

**Towards a Greater Downtown Dublin:  
A Cultural District Plan for the Heart of Dublin, Ohio**  
Submitted by The Dublin Arts Council and the Cultural District Steering Committee  
with Creative Community Builders  
August 10, 2016

**Putting Dublin's Robust Creative Climate to Work**

*We at the Dublin Arts Council have been proud partners in making our community one of the best places in the United States to live, work, do business, and enjoy the arts. We've worked closely with our forward-thinking City government and our robust business, education, civic, and voluntary sectors for over three decades – all through a time of enormous growth and change for Dublin. We're proud to take leadership in a new effort to bring even greater attention to this jewel on the Scioto and its unique historical, visionary, and creative heart through the designation and activation of a formal cultural district.*

*Residents and businesses of Dublin are moving towards exciting new ways of experiencing community life as the city continues to grow and adapt to new challenges. In 2013 the Arts Council commissioned research on Dublin's Sense of Place to better understand the values and strengths that Dublin residents strive to build upon. In late 2014 we stepped up our role in the arena of community building and creative placemaking assessing how to best leverage our arts and cultural resources for ongoing social, civic, economic, and physical improvement of the community. Coordinating efforts of many Dublin organizations to assert our great creative resources and cultural richness will amplify our success and reputation across the region.*

*The Arts Council's internationally recognized public art program provided a platform to build our expertise and to bring increased vibrancy to Dublin. We've spent decades fostering creativity and adding vitality to our downtown, parks, and other public spaces through both the process and product of public art – as well as through visual, performing, media, and literary arts programs. Through the cultural district plan that follows we take that work to a new level.*

*Over the past year it has been a joy to convene, to listen, to formulate, and now to advance ideas **to activate a cultural district in the heart of Dublin!** Nearly 40 community leaders from a diverse range of sectors, professions, businesses, and interests volunteered hundreds of hours during the first half of 2016 to explore and add their ideas to this effort. This work was facilitated by Dr. Tom Borrup, a nationally known creative placemaking and community building consultant. His report follows, describing both why and how Dublin's success can continue through formation of a cultural district. The Arts Council is excited by the possibilities in Dublin's future and proud to add our leadership to the table with our many excellent partners to keep Dublin a unique, visionary, and forward-moving community.*

**David Guion, Dublin Arts Council Executive Director**

### **Dublin's Future and Unique Possibilities**

Across the United States suburban communities face many challenges from changes in lifestyle patterns, transportation, demographics, and land use to aging infrastructure, maturing communities, and their often-blurred sense of identity. A more recent and growing challenge especially relevant for Dublin is the trend of corporate headquarters returning to core cities as skilled workforces are drawn to live and work in active, diverse, and creative environments.

Dublin is turning these challenges to opportunities. A relatively young suburb that grew up since the 1980s, it has built an unusually strong sense of identity. Prompted in part by its distinctive name and thanks to assertive civic leadership, Dublin leveraged its identity and assets becoming well known for its celebration of Irish culture, golf courses, historic village center, corporate campuses, landscape design, and distinctive public art. Approaching a generational shift the City is now aggressively confronting imminent challenges by making major public and private investments in infrastructure and housing built around its historic center, and by embracing diversity, refocusing its core to face the lovely Scioto River, and ramping up its creative cultural identity.

This report recommends and provides the framework for Dublin to cement its unique identity and position within the Greater Columbus area through development of a distinctive cultural district. This district should include Historic Downtown Dublin and the emerging adjacent concentration of businesses and residents directly across the Scioto River in new Bridge Park Developments and including the existing Shoppes at River Ridge.

### **Value and Operation of Cultural Districts**

Strategies known as arts-led regeneration or creative placemaking are leveraging the rebuilding and growth of cities, neighborhoods, and even small towns around the globe. Development of arts and cultural districts assert the identity of a place. They serve to both coalesce internal stakeholders and to attract visitors and new residents. Development of such a district, building on its remarkable historic core provides Dublin a major opportunity. It can bring together stakeholders on both sides of the Scioto River within a well-defined district to build and promote the City's identity while signaling to visitors and prospective residents the growth of an active, creative, amenity-rich community.

In the United States alone it is estimated that at least 600 arts and/or cultural districts have identified themselves or been designated by their respective municipalities or state governments. Fifteen states now have formal programs to recognize and in some cases support cultural, creative or arts and entertainment districts. While exemplary cultural districts have emerged in multiple Ohio cities, the State of Ohio is not among those providing recognition.

Success of a cultural district in Dublin will require coordination and collaboration among the wide range of stakeholders involved. This includes individual and associated businesses within the defined area, the City of Dublin, civic organizations such as the Dublin Convention and

Visitors Bureau and Dublin Area Chamber of Commerce, the Dublin Arts Council and other arts and cultural organizations, developers, the library, schools, and others. Success will also require investment by those named above and assertive efforts to program cultural events, public art, and other activities in key areas within the defined district.

The venerable organization Project for Public Spaces, and its decades of international experience in the arena of placemaking and activation of public spaces, has cited that 80 per cent of the success of a place is in its programming. They suggest that design and physical characteristics are not to be ignored, but the most important effort is in the ongoing activities.

Part of the success of downtowns and vibrant neighborhoods – and often as a complement to defined districts – cites large and small actively program central or public spaces for purposes of developing local economies, adding to safety and community life. Such activity brings vibrancy and promotes community building, civic engagement, and place identity. Some are managed directly by city agencies, others activated by civic, business, and/or cultural organizations and are paid for in any manner of arrangements. Some are nonprofits with city and/or private funding. Some generate income through commercial sponsorships or sale of alcoholic beverages at special events. Some use a tax-based Special Improvement District – a special levy on properties within a designated area for general maintenance, beautification, added security or other activation. This report contains a number of comparisons including both broader place-based management strategies and specific place-based programming. (See Appendix X)

### **Building on Quality of Place**

Dublin has excelled at asserting its identity over the past 30 years – a time of explosive growth – and leveraging that identity to both attract residents and visitors and bolster pride in place. A population of 681 people in 1970 grew five-fold to 3,855 in 1980 then mushroomed to over 45,000 in 35 years, a pattern of growth that appears to be continuing.

With the first Irish Festival in 1988, the City began building on an identity rooted in its name. The city added award-winning golf courses and internationally known tournaments. Those digging deeper see that Dublin offers much more. The 2013 **Dublin: A Sense of Place** report commissioned by Dublin Arts Council found that values such as commitment to quality education, community volunteerism, and cultural diversity were paramount to those with a stake in the community. Parks and green spaces, along with “a balanced approach to industry and nature” ranked high. Additionally, residents placed high value on good city services and maintaining a family oriented and safe community.

The enduring presence of a Native American heritage from the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries and settlement primarily by German immigrants on the Scioto River are prominent. The historic downtown remains a widely known and popular destination. Overall Dublin is an affluent community that considers itself open and inviting.

The qualities identified through the ***Sense of Place*** research were affirmed through informal poll-taking during this planning process to reflect a community with a high self-esteem and an optimism for the future. The City motto appearing on its official seal claims Dublin is “where yesterday meets tomorrow.” While City officials claim little daily awareness of this motto, it does reflect a very present juxtaposition of the city’s past with its rapidly emerging future. And it presents an opportunity for a Dublin Cultural District connecting and combining the efforts of Historic Dublin merchants on the west side of the Scioto River with those of newer enterprises and residents in developments on the east side.

### **Purpose & Opportunity**

This report presents recommendations resulting from a six-month planning process spearheaded by the Dublin Arts Council and City of Dublin to define, designate, and plan programming and management for a cultural district – an area primarily within the Bridge Street District and including the Dublin Arts Center. A 38-member Steering Committee of community leaders guided this process during the first half of 2016 with Minneapolis consultant Creative Community Builders.

The Steering Committee advances a set of recommendations contained in this report to the Dublin City Council. This 5- to 10-year cultural district plan identifies programming and organizational strategies to activate the district with regard to visual and performing arts, special events, public art projects, among others. The plan also contains recommendations for ongoing district program management and financial sustainability. Additional recommendations consider the geographic parameters and naming options for a cultural district as well as goals and success indicators.

The development of the Bridge Street District represents significant public and private investment in Dublin. Success of the District, including the continuing success of Historic Dublin, offers the City both enormous opportunity and significant challenge. The familiar pattern seen in many communities in the U.S., where the newer and bigger developments drive the older ones out of business, need not be replicated here. A critical element of success with the Bridge Street District requires unifying the district by joining old and new, encompassing both sides of the river, and devising methods for stakeholders to act together in an integrated manner. Strategies here must encourage activity in public space, offer varied experiences, and emphasize walkability. Building on the efforts of the Historic Dublin Business Association and the various developers to activate the entire District will be critical to a sustainable social, cultural, and retail core of the community.

### **Recommendation Summary**

1. Consider designating the boundaries of the district as outlined in the map below (see page X) and identify it through a separate and distinctive name.
2. Create a single entity to represent stakeholders, activate the district, and promote businesses and activities within the district.

3. Form a consortium of cultural program and activity producers to generate, enable, manage, and host events, and to plan and commission public art in the District.
4. Generate activities that engage residents, visitors, businesses and organizations on both sides of the river that reinforce themes that emphasize bridging, connecting, and collaboration.
5. Provide three- to five-year start-up funding for the consortium and develop a long-term sustainable revenue stream through a Special Improvement District.
6. Review and revise City policies as appropriate to better enable activities that support animation of the District.
7. Continue to implement the physical infrastructure connections and improvements and that enable flexibility as movement patterns evolve over time.
8. Collaborate with public and private sector entities to realize future investments in public and private amenities.

### **Measurable Success indicators**

Steering Committee members advanced a series of indicators that can be tracked to determine success of the District.

#### **(Quantitative)**

1. Increase in number of visitors and overnight stays
2. Businesses in the District are successful
3. Number and diversity of Dublin arts programs grow
4. Performing/cultural arts center is sustainable based on critical mass of patrons
5. Regular regional and national recognition media coverage brings brand recognition for Dublin, Dublin Arts Council, arts and civic activities, and the District
6. Activities draw retail traffic and participation day and evening

#### **(Qualitative)**

1. Businesses and other stakeholders in Historic Dublin and the surrounding District work cohesively
2. Consistent park and public space programming each year appeals to a wide demographic mix
3. Artists identify the District as a desirable place to work, exhibit and perform
4. Activities and entertainment are within walkable distances to enable cross-over participation

### **Conditions Requiring Action**

Demographic changes are impacting suburbs throughout the country forcing communities to rethink how they plan and develop into the future. Dublin is experiencing profound changes in population, lifestyle choices, downtown business mix, and the City's regional identity. These changes are being addressed in Dublin partly through redevelopment of 1,100 acres of land situated along both sides of the Scioto River centered in the City's historic downtown. Known as the Bridge Street District, it encompasses only 6% of the City's current landmass, yet signals an important shift in the community's economic and civic future. New mixed-use, high-density, pedestrian-friendly development includes commercial office space, housing, retail, hotel/conference center, new library, parkland along the river, with plans for an iconic pedestrian bridge and the possible addition of a performing or cultural arts center.

Internationally, it is well known that arts and cultural activities, organizations, and spaces – along with active and coordinated placemaking efforts – are increasingly significant in the success and vitality of community life. Defined as collaborative, cross-sector efforts that re-design and animate public spaces, placemaking has become key to the success of local business, to attract and engage new residents, and to re-position cities within their regional economies. Arts and cultural activities and organizations play a pivotal role in welcoming and engaging visitors and residents into community fabric, building social cohesion, and bringing distinctiveness to cities.

Dublin is among the fortunate suburban communities in the United States that have opportunity, means, and vision to evolve in ways that will make it attractive and sustainable well into the future. Thoughtful planning, programming, and management of Dublin's new public spaces, along with constructive connections among existing and new businesses and residents, will ensure its success as good place to live, work, do business, learn and visit – while expanding its role as a dynamic contributor to the economy and culture of the region.

### **Formation of this Plan**

Building on *Dublin: A Sense of Place* research project in 2012 and cultural assessment work in 2014-15, Dublin Arts Council contracted with the consulting team of Creative Community Builders of Minneapolis to facilitate the creation of this plan. Dr. Tom Borrup, Principal in the firm worked with Arts Council and City staff, a steering committee, other City consultants, and conducted public engagement activities.

The Steering Committee met in six two-hour meetings between February and July of 2016 to provide input and strategic oversight to this plan. Members represented key interests in the Bridge Street area, downtown businesses, residents and organizations, citywide civic and business interests, city planners and expertise related to arts, culture and education as well as tourism and business development. They brought unique perspectives on long-term economic, cultural, and civic development of the City along with knowledge and resources to realize broad civic goals.

### **Steering Committee Members**

Sue Andrews, artist, retired Dublin City Schools art teacher  
 Robie Benvenuti, President, Dublin Area Art League  
 Julia Caruso, FUSE, appointed Community Representative to Dublin Arts Council board  
 Janet Cooper, Director of Engagement, Dublin Arts Council  
 Rachel Cornish, Tantrum Theater, Ohio University  
 Michelle Crandall, Assistant City Manager, City of Dublin  
 Matt Davis, owner, Mesh Fitness  
 Scott Dring, Dublin Convention and Visitors Bureau  
 Ryan Fogelman, consultant, Mesh Fitness  
 Denise Franz King, Washington Township Trustee, historic District resident  
 Curt Gettman, Contract Specialist/public art, City of Dublin  
 Bev Goldie, Community Liaison, Dublin Area Art League  
 Donna Goss, Director of Development, City of Dublin  
 David S. Guion, Ph.D., Executive Director, Dublin Arts Council  
 Stephanie Hall, Director, Clinical Nursing Placement, Ohio State University, Member CSAC  
 Jeff Hersey, Terra Gallery  
 Todd F. Hoadley, Ph.D., Superintendent, Dublin City Schools  
 Gayle Holton, President, Gayle Holton Design, Dublin Historical Society, Dublin Arts Council Board  
 Russ Hunter, Design Director, Crawford Hoying Development  
 Jenny Jaske, Chief Operating Officer, Dublin Chamber of Commerce  
 Pete Joodi, IBM Engineer, Dublin Arts Council board member  
 Anna Leeper, Marketing Communications Coordinator, Dublin Arts Council  
 Allison LeRoy, Special Events Director, City of Dublin  
 Tom Munhall, CPA, ARB board, Dublin Arts Council board  
 Claudia Plumley, Editor, Great Lakes Publishing, Dublin Arts Council board president  
 Candy Princehorn, Columbus Metropolitan Library  
 Sandra Puskarcik, Director of Community Relations, City of Dublin  
 John Reiner, City Council, City of Dublin  
 Cora Sheets, Cardinal Health Foundation  
 Joanne Shelley, Urban Design/Landscape Architect, City of Dublin  
 Lou Slangen, soon-to-be resident of Bridge Park West condos  
 Ben Stormer, FUSE at Cardinal Health, Dublin Arts Council board  
 Linda Swearingen, CASTO Developers  
 Stephanie Thompson, Dublin Arts Council Board  
 Gwen Weihe, Business owner, Dublin Arts Council Board  
 Christena Wentz, Chelsea Borough Home, Historic Dublin Business Association  
 Isao Yamakawa, Dublin Taiko Group, Mashiko friendship city volunteer  
 Keiko Yamakawa, artist

Committee members worked to:

- Devise cultural programming and activities for public spaces
- Engage the public, local artists, and arts groups across a wide mix of ethnicities
- Identify partnerships, a district management structure, and financial models
- Model and motivate constructive civic engagement in Dublin's future

- Ensure an environment where arts and culture thrives and at the same time advances the community aesthetically, educationally, and economically
- Determine most advantageous geographic parameters of the cultural district
- Establish goals, and measurable outcomes
- Define the brand identity and name of the district

### **Goals**

The Steering Committee established the following goals to:

1. Support a quality public realm – in both the physical and social sense – that is inviting, active, and aesthetically welcoming
2. Foster a sense of connection to community, history, and the natural environment with the outdoors, green spaces, and the Scioto River as part of daily experience
3. Provide opportunities for our resident and visitor base to experience and engage in creative and recreational activities that embrace and celebrate the community’s cultural diversity
4. Encourage a vibrant and welcoming cultural destination with unique art, shopping, and dining experiences.
5. Form a consortium of organizations with identified funding sources to conduct ongoing activities, promotions, and planning to strengthen the district’s value to all stakeholders.

### **Public Engagement Events**

In addition to monthly Steering Committee meetings and consultations with city leaders and other stakeholders events were conducted to engage the public and the media in the vision of a cultural district. Activities were constructed using a theme of time travel from popular film and television to generate an inclusive and fun event and stimulate thinking about the past, present, and future of Dublin. They were also devised to “build muscles” relative to working relationships among public, private, and nonprofit groups, as well as with entities within the District on both sides of the river to promote the concept of District -wide collaboration.

Desired audiences included:

- 1) Existing and potential customers and stakeholders in the historic downtown and businesses on the immediate east side of the river (within defined district area)
- 2) Dublin residents interested in or concerned with new development
- 3) Potential customers, residents, and business owners of the Bridge Street District from the greater central Ohio region
- 4) Regular and new visitors to Dublin



Events were held with one day on each side of the river during the weekend of May 21 and 22, 2016, to:

- 1) Draw wider attention to cultural district planning efforts and greater buy-in among Dublin residents
- 2) Attract existing and prospective customers, residents, and entrepreneurs to the downtown Dublin area
- 3) Connect with visitors in a way that is informative and sparks imagination and involvement
- 4) Elicit from visitors their visions, ideas, and perceptions related to the potential cultural district while collecting demographic data
- 5) Initiate collaborative activities incorporating businesses and organizations on east and west sides of the river; develop network for continued collaborations

Activities included:

- Photo opportunities with two widely known “time machines” and related fictional characters – where participants express visions from the past and/or for the future of the community
- Back in time: walking tours with Dublin Historical Society leaders
- Observing or participating in the documenting of Dublin’s present: Annual Dublin PaintOut Plein Air painting events and competition
- Balloting on several suggested district names as well as write-ins
- Surveys to gauge visitor preferences
- Displays of images from Dublin’s history and plans for future developments
- Glimpse of the future: tours of the Bridge Park construction site
- Opportunities to express preferences and ideas by placing notes on maps of the district

## **Towards a GREATER Downtown Dublin**

### **Detailed Recommendations**

#### ***Area and Identity***

1. **Consider designating the boundaries of the district as outlined in the map below (see page X) and identify it through designation of a separate and distinctive name.**

It is essential to provide guidance to which properties are “in” the district and which are not, at least for an interim period of time. The purpose is to facilitate organizing and activity planning among those identified businesses and property owners. The map at this stage carries no formal restrictions or benefits and can easily be amended.

Borders of the District in the map below were carefully defined by properties relevant to a cultural district in which businesses, institutions, homes, and other elements of the landscape would both contribute to and potentially benefit from identification within the District. Thus, the entirety of the existing Dublin Historic District was included with the cemetery, community church, schools, park space, library, historic homes and businesses. Crossing the river, the proposed district includes the Shoppes at River Ridge and all the riverside space running from the southern edge of the Historic District to the northern edge of the current city-owned Dublin Art Center property. All of the mixed-use Bridge Park developments are included as well as the senior complex known as The Grand. The district extends north above I-270 to include city-owned land to the east of Riverside Drive where a future park is planned, as well as the Art Center and adjacent riverside properties. Non-retail business developments and non-mixed-use residential developments were not included, except for historic residential properties. The District is connected north-south by the Scioto River and newly developing park lands that suggest a water trail for recreational purposes. With exception of the small area north of I-270, this area sits within the larger Bridge Street District of 1,100 acres.

The Dublin cultural district is 'cultural' because of the historic and natural elements, a growing multi-ethnic population, and the active creativity seen through public art, live music, theatre and dance, and other activities at the schools and Library, Dublin Arts Council, in restaurants and bars, and on the streets. The District represents a complementary blend of old and new.



Steering Committee members considered a variety of strategies for designating the District with a distinctive name. Naming variations incorporated words including bridge, river, riverbanks, riverway, riverside, creative, and quarter. Events on May 21 – 22, included balloting by the public on eight different choices with 186 ballots submitted. The most favored, tied with 37 each, were **Bridge Street Quarter** and **Riverside Arts District**. Other top voter-getters were *Dublin Riverway* with 26 votes, *D'Art Quarter* received 20, and *Dublin Creative Quarter* and *Dublin Riverbanks* both received 17. Subsequent suggestions to incorporate the defined area included **Dublin on the River**, **The Heart of Dublin**, and **Greater Downtown Dublin**. No singular favorite stood out, and a number of factors related to the multiplicity of existing identities, dissuaded the Committee from recommending a name at this time. Factors included the importance of retaining the integrity of *Historic Dublin*, the strong marketing push of *Bridge Park* developments, existing city denomination of the *Bridge Street District*, and pending naming for new riverfront parks. A focused effort on identity development and place branding will be required in the near future. The consultant pointed out the importance of identity and naming, recognizing how the choice made two centuries ago to call the city Dublin provided a powerful tool to be used to leverage success.

The area identified suggests the heart of Dublin, an eclectic mix of old and new buildings with dense concentration of residential, retail, cultural, educational, and recreational activities. Residences both old and new are mixed with these various uses contribute to an active lifestyle. The area (with pedestrian bridge complete) encourages walking with easy connectivity across the river and crossing streets on foot and by bicycle. Encompassing approximately 412 acres and bucolic riverfront vistas, activities in waterfront parks and on the river itself further support active living. For long-time residents, Dublin has transformed almost overnight. For new residents, it will appear that it has been there since the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

### ***Coordinative Entity***

2. **Create a single entity to represent stakeholders, activate the district, and promote businesses and activities within the district. The entity should be built upon the existing HDBA to include all businesses and organizations with the district.**

Building on the Historic Dublin Business Association is critical to a sustainable social, cultural, and retail core of Dublin. The familiar pattern seen in many communities in the U.S., where the newer and bigger development drives the older one out of business need not be replicated here. Working together, cross-promoting business and encouraging walkability is critical. Considering the District as one and stakeholders acting together in a unified manner will bring the greatest possibility of continued success for the entire District. Some benefits of an expanded business partnership are:

- Larger membership base and budget
- More opportunities for community involvement and increased volunteer resources
- Expanded networks of information between businesses, nonprofits, and public sector
- Maintaining a Business-to-Customer focus
- Creation of a more complete online community calendar
- Increased visibility through outreach (digital and traditional)
- Stronger voice to leverage City services and policies
- More partnerships with schools, library and City recreation department
- Greater leverage with corporate sector and media sponsorships

Structure of the recommended entity would include:

*(See Appendix X for comparable examples)*

- Non-profit organization
- Volunteer board with geographically spread representation
- Coalition building
- Small paid staff of 1 or 2 (highly skilled in social media, promotions, event production, internal and external communications)
- Staff with physical office space in the district
- Consortium that serves flexibly as an enabler/host/coordinator and a producer of events and promotions

The entity would devote much of its time and resources to hosting activities and events that attract visitors and new residents, and that serve to cross promote businesses and organizations in the District. Organizational and promotional activities would include:

- Enhancing identity and image for the District
- Aggregating resources from public and private sources to support cultural programming in the District
- Coordinating space for and participation in cultural events and public art
- Maintaining a calendar platform that artists, businesses and groups could access and update; including festivals, smaller events, art activities, among others
- Convening networking between businesses in the District
- Generating inclusive activities to engage youth
- Overseeing a programming consortium to maintain ongoing events in the District (See #3)

### ***Programming Consortium***

- 3. Form a consortium of cultural program and activity producers to generate, enable, manage, and host events and to plan and commission public art in the District.**

Capacity to produce events exists within several groups in Dublin. Joining forces in a new consortium to actively coordinate resources and activities will be essential to make the entire Dublin Cultural District a success. The coordinative entity described above should coordinate these efforts. In the interim, until this entity is fully formed, leadership to convene and coordinate members should remain with the Dublin Arts Council. The programming consortium should be composed of:

- Dublin Arts Council
- City of Dublin (Events, Parks and Recreation Services)
- Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Tantrum Theater – Ohio University
- Columbus Metropolitan Library
- Dublin Public Schools
- Dublin Area Arts League
- Business and developer representation

### ***Cultural/Community Events***

- 4. Produce and coordinate activities that engage residents, visitors, businesses and organizations on both sides of the river based on and structured to support key themes. Themes should be built around experiences that connect people, businesses, and activities in the District. Themes might include crossing the river, where yesterday meets tomorrow, where east meets west, and other ideas that reinforce bridging and connecting, and that emphasize collaboration.**

## Events

In addition to continuing seasonal events already taking place in Historic Dublin – and finding ways to extend them District-wide when appropriate – committee members and public participants identified many new ideas. Most frequently cited by public participants was a **farmers market** including ethnic foods and crafts. Second most frequently cited as **live music and outdoor music**. Longer-term development of a performing or cultural arts facility will provide an anchor for Tantrum Theater and others who can then plan a regular schedule with related indoor and outdoor activities. Three themes recommended below help build unity to the District. Ideas for specific activities after each theme were among dozens generated by Steering Committee members and the public during events May 21 and 22, and recommended for consideration by the Programming Consortium.

### Theme: Crossing the River

- Opening events for Pedestrian Bridge
- Focusing general events and new public art around the bridge
- Maintain and expand monthly art stroll
- Bike and kayak tours of historic sites and interactive public art geared towards different age groups
- Events involving fire or lights on the water
- Submerged water feature/fountain/light shows
- Light-based art interacting with the pedestrian and vehicular bridges

### Theme: Where East Meets West

- Indian outdoor film festival
- Cultural ethnic markets/fair
- Chinese lantern-dragon boats
- Ceramic studio/exhibitions of Japanese art

### Theme: Where Yesterday Meets Tomorrow

- New Year's Festivals (at different times of year to represent different cultures of the community)
- Varied, inclusive seasonal light festivals through the district
- Children's performances followed by adult performances
- Outdoor movies on time travel themes

## Public Art

As part of an overall, citywide public art plan, permanent and temporary public art will need to follow overarching guidelines and be thoughtfully planned for a variety of sites, including parklands, related to the pedestrian bridge, and in key locations within the District's commercial and residential areas. Artworks should also consider above themes related to unity of the District. Temporary art should be spontaneous and fun, both ephemeral and organic

adding color and vibrancy. Some ideas generated by the Steering Committee and through public input included:

- Temporary and portable furniture in public spaces
- Outdoor inflatable projection screens
- Street performers
- Festivals
- Community engagement opportunities
- Pop-up Art
- Outdoor digital photo exhibitions in park
- Adding geocache Riverboxes
- Light based art highlighting river and trees
- Activities on, under, or surrounding the pedestrian bridge
- Laser and/or programmed movement/projection/technology especially related to the bridge
- Art that grows on walls – incorporate nature into built environment through living walls or gardens
- Human-sized game boards or games in the park and localize game pieces (as ears of corn, etc.)

### ***Funding Strategies***

- 5. Provide three- to five-year start-up funding for the partnership entity and develop a funding model for activities and management through a blend of public and private sources in the mid-term. In the longer term, secure a sustainable revenue stream through a Special Improvement District.**

The City and major developers in the District should pool funding and commit to an up-front three- to five-year investment in animating the District to supplement membership and other existing sources supporting HDBA. Funding should be sufficient for a two-person staff, office costs, and a core program budget. During those years, the Partnership must build its membership base, sponsorships and other sources of support while exploring a more stable stream. Committee members brainstormed a variety of revenue streams from familiar to more speculative. Among current or known sources:

- Sliding scale or tiered membership fees – maybe based on retail impact and/or affiliation
- Sponsorships
- Partnerships with developers and major property owners
- City funding for specific activities and promotions
- Percentage of bed tax
- Designated levy or assessment

Prospective sources for future consideration included:

- Large landlords contribute tenant fees
- Parking fees
- Dedicated property tax through a Special Improvement District (SID)
- Dedicated sales tax
- Percentage of entertainment district tax
- Fee on bike or kayak rentals
- Resident and visitor membership for services (weekly/monthly pass or affinity program models)
- Conference/convention surcharge
- Admission surcharges
- Cover charge percentage

### ***Supportive Policies***

- 6. Review and revise City policies as appropriate to provide opportunities for licensing of street food vendors, food trucks, pop-up retail, outdoor live performances, outdoor dining, murals, creative signage, group use of park facilities, street closures for larger events, and other activities that support animation of the District and vibrancy for City residents and visitors.**

This planning project did not include an inventory of existing city policies relevant to animation of the District. The recommended consortium, working closely with the City, could identify policy needs as they arise and work collaboratively to find optimal solutions to protect life and property while contributing to the activation of the District. The City and Consortium could assemble an events handbook for the District to assist event-producing entrepreneurs.

### ***Infrastructure Improvements***

- 7. Continue to implement the physical infrastructure connections and improvements including the pedestrian bridge, bicycle and pedestrian connections, water trails, and that enable flexibility in public space usage as lifestyle, recreational, and transportation patterns evolve over time.**

Considerable planning and design has been carried out by the City of Dublin relative to street, pedestrian, and bicycle connections and especially park spaces along both sides of the Scioto River. Ideas related to physical infrastructure expressed here are done so in relation to activities desired to activate these spaces and make them more meaningful to both daily users and visitors. Many of these improvements have already been included in current and future City plans for the Bridge Street District. Most often called for were walking and biking trails along the river with benches and other amenities such as public art, more geo-caching sites (Riverboxes) and dog parks. Other improvements generated by the committee included:

- River access for kayaks along with other forms of manually operated boats
- Protection of the "green zone" or forested areas parallel to the river and enhancing the natural experience, including some form of botanical interpretation



- Activities such as rock climbing and opportunities for small motorized vehicles
- Amenities such as a splash pad and ice rink along with a soccer field, gym designed for teenagers and space for outdoor exercise classes or “bootcamps”
- Outdoor concert area
- Electrical outlets in public spaces for events and temporary artist exhibitions or performances
- Children’s playground adjacent to a picnic a concert area
- Shelter house for picnic/special events in park
- Areas for parking significant numbers of bicycles and small motorized vehicles
- Family friendly gathering places with comfortable furniture

Other recommendations related to physical connections and wayfinding included:

- Enhanced signage with consistent color and design
- Informational signage related to Holder-Wright Earthworks
- Up-lighting on the original stone bridge arches
- Bike path from the Emerald Bike Trail to the Arts Council and connector under 161
- Bypass road to relieve traffic on 161

### ***Future Amenities***

- 8. Collaborate with public and private sector entities to realize future public and private investments including the new library, well-equipped playgrounds, outdoor recreation opportunities, a performing/cultural arts facility, and other future amenities.**

The new Dublin Branch of the Columbus Metropolitan Library is a vital community resource and center of activity at a pivotal location in Historic Dublin at the head of the planned pedestrian bridge. Its re-construction is much-awaited and a critical piece of civic infrastructure. Similarly significant is a proposed theater, performing or cultural arts center within the District. Separate planning studies are underway for the realization of this amenity – a formal gathering place and focal point – that has great importance to the long-term success of the District and City as a whole.

Other civic and cultural amenities called for by the committee and public input that should be considered include space for arts activities for children and youth and active art-making space or maker-space. For younger children, recreational spaces with creative play structures and equipment would fulfill the needs of younger people and families living in or visiting the District.

Prospective private sector initiatives in which committee members and the public expressed interest included:

- Movie theater focusing on independent films
- Art studios and galleries

- Music studio and instrument store
- Dance studio
- Open mic/cabaret venue
- Specialty retail including soccer and other sports equipment
- Local brewery
- Hookah bar
- Japanese restaurants/bakeries
- Family friendly themed restaurants

### **Summary: Making Downtown Dublin Greater**

Major physical and economic changes in Dublin call for equally significant strategic organizing among local business, cultural, and civic players. The Dublin Arts Council sits in a unique position to lead these efforts, as described in this report, to establish and activate a cultural district, an effort that will be pivotal to Dublin's future success. Such an effort requires **more** than placing public art or planning noontime music-in-the-park activities or even festivals and special events – although these are what most members of the public might experience. It requires an active consortium of key players pooling resources, devoting time, and focusing around a common goal.

Urgently called for is to maintain the integrity of Historic Downtown Dublin, while embracing and incorporating Bridge Park and Shoppes at River Ridge as a unified group acting in common interest to become a **greater** downtown Dublin and to build an identity shared by the growing local population and appealing to visitors and future investors. Implementing this plan and acting swiftly on the complex yet critical process of naming and creating a sense of place identity for this new district will both protect investments made in the city's growth and foster a more highly functional, active, and appealing place for all.

Appendices:

- 1) Survey Results from Public Engagement Activities
- 2) Public Space Activation Examples: Columbus Common, Market Square (Pittsburgh), Fountain Square (Cincinnati)
- 3) District Management Examples: North Hollywood (California), Highland Park (Saint Paul), Lakewood (Denver)
- 4) State-based Cultural District Funding Mechanisms