

Planning Matters



CITY OF COLUMBUS, MAYOR MICHAEL B. COLEMAN DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT, DIRECTOR BOYCE SAFFORD, III

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Columbus Vision 2012 Update Public Input Process Concluding; Planning Starts for the Next Big Events

By Mark Lundine

The City of Columbus is currently undertaking the single largest public input process in its 196-year history: asking thousands of citizens to describe their dreams and ambitions for the city's future as it relates to its bicentennial in 2012. Citizens were asked to think big and think creatively on how to make Columbus the best place in the nation to live, work, play and raise a family by 2012.

Why 2012? This will be the year Columbus celebrates its 200th anniversary. Mayor Michael B. Coleman has challenged the community to contemplate this significant milestone as an opportunity to not only celebrate, but as a call to action to dream big and to act on those dreams. Vision 2012 will identify significant projects throughout the city to possibly include in the Bicentennial Bond Package that will be voted on in 2008. Private funding sources will also be identified to help accomplish these goals.

Public Input. In order to begin the transformation desired by 2012, the city has undertaken an unprecedented public input process designed to engage thousands of participants in the 2012 process. During the summer of 2007 a group of four city interns and Ohio State City Planning Students (Amy Miller, Jim Thompson, Amber Cackler, and I) traveled to 23 community festivals with a kiosk full of computer terminals called the 2012 Think Tank. The 2012 Think Tank was designed to gather public input through surveys as well as written and video blogs. Additionally, online surveys were posted on the Columbus 2012 website (www.columbus2012.org) and a



Great Attributes of Your Neighborhood paper survey was distributed to neighborhood leaders throughout the city. In total, 1,840 people participated in the public input process generating 8,197 comments throughout the summer.

Beyond these general means of gathering input, several specific populations were targeted to be included in the 2012 process. The Vision 2012 project held two meetings on November 1st targeting high school and college students. The Youth Brainstorming Forum was held at Metro High School with over 300 high school students from the 11 school districts represented within the City of Columbus' ►►

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Columbus Vision 2012 Update

Public Input Process Concluding; Planning Starts for the Next Big Events

corporate boundaries, gathered together in a student led program that asked them to identify improvements. That evening, over 50 college students from six different area universities gathered to provide their insights and visions for the future of Columbus. Beyond these student events, two structured interview sessions have been conducted with Somali-Americans and Latinos living within the city to gather their dreams and desires.

The Commission. Mayor Coleman and members of City Council have worked together to establish a citizen commission in charge of steering the 2012 process. This commission is led by a steering committee of 33 prominent community members and is chaired by President E. Gordon Gee from The Ohio State University, Mrs. Abigail Wexner, Board Chair of the Columbus Coalition Against Family Violence, and Bishop Timothy Clarke, Senior Pastor of the First Church of God.

Over 200 commissioners have been appointed to 13 Focus Groups that are charged with addressing specific topical areas with key questions framing their work. The focus groups will use the public input to prepare goals and principles, and recommend one to three city-wide action items that can be initiated or completed by 2012.

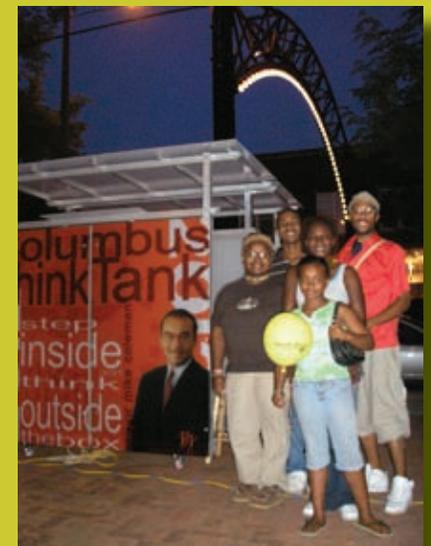
How You Can Participate in Vision 2012. The 2012 project will continue to reach out to engage the public through a series of large public meetings in January 2008. A Citizen's Summit will be a large public gathering where thousands of people will come together to view the public input results, use electronic voting to prioritize the themes that emerged from the public input, and hear from prominent

speakers. Also, in February there will be a series of five Regional Neighborhood Meetings held throughout the city that are designed to get neighborhoods together to identify a physical project in their neighborhood that can be proposed for the Bicentennial Bond package.

A final Blueprint for the Bicentennial will be created by the 2012 commission that will lay the path to accomplishing the major projects envisioned through the commission and the 2012 public input process. This Blueprint will include items for the Bond package that will go to voters in 2008 and also identify private resources that can accomplish the prioritized projects from Vision 2012.

Everybody is encouraged to participate in the upcoming Citizens Summit and Regional Neighborhood Meetings. Please encourage others to become involved in Vision 2012 as it is a unique and important project that will help to shape Columbus' future well beyond the bicentennial in 2012.

You can track Vision 2012 at its website, where a calendar of events is also posted at www.columbus2012.org. ♦



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Columbus Art Commission Taking the First Steps

By Lori Baudro, AICP

It's been 47 years in the making, but on October 19th of this year, the very first Columbus Art Commission (CAC) was convened. Seven community leaders from Greater Columbus with expertise in the arts were appointed by Mayor Coleman and authorized by Columbus City Council to serve on the CAC. The chapter of the Columbus City Code authorizing the formation of the Commission dates back to 1960. Per code, the CAC has authority over the city's acquisition of art and the placement of art owned by the city. Once a city-owned work of art is sited, the Commission's approval is required before it can be removed, relocated, or altered.

Chapter 3115 of the Columbus City Code defines "work of art" as including all paintings, mural decorations, inscriptions, stained glass, statues, relief's, or other sculptures, monuments, fountains, arches or other structures intended for ornament or commemoration. This definition differs from more modern definitions of art or public art being used by most municipal art commissions. Rather than emphasize the type of art or art object, definitions today tend to emphasize originality, acknowledge the breadth of media and materials from which art is being created, and recognize the integrative and collaborative nature of artists and artwork in the civic realm – such as in the design of parks, plazas, buildings and public infrastructure.

For the rest of this year and into the next, the CAC will focus on revising Chapter 3115, the definition of art, commission duties and ►►



Umbrella Girl in Schiller Park, German Village, Joan Wobst, Sculptor

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Columbus Art Commission Taking The First Steps

approval requirements. One of the first things the Commission has been asked to tackle by Councilmember Maryellen O'Shaughnessy, is broadening its review authority to include the placement of any art in the public right-of-way. In this context, right-of-way is generally considered the part of the roadway that includes the tree lawn or grass strip between the road and sidewalk and the sidewalk itself. It is the area along a roadway where there is public control and common right of passage (technically, the right-of-way includes the road pavement and all utilities, as well.) Currently, the CAC's review authority only extends to art works owned by the city; it does not include the placement of privately-owned art in the public right-of-way.

Revisions to the code are underway to ensure that Commission approval is required for all art placed on public property and in the public right-of-way, regardless of ownership. The definition of "art" is also under review.

Although a major focus of their attention, CAC activities include more than code revisions and the nuts and bolts of their future operation. At their November 8th meeting, Commissioners received a presentation on the Scioto Mile, a project that will transform the downtown riverfront. Representatives from the Columbus Downtown Development Corporation, AEP and MSI Design shared conceptual design images and solicited Commission feedback. Other presentations, both general and for projects requiring Commission approval, will be scheduled onto future agendas.



Schiller Statue in Schiller Park.

Commission meetings are published in the City Bulletin and will soon be posted to the city's website, www.columbus.gov. A link to the Columbus Art Commission should be up and running by the first of December. The link will provide access to Commission meeting dates, agendas, meeting minutes and other materials.

For information on the Columbus Art Commission, please contact Lori Baudro, AICP at lsbaudro@columbus.gov. ◆

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The Next Step for the Big Darby Accord: The Town Center Master Plan

By Adrienne Joly, AICP

Across the country public planners and private land developers alike are looking for new ways to achieve sustainable growth and create places with a sense of community that has largely been lost to the suburban development patterns of the past fifty years. One response has been the development of "town centers". In recent years, the term has been applied to developments of all types and sizes, however the Urban Land Institute describes town centers as "an enduring, walkable, and integrated open-air, multiuse development that is organized around a clearly identifiable and energized public realm where citizens can gather and strengthen their community bonds. It is anchored by retail, dining, and leisure uses as well as by vertical or horizontal residential uses. At least one other type of development is included in a town center, such as office, hospitality, civic, and cultural uses. Over time, a town center should evolve into the densest, most compact, and most diverse part of a community, with strong connections to its surroundings." This is the type of town center envisioned by the *Big Darby Accord Watershed Management Plan*.

The Accord proposes a town center on 1,835 acres located generally north of West Broad Street, south of I-70, east of Hubbard Road and west of Hellbranch Run. The town center will focus density onto a portion (3%) of the watershed, so other more environmentally sensitive land can be conserved and protected. While the Accord outlines the location and approximate size for the town center, it recommends the preparation of a detailed master plan to develop a vision and to address a range of issues involved with a project of this scale. It is the

intent that the master plan will provide a detailed economic analysis of overall market feasibility of the project, and to generate a design for the town center

that incorporates specific recommendations on level and type of development, land use, infrastructure requirements (with specific emphasis on storm water management), and transportation, as well as phasing and funding of the project.

Columbus along with its partners Franklin County, Brown Township and Prairie Township are preparing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to seek proposals from qualified consultants to prepare the *Town Center Master Plan*. Continuing the open process begun by the Accord, an open house was held in August to collect get public input on the issues the master plan should cover and to seek participants to serve on the Town Center Procurement Committee (TCPC). The TCPC includes individuals with a wide range of interests and experience, from area residents, natural resource experts and land developers. The group has worked through the fall to develop a draft RFP. The jurisdictions hope to release the RFP in late fall and have a consultant team on board by the first quarter of 2008. The Town Center Master Plan is the next step in implementing the Accord and ensuring the long term protection of the Big Darby watershed. ◆



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Revisions of Commercial Overlays Proposed Providing Additional Standards

By Mark Dravillas, AICP

Since 1999, a series of commercial zoning overlays and special graphics control area designations have been applied to areas of Columbus as a means of addressing community planning and design priorities. These designations work in conjunction with underlying zoning districts to provide additional standards for such things as building setback, screening, lighting and graphics.

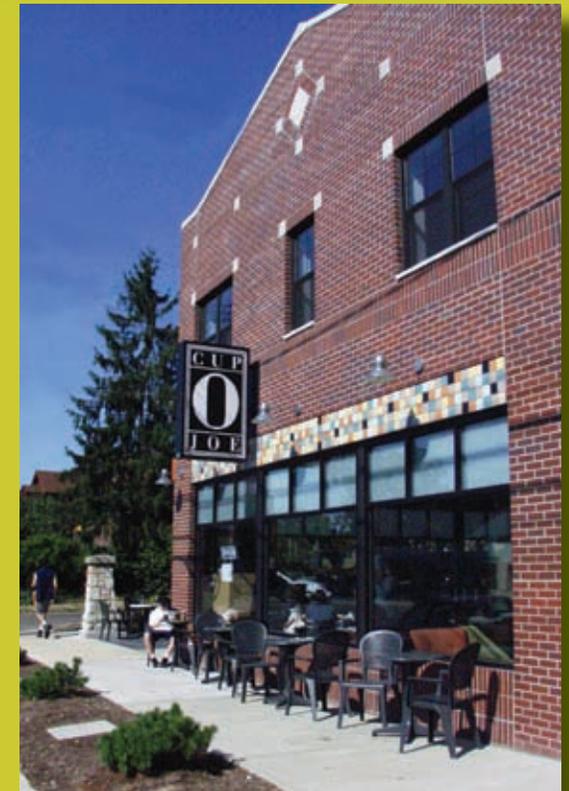
The most prevalent of these overlays is the *Urban Commercial Overlay* (UCO), which is in place in several of the older commercial districts in all parts of Columbus. The most prominent effect of the UCO is that new construction must be built to the sidewalk, hiding parking either behind and/or next to the building. These standards ensure that new development mimics older buildings and reinforces the sense of place in Columbus' historic neighborhoods. Indeed, successful new development has been built in all parts of the Columbus under the UCO (even a new gasoline service station), indicating that design standards will not thwart development, but play a key role in building quality into our older neighborhoods.

As the City gains experience in the administration of these code sections, a number of areas have been identified for needed revision. A city staff team - representing Planning, Zoning, Transportation, City Attorney, and City Council - undertook a comprehensive review of the commercial overlays (Urban, Community and Regional) as well as the Morse Road and Olentangy River Road special graphic control

areas. As a result of that effort, a number of changes are being recommended to the code.

Many of the suggested modifications clarify ambiguous language or provide greater consistency of approach among overlays. In other cases, redundant standards or provisions were removed.

One of the more significant proposals is the replacement of code sections that tie parking reductions to administrative waivers in the Urban and Community Commercial Overlays with a range of parking reductions linked to size of the proposed building. The proposed standards recognize that new urban development should be geared toward the pedestrian and not be required to meet parking requirements more suited to suburban development. The proposed parking standards are as follows: ►►



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- ▶ For buildings that are 0-2,000 square feet: 25% of the required parking in Chapter 3342 shall be provided.
- ▶ For buildings that are 2,001- 10,000 square feet: 50% of the required parking in Chapter 3342 shall be provided.
- ▶ For buildings greater than 10,000 square feet: Parking shall be provided, but not exceed, the ratio given in Chapter 3342.

The proposed revisions also fold the special graphic control area standards into the regional commercial overlay section, thereby eliminating two code sections. This also extends the provisions of the special graphic control areas relative to billboard prohibition and other related controls to regional corridors beyond Morse and Olentangy River Roads – a standard requested by many neighborhoods. It is also important to note that these proposed changes would have no impact on the boundaries of existing areas.

Benefits of the proposed changes, if adopted, would include:

- ▶ Improved efficiency in application and oversight.
- ▶ Greater consistency of structure and approach among the overlays.
- ▶ Removal of redundant provisions and ambiguous language.
- ▶ Clearer guidance on applicability of overlays to non-conforming uses, maintenance, and “in-kind” replacement.
- ▶ “Greener” provisions regarding landscaping and screening, particularly with respect to parking lots.



Giant Eagles' new Get Go gasoline service station and convenience store on N. High St.

- ▶ Replacement of administrative waivers with new parking requirement guidelines.
- ▶ Elimination of two code sections by folding the requirements of the Morse Road and Olentangy River Road special graphic control overlays into the Regional Commercial Overlays.

Detailed side by side comparisons of existing and proposed text, a complete copy of the proposed revisions, and a presentation summarizing the proposed changes is available at http://development.columbus.gov/Bizdevelopment/PlanList/PL_114.asp (see “Documents”).

Four public meetings were held in November to present the proposed changes and collect for public input. Written input was collected through November 30th. Staff will be preparing revisions based on the input and releasing a second draft prior to presentation before the City Development Commission. Pending Development Commission support, the proposed revisions will be brought for the consideration of City Council. ◆

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Project Updates

Adopted Plans. Earlier this fall Columbus City Council adopted three area plans: an update to the *Northwest Area Plan*; the *Bixby Road Economic Development Amendment to the Southeast Area Plan*; and the *Scioto Southland Area Plan*, the first for this planning area on the city's south side. The Columbus Development Commission approved in November the *Southside Plan*, *Merion Village* and *Schumacher Place Amendment*. Council consideration is anticipated in early 2008.

Plans Underway. The Division has initiated four new area plans this fall that will continue into 2008: *Livingston East Area Plan*, *Clintonville Neighborhood Plan*, *Fifth by Northwest Area Plan*, and *Southwest Area Plan* (working jointly with the Franklin County Department of Economic Development and Planning).

The Year Ahead. The Division will continue to be working on neighborhood plans, development reviews, and related projects. Of particular note in 2008, the staff will be participating in the U.S. Census Bureau's LUCA initiative to update street addresses in time for the 2010 Census (this is critical to an accurate population count, which affects Federal funding levels).

The Division will continue to provide staff report to Mayor Coleman's 2012 Commission, in particular gathering data and assisting with five

regional neighborhood meetings in the first quarter of 08. The Division will be working jointly with Franklin County and Brown and Prairie Townships in hiring and managing a consultant team to design the Darby Town Center.

As part of neighborhood plan implementation, the Division expects to initiate the process to adopt upwards of five sets of commercial overlays in Eastmoor, Clintonville, Near South, Milo-Grogan, and Northeast planning areas.

Awards. The *Big Darby Accord Watershed Management Plan* was recognized by the Ohio Planning Conference, a chapter of the American Planning Association, at the fall statewide conference with a 2007 award for a Focused Planning Project. The award was presented at the Keynote Luncheon, at which Governor Ted Strickland addressed the conference to discuss the state's urban agenda.

The *Eastmoor Design Charrette – Broad and East Main Streets* was recognized this fall by the Central Ohio Section of the Ohio Planning Conference with a planning award. This urban design plan was led by Daniel Thomas, Urban Design Manager, working with our staff and the Eastmoor community. ♦



Governor Ted Strickland.

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