on achieving goals. Goals will help us advance the Mission which then fulfills the Vision.

Finally, our Plan implementation will be comprised of four elements: Plan, Assess, Adopt, Execute. Each element informs, guides, and directs the next one. They feed into each other in *continuous and dynamic circular pattern*:



As the staff, Board, committees, volunteers, and others implement this Plan, there will also be efforts, at designated times during the next five years, to evaluate how well we are doing. Tracking our progress (or lack thereof) is critical to knowing whether our efforts are succeeding. These assessments will help us decide whether or not to revise the Plan during the Plan’s five-year life. The process, therefore, is systemic, continuous and “evergreen.”

IX. Cameron's Vision and Mission

VISION

Creating an equitable and empowered community.

MISSION

Working with neighborhood residents and partners to create a vibrant and thriving community through, empowerment and advocacy while meeting basic needs.

X. 2021-2025 Pillars

Based upon the findings of our environmental scan, our Vision and Mission, our Brand and the committee's discussions, the following 2021-2025 Pillars, along with their respective strategies, are proposed.

- **Pillar 1 - Create and implement a fiscal plan that will ensure future financial growth and sustainability.**
 - Strategy 1.1 - Consider creating a new staff position with the responsibility of developing and implementing personal, foundation and corporate fund-raising along with marketing and social media.
 - Strategy 1.2 - Begin conversations with community agencies aimed at exploring in-depth collaborations and partnerships as well as potential restructuring opportunities and models.
 - Strategy 1.3 - In 2023, as part of Cameron's 40th Anniversary, launch a capital campaign to raise funds for improvements and upgrades to our campus and to increase our Endowment.
- **Pillar 2 - Build a respected and well-recognized Brand.**
 - Strategy 2.1 - Continue to build on our vibrant digital and social media presence to ensure we're reaching our target audience and constantly expanding our reach.
 - Strategy 2.2 - Change and rebrand Cameron's name.
 - Strategy 2.3 - Sponsor a series of celebratory events to mark Cameron's 40th Anniversary in 2023.

- **Pillar 3 - Continually improve Cameron’s management and Board governance.**
 - Strategy 3.1 - Develop and implement measurable outcomes (not outputs) so that data will inform and direct management planning and evaluation.
 - Strategy 3.2 - Review staff descriptions to determine the need for change in order to better implement the 2021-2025 Plan.
 - Strategy 3.3 - Ensure that the staff pay structure provides a fair and living wage.
 - Strategy 3.4 - Implement governance training for the Board with a focus on the role of the Board in policy setting and oversight.
 - Strategy 3.5 - Ensure a diverse and pluralistic Board and staff along with anti-racism training.
 - Strategy 3.6 - Develop and implement a staff and Board succession plan.
 - Strategy 3.7 - Review and revise Cameron’s By-Laws as needed, along with Cameron’s Incorporation documents.
- **Pillar 4 - Expand Cameron’s services to include a major focus on advocacy and neighborhood empowerment.**
 - Strategy 4.1 - Using the Strategic Plan as a guide, review/evaluate Cameron’s existing services to determine what modifications, if any, should be considered
 - Strategy 4.2 - Begin conversations with Charles Settlement House focused on strategic collaboration possibilities.
 - Strategy 4.3 - Create strategic partnerships with neighborhood residents and agencies based on the Community Collaborative model being implemented in the Beechwood area.

- Strategy 4.4 - Expand our coordination and referral services with other key agencies to provide clients with access to affordable housing, furniture, breakfast options and laundry services.
- Strategy 4.5 - In partnership with the Lyell-Otis Neighborhood Association, develop a neighborhood strategic plan.
- **Pillar 5: Fully implement the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.**
 - Strategy 5.1 - The Board will appoint a Plan Oversight Committee, charged with overseeing and ensuring the full implementation of the Plan, including the delegation of responsibilities and time frames.
 - Strategy 5.2 - Using pre-established measures and data, determine specific times (monthly, bimonthly or quarterly) for the Committee to report to the Board on Plan implementation.
 - Strategy 5.3 - Ensure that all Cameron's services, budgets and policies are consistent with and focused on implementing the Plan.
 - Strategy 5.4 - Hold Board planning retreats in mid-2022 and 2023 to review the Plan's implementation progress and revise the Plan as needed.
 - Strategy 5.5 - Begin developing and drafting a new Strategic Plan in 2024.

XI. Conclusion

Almost forty years ago, committed and mission-driven churches created a not-for-profit agency to serve the Lyell-Otis and other northwest neighborhoods. Over these years, Cameron has served its neighbors with a deep sense of caring, commitment and creativity.

As we developed and approved this new five-year Plan, Cameron's leadership envisioned exciting new opportunities to better engage with our community and to work with our various partners to help ensure a vibrant, caring, healthy and safe neighborhood in the years to come. Fulfilling the promise of the Plan, however, will demand foresight, a clear vision, thinking "outside the box," and tough decisions.

Writing this Plan was easy. Now comes the hard part: working the Plan and getting it done! It will be challenging, rewarding, time consuming and hope filled.

This 2021-2025 Strategic Plan provides us with the roadmap to Cameron's future. It creates for us a dynamic and exciting future for us and our community. It will move us from our 'no longer' to our 'not yet'. And as it does, we will define our "What's Next."
So...let's get started!

The Ad-hoc Strategic Planning Committee

- Tom Argust, Facilitator and Plan Author
- Emily Hessney Lynch
- Denee Martin
- Kelly McDermott
- Bob Moore
- Jennifer Muniga
- Edgar SantaCruz
- Kristen Zale

APPENDIX A ~ ASSET MAP



APPENDIX B ~ CAMERON'S BRAND



Brand Platform

TARGET AUDIENCES

(for our Brand – may vary for specific programs or marketing objectives)

Primary:

Resource providers

(volunteers, donors, businesses, foundations/grant-making orgs.)

Secondary:

Partners *(other organizations, colleges);*

People who care about health of the City

(concerned citizens, people who care about children/poverty/education, government officials)

Tertiary:

People who need supportive services;

Neighborhood

(residents, neighborhood schools)

BRAND ESSENCE

(our DNA, Heart and Soul)

Offering hope, Serving needs, Empowering community.

BRAND PERSONALITY

(how we behave, individually and as an organization)

Trustworthy Caring Respectful Dedicated Effective

BRAND PROMISE

(what only we do that is really important to our primary audiences)

Only Cameron Community Ministries uplifts children, families and individuals in a warm environment by providing food, clothing, education and exposure to new possibilities leading to life-changing results.



Brand Development Workshop

APPENDIX C ~ FOOT NOTES

- (1) *Finding data at the neighborhood level is difficult, In addition to [niche.com](https://www.niche.com), other resources to explore are: Act Rochester (actrochester.org). The Census Bureau ([census.gov](https://www.census.gov)) , and [point2homes.com](https://www.point2homes.com). Also, the new city Plan, (rochester2034.com) provides a wealth of data and information.*