



Whittier Peninsula Redevelopment Columbus, Ohio

Department of Development
 Mayor Michael B. Coleman

I. Location:

The Whittier Peninsula is approximately 160 acres of land bounded by Interstate 70, the bend of the Scioto River, and the CSX and Norfolk Southern railroad tracks. It is part of the Brewery District a neighborhood located south of, and adjacent to, downtown Columbus.

The Brewery District is an architectural review area. Commission approval is required for exterior renovations, demolitions and new construction. Land uses in the Brewery District include entertainment venues and offices, supplemented by existing and actively expanding residential (apartment and condominium) uses.



II BACKGROUND:

Adopted by Columbus City Council in 1998, the Riverfront Vision is a long-range plan to develop and renew nine miles of the Olentangy and Scioto riverfront. It provides an overall framework for redevelopment of the Whittier Peninsula, including the following important objectives:

- ◀ Protection and enhancement of the riparian edge and wildlife habitat;
- ◀ A roughly 50/50 split between public parkland-open space development and traditional neighborhood development;
- ◀ Improved connections to the Brewery District;
- ◀ Public access along the shoreline via parkland and trails; and
- ◀ Secondary vehicular access onto the peninsula

These objectives, as well as others contained in the plan, provide the basis for making land use and development decisions.

In the spring of 2003, the city of Columbus Recreation and Parks Department, Metro Parks and Audubon Ohio entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to jointly develop an urban nature center and park on a portion of the Whittier Peninsula. Park planning and design is complete and Metro Parks has started construction of the Northern Tier parklands. Audubon is on schedule to open their nature center to visitors and students in 2008.

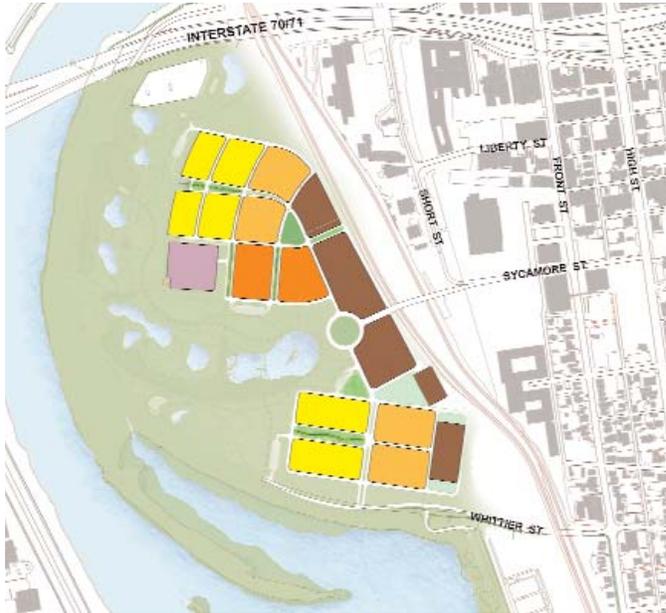
The park project represents an exciting, collaborative effort. It will reclaim and transform a portion of an abused, industrial Brownfield into a vibrant natural setting, and do so within one of the most urbanized areas of the city. From an environmental and development aspect, the impact will be profound.

Future Whittier residents will have immediate access to an 80-acre public parkland featuring nature trails, grass lawns for picnicking and playing, and access to a regional trail system. The centerpiece of the park will be the Audubon nature center and a chain of constructed wetlands, ponds and prairies.



A great Blue Heron as seen from the Whittier Peninsula.

III. REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPT:



Redevelopment Concept

In keeping with the Riverfront Vision, about 60 acres on the Whittier will be developed into a new, urban mixed-use neighborhood.

The neighborhood is planned to be a relatively high-density, neo-traditional community. Residential densities are expected to reflect those of other new area developments and range from about 15 to 80 units per acre. In addition, the Riverfront Vision recommends the construction of 150,000 to 200,000 square feet of neighborhood-scale office/commercial uses. The Redevelopment Concept identifies approximately 60 acres for redevelopment, another 80 acres for parkland use, with approximately 10 acres reserved for Department of Public Utilities operations.

The close physical relationship between the parkland and neighborhood creates a tremendous opportunity to showcase development practices that are both cost effective and environmentally responsible. Whittier redevelopment

will feature best practices in the area of sustainable development and green building technologies. It is envisioned that buildings will be energy efficient and healthy, waste will be reduced through material re-use and recycling, and stormwater will be integrated via functional landscape treatments and used to re-charge park wetlands. The application of these development principles will add value to the properties constructed and open a new residential market niche in Central Ohio.

ADAPTIVE RE-USE

The eastern third of the Lazarus furniture warehouse is being preserved for adaptive reuse and to serve as a showpiece for the future neighborhood's environmentally responsible design principles. The reuse of the building will provide a connection to the area's industrial past. For more information, please refer to the *Lazarus Furniture Warehouse Profile*.



Existing Lazarus warehouse.



Adaptive reuse and new construction.

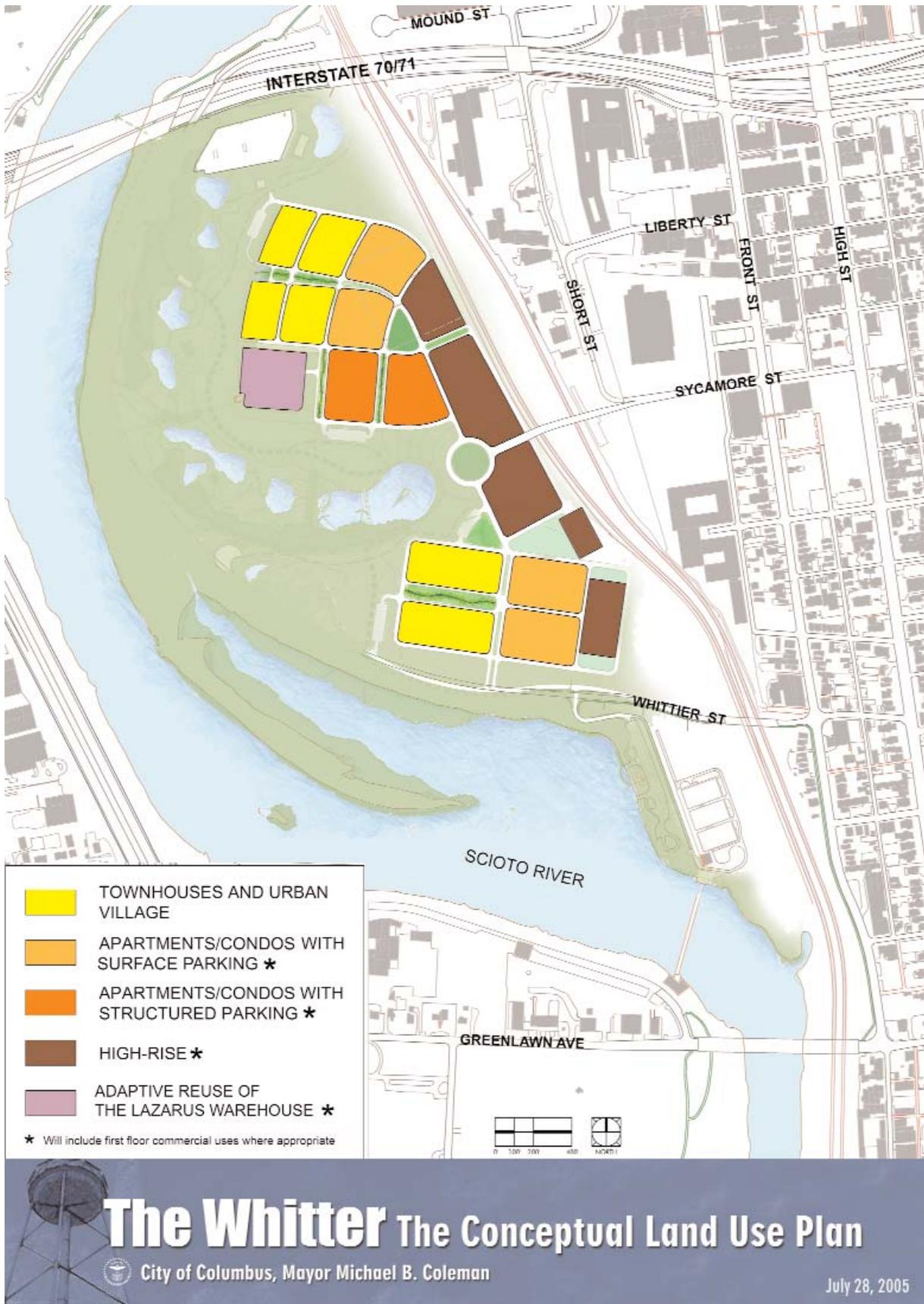


Figure 1A

IV. LAND USE

HISTORIC

Historic operations have all involved municipal, commercial/manufacturing and rail activity. Municipal uses included incineration, dumping and landfill operations. Among the commercial/manufacturing uses

were a steel works and foundry, as well as, machine shops and warehousing. Rail operations, in addition to transport, included a roundhouse, maintenance operations and a scrap yard.

CURRENT

The city of Columbus controls all but one of the active land uses in operation on the Whittier. The city has a large impound lot operation and the Recreation and Parks Department (CRPD) maintains administrative offices, warehousing, and maintenance operations. Impound and CRPD operations will be relocated.

The Department of Utilities maintains two facilities on the Whittier. The Electricity Division operates a substation at the north end of the Whittier near the Interstate. At the far south end of the site the Division of Sewerage and Drainage operates the Whittier Storm Tanks (WST). The WST is a facility for wastewater overflow and treatment for the city's combined sewer system. The city has prepared a plan to



address combined sewer overflows into the Scioto and Olentangy Rivers. The plan identifies changes to the operations and physical plant of the WST operations.

V. PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Geology

The soils on the Peninsula are classified as Urban Land and Genesee Complex that may be occasionally flooded. Vast areas of landfill exist as a result of waste disposal, development and flood control activities. The two types of fill are:

(1) Surface Fill

- ◀ Sand and Gravel make up the base/ parking material at the impound lots
- ◀ Silts and clays make up the Whittier Avenue levee and areas with vegetative cover

(2) Underlying Fill (five to 25 feet in depth)

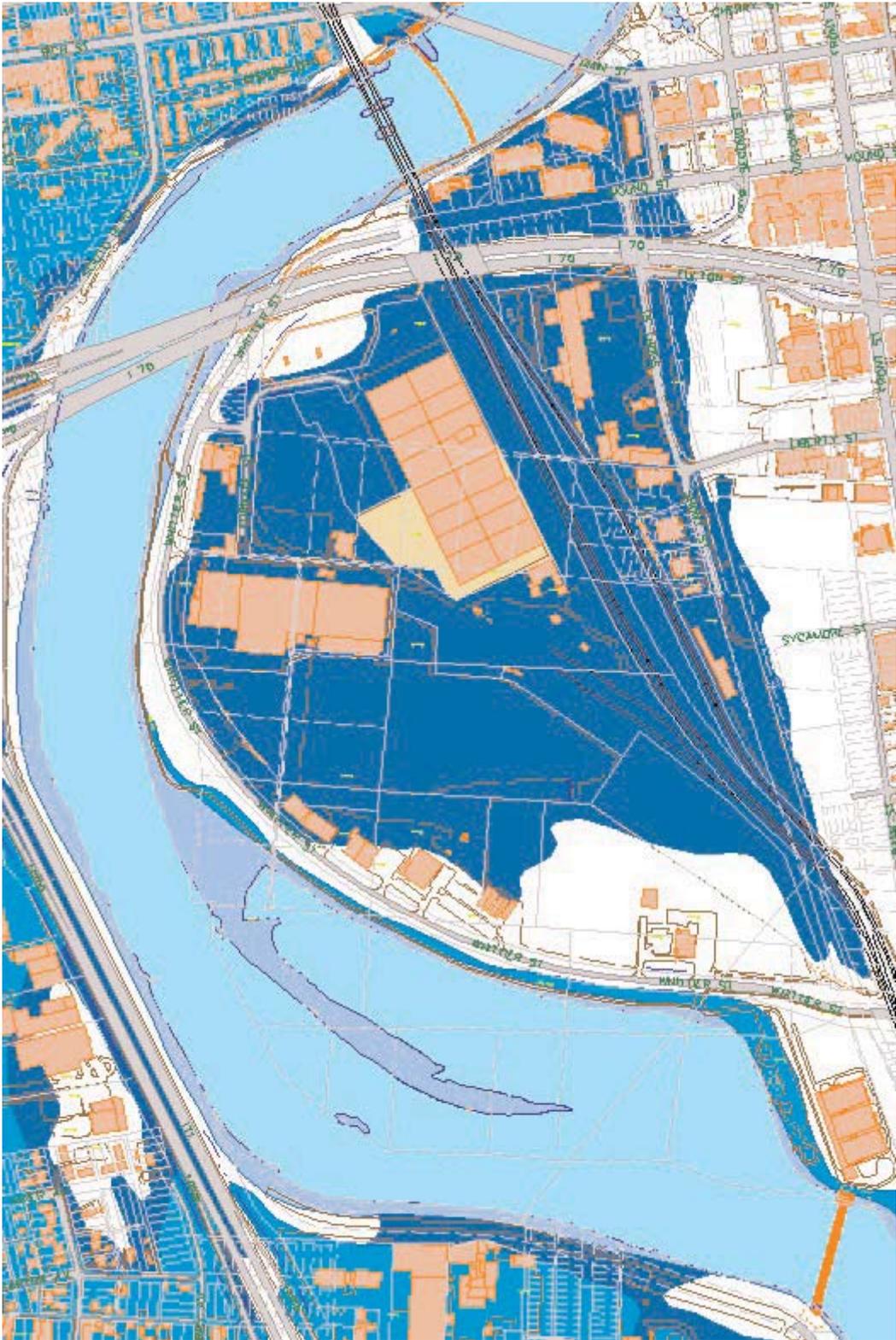
- ◀ Construction waste, demolition debris, and refuse debris such as brick, concrete, lime sludge, wood, etc.
- ◀ The fills are underlain by sand or sand and gravel outwash.

Flood Plain

Recent mapping by The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has placed approximately 75% of the Whittier Peninsula in the 100-year flood plain (figure 1B and figure 1C). The base (100 year flood) elevation has been set at 717 feet. Recorded elevations on the Whittier range from isolated areas in the low 700's to high elevations in the upper-720's. Columbus City Codes require that the finished floor elevations of occupied levels of all buildings shall be 1-½ feet above the 100-year flood elevation (718 ½ feet). Areas of the Whittier outside of the 100-year flood plain include the southern impound lot, the location of the Columbus Recreation and Parks' facilities and Whittier Street.



V. PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

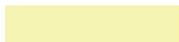


VI. REDEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Metro Parks



City Properties Inc.



CSX Transportation



Land ownership.

(1) Relocation of City Facilities

- ◀ The Recreation and Parks Department is on schedule to vacate their Whittier facilities by July 2007.
- ◀ The city is working to secure a new location for the impound lot and associated operations. The city has entered into negotiations for a potential relocation site.

(2) Department of Utilities Operations

- ◀ A Wet Weather Management Plan (WWMP) was filed with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency on July 1, 2005. The Plan is comprehensive and outlines an approach to improving city sewer operations. An intensive

capital-based approach, the Plan addresses, maintenance, long-term capacity issues and combined sewer and storm water overflows into waterways.

- ◀ Per the Plan, a new sewer pipe will be built from the Whittier Street Storm Tanks (WSST) and cross the Scioto River, extending southward to a wastewater treatment plant; it is to be completed by 2010. The wet weather storage capacity currently provided by the WSST is critical and will be maintained. However, it is expected that changes will be made to the physical plant and operations of the facility. Among the approaches being studied is the feasibility of “capping” the tanks.

VI. REDEVELOPMENT ISSUES

The Northern Tier will be remediated to recreational standards, including a small section of land slated for neighborhood development.

- Southern Tier
 - ▶ Environmental issues on the southern portion of the Whittier include underground storage tanks, municipal dump, scrap yard, PCB contamination, vehicle storage, concrete manufacturing, and sand and gravel operations. A Phase I assessment has been completed, and although a few gaps remain, Phase II data has been collected. (NOTE: Environmental assessment work has only been completed on the publicly-owned parcels.)
 - ▶ Although data has been gathered, a “No Further Action” letter (NFA) for the development portion of the southern tier has been put on hold pending the completion of a land use master plan. However, to keep the Audubon and Metro Park projects on track, the city has extended its contract with Burgess and Niple to complete two NFA letters for the recreational section of the southern tier.



(5) I-70/71 South Innerbelt Study

- ◀ In 2008 the Ohio Department of Transportation plans to begin construction on a newly design I-70/71 south innerbelt “split.” The current I-70/71 configuration enters the south end of downtown Columbus from the west. The interstate crosses the Scioto River and borders the north end of the Whittier Peninsula.
- ◀ Four alternatives are under study and it is expected that the approach of the newly constructed interstate will widen as it crosses the river and enters the downtown. The exact footprint will not be determined until a final design alternative is selected sometime in February 2006.
- ◀ For more information go to: <http://www.dot.state.oh.us/7071study/stakeholder%20link.aspx>

VII. STUDIES

COMPREHENSIVE MARKET EVALUATION

In summer 2005, the City contracted with the Columbus-based market research firm, Vogt Williams & Bowen, LLC to evaluate the proposed mixed-use development concept, market potential for green development concepts and potential development premiums and detractors. The market

evaluation, delivered August 2005, recommended the following “menu” of feasible configurations and absorption estimates that were based on a 2008 opening; it is assumed that the project will integrate multiple alternatives and a variety of price points.

RESIDENTIAL:

For-Sale Housing Component

Housing Program	Supportable # Units	Sizes (Square feet)	Pricing	Annual Absorption
Upscale Townhouses	150	1,400 – 3,000	\$275,000 - \$1,000,000	20-25
Mid-range Townhouses	250	1,000-2,100	\$150,000 - \$300,000	20-38
Affordable Townhouses	200	1,000-1,650	\$125,000 - \$190,000	36-48
Upscale Garden Condos	200	650-4,000	\$175,000 - \$1,500,000	25-30
Mid-range Garden condos	300	650-3,000	\$125,000-\$600,000	30-35
Affordable Garden Condos	75	750-1,500	\$150,000-250,000	20-25
Live/work	75	750-1,500	\$150,000-\$250,000	20-25

Rental Housing Component

Housing Program	Supportable # Units	Sizes (Square feet)	Gross* Monthly Rents	Monthly Absorption
Upscale Townhouses	30	1,000-2,000	\$1,250-\$2,500	6-8
Mid-range Townhouses	50	800-2,000	\$950-\$1,750	8-10
Tax-credit Townhouses	40	800-1,500	\$650-\$1,000	12-14
Upscale Garden Rentals	75	500-1,750	\$850-\$2,250	8-10
Mid-range Garden Rentals	150	500-1,500	\$700-\$1,850	10-12
Tax-Credit Garden Rentals	100	500-1,000	\$450-\$850	12-14
*includes all shelter costs				

Source: Vogt Williams Bowen, LLC

VII. STUDIES

Commercial Component

	Supportable Square Feet	Gross Lease*/ Square Feet	Potential Annual Absorption
Office	250,000	\$20-\$50	40,000 sq. ft.
Retail	100,000	\$15-\$20	20,000 sq. ft.
TOTAL	350,000		

Source: Vogt Williams Bowen, LLC

- Product design, location and competition within the development area will significantly influence the ultimate absorption rate.
- Single-family housing has not been programmed into the Whittier conceptual development plan because it may be prohibitively expensive to construct due to flood plain, geotechnical and environmental remediation considerations. However, it should be noted that the consultants found that current market conditions indicate that the site could support up to 100 single-family homes ranging in size from 1,800 to 4,000 square feet, priced from \$275,000 to \$1,250,000, respectively.



The complete report can be viewed at www.columbus.gov/whittier.asp

VII. STUDIES

PRELIMINARY SITE ASSESSMENT:

In summer 2005, the City contracted with Burgess and Niple, to conduct an assessment of physical site characteristics found on the Whittier Peninsula, and to project development infrastructure costs based on the conceptual development plan. (Note: The current concept plan differs slightly from the version used by in completing this report. The current concept has a slightly smaller footprint and fewer roadways.)

Flood Map Assessment

- ◀ Approximately 560,000 cubic yards of fill will be required to elevate the entire development area out of the 100-year flood elevation and meet city code requirements for first floor habitable space.
- ◀ The fill will have no impact on the Scioto River 100-year flood plain.
- ◀ A Conditional Letter of Map Revision has been completed for submission to FEMA.

Preliminary Geotechnical Analysis

- ◀ Eight geotechnical borings were completed within the Whittier's southern tier.
- ◀ Uncontrolled fill is prevalent throughout the entire proposed redevelopment area, averaging 24 feet thick at the southern portion of the redevelopment area and eight feet thick in the northern portion.
- ◀ Shallow foundations are not a development option.
- ◀ Viable options for foundation support include: undercutting and replacing the unsuitable fill; deep foundation systems (drilled shafts, auger-cast piles, or driven piles); and ground modification by dynamic compaction.
- ◀ Construction of new embankments will result in consolidation settlement of existing fill soils. Waiting times for soils to settle will need to be incorporated in the construction schedule.
- ◀ Roadways and parking lot constructed on existing fill will likely require some form of sub-grade stabilization.

VII. STUDIES

LIMITED PHASE II ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLING

- ◀ One soil sample from each of the eight geotechnical borings was collected; seven of the eight samples underwent chemical analysis.
- ◀ Two of the seven samples had chemicals of concern above the VAP direct-contact standards for commercial land use.
- ◀ The soil sample collected from a depth of 0-2 feet on the east side of the Lazarus Warehouse had a lead concentration of 3,350 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg). The VAP-direct contact standard for commercial land use is 1,800 kg
- ◀ The soil sample collected from a depth of 4-6 feet, located at the far southeast portion of the development area had a benzo(a)anthracene concentration of 68.9 and had a benzo(a)pyrene concentration of 53.7; VAP direct contact standard for commercial land use is 63 and 6.3, respectively.
- ◀ Several samples had concentrated levels of arsenic above VAP standards for residential use. The concentrations are consistent with concentrations found on properties surrounding the Whittier Peninsula.

INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT

- ◀ A street hierarchy with a variety of street types is proposed.
- ◀ The majority of the existing sanitary sewer will be abandoned and a new system installed.
- ◀ The existing water distribution system will be abandoned and a new water distribution system will be installed.
- ◀ Proposed storm sewer system will utilize low-impact development features, including bioretention, enhanced wet swales, and enhanced dry swales.
- ◀ A new 6-inch natural gas supply line will need to be constructed
- ◀ New underground electric, phone, and cable lines will need to be constructed throughout the new development.

COST ESTIMATES

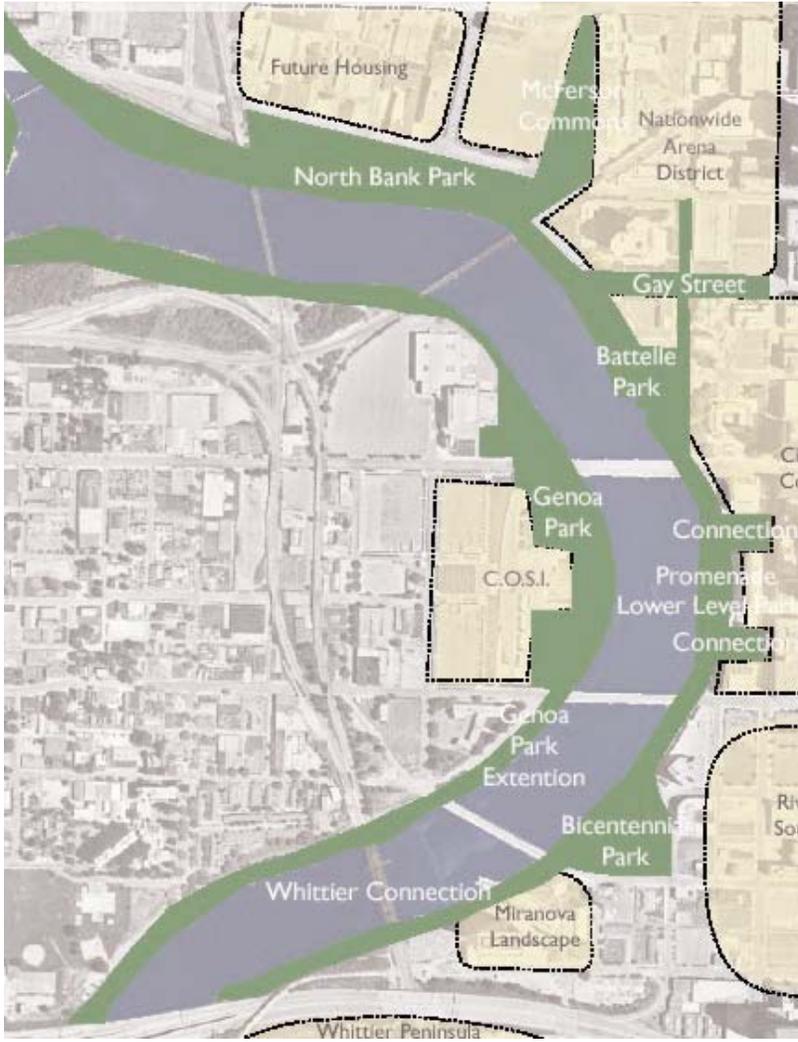
- ◀ The estimated construction site redevelopment costs are estimated at \$34,416,000 in 2008 dollars. (Includes site excavation and fill.)
- ◀ Anticipated that development will be phased over a 12 to 15-year period.

The complete report can be viewed at www.columbus.gov/whittier.asp

VII. CONTEXT

Downtown Riverfront Investments

Over the next decade, the city of Columbus expects to invest over \$123 million in the downtown riverfront. The Whittier Peninsula is immediately south of downtown and it enjoys a direct link via the multi-purpose trail system. Funding and schedules are in place for the Main and Town Street Bridge replacement projects and it is anticipated that both bridges will be completed by the end of the decade. The Main Street Bridge, with its spectacular lighting, arches and pedestrian promenade will connect the Whittier with west bank attractions such as Center of Science and Industry (COSI), the Genoa Park Amphitheater, and the revitalized Dodge Park Recreation Center. In addition to the physical connection, Audubon has established a partnership with COSI to further strengthen the mission of environmental education. The stretch of the river flowing through downtown, recently coined the Scioto Mile, will include renovations to

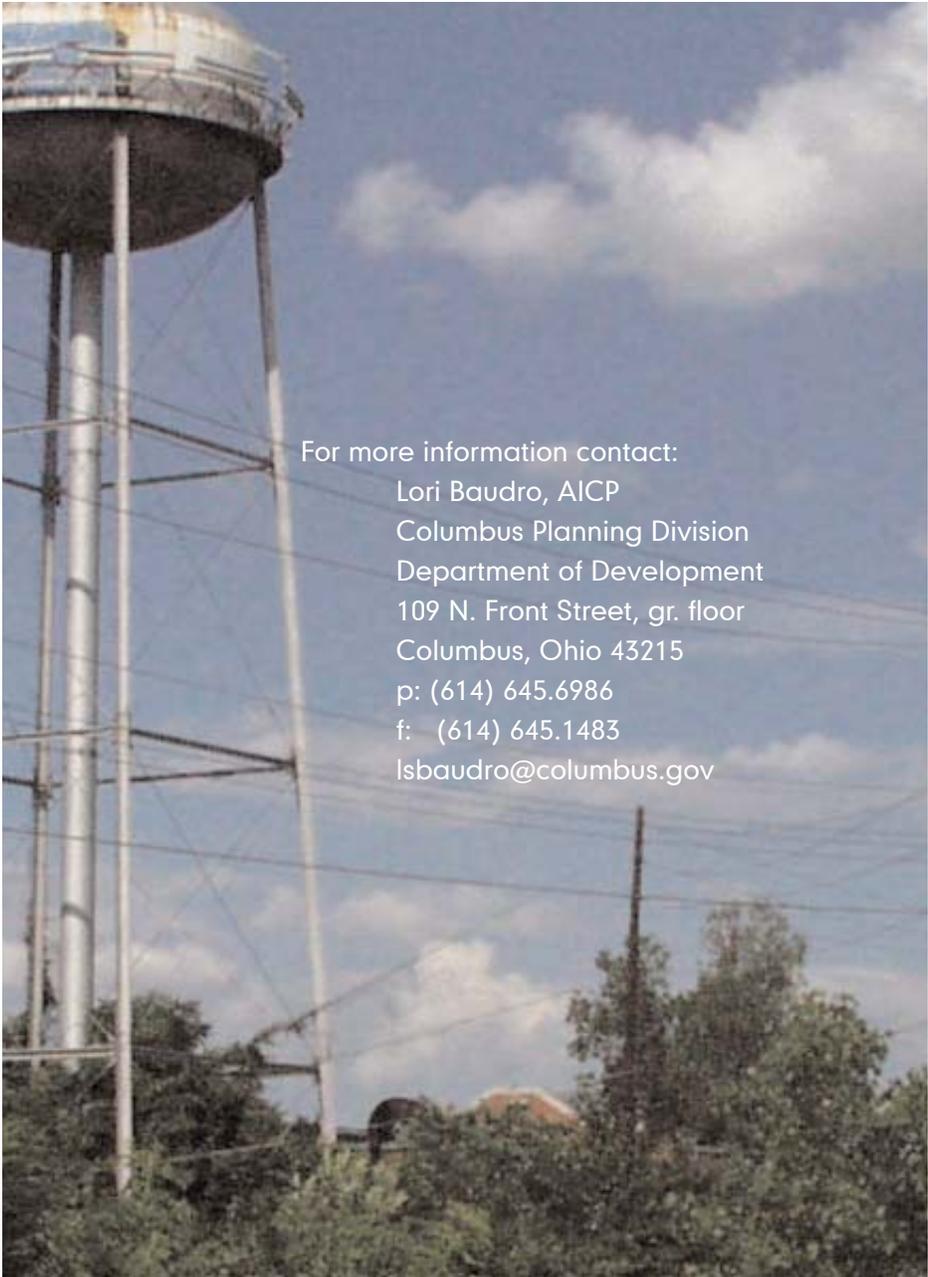


The Scioto Mile

Columbus Downtown Development Corporation

Bicentennial Park and completion of a river walkway system that will provide a convenient and enjoyable connection to downtown venues, the new North Bank Park, and other points north.

VIII. CONTACT



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