

*History  
in the  
Making*



A capital campaign for Shimer Square.

# Community Perseverance

Shimer Square has a rich history in Mount Carroll, and the pride that its residents have for its beloved campus remains unmatched.

Generations later, the community's commitment to Shimer Square remains stronger than ever.

Revitalization of this community asset is before us.

We need your support.

---

## The Vision



GROWTH plans to make an unprecedented investment of more than \$60 million over a period of 5 to 7 years in Shimer Square. This new investment brings new housing, new residents, new businesses, and new community amenities within the campus.

Development activity will also drive catalytic impacts throughout the community through job creation and retention, and increases in the tax base.

Soon, when driving within Shimer Square, you will see historic buildings rehabilitated providing safe and secure housing, new businesses opened supplying vital goods and services all of which enhance the quality of life for Mount Carroll residents and visitors.

Lights will be turned on after decades of being shut off. New gateway signage will be lit up at the entrance. The 14-acre campus will be well-kept with regular mowing, maintenance, and landscaping.

An annual tradition, Mayfest, is back for good. New possibilities are endless and on the way to becoming reality.

# The Opportunity

Shimer Square's capital campaign represents the entire campus over the 5 to 7 year revitalization period. The opportunity encompasses helping with the overall picture:

- Conversion of historic properties into safe, quality housing
- Conversion of historic properties into new commercial leasing opportunities
- Providing opportunities for entrepreneurs, startups, and artisans
- Creation of jobs

We are asking you to join us in this redevelopment effort, to realize what could be, and make our shared vision a reality.

With great opportunity comes great responsibility. GROWTH does not take this redevelopment effort lightly. GROWTH is coming in with eyes wide open, setting realistic expectations and timelines in order to remain result-oriented, and revitalize Shimer Square into its highest and best use for the ultimate benefit of the community and its residents.



# The Goal

\$2,500,000 over a period of five years. \$500,000 per year.

The goal is big, and so are the redevelopment goals for Shimer Square.

Capital campaign contributions will provide the capital needed to allow the entire revitalization of Shimer Square to move forward. Given the increased costs associated with construction and stabilization, capital contributions will help fill the gap that no other financing or grant funding will support.

It enables the dream of Shimer Square to move forward as planned.

It will be a win for Illinois.

It will be a win for the region.

Most importantly, it will be a win for Mount Carroll.





- Phase 1 (Blue)
- Phase 2 (Yellow)
- Phase 3 (Orange)
- Phase 4 (Green)
- Phase 5 (Red)

## History & Present

Shimer College was an American Great Books college, first founded in 1852 in the town of Mount Carroll, IL. Known as one of the first academies for women, Shimer College has a rich history in Mount Carroll and had a renowned list of historical figures like Amelia Earhart's first flight instructor having enrolled there. The school was founded as the "Mount Carroll Seminary" and adopted the "Shimer College" name in 1950.

Times evolved, needs changed. The Campbell Center was the last remaining structure in use until its closure in December 2017. In 2018, Mayfest, an annual tradition in Mount Carroll, was cancelled for the first time since 1982 due to concern for the safety and security of attendees in the campus' buildings.

One thing remained consistent: the community pride and perseverance for its historic anchor never waived from Mount Carroll residents. In 2018, the Mount Carroll citizens joined together, for the sake of their historic asset, in search of a community-minded partner that would view Shimer College as they did. Someone who would recognize an opportunity to preserve and revitalize an historic anchor, restore the campus' beauty and capitalize upon the community's pride bringing the campus back to life.

By invitation, GROWTH conducted a site visit and met with community stakeholders. GROWTH then brought its board of directors up to see the site, and received unanimous approval to come up with a comprehensive multi-year redevelopment plan aimed at the preservation of Shimer College's existing historic fabric while protecting the campus and its historical integrity.

GROWTH took title to the property December 31, 2018.

The community's annual tradition of Mayfest came back Memorial Day Weekend 2019.

The community weighed in and renamed the campus to Shimer Square after a coin toss by the Mayor breaking the tie between names.

Now known as Shimer Square, stepping into the historic buildings is like stepping back in time. The buildings have chalk on the chalkboards, test tubes on the science tables, hangers inside the dormitories, artwork on walls, books and county historical records in the library, a nearly deflated basketball in the basketball court, and historic tile one hundred percent intact surrounding the in-ground pool.

The revitalization efforts were defined in early conversation with the project team and key stakeholders to be a multi-year phased development celebrating Shimer Square's rich history while preserving the unique character of the campus. The project includes adaptive-reuse efforts of the existing structures and developing artist live-work space, senior and family housing; commercial community quality-of-life amenities that will incorporate many of the historical artifacts that still remain on campus. The total development costs estimated over \$60 million with anticipated completion in five to seven years.