

2010 DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS  
STRATEGIC PLAN





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE 2010 DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS STRATEGIC PLAN ALLOWS EVERYONE FROM PUBLIC OFFICIALS TO RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS LEADERS TO POINT TO ONE VISION AND SAY, “THIS IS WHAT WE WANT.”

Downtown’s success is essential to the success of the entire Central Ohio region. While growth continues on the fringes of the metro area, Downtown Columbus remains the center of commerce, government and entertainment. Even in this electronic age that some believe makes place irrelevant, a thriving downtown remains a precondition to the overall competitiveness and attractiveness of a city.

Over the course of the last decade, there has been a significant amount of reinvestment in Downtown Columbus. Residential growth has rebounded for the first time since 1950. In the face of a down economy the office market has stabilized, while absorbing more than one million square feet of office space. Since 2000 there has been nearly \$2 billion in public and private investment downtown.

The resurgence of downtown is due in part to the success of the 2002 Downtown Business Plan that called for, among other things, building more downtown housing, improving the riverfront park system, and attracting and retaining jobs downtown. With this mission largely fulfilled, City leaders recognize that now is the time to capitalize on current success and to plan for the next 10 years and beyond.

The 2010 Downtown Columbus Strategic Plan creates an overall vision for downtown that builds on previous planning efforts. Over the past several months, the planning team has conducted an interactive public process, hosting three town hall meetings and gaining input from more than 1,000 comments. The result? **10 Principles, 12 Ideas** and **8 Strategies** that will guide the revitalization of Downtown Columbus.

## 10 Principles

No plan can gain acceptance without establishing a vision. The **10 Principles** narrate the community’s core values and outline the goals for the future of Downtown Columbus. Some of these principles build upon current momentum, such as increasing the amount and variety of downtown housing, maintaining downtown as the employment center of the region, and continuing to foster public and private partnerships.

Other principles are more aspirational. The City needs to embrace transit as a competitive advantage. Arts and culture should be a prominent and visible part of everyday life downtown. Sustainability should be promoted to transform Downtown Columbus into the green capital of the Midwest. These **10 Principles** provide a critical framework for this Plan, but they also provide a benchmark for judging success.



## 12 Ideas

Innovation requires ideas. Columbus has a strong track record of challenging conventional wisdom—and succeeding. In 1995, who would have believed that the Ohio Penitentiary would be replaced with both a new arena and a new ballpark? Or that it was possible to build restaurants over a highway? In 2002, who would have imagined that Downtown Columbus would have a completely new riverfront park system and more than 2,000 new residents in just eight years? Even in the face of economic challenges, development downtown has continued, exemplified by the dramatic transformation of City Center Mall into Columbus Commons.

In this context, developing a new Creative Campus between Columbus State, CCAD and the Columbus Museum of Art seems possible. Restoring High Street and Broad Street as the most important commercial and civic streets in the City becomes necessary. Improving transportation alternatives is now mandatory for the long term economic health of the city. Creating a sustainable urban neighborhood on the Scioto Peninsula is an opportunity that must be seized. The costs of reversing decades of environmental damage along our river corridors become surmountable. In short, we have the capacity and capability to achieve these **12 Ideas** and more if we decide as a community that we want to achieve them.

The **12 Ideas** in this Plan are just that—ideas. Without ideas, without inspiration, we cannot move forward. Surely, there are details to be worked out. Proposals need to be analyzed. Partnerships need to be formed. Funding sources need to be identified. It will take hard work and community support to transform these ideas into plans. This process has already begun. Through extensive public comments and input, the community has embraced this common vision for the future of Downtown Columbus.

## 8 Strategies

Individual projects alone will not be enough to guide the continued revitalization of Downtown Columbus. Improving transportation alternatives, promoting sustainability, and increasing residential density cannot be solved by singular developments. There are no one-off solutions. These complicated urban issues require a holistic approach and numerous public policy changes.

The **8 Strategies** identify the policy areas that need to be addressed in order for Downtown Columbus to fulfill its potential. Specific action items are proposed to guide urban form, support new arts and culture investments, and enhance neighborhood connections. Properly implemented, these strategies will shape all future development in Downtown Columbus and ensure the success of the **12 Ideas** and others that follow.

Together, these **10 Principles, 12 Ideas, and 8 Strategies** reflect the community’s aspirations for the future of Downtown Columbus. But it is more than that. The 2010 Downtown Columbus Strategic Plan allows everyone from public officials to residents and business leaders to point to one vision and say, “This is what we want.”



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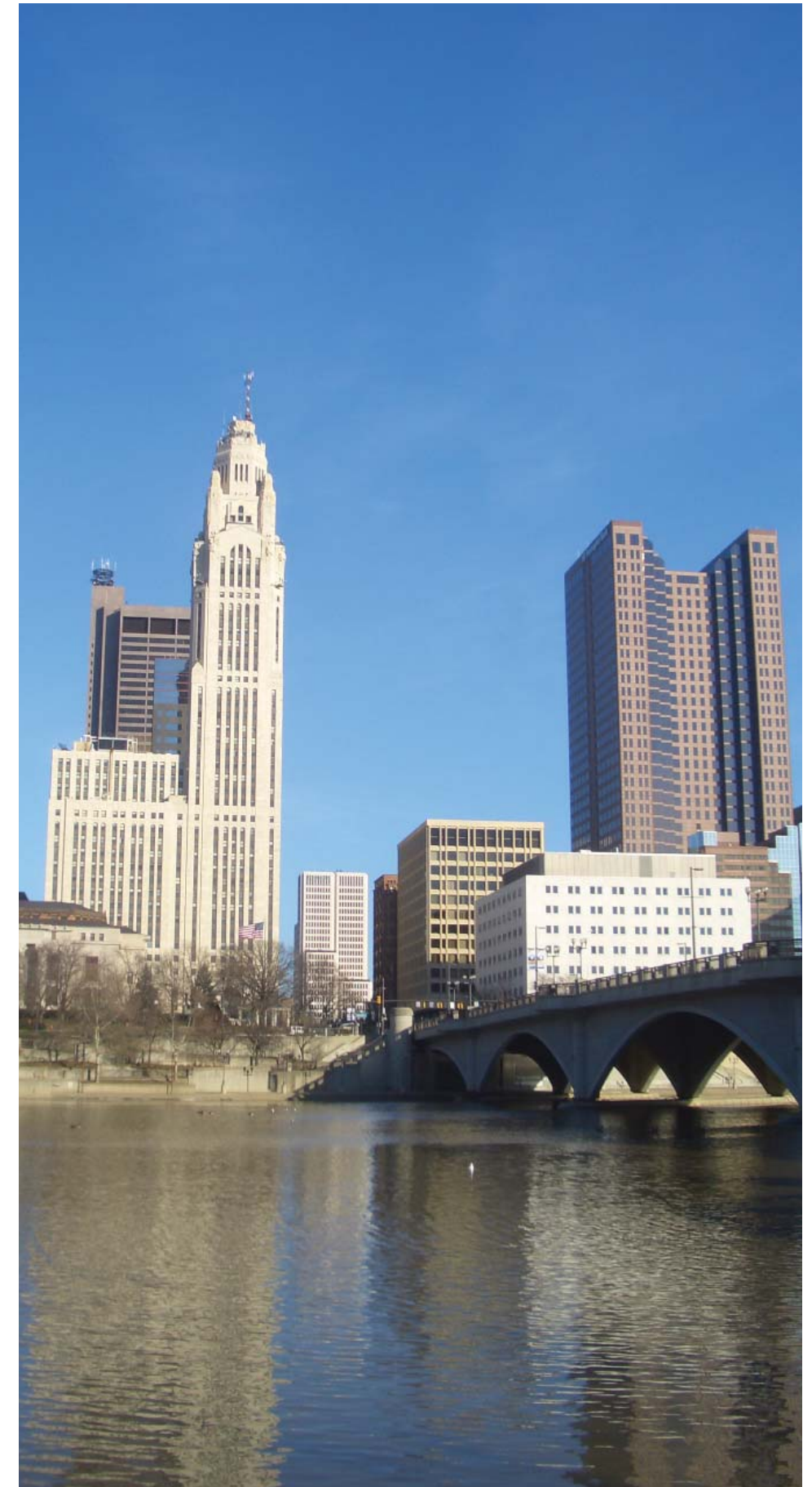
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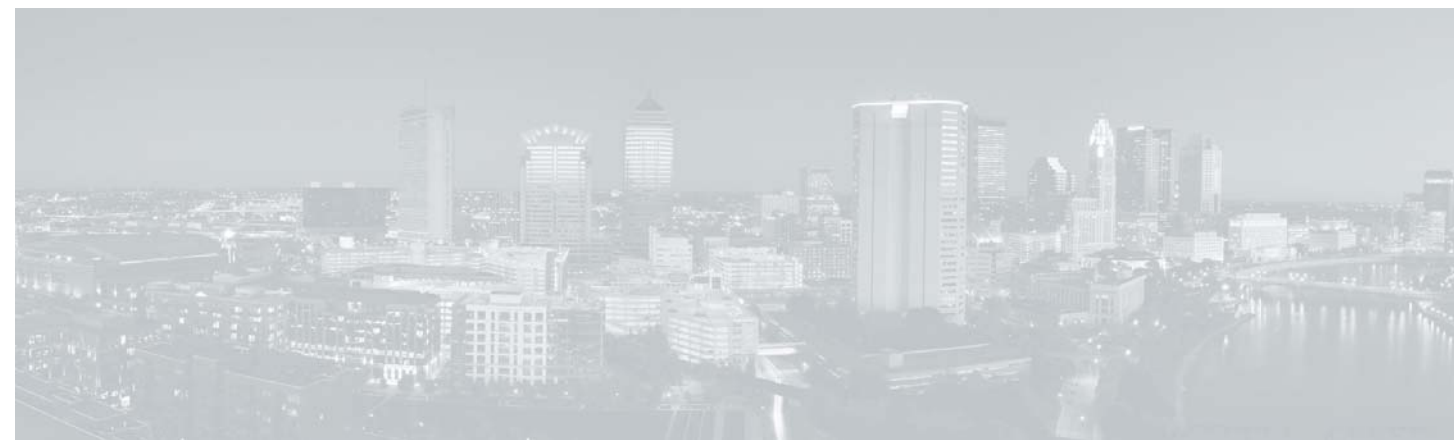




# 2010 DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS STRATEGIC PLAN

## **INTRODUCTION**

*The 2010 Downtown Columbus Strategic Plan has three major objectives: 1) To define needs and opportunities, 2) To identify catalytic projects, and 3) To create policy and strategy recommendations to guide implementation. This section outlines the impetus for the Plan, summarizes the planning process and explains the structure of the report.*



# INTRODUCTION

Downtown Columbus has experienced a tremendous amount of development activity over the past decade. In 10 short years, the Ohio Penitentiary has been replaced by the Arena District, which has become the City's sports and entertainment destination. Aided by incentives and changes in City policies, the downtown housing market has taken off filling in surface parking lots with new developments and renovating existing buildings. By the City's Bicentennial in 2012, there will be a new riverfront park system along the Scioto Mile, a new park at Columbus Commons, a new Franklin County Courthouse, and two new bridges over the Scioto River. While growth continues to occur throughout Central Ohio, Downtown Columbus remains the hub of government, commercial, and entertainment activity in the region. At the core of this reinvestment is a nationwide trend toward a return to urbanity. This can be seen downtown as it gained residential population for the first time since 1950. In the midst of a housing downturn, this movement remains strong with more than 600 housing units currently under construction in Downtown Columbus.

## Plan Objectives

Recognizing that this renewed attention on downtown represents an opportunity to plan for the future, the Columbus Downtown Development Corporation (CDDC) and the City of Columbus engaged MSI Design to update Downtown's 2002 Strategic Business Plan. The 2002 Plan has helped shape the development of Downtown Columbus over the past eight years. It identified several catalytic projects and made key policy recommendations that led to the beginning of Downtown's renaissance. The 2010 Strategic Plan builds off the previous plan's success and takes into account current and planned Downtown projects to create an updated vision for Downtown Columbus. The CDDC and the City wanted to create the 2010 Downtown Columbus Strategic Plan in order to:

1. Define needs and opportunities
2. Identify catalytic projects
3. Create policy and strategy recommendations to guide implementation

As a result of this planning process, the planning team has defined **10 Principles**, **12 Ideas**, and **8 Strategies** to guide the future of Downtown Columbus.

## Public Process

The planning process began in February 2010, with a press conference held by Mayor Michael B. Coleman. At this meeting, a round table of local leaders and politicians discussed the successes since 2002, and the future aspirations for Downtown Columbus. The planning team from MSI Design added this information to that gathered from more than 50 individual meetings with downtown stakeholders and public officials and prepared for the first public meeting held March 2. At this meeting, existing conditions

## MORE THAN 1,000 PUBLIC COMMENTS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED REGARDING AN OVERALL VISION FOR DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS

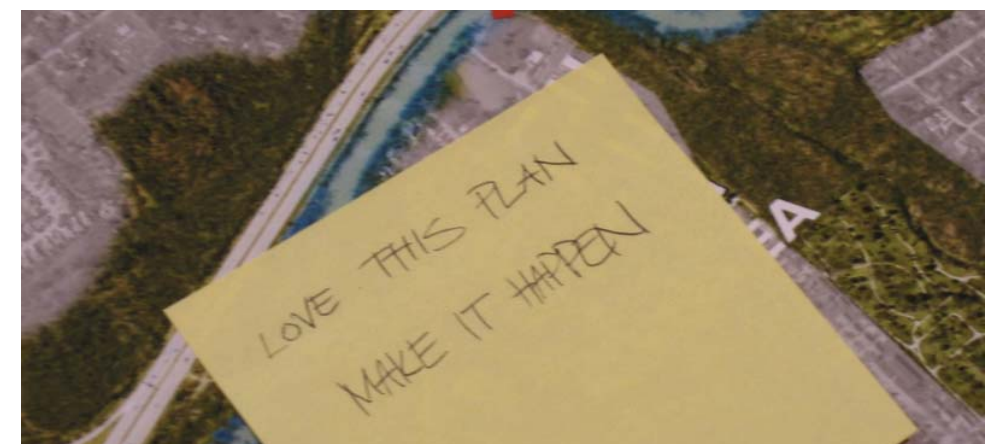
analysis and current issues and constraints were outlined. Input for future ideas were received from more than 125 attendees. This conversation continued online, as more than 600 comments were received during this initial stage of the planning process. The planning team took this extensive input and developed **10 Principles** to comprehensively express the community's goals and vision for Downtown Columbus. These principles were then used to inform the **12 Ideas** that were developed to inspire Columbus to think big and identify catalytic projects that take downtown to the next level.

The **10 Principles** and **12 Ideas** were presented to the public on April 15, and were met with enthusiasm by the more than 150 people in attendance. Almost 500 comments, both at the meeting and online, were received regarding the **12 Ideas**. This input was used to determine the next steps for each of the **12 Ideas** and to develop **8 Strategies** to guide the revitalization of Downtown Columbus. This information was shared with the public in a final public meeting held May 25. Over the course of this process, more than 1,000 total public comments have been received regarding an overall vision for Downtown Columbus for the next 10 years and beyond.

## Using the Plan

Following this introduction section, the 2010 Downtown Columbus Strategic Plan examines existing conditions in Downtown Today. This baseline information provides a starting point for considering opportunities and potential improvements downtown. As a result of this information gathering and analysis, the planning team developed a set of **10 Principles** to guide the planning process. These principles are applied in the **12 Ideas** section of the Plan which divides downtown into three distinct planning areas in order to shape the future development of each in a cohesive and productive manner. These planning areas, the Discovery District, the High Street Core and the Riverfront are examined in greater detail in individual sections that detail the **12 Ideas**. The **8 Strategies** address Downtown holistically, identifying the needed policy changes and further study needed to guide the revitalization of Downtown Columbus.

The Implementation section begins the process of turning the **12 Ideas** into action. For each idea, the planning team has identified the potential actors and lead responsibility for either studying or implementing the proposed project. Additionally, the **8 Strategies** are summarized. This section provides the necessary methodology for tracking implementation progress.



Multiple public meetings and more than 1,000 public comments helped shape the 2010 Strategic Plan.





Figure 1 - Downtown Columbus Strategic Plan Study Area Diagram



# INTRODUCTION

## PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

The 2010 Downtown Columbus Strategic Plan is the first comprehensive plan for downtown since 1988. The planning team analyzed each of the major downtown planning initiatives that have taken place in Columbus over the last 100 years. During this time, dozens of plans—large and small—were created for specific individual districts or projects downtown. While some believe that all plans are destined to sit on a shelf, this analysis has shown that every plan from the 1908 Plan of the City of Columbus to the 2002 Strategic Business Plan has had an impact on the city in one way or another.

While these plans represent a snapshot in time and reflect the dominant planning theory of the day, this analysis provides an understanding of the urban condition of Downtown Columbus. A careful reading of each plan reveals that much of what exists in downtown today has a direct connection to a specific plan. It is also interesting to note that there are numerous issues from previous plans, such as adequate parking, effective mass transportation, and increased parkland, which the City and its leaders are still working to address today.

### 1908 - THE PLAN OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS

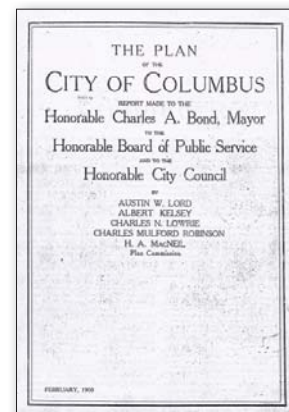
#### THE 1908 PLAN OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS PROPOSED A CIVIC MALL FROM THE STATE HOUSE TO THE RIVERFRONT.

##### Big Ideas

- Create a civic mall located from the Statehouse to the riverfront
- Encourage commercial trade downtown by providing easy access to downtown businesses
- Create a comprehensive scheme locating public utility wires in conduits underground
- Build a terminal for the interurban that “is obviously permanent and useful part of the urban ensemble”
- Create a “magnificent approach” to the university and better plan its growth in relation to the City
- Create additional public parkland for the residents of Columbus
- Create non-partisan self-perpetuating local commission to ensure that plans are adhered to

##### Plan Outcomes

- Preservation of the Statehouse Square greenspace
- Purchase of additional parkland outside of downtown
- Construction of some radial boulevards



### 1955 - A REPORT UPON THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

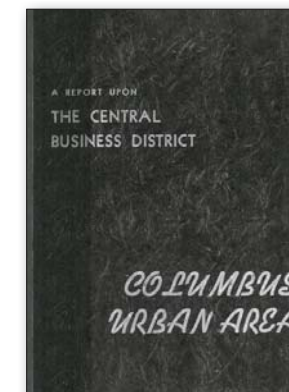
#### IMPROVING AND EXPANDING ACCESS TO DOWNTOWN VIA URBAN HIGHWAYS WAS ONE OF THE FOCAL POINTS OF THE 1955 REPORT.

##### Big Ideas

- Downtown needs to be more attractive to compete with outlying shopping centers
- Build proposed innerbelt expressway and encourage wider use of mass transit
- Provide more ramps on proposed innerbelt at Front, High and Spring streets
- Limit turns and consolidate transit lines to increase efficiency of downtown traffic
- Construct several properly located garages and additional surface parking
- Move the Central Market
- Raze the area south of Rich Street along riverfront and give over to public use
- Develop medical center around Grant and St. Francis hospitals with medical office buildings on State and Town streets

##### Plan Outcomes

- Additional ramps to downtown off what became I-70/71
- Additional traffic controls limit turns; set the stage for widening of streets, creation of more one-way streets
- Led to the removal of Central Market, replaced with bus terminal
- Consolidation of Grant and St. Francis hospitals





1973 - ACTION PROGRAM FOR DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS

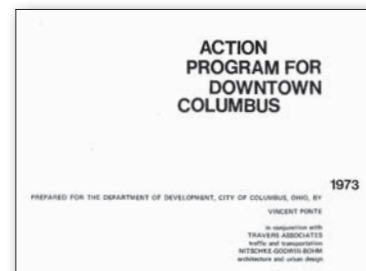
**THE 1973 ACTION PROGRAM RESULTED IN THE CLEARANCE OF SLUMS TO MAKE WAY FOR BICENTENNIAL PARK.**

**Big Ideas**

- Improve flow of traffic by creating internal distributor road systems in the downtown
- Provide peripheral parking garages that are linked by pedestrian walkway system
- Create High Street transitway (three phases: 1. Restricted bus lanes, 2. Bus and taxi transitway, 3. Subway under High Street and connection to Port Columbus)
- Create new downtown parks along the riverfront and establish green gateways (portal parks) to the city on all four sides
- Restore the Broad Street median

**Plan Outcomes**

- Realignment and one-way directionality of several roadways: Marconi/Civic Center and Front streets; Rich Street Connector; Mt. Vernon/Naughten one-way pairs east of High Street; Neill/Goodale Connector; I-71 Connector
- Impetus for Bicentennial Park and Battelle Riverfront Park
- Closure of Pearl Alley around State House Square; Capital Street closed west of High Street for pocket park
- High Street turning restrictions; curb lanes reserved during rush hours for buses
- Construction of additional garages



1988 - DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS STRATEGIC PLAN

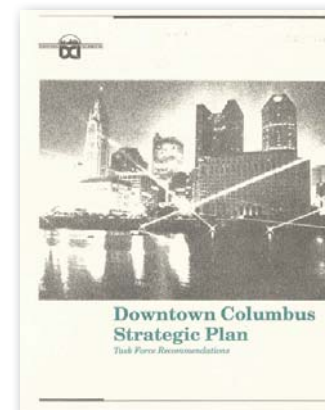
**THE 1988 STRATEGIC PLAN MOVED FORWARD THE IDEA TO RENOVATE MANY OF DOWNTOWN'S HISTORIC THEATERS.**

**Big Ideas**

- Redevelop Central High School site
- Expand COSI
- Create satellite parking facilities and provide shuttle service
- Provide a people mover system downtown
- Establish organization to make downtown planning and design decisions
- Eliminate incentives for surface parking lots
- Concentrate arts and entertainment facilities
- Build Civic Center/Sports Arena
- Build Downtown River Amphitheater
- Establish Light Rail system
- "Cap" downtown freeways by using air rights to integrate neighborhoods
- Improve efficiency and look of bus service
- Improve riverfront parks

**Plan Outcomes**

- Renewed emphasis on planning downtown
- Promoted expansion of COSI
- Promoted the idea of renovating theaters
- Identified need and desire for an arena
- Generated planning and thinking for highway caps, resulted in the I-670 Cap
- Created focus on improving riverfront park system
- Light Rail studied for possible development



2002 - A STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS

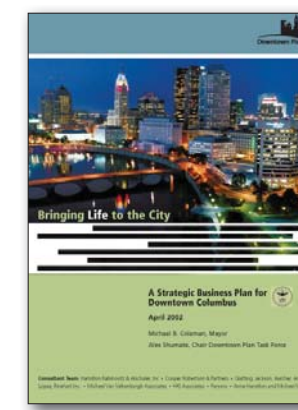
**INCREASING THE AMOUNT OF DOWNTOWN HOUSING WAS A MAJOR FOCUS OF THE 2002 STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN.**

**Big Ideas**

- Increase amount of downtown housing by providing incentives
- Construct additional structured parking downtown
- Build a new neighborhood at the southern end of downtown
- Build new riverfront park system downtown, improve existing parks
- Restore two-way directionality to Civic Center, Front, Gay and State Streets
- Build multi-modal transit station at High Street and Nationwide Boulevard

**Plan Outcomes**

- Residential incentives and tax abatements have caused new housing downtown since 2002 to grow by more than 1,000 units
- New garages are in the planning or construction stages
- RiverSouth plan created, implementation underway
- Scioto Mile plan created and being implemented
- Gay Street improvements complete
- Columbus Commons plan created and being implemented





# INTRODUCTION

## DOWNTOWN'S URBAN EROSION

Downtown Columbus has evolved dramatically over the course of the past 100 years. It has been shaped by floods, urban renewal, highway construction and the predominance of skyscrapers. These natural and man-made influences have steadily eroded downtown's urban form. The following analysis shows how the dense, low-scale, small block development pattern prevalent in 1921 eventually gave way to the lower density, large scale, superblock development patterns that we are left with today.

### 1921 to 1951

In 1921 downtown population was 23,000 and most blocks were covered with smaller, low-scale buildings. This resulted in a very dense walkable downtown street grid. Industrial and warehouse uses filled the riverfront and the area south of downtown along the riverfront was characterized by rundown residential uses.

By 1951, downtown population was at its peak of nearly 30,000 residents. Urban renewal had begun to clear the riverfront for parks, government and civic buildings. With redevelopment, block sizes were beginning to increase. The impact of skyscrapers and automobile traffic is beginning to be seen as surface parking lots start to appear along Broad and High streets. At this moment in time, downtown was the retail hub of Central Ohio and 55,000 workers came into downtown each day.



1921

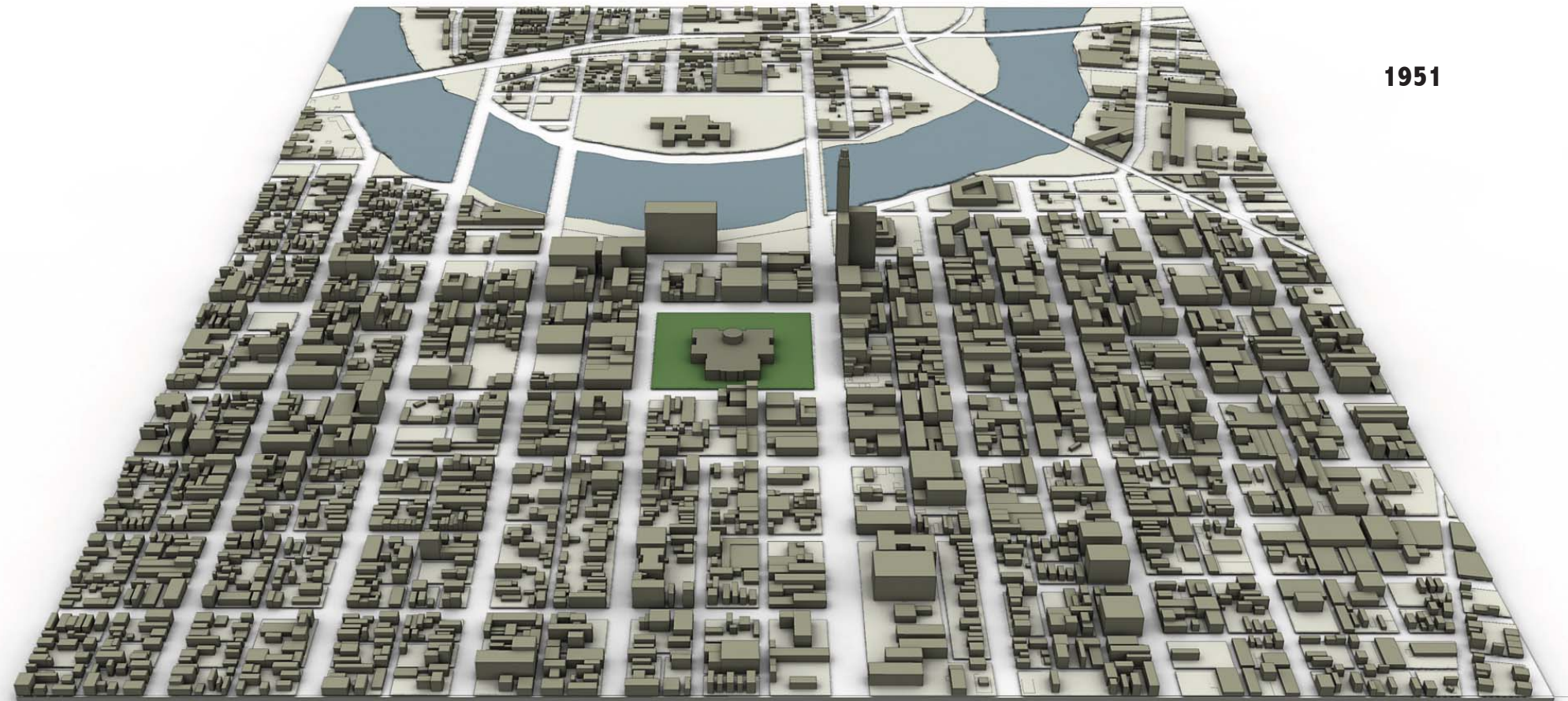


1951

**COLUMBUS HAS GROWN DUE TO AN AGGRESSIVE ANNEXATION POLICY, BUT AT THE EXPENSE OF DENSITY. IN 1951 COLUMBUS HAD 9,400 PEOPLE PER SQUARE MILE. TODAY COLUMBUS HAS JUST 3,340 PEOPLE PER SQUARE MILE.**



1951



**1951 to 2008**

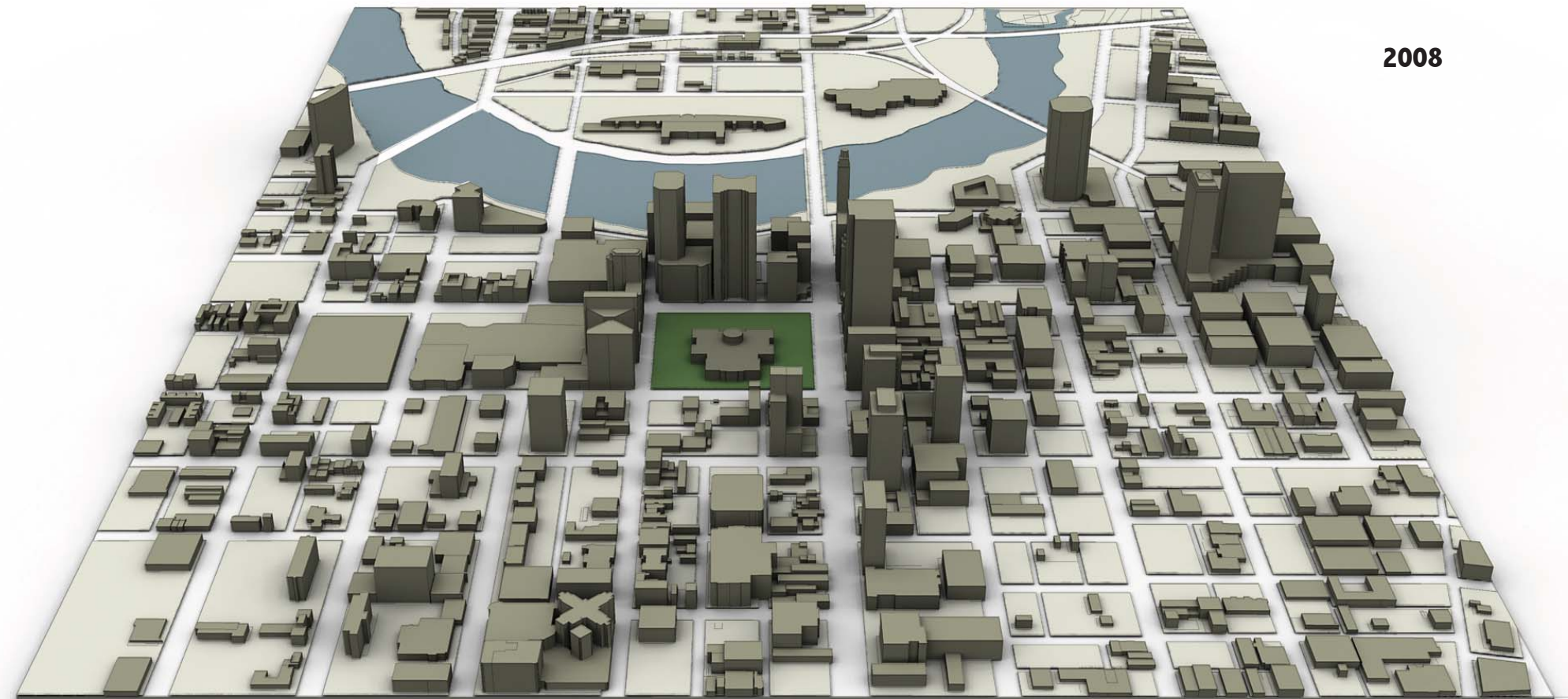
During this period, downtown was radically transformed. These changes were primarily driven by annexation policies, urban highways that made it easier to access the expanding suburbs, and the proliferation of skyscrapers and their attendant parking lots.

In 1951 Columbus was the 28th largest city in the United States. Columbus took up 39.9 square miles in land area and had 9,400 people per square mile. With the aggressive annexation program that began soon afterward, Columbus expanded to 213 square miles in land area and is now the 15th largest city in the United States. However, the city's density has suffered as a result. Today Columbus has just 3,340 people per square mile.

The outward expansion of the city boundaries was aided by the advent of urban highways that connected the city center to the suburbs. While this allowed the now more than 100,000 office workers to reach downtown with relative ease, it has had an adverse impact on the downtown environment. To support the parking demands of skyscrapers and other office uses, downtown is now covered with surface parking lots. Residents fled en masse as urban renewal projects or parking lot conversions leveled residential uses. Retail uses also relocated to the suburbs (even with the brief success of City Center Mall), and High Street now has a 40% retail vacancy rate. Downtown residential population fell precipitously decade by decade losing nearly 20,000 residents between 1950 and 1970 before bottoming out in 2000 at less than 3,488 residents. The urban realm has been supremely affected as auto-oriented corridors and large superblocks represent the dominant urban condition.

Since 2002, there have been significant strides to improve downtown. Residential population increased for the first time since 1950 and there are now more than 5,500 residents in downtown. Dozens of residential projects are beginning to fill in surface parking lots with new development and a number of one-way streets are being converted to two way streets. However, this analysis demonstrates how over the course of just a few decades the character of downtown has been eroded. Knowing that Downtown once had nearly 30,000 residents also helps to set a goal for rebuilding downtown into a more livable, mixed use, sustainable urban core that is active from day to night, not just from 9 to 5.

2008



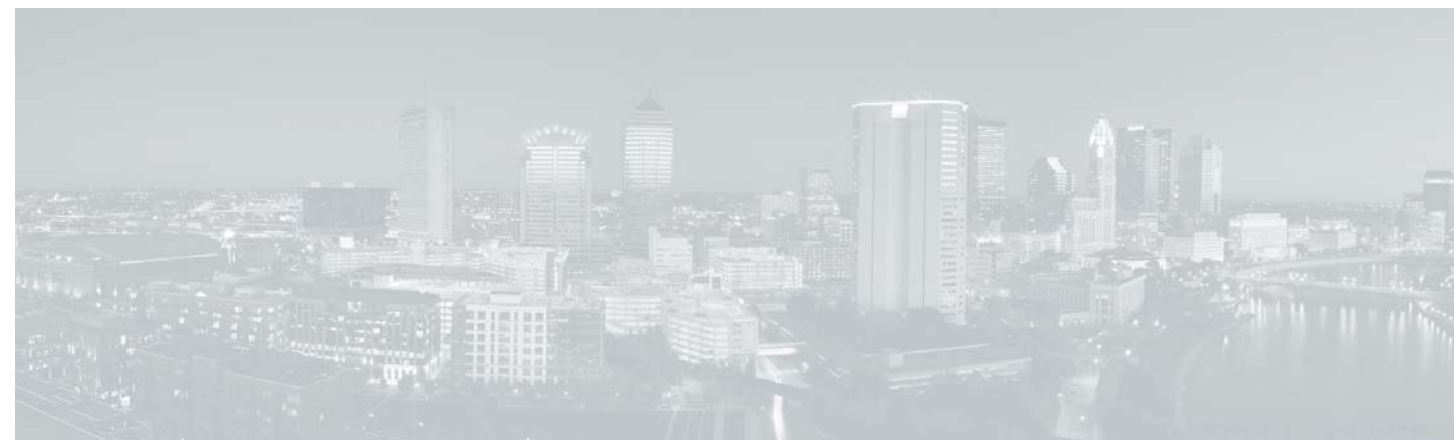




# 2010 DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS STRATEGIC PLAN

## **DOWNTOWN TODAY**

*Downtown Today is an examination of existing conditions throughout Downtown Columbus. This section addresses: land use and ownership, connectivity, open space, parking, residential development and density, employment, and visitors and attractions. This planning exercise both identifies opportunities and challenges and provides the foundation for developing planning principles, identifying conceptual catalytic projects and drafting implementation strategies.*



# DOWNTOWN TODAY

## INTRODUCTION

Downtown Columbus is a dynamic, ever-changing urban environment that has experienced a significant amount of reinvestment and repopulation over the past decade. With the addition of Huntington Park, the Arena District is now a year-round hub of sports and entertainment activity. The innovative Cap at Union Station provides a seamless connection along High Street connecting the Short North to the Downtown. Gay Street has been revitalized as a two-way street and is home to numerous independent restaurants, bars and shops. The CDDC has renovated the former Lazarus department store into a premier, “green” office building. Two new parking garages have opened in the last year to support new development. Spurred by the incentives created by the 2002 Downtown Business Plan, dozens of residential infill and rehabilitation projects have added more than 2,000 residents downtown—the first increase in population since 1950.

Leading up to the City’s Bicentennial in 2012, Downtown Columbus will have a new riverfront park along the Scioto Mile, Columbus Commons will have replaced City Center Mall, a new Franklin County Courthouse will be open, and two new bridges will be built over the Scioto River. Even in a down economy, there are more than 600 housing units currently planned, under construction or recently opened in Downtown Columbus. Work is also slated to start on several new projects, including a new full-service convention center hotel, the rebuilding the entire I-70/I-71 South Innerbelt highway system, and the potential return of rail service with the 3-C Connector that is being studied.

Downtown is also the hub of government, commercial and entertainment activity in the region. It is home to numerous assets including the Greater Columbus Convention Center, the Arena District, the State House, COSI, the Columbus Museum of Art, the Main Branch of the Columbus Public Library, office skyscrapers, numerous theaters, City Hall and the Franklin County Government Complex.

Despite recent and planned reinvestment and these significant assets and attractions, Downtown Columbus does not feel consistently vibrant and active. In part, this is due to the sheer size of downtown. It is difficult to energize the entirety of its 960 acres. While Downtown Columbus has several successful districts and independent success stories, little thought has been given to how to better connect these areas and combine planning efforts into a singular, cohesive vision for Downtown Columbus.

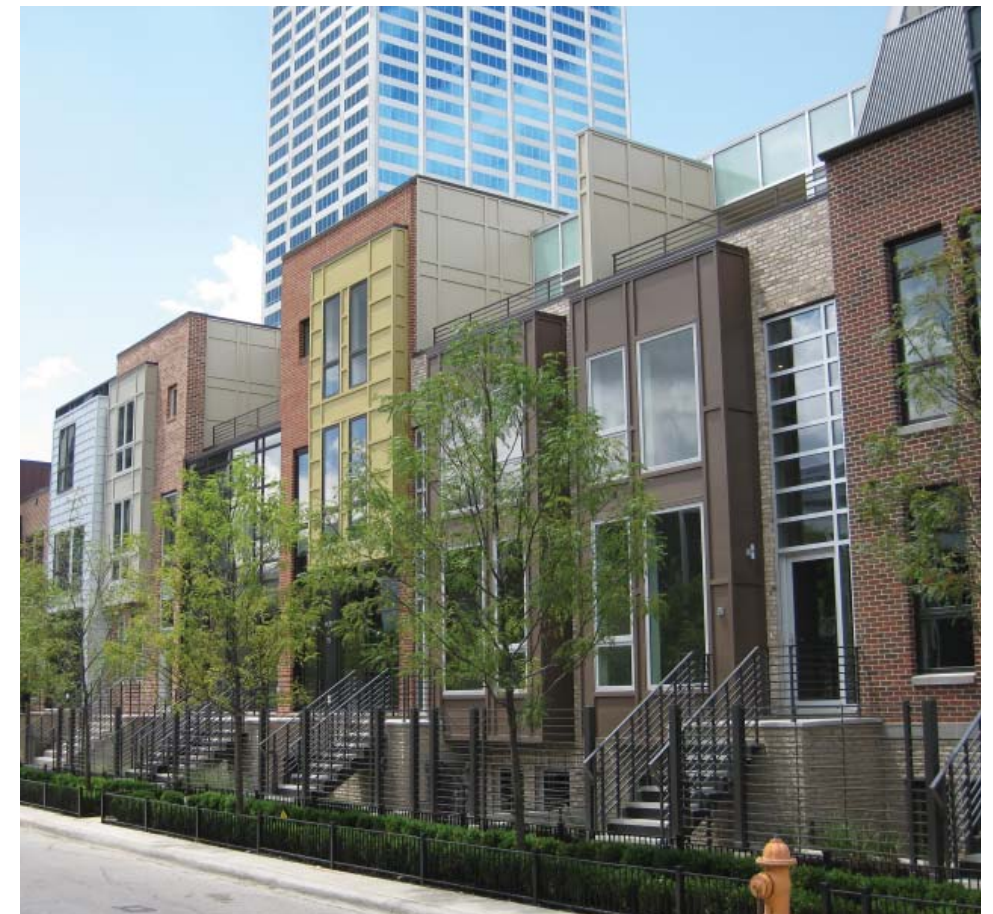
Though there have been numerous downtown planning efforts conducted over the past several decades, there is still no overall comprehensive downtown plan that acts as a framework for growth. Currently, all of Downtown Columbus is zoned as “downtown district.” The Downtown Commission uses this code to guide its decision making process when reviewing new developments. While the code allows for substantial design freedom, the Downtown Commission and the City do not have an overall plan that provides the necessary context and guidance for the Commission to properly and effectively review development proposals.

Due to the lack of an overall plan and other factors, there has been no comprehensive approach to redevelopment. Housing development has increased, but it is spread across a large area of downtown, minimizing its impact. Likewise, arts and civic anchors are located far apart from one another. There are ample vacant lots, empty buildings and abandoned storefronts, especially along South High Street. In order to be truly successful, downtown needs to develop a critical mass of interconnected residential density, pedestrian activity, arts and civic attractions, and retail destinations. This section will examine these issues in greater detail and set the stage for ideas and strategies that help create a more cohesive and active urban core.

**IN ORDER TO BE TRULY SUCCESSFUL, DOWNTOWN NEEDS TO DEVELOP A CRITICAL MASS OF INTERCONNECTED RESIDENTIAL DENSITY, PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITY, ARTS AND CIVIC ATTRACTIONS, AND RETAIL DESTINATIONS.**



*Huntington Park opened in spring 2009 in the Arena District and was named the best new ballpark in the country.*



*More than 250 residential units are being built east of 4th Street as part of the Neighborhood Launch project.*





The Arena District has transformed the former Ohio Penitentiary site into a year-round hub of sports and entertainment activity.



Downtown remains the employment center of the region.

**DOWNTOWN IS THE HUB OF GOVERNMENT, COMMERCE AND ENTERTAINMENT ACTIVITY IN CENTRAL OHIO.**



Figure 2 - Downtown Landmarks - 1"=1200'



# DOWNTOWN TODAY

## LAND USE & OWNERSHIP

Downtown Columbus is home to a diverse mix of uses. As the state capital of Ohio and the county seat of Franklin County, downtown has a preponderance of government offices and uses. These include the State House and state office buildings, the State Supreme Court, the Franklin County Government Complex and county offices, City Hall and city offices, and Federal courts and offices. While this provides a stable employment base for downtown, it results in a large amount of land dedicated to government office use which is not generating property tax revenues. It also reinforces a limited Monday to Friday, 9 to 5 activity base that creates peak traffic problems and leaves downtown vacant during non-work hours.

### Office

There is a significant amount of private sector office uses located throughout downtown. These office uses are found in the traditional clusters along Broad, High, Town and Front streets, but also in the Arena District, which has experienced strong office growth over the past 10 years.

### Attractions

Downtown is home to numerous regional and national attractions such as the Greater Columbus Convention Center, the North Market, Nationwide Arena, Huntington Park, the Columbus Museum of Art, COSI and various arts and theater venues. Prior to 2000, downtown was also the retail hub of the region. For nearly a decade after opening in 1989, the 1.3 million square foot City Center Mall was the place to shop in Central Ohio. As new regional malls sprung up in the suburbs, City Center was unable to compete. Capitol South re-acquired the property in late 2007 and plans to replace the monolithic structure with Columbus Commons, a mixed-use development that will eventually include park space, office, retail and residential uses. Demolition of the structure is complete and the park space will open in late 2010.

Elsewhere downtown, retail is located in the ground floor of buildings and scattered standalone structures. There is an estimated 152,000 square feet of vacant retail space along High Street alone.

### Residential

Residential uses have been increasing downtown in recent years, enough so that downtown recorded its first population increase since 1950. However, as can be seen in Figure 4, residential uses are scattered throughout downtown and in many locations downtown there is a lack of critical mass to create neighborhood vitality. In order to encourage new retail and other neighborhood amenities, the residential density issue will need to be addressed.

### Large Land Ownership

An analysis of large property ownership downtown also reflects the high number of government uses. A significant amount of land is owned by Franklin County, the City of Columbus, the State of Ohio and the United States Government. Other large land owners include museums, theaters and educational campuses. Almost one-third of all land downtown is held by public entities or large institutions.

Given that one of the largest impediments to redevelopment is land cost and acquisition, it is an advantage that government entities already have control of a sizable amount of under-utilized property. The fact that the City owns several large parcels on the Scioto Peninsula makes redevelopment on the west side of the river all the more possible. The CDDC sold several parcels it had aggregated in RiverSouth that are now being redeveloped as residential.

Other large land owners in downtown include educational institutions such as Columbus State Community College, Columbus College of Art and Design and Franklin University. These institutions are starting to better integrate their respective campuses into the urban fabric and have plans continue to make more effective use of their land. Together, these institutions have the potential to positively transform the eastern portion of downtown.



*The Annex at RiverSouth has replaced surface parking lots with new residential development.*



*There is ample City-owned land on the Scioto Peninsula.*

**DOWNTOWN IS DOMINATED BY OFFICE AND CIVIC USES, BUT RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN STEADILY INCREASING IN RECENT YEARS.**





Columbus State's new bookstore on Cleveland Avenue represents a large step forward by the institution to embrace its urban surroundings.



High Street features a mix of modern office towers and older, traditional storefronts.

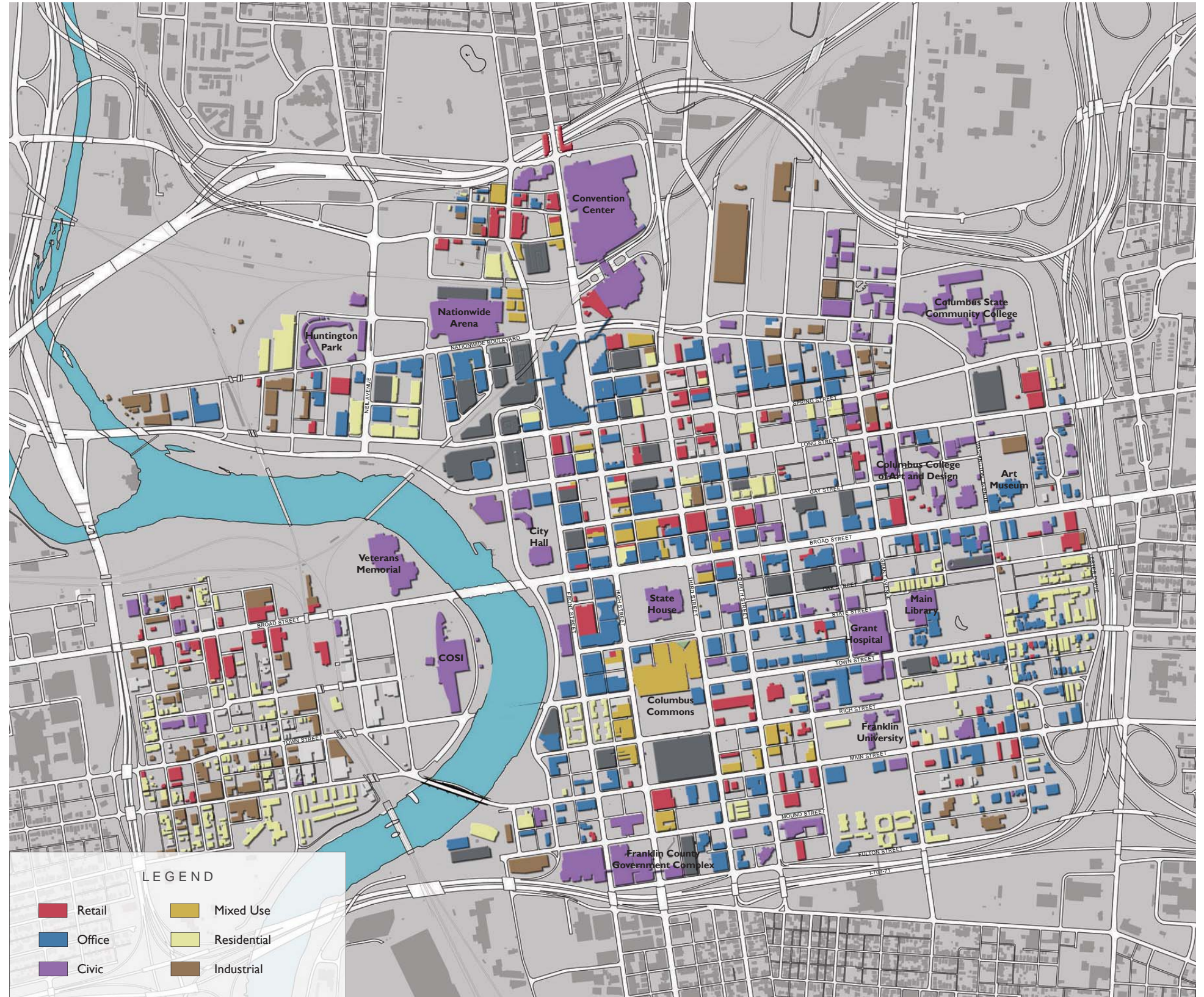


Figure 3 - Downtown Land Use - 1"=1200'



# DOWNTOWN TODAY

## CONNECTIVITY

### Streets

Today Downtown Columbus is oriented more toward automobiles than pedestrians. This is due in large part to the predominance of wide one-way and arterial streets that are focused primarily on moving automobiles in and out of downtown. While downtown must be accessible to vehicular traffic and maintain efficient traffic patterns, the over-reliance on one-way streets and wide arterials to allow for the quick movement of high traffic volumes for short peak intervals has severely impacted the pedestrian realm. One-way and arterial streets may be effective at moving traffic, but they also disrupt the traditional grid pattern of streets that make cities easy to navigate. Controlling directionality and turn movements makes it more difficult to navigate within downtown and impedes wayfinding.

### Blocks

The traditional city grid has also been altered over time with the development of large uses that span several blocks. The area between Front and High streets represents the traditional block size in Downtown Columbus. Measuring 440 feet by 440 feet, they are easily walkable and suited for pedestrians. In most areas this walkability is further enhanced by alleys and other smaller streets that break the blocks up into 220 foot by 220 foot quarter blocks. According to urban design and planner Jonathan Barnett, city blocks need to be less than 1,800 feet in perimeter area to maintain a walkable city. Downtown Columbus' traditional block size meets that criteria. However, over time larger buildings such as the State House and City Center Mall and larger office buildings and garages disrupted this traditional, pedestrian-friendly block pattern (see Figure 4).

Aside from larger development blocks, the City has vacated or cut off streets and alleys to accommodate development and control traffic movements. This has resulted in larger than normal blocks. Evidence of this can be seen east of Fourth Street where Fifth Street was disconnected and several alleys vacated resulting in the blocks between Fifth and Grant streets and Grant and Washington streets that are overly large.

### Walking Distance

In addition to overly large block sizes throughout downtown, there are also long distances between downtown destinations. A generally accepted standard for the typical comfortable walking distance is one-quarter mile, or 1,250 feet. As shown in Figure 5, there are few major downtown destinations that are within a quarter-mile radius of one another. The fact that downtown lacks consistent activity and walkable attractions makes it less inviting to pedestrians and necessitates using automobiles to visit multiple locations downtown.

The diagram in Figure 6 focuses on the key activity centers in downtown, including the Convention Center, the Nationwide Arena, Broad and High, COSI, the Franklin County Government Center, the Main Columbus Library, and Columbus State Community College/CCAD. The only attractions that overlap in a meaningful way are the Nationwide Arena and the Convention Center. These two districts are both pedestrian friendly and have multiple destinations within walkable distances of one another. This is one reason both areas are experiencing growth and success. COSI and Broad and High also overlap. A visitor to COSI would be at the five minute walk limit just after crossing the Broad Street bridge, although with the development of the Scioto Mile this will create another destination that should serve to better link the Scioto Peninsula to downtown.

Outside of these two instances, downtown features large gaps both between and within walksheds. There is a significant activity gap between the Gay Street restaurant and bar cluster and the Arena District/Convention Center to the north. Columbus State and the Main Library are also well removed from other downtown activity centers. While residential redevelopment on Gay Street is planned to nearly reach Grant Street and bridge the gap between the Central Business District and the eastern edge of downtown, it will take more such developments with pedestrian activity to establish stronger connections.

These gaps represent opportunities for infill development. The large distances between activity centers also make the case for improved downtown transportation systems that could better link destinations and allow visitors, office workers and residents to park once and visit multiple locations downtown with ease.

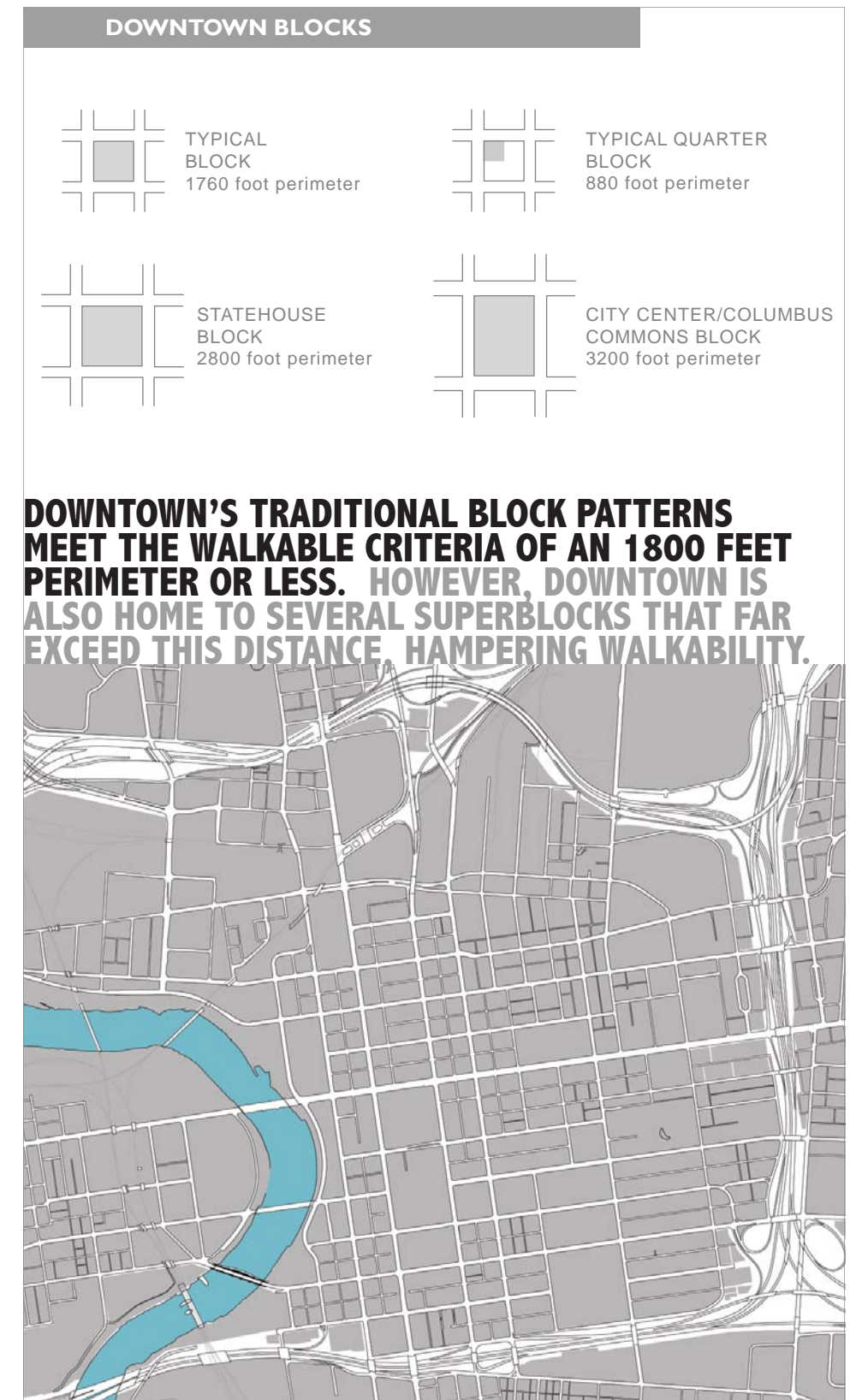
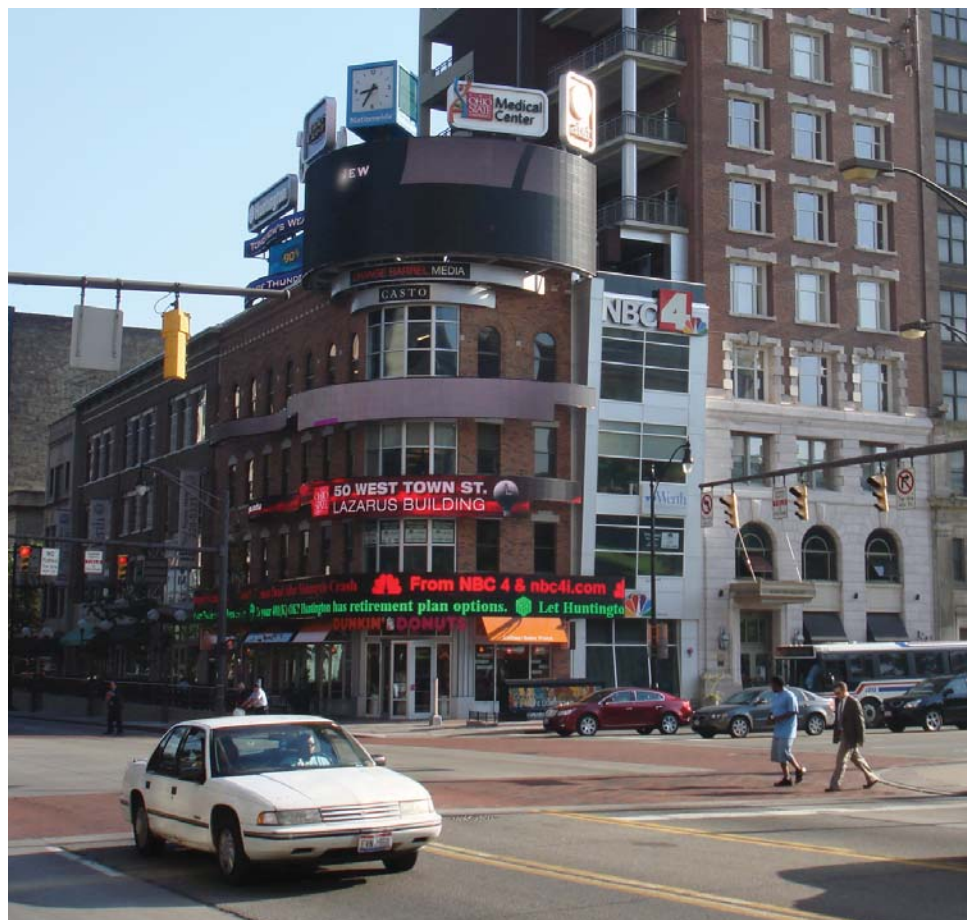


Figure 4 - Block Diagram - 1''=2000'





Ludlow Alley in the Arena District is an example of how to mitigate the impacts of a large block.



Broad and High is the historic and active center of Downtown Columbus. It is necessary to connect this activity zone with others downtown.

**FIVE-MINUTE WALKSHEDS ILLUSTRATE THE OVERLAP AND GAPS BETWEEN MAJOR USES DOWNTOWN. MOST USES ARE NOT WITHIN A COMFORTABLE WALKING DISTANCE OF ONE-ANOTHER.**

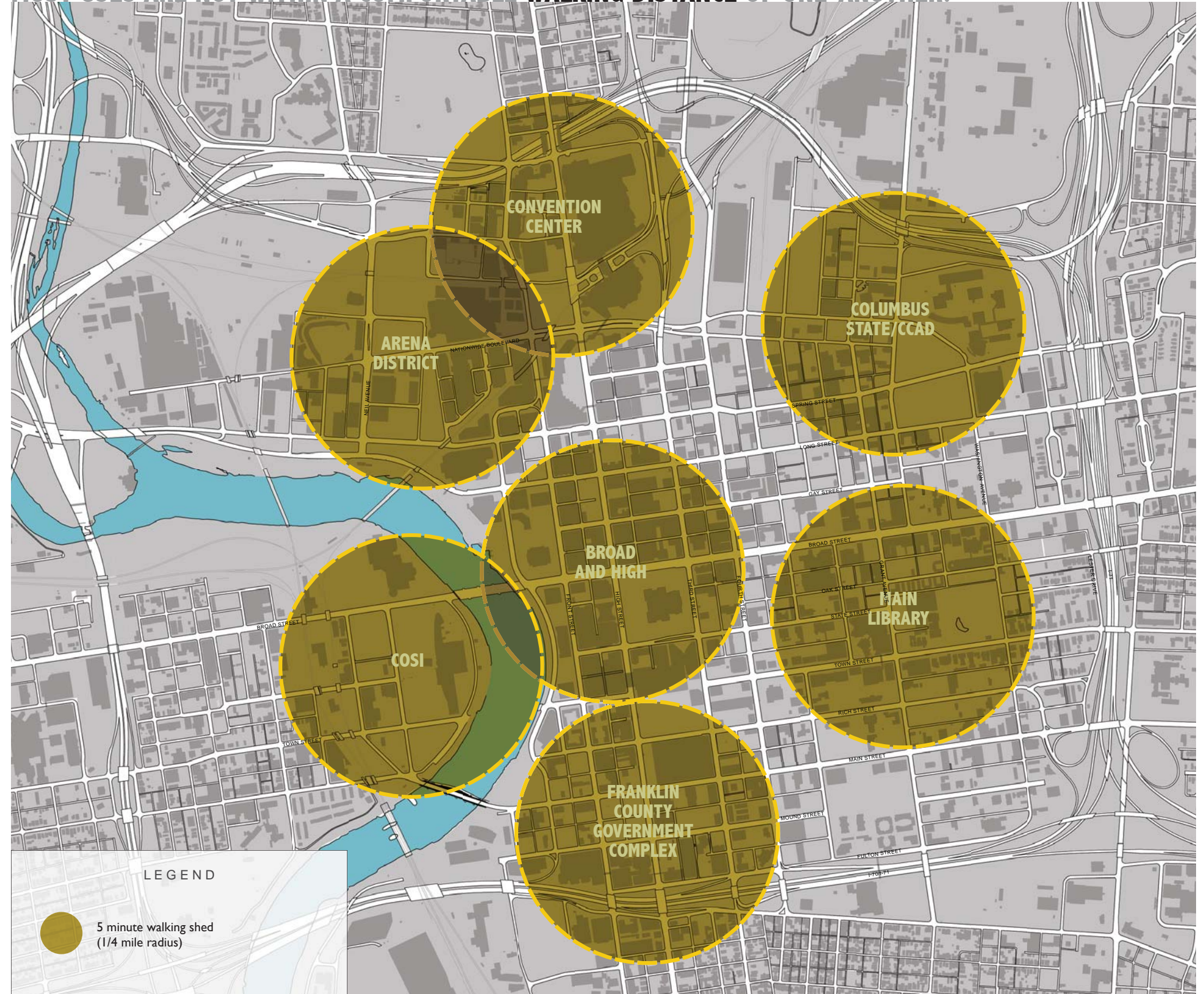


Figure 5 - Walking Distance Diagram - 1"=1200'



# DOWNTOWN TODAY

## OPEN SPACE

Open space downtown is largely concentrated along the Scioto River. Two new parks, McFerson Commons and North Bank Park, have been added to downtown in the past few years. The Scioto Mile project will connect these parks to the existing Genoa, Battelle and Bicentennial riverfront parks. This enhanced connection will help extend the energy of the individual parks along the entirety of the downtown riverfront. In addition to these new and recently opened parks, the Columbus Commons project will include new permanent green space as the anchor for the mixed-use redevelopment.

Aside from the riverfront, the only significant green spaces are the State House lawn and Topiary Park. Other uses such as City Hall, the Franklin County Government Complex, the Main Downtown Library, the Columbus College of Art and Design, and Columbus State Community College feature green spaces within their grounds. The remaining green space is limited to a handful of less successful pocket parks that are haphazardly scattered throughout downtown and have no meaningful connections to each other or surrounding uses and neighborhoods.

The area between Third Street and Grant Street has virtually no green space to speak of. Elsewhere in downtown, the addition or renovation of green space has proven to be an economic development spark and has helped to create an identity and focal point for a district or neighborhood. Therefore, there is clearly an opportunity in many areas of downtown to increase the amount and type of green space in an effort to provide gathering places for office workers, residents and visitors and to stimulate further reinvestment.

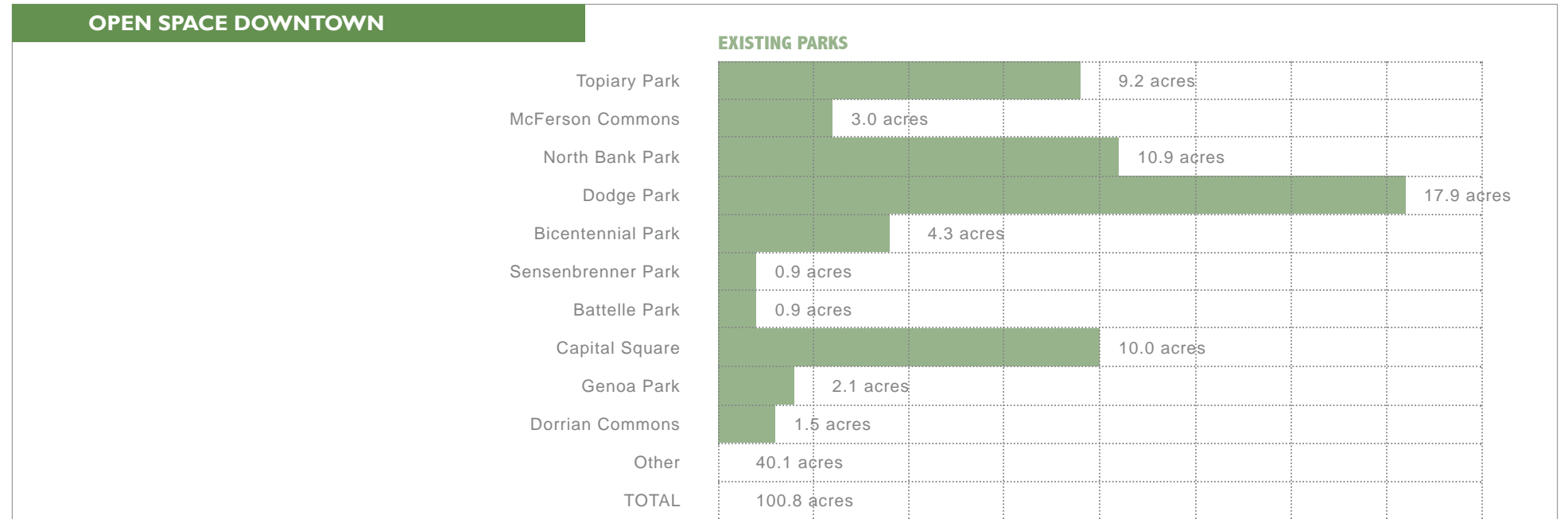


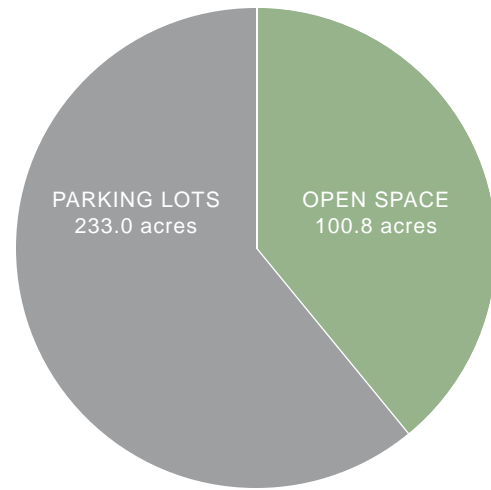
Table 1 - Existing Downtown Parks



North Bank Park is the newest addition to downtown's riverfront park system.



**PARKING LOTS vs. OPEN SPACE**



**THERE IS MORE LAND AREA GIVEN TO PARKING LOTS THAN PARKS IN DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS.**



Surface Parking Lots at High and Gay streets.

**14 ACRES** OF GREEN SPACE HAVE BEEN ADDED TO DOWNTOWN OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS AND A REDEVELOPED SCIOTO MILE WILL OPEN BY 2011. EVEN WITH THIS ADDITIONAL ACREAGE, THERE ARE STILL LARGE AREAS OF DOWNTOWN THAT **LACK ADEQUATE OPEN SPACE.**

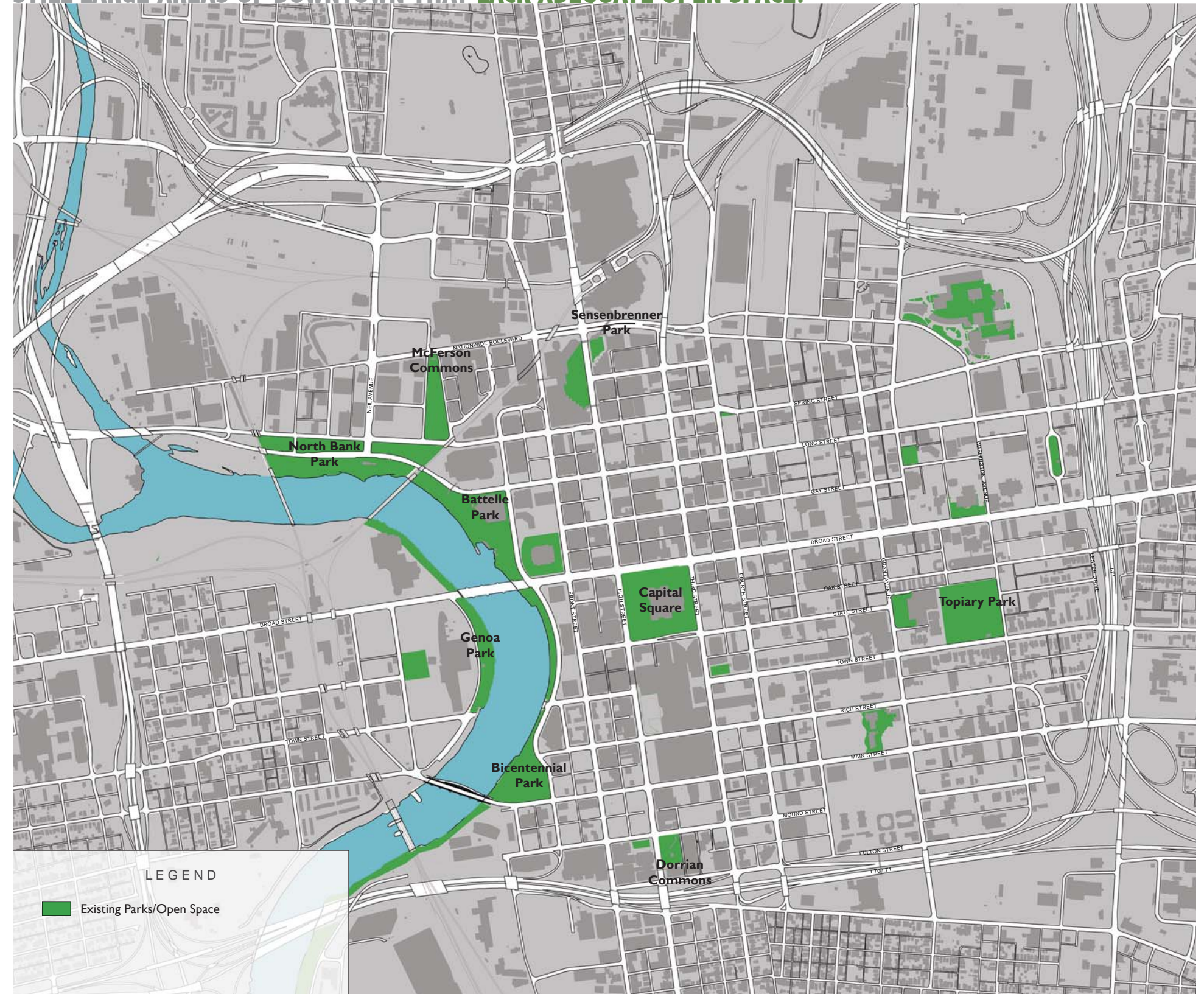


Figure 6- Open Space Diagram - 1"=1200'



# DOWNTOWN TODAY

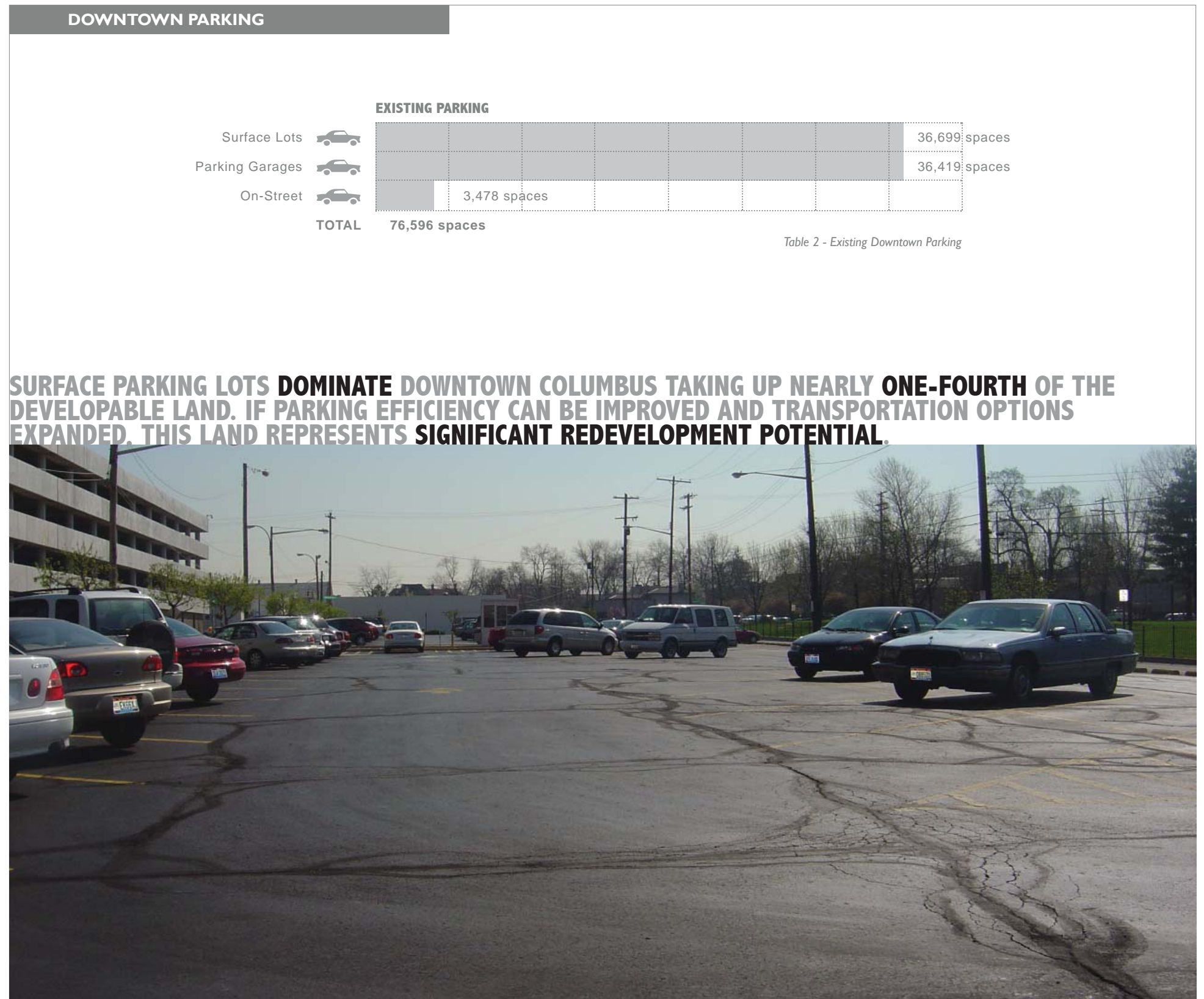
## PARKING

Parking is one thing that Downtown Columbus has in abundance. However, while the total amount of parking spaces in downtown is more than adequate, it is not necessarily located in close proximity to where it is needed. The lack of adequate parking close to the core employment centers downtown is limiting efforts to lease office buildings downtown.

The majority of garages in downtown are located in the Arena District and within the downtown core (between Front and Third streets). The office towers along Broad and High that have been built as downtown has grown over the past 50-plus years, however, lack adequate parking. This has resulted in the proliferation of surface parking lots throughout downtown to serve these large parking users, especially between Third and Grant streets. In order to put workers and visitors closer to their destinations, there is a need for increasing the supply of parking garages. This need is even more acute as development starts to occur on surface lots, removing parking supply from downtown.

The City has responded to this need by investing \$28.9 million to construct two new parking garages at Front and Rich streets and Fourth and Elm streets that accommodate 1,450 cars. Given the infrastructure costs, over the long term it will require much more than just additional parking garages to solve the parking problem downtown. A comprehensive approach must be taken that includes alternative transportation options, peripheral parking facilities, and more downtown housing for workers.

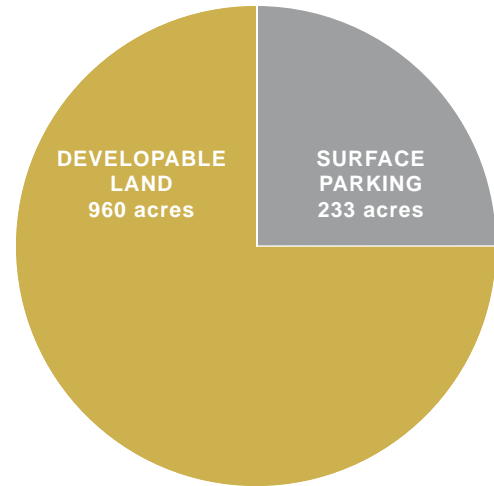
Surface lots make up nearly half the total supply of parking in downtown. These surface lots represent 233 acres of land being used solely for the storage of automobiles. Most of these parking lots are empty after 5pm, making little contribution to the life of the city. The fact that 24% of downtown's total developable land area is dedicated a non-productive and inactive use has adversely impacted the public realm. The built environment suffers because surface parking lots create dead zones that often extend across an entire block or several contiguous blocks. Today these surface parking lots are a liability, but in terms of future development ground, surface parking lots represent a significant opportunity to transform downtown.



Surface parking on the edge of Topiary Park



**SURFACE PARKING vs. DEVELOPABLE LAND**



**THERE IS A TOTAL OF 233 ACRES OF SURFACE PARKING DOWNTOWN. THIS IS 24% OF THE TOTAL DEVELOPABLE LAND DOWNTOWN.**



The newly-opened RiverSouth Garage will support new and existing demand for parking spaces in RiverSouth.



Figure 7 - Downtown Parking Diagram - 1"=1200'



# DOWNTOWN TODAY

## RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT & DENSITY

Downtown Columbus has experienced a residential renaissance over the last decade, gaining population for the first time since 1950. Since 2002, more than 2,000 residents have moved into Downtown Columbus. Bucking the nationwide housing downturn, more than 600 housing units are planned, under construction or recently-opened in downtown.

This gain is due, in part, to the City's 2002 *Business Plan* which created a number of incentives including property tax abatement, utility tap fee credits, street and sidewalk improvement funding, and housing loan funds. The goal of this effort was to create 10,000 units in downtown in 10 years. While the total number of built, under construction and planned units is still short of this goal, it is significant progress. Downtown population was 3,488 in 2000 and the 2009 estimated population is 5,500. Combined with the resurgence of downtown's near neighborhoods, including Victorian Village, Italian Village and German Village, Columbus' urban core and its surroundings are becoming increasingly vital and vibrant.

### Range of Unit Types

There are a wide range of new downtown unit types available, including apartments, luxury condominiums, townhomes and warehouse lofts. In addition to new construction, a number of housing projects have renovated or added onto existing structures. The diversity of unit types and construction methods has enabled downtown housing to remain unique and retain its urban character.

### Lack of Critical Mass

The downtown residential market remains positive, despite the recent housing downturn. However, while the market has expanded and more people are moving downtown, there is still a lack of critical mass. Given the fact that residential incentives apply to all of downtown, new housing development has not been concentrated in any one area. Even in successful neighborhoods like the Arena District, the residential development component is not yet large enough to support a wide range of retail offerings. North of Broad Street between Fourth and Front Streets there has also been a number of new residential developments, but there is not enough concentration to result in significant activity within this 15 block area. Southern downtown and east of Fourth Street have not seen as much new residential development and contain large areas that have seen no development activity whatsoever.

### Affordability

Affordability has also been identified as an issue since the new residential development has largely been aimed at the higher end of the market. Affordable housing is seen by many as the key to retaining and attracting young professionals. The City-funded State of the Young Professionals in Columbus report concluded that the amount of downtown residential housing in the \$150,000 to \$200,000 price range and rental housing between

\$500 to \$700 per month needed to be increased. According to the study, providing affordable housing close to the activity centers in urban areas is attractive to young professionals who demand a certain "after hours" lifestyle. Since they are more likely to be single and starting out in their careers, their ability to afford high-end housing is limited.

According to the 2007 Danter Downtown Housing Analysis, the median sales prices in the downtown effective market area (this includes peripheral neighborhoods) was \$298,500. The report also showed a low apartment vacancy rate of 4% and noted that a limited amount of affordable rental products had been added to the market. In keeping with the Young Professional study, the Danter report found that there was a large market demand for for-sale housing units in the \$150,000 to \$199,000 price range and rental units between \$500 and \$750 a month, but that supply for both was limited. In response to this market demand, Lifestyles Communities is building apartments at the Annex at RiverSouth and Daimler is planning a multi-story apartment building at Gay and Grant streets that will be aimed at students.

### Need for Continued Growth

The renewed interest in the residential market is a positive trend and has sparked a new sense of optimism about the future of downtown, despite the economic downturn. The market for downtown housing will continue to expand and population figures are expected to continue trending upward. To achieve the missing critical mass, however, many agree that downtown will ultimately have to return to a residential population that is close to 1950 population level of nearly 30,000 full-time residents.



The Buggyworks in the Arena District is an example of a warehouse that was converted into urban lofts.

**THERE HAS BEEN A RESIDENTIAL RENAISSANCE IN DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS DURING THIS DECADE, RESULTING IN THE FIRST INCREASE IN POPULATION SINCE 1950. WHILE THIS SUCCESS IS IMPRESSIVE, THERE IS STILL WORK TO BE DONE TO ACHIEVE ENOUGH CRITICAL POPULATION MASS TO MAKE DOWNTOWN VIBRANT AND ACTIVE.**

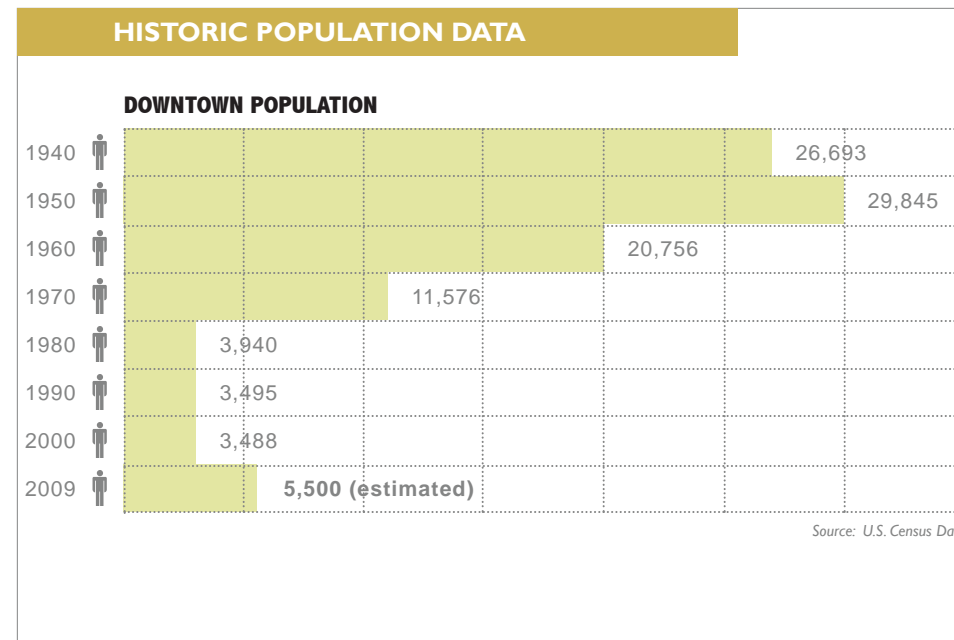


Table 3 - Downtown Population and Housing Data





Neighborhood Launch along Gay Street has replaced blocks of surface parking lots with infill residential development.



As one of the first luxury condominium developments, Miranova set the stage for downtown's residential growth.

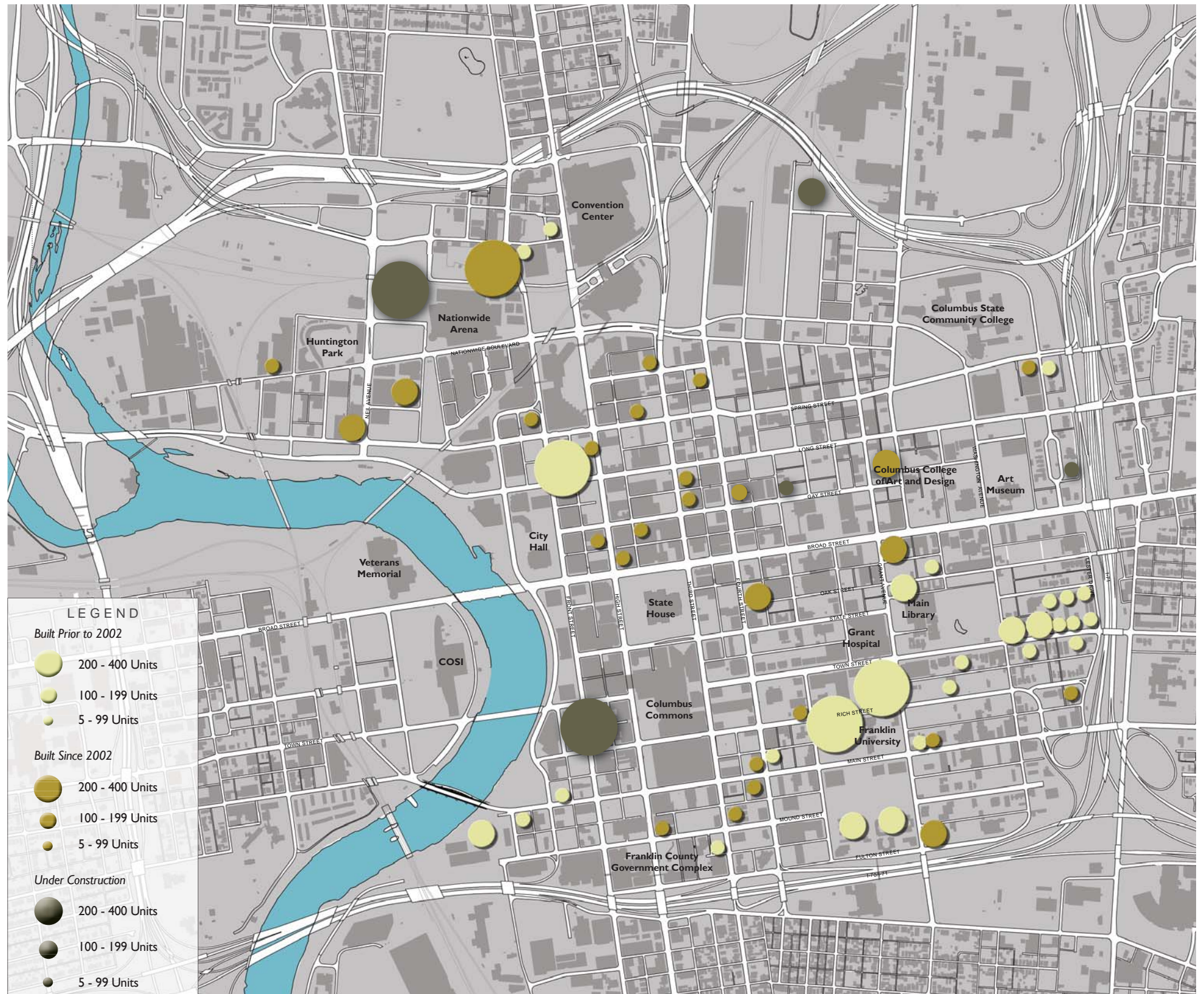


Figure 8 - Downtown Residential Diagram - 1"=1200'



# DOWNTOWN TODAY

## DEVELOPABLE GROUND

While it will likely take several more years, Downtown Columbus is on its way toward achieving the Mayor's goal of 10,000 new housing units by 2012. Projects to-date have gone a long way toward repopulating downtown and have sparked renewed interest in urban living. If a multiplier of 1.5 residents per unit is used, the current new projects in the housing development pipeline will result in more than 1,000 downtown residents and a total downtown population of approximately 6,500. This is far less than downtown's peak of nearly 30,000 residents in 1950, a number that many think will be necessary to recreate a vibrant 24-hour downtown.

With the goal of matching the 1950 population numbers and achieving at least 30,000 downtown residents in mind, the planning team analyzed the amount of available development ground in Downtown Columbus. Figure 10 shows the amount of development ground in downtown, which after subtracting non-developable areas and rights-of-way represents 960 acres. Subtracting areas of developed ground and institutions, leaves 163 acres of mostly parking lots and some vacant and underutilized buildings (see Figure 10).

The 163 acres represent the land that is most suitable to redevelopment downtown because it requires minimal removal of buildings and features largely contiguous sites. Assuming that residential development is the only type of use on all 163 acres, the dwelling unit/acre figures for four recent residential projects were applied to the highlighted areas to illustrate how different density levels would contribute to the total number of residents living downtown. With more than 2,500 units added in and adjacent to Downtown since 2002, three out of four recent downtown residential developments are built at densities that would exceed the Mayor's 10,000 new housing unit goal. However, in order to reach the goal of having 30,000 residents downtown, more than 15,000 additional units would need to be constructed. While all types of density are appropriate in downtown, the average level of density of residential development in downtown would need to be somewhere between 67 to 126 DU/AC as shown in Table 5 in order to achieve this level of population.



Figure 9 - Development Ground Diagram (960 acres) - 1"=2000'

Figure 10 - Developable Ground Diagram (163 Acres) - 1"=2000'



## ACHIEVING DOWNTOWN HOUSING GOALS

Achieving downtown's housing goals will require the construction of a significant amount of additional residential units. Table 4 illustrates how many units will be necessary to meet downtown housing goals. Table 5 illustrates the dwelling units per acre (DU/AC) of four recent downtown residential developments and calculates the total number of units that could be constructed downtown and the number of new downtown residents if those project densities were applied across the available development ground downtown.

## UNITS NECESSARY TO MEET HOUSING GOALS

### CURRENT DOWNTOWN POPULATION:

5,500

### ESTIMATED NEW RESIDENTS FROM NEW AND RECENT CONSTRUCTION:

1,000

### NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL UNITS NEEDED TO MEET 1950 PEAK DOWNTOWN POPULATION OF 30,000\*

15,666

AVERAGE 96 DU/AC

\* ASSUMES A MULTIPLIER OF 1.5 PERSONS PER UNIT

Table 4 - Units Necessary to Meet Downtown Housing Goals

## ANALYSIS OF CURRENT DEVELOPMENT

01 NEIGHBORHOOD LAUNCH	DENSITY: 35 DU/AC
	
<p><b>ADDITIONAL DOWNTOWN UNITS POSSIBLE AT THIS DENSITY</b>  <b>TOTAL NEW UNITS: 5,700</b>  <b>TOTAL NEW RESIDENTS: 8,550</b></p>	
03 ARENA CROSSING	DENSITY: 126 DU/AC
	
<p><b>ADDITIONAL DOWNTOWN UNITS POSSIBLE AT THIS DENSITY</b>  <b>TOTAL NEW UNITS: 20,500</b>  <b>TOTAL NEW RESIDENTS: 30,750</b></p>	



02 THE RENAISSANCE	DENSITY: 67 DU/AC
	
<p><b>ADDITIONAL DOWNTOWN UNITS POSSIBLE AT THIS DENSITY</b>  <b>TOTAL NEW UNITS: 10,900</b>  <b>TOTAL NEW RESIDENTS: 16,350</b></p>	
04 60 SPRING	DENSITY: 155 DU/AC
	
<p><b>ADDITIONAL DOWNTOWN UNITS POSSIBLE AT THIS DENSITY</b>  <b>TOTAL NEW UNITS: 25,200</b>  <b>TOTAL NEW RESIDENTS: 37,800</b></p>	

Table 5 - Analysis of Current Downtown Residential Development Densities



# DOWNTOWN TODAY

## EMPLOYMENT

Downtown is the employment center of the Central Ohio Region, with approximately 100,000 jobs. This represents 10 percent of the jobs in the region, and 22 percent of the jobs in the City of Columbus. Annual income tax revenue from these 100,000 jobs is approximately \$100 million. Put in perspective, the City has spent an average of \$10 million annually for the past ten years on capital improvements in Downtown Columbus. This means that the City gets back income tax revenue in one year what it has invested over 10 years through supporting a vibrant job market in Downtown Columbus. It is abundantly clear that continuing to invest in expanding this concentrated employment center plays a large role in the economic health of the City and the region as a whole.

### Office Vacancy Rates

The downtown office market is steadily improving after a brief downturn, despite the poor economy. While the suburban office supply has continued to increase over the past few decades, downtown remains the place to do business in Central Ohio. It is home to nearly 21 million square feet of office space. In the last few years, vacancy rates have steadily declined from a high of 26% in the first quarter of 2003 to a low of 13.06% in 2008. While the soft economy has caused vacancy rates to creep upward since then, downtown absorption has remained remarkably steady over the last couple of years. Since 2002, Downtown has added more than one million square feet of office space, much of it in the Arena District. The drop in vacancy rates can be attributed to both the addition of new Class A office space and the conversion of older office properties to residential uses.

### Advantages

One of downtown's primary employment advantages is that it is a government center. Because Columbus is a county seat and a capital city, the state, county and city all have major offices and institutions downtown. As the hub of state, county and city governmental functions, numerous legal and accounting offices are located downtown to take advantage of the proximity to government offices and institutions. In terms of the private sector, downtown is home to several large insurance companies, the largest of which is Nationwide Insurance that employs over 10,000 workers at its corporate headquarters downtown. American Electric Power, Huntington Bank and several other regional banking and utility company offices are also located downtown. In addition to Grant Hospital and numerous private medical practices downtown, Nationwide Children's Hospital just southeast of downtown is in the midst of a \$1 billion expansion.

### Opportunities for Growth

Government workers and the financial, insurance and healthcare industries currently dominate the downtown employment picture. There is very little occurring downtown to encourage start up businesses and entrepreneurship. Particularly lacking are high-technology businesses that are flourishing in other cities of similar size to Columbus. These are the types of new jobs and technologies that need to be focused if Downtown Columbus is to remain the major employment center of the City and the region as a whole.

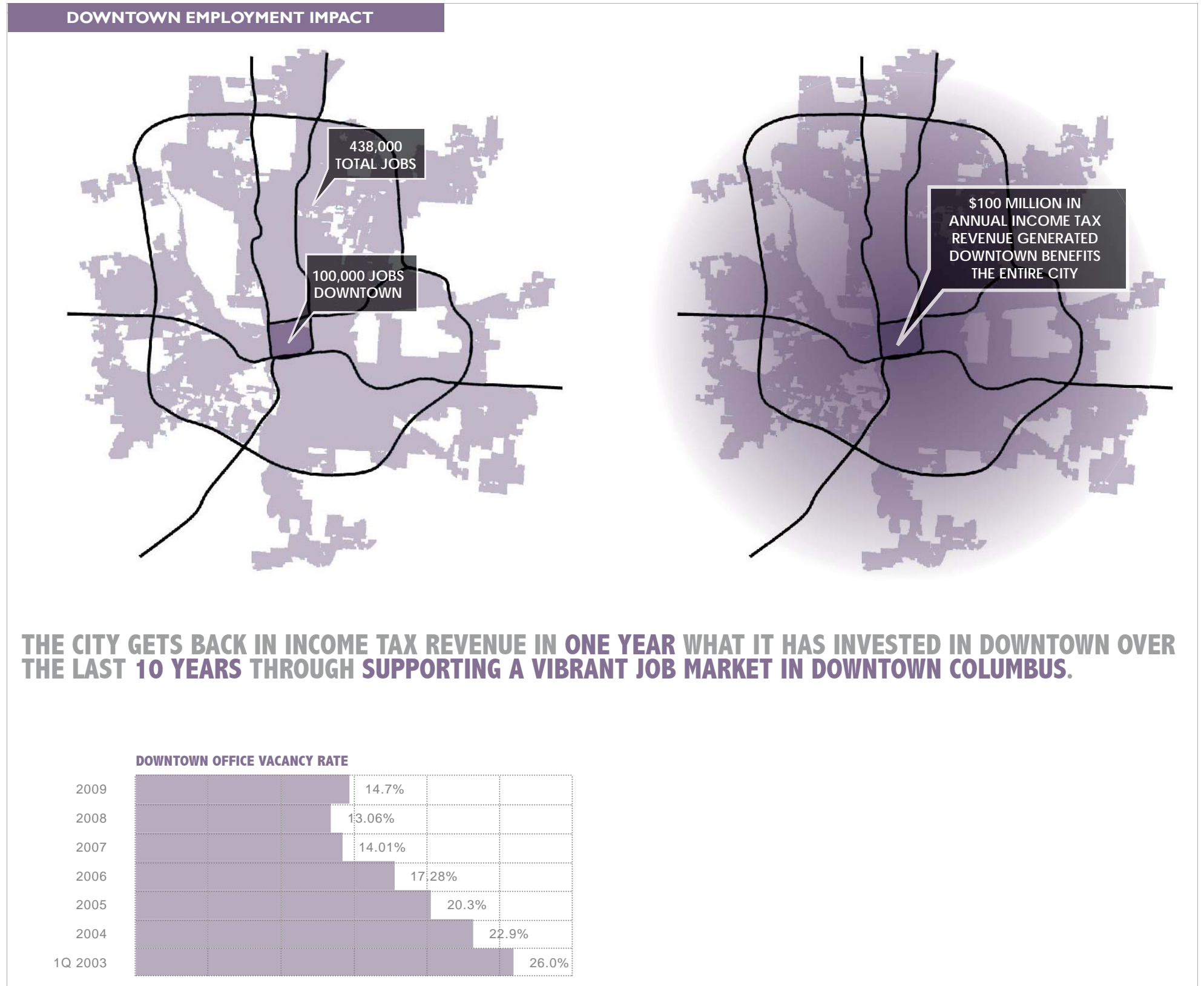


Table 6 - Employment Impact Data





The Huntington Center is one of the premier office spaces downtown.



The Ohio Supreme Court occupies a prime position along Front Street with views of the Scioto River.

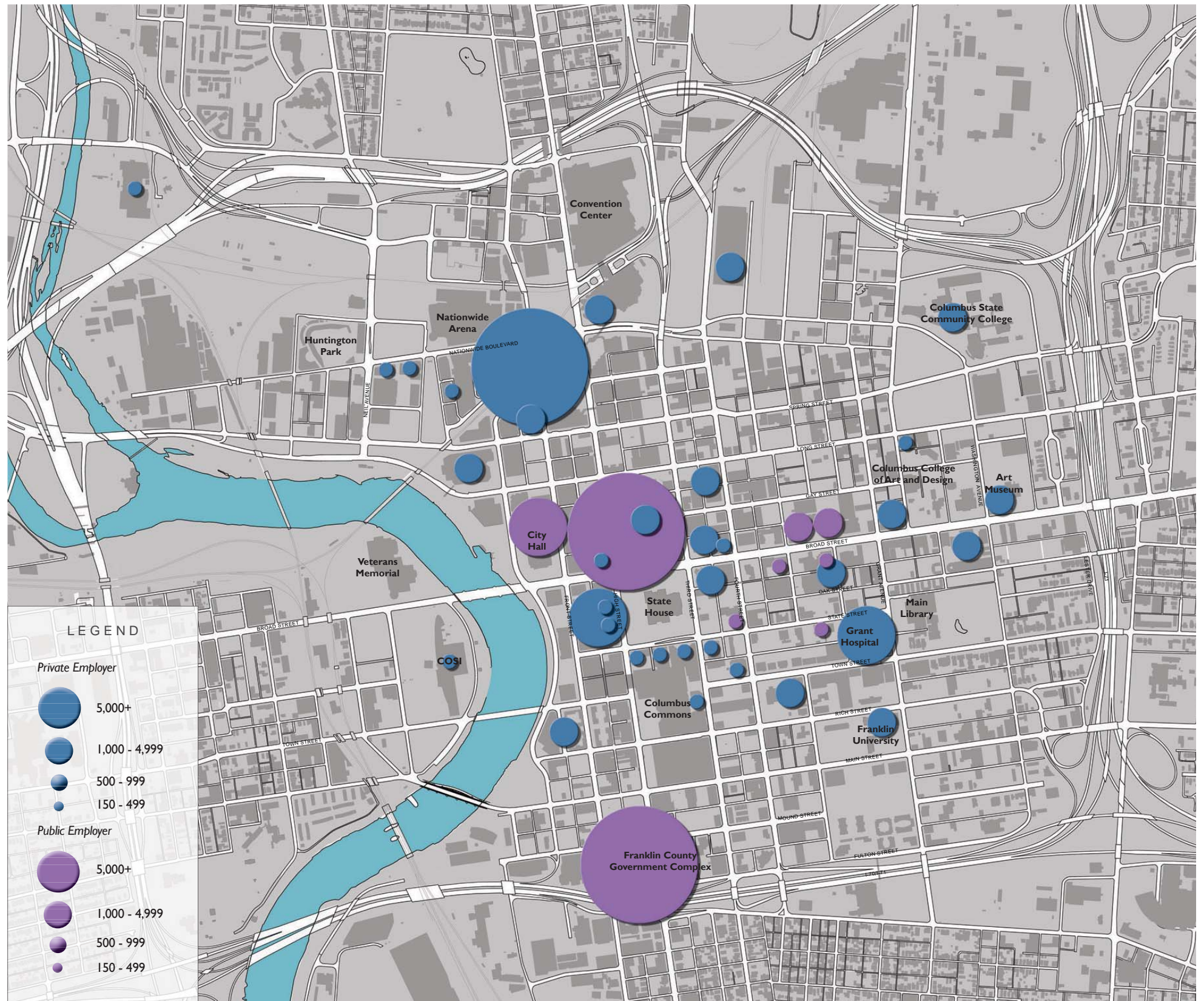


Figure 11 - Employment Centers - 1"=1200'



# DOWNTOWN TODAY

## VISITORS & ATTRACTIONS

Downtown is the arts and cultural hub of the region attracting nearly 8 million visitors yearly. Festivals account for almost 2 million visitors and other downtown attractions draw almost 6 million visitors. Downtown attractions can generally be divided up in to several clusters of activity including the Convention Center and Arena District, various Performing Arts facilities, the Scioto Mile, the Scioto Peninsula and the Discovery District. While these clusters have individual synergies, there is a lack of connectivity between them.

### Convention Center and Arena District

The Greater Columbus Convention Center and Nationwide Arena represent the largest two attractions downtown drawing more than 2 million visitors annually between them. These two attractions are located in close proximity to one another providing a strong synergy between the convention and sports and entertainment sectors. In addition to other restaurants, bars and a movie theatre, the Arena District is now home to Huntington Park baseball stadium. This addition solidifies its place as the sports and entertainment destination in Central Ohio.

The Convention Center also benefits from being close to numerous restaurants and adjacent to the Short North arts and entertainment district. The Convention Center is currently a successful regional venue, but has shortfalls that hurt its ability to host large national conventions. One of its major limitations is the lack of adjacent full-service hotels. There are approximately 3,000 hotel rooms in the whole of downtown, and only half qualify as full service. As a point of comparison, Indianapolis' convention center has 3,000 full service hotel rooms directly connected or adjacent to its convention halls. In order to address this issue, plans for a full service hotel across High Street from the Convention Center are underway.

### Performing Arts

Downtown is also home seven performing arts venues that are located in close proximity to High Street. The Ohio, State, Capitol and Southern theaters along with the Riffe Center collectively draw 800,000 people annually. Adjacent to these performing arts venues is the Ohio State House which attracts 100,000 annually. While these attractions are in close proximity they are not in a tight enough cluster to generate the level of critical mass and evening activity to make downtown a more vibrant place to be.

### Scioto Mile

Festivals downtown are primarily located along the riverfront. These popular festivals are centered around Bicentennial Park on the southernmost section of the riverfront, but some extend north up Civic Center Drive and across to the west side of the Scioto River. The Scioto Mile improvements which are currently underway, will result in upgraded festival grounds and facilities, which should improve both the ability to manage crowds and enhance the visitor experience.

### Scioto Peninsula

The Scioto Peninsula also draws a significant amount of people downtown. COSI has more than 500,000 visitors annually and Veterans Memorial draws 750,000. While these are large amounts of people, there are no synergies between the two institutions. The Scioto Peninsula, which has been referred to as Columbus' "Cultural Peninsula," is largely made up of vacant ground and is in need of one or more complementary uses to fully become fully activated.

### Discovery District

On the eastern edge of downtown is the Discovery District, which is home to four higher education institutions, the Main Library for the Columbus Metropolitan Library System and the Columbus Museum of Art. The campuses of Columbus State Community College (CSCC), the Columbus College of Art and Design (CCAD), Franklin University, and Capitol University Law School represent more than 32,000 students. The Main Library attracts nearly one million visitors annually. The Art Museum, which is adjacent to CCAD and is currently planning to expand, has 250,000 visitors annually. While this district is largely cut off from all the other attractions downtown, it does contain some compelling synergies. Both CCAD and CSCC have completed new buildings and have made a commitment in their campus plans to better relate to the surrounding urban fabric.

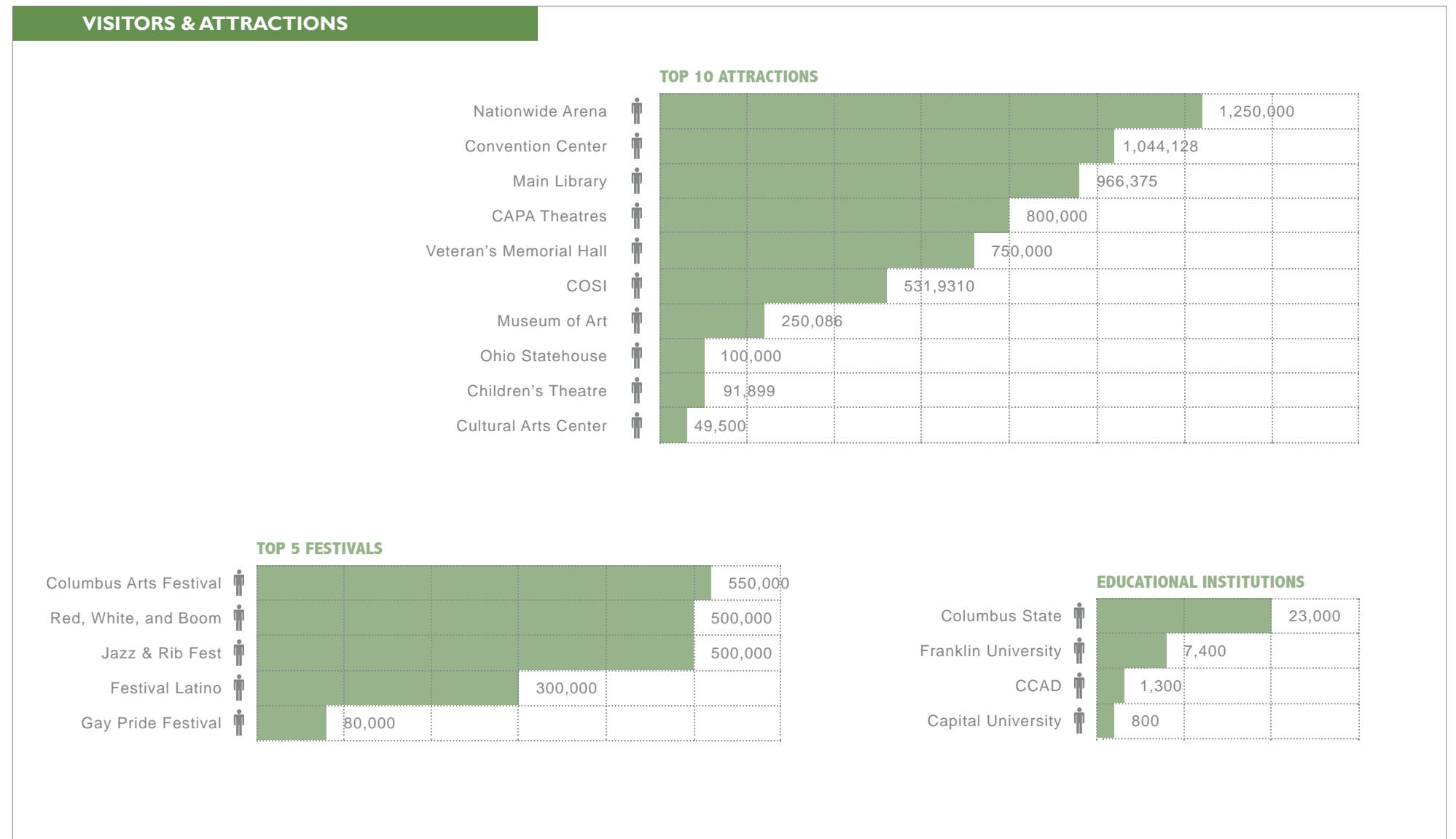


Table 7 - Visitors and Attractions Data



DOWNTOWN ATTRACTIONS ARE **WIDELY DISPERSED** THROUGHOUT DOWNTOWN WITH THE CONVENTION CENTER AND NATIONWIDE ARENA ON THE NORTH SIDE, A PERFORMING ARTS AND FESTIVAL CLUSTER IN THE HEART OF DOWNTOWN, AND THE MAIN BRANCH OF THE COLUMBUS PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM AND COLUMBUS MUSEUM OF ART ON THE EAST EDGE OF DOWNTOWN.



Nationwide Arena draws more than 1 million people downtown annually.



The Columbus Arts Festival is the largest downtown festival.



Figure 12 - Downtown Attractions - 1"=1200'







# 2010 DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS STRATEGIC PLAN

## **10 PRINCIPLES**

*The 10 Principles were informed by the public process and the existing conditions analysis. This unified vision provides the basis for the 12 Ideas that will transform Downtown Columbus.*





# 10 PRINCIPLES

As part of the planning process, a list of **10 Principles** were created to cohesively and comprehensively express the community's goals and common vision for Downtown Columbus. Combined with the existing conditions analysis that was outlined in the Downtown Today section of this document, these core principles provide a common understanding of both where Downtown Columbus is today and what it wants to become tomorrow. These principles serve as the foundation for each of the **12 Ideas** for Downtown Columbus and directly inform the resulting **8 Strategies** that have been created to implement the Plan.

## PRINCIPLE #1

### CONNECT USES, DISTRICTS AND PEOPLE

- Create an interconnected, walkable and vibrant downtown
- Plan a rich mix of uses that fills in the gaps to better connect downtown's assets, districts, corridors, and neighborhoods



## PRINCIPLE #2

### MAINTAIN DOWNTOWN'S STATUS AS THE EMPLOYMENT CENTER OF THE REGION

- Expand the role of downtown as the economic engine of the region
- Create opportunities for new business clusters that take advantage of synergies between existing firms and emerging technologies



## PRINCIPLE #6

### CONTINUE TO DEVELOP SIGNATURE PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACES

- Plan an interconnected system of parks, plazas and green spaces that provide for a wide variety of leisure activities
- Design additional public and private green space to attract private investment and revitalization by establishing new neighborhood gathering places



## PRINCIPLE #7

### INVEST IN ARTS AND CULTURE

- Ensure downtown's place as the preeminent cultural and creative hub of Central Ohio
- Establish a network of support for local artists, engaging adjacent neighborhoods and business districts
- Make art and performance facilities, cultural institutions, and a high quality built environment prominent and visible in everyday life downtown





**PRINCIPLE #3**

**EMBRACE TRANSIT AS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE**

- Improve and expand existing transit service
- Develop and fund alternative transportation options to improve mobility, ease parking pressure, facilitate higher density mixed-use development, and improve Columbus' and the region's competitiveness



**PRINCIPLE #4**

**GUIDE BUILDING FORM, DESIGN AND QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC REALM**

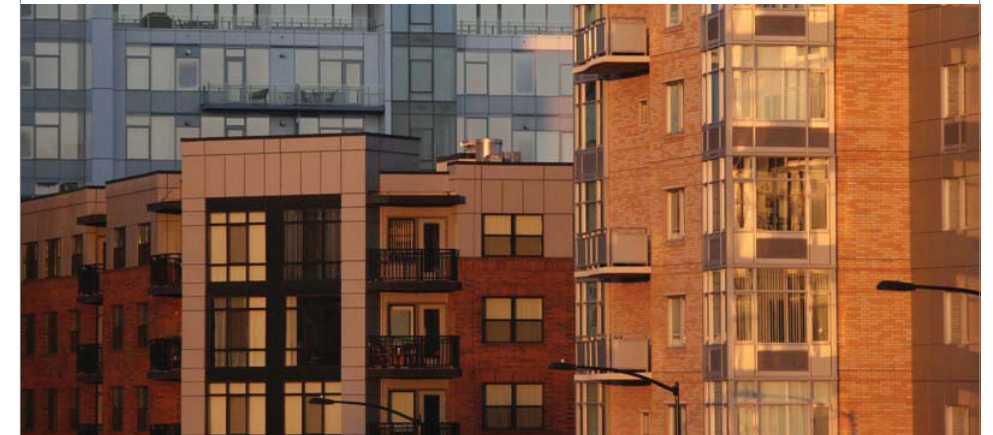
- Develop stronger guidelines to achieve a higher standard of development and streetscape enhancements
- Protect public and private investment and ensure that downtown achieves its full potential as a unique urban environment



**PRINCIPLE #5**

**INCREASE AMOUNT AND VARIETY OF DOWNTOWN HOUSING**

- Plan for a wide range of housing types, styles and price points to meet the space and cost requirements of current and future residents
- Focus downtown housing to create dynamic, sustainable and active neighborhoods that will attract retail, entertainment and other supporting services



**PRINCIPLE #8**

**PRIORITIZE SUSTAINABILITY AND THE GREENING OF DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS**

- Establish Downtown Columbus as the green capital of the Midwest by prioritizing sustainability
- Invest in green infrastructure, promote incentives for green buildings, and capitalize on green-oriented job growth that can transform the City's economy
- Develop an off-the-grid urban neighborhood that serves as a Midwest model of sustainability



**PRINCIPLE #9**

**CONTINUE COLLABORATION BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS**

- Target and prioritize new development opportunities and public green spaces that both the public and private sectors can jointly implement
- Promote existing and identify new policies and development incentives that advance desired outcomes



**PRINCIPLE #10**

**CELEBRATE THE URBAN EXPERIENCE THAT ONLY EXISTS DOWNTOWN**

- Understand and cultivate the allure of the downtown experience
- Focus on the strengths and opportunities unique to great urban environments, such as density, diversity, walkability, day-to-night activity and the greatest attractions in the region
- Continue and expand community celebrations in the downtown









# 2010 DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS STRATEGIC PLAN

## **12 IDEAS**

*Through the comprehensive public involvement process, 12 Ideas were developed to help take Downtown Columbus to the next level. These 12 Ideas are intended to inspire Columbus to think big and to bring people together around common goals and projects. This section outlines all 12 Ideas and identifies the needed next steps to put these ideas into action.*





# 12 IDEAS

## INTRODUCTION

One of the primary goals of the 2010 Downtown Columbus Strategic Plan is to identify the innovative, energizing projects that will set Downtown Columbus apart from the competition. Building off the successful implementation of the 2002 Downtown Business Plan and armed with creative input from the public, the planning team drafted the following **12 Ideas** for Downtown Columbus.

From transit and mobility improvements, to sustainability, to creating new downtown neighborhoods these **12 Ideas**:

- Build on current momentum;
- Harness the synergies between existing uses, institutions and planned projects;
- Identify catalytic projects that will take Downtown Columbus to the next level.

For the purposes of organizing these **12 Ideas**, Downtown Columbus has been divided into three planning areas (see diagram at right). These planning areas are described by the overarching influences that have shaped their image and milieu.

### Discovery District

This area of downtown east of Fourth Street is dominated by education, arts, and medical and office uses. These uses include: Columbus State Community College, Columbus College of Art and Design, Franklin University, Grant Hospital, the Columbus Museum of Art, and the Main Branch of the Columbus Metropolitan Library. Collectively, this portion of downtown has been referred to as the “Discovery District.”



### High Street Core

High Street is the central spine of Columbus, connecting downtown with the rest of the City. It is the organizing force downtown that ties the Central Business District together to the Arena District and Convention Center to the north, and the Franklin County Government Complex to the south. It is the center of commerce, government and transportation within downtown and the City of Columbus, yet fails to feel consistently vibrant along its length.



### Riverfront

The Scioto River is the dominant influence in this portion of downtown. The eastern side of the Scioto is lined with government buildings and civic open space. The western side of the Scioto has often been referred to as the “Cultural Peninsula.” This area is home to the Center of Science and Industry (COSI), Veterans Memorial Hall and acres of vacant land.





**THESE IDEAS ARE DESIGNED TO CHALLENGE CONVENTION IN ORDER TO GENERATE NEW SOLUTIONS AND ENCOURAGE INNOVATION**

**Turning Ideas Into Action**

These **12 Ideas** are just that—ideas. These ideas are designed to challenge convention in order to generate new solutions and encourage innovation. At this stage of the process, these ideas are a work in progress. All of the details have not been sorted out, they will require further study. It will take hard work and community support to turn these ideas into plans with budgets, schedules and funding sources. But that is not the point of this planning process. These **12 Ideas** are intended to inspire Columbus to think big and to bring people together around common goals and projects. And that is exactly what they have done. With more than 1,000 public comments gathered across the past few months, the community has rallied around these **12 Ideas** and has embraced them as part of a common vision for the future of Downtown Columbus.

This section examines each planning area, from the present opportunities and constraints to the ideas that have been developed as part of the public process. Following each idea, specific next steps are recommended. In the implementation section at the end of this report, all of these next steps will be assigned to potential leaders who will be responsible for making each idea a reality.

**12 IDEAS**

**DISCOVERY DISTRICT**

1. Southeast Downtown Gateway Opportunity
2. Infill Housing around Topiary Park
3. The Creative Campus

**HIGH STREET CORE**

4. Redefine Broad Street as the civic spine of the City
5. Restore High Street as downtown's commercial corridor
6. Develop a Downtown Transit Center to replace the High Street Transit Mall
7. 3-C Multi-Modal Station
8. Develop a Downtown Bike Station
9. Develop a Downtown Field House

**RIVERFRONT**

10. Pedestrian Bridge connecting Arena District to Scioto Peninsula
11. Continue the Development of the Scioto Peninsula
12. Scioto-Olentangy Greenway Corridor

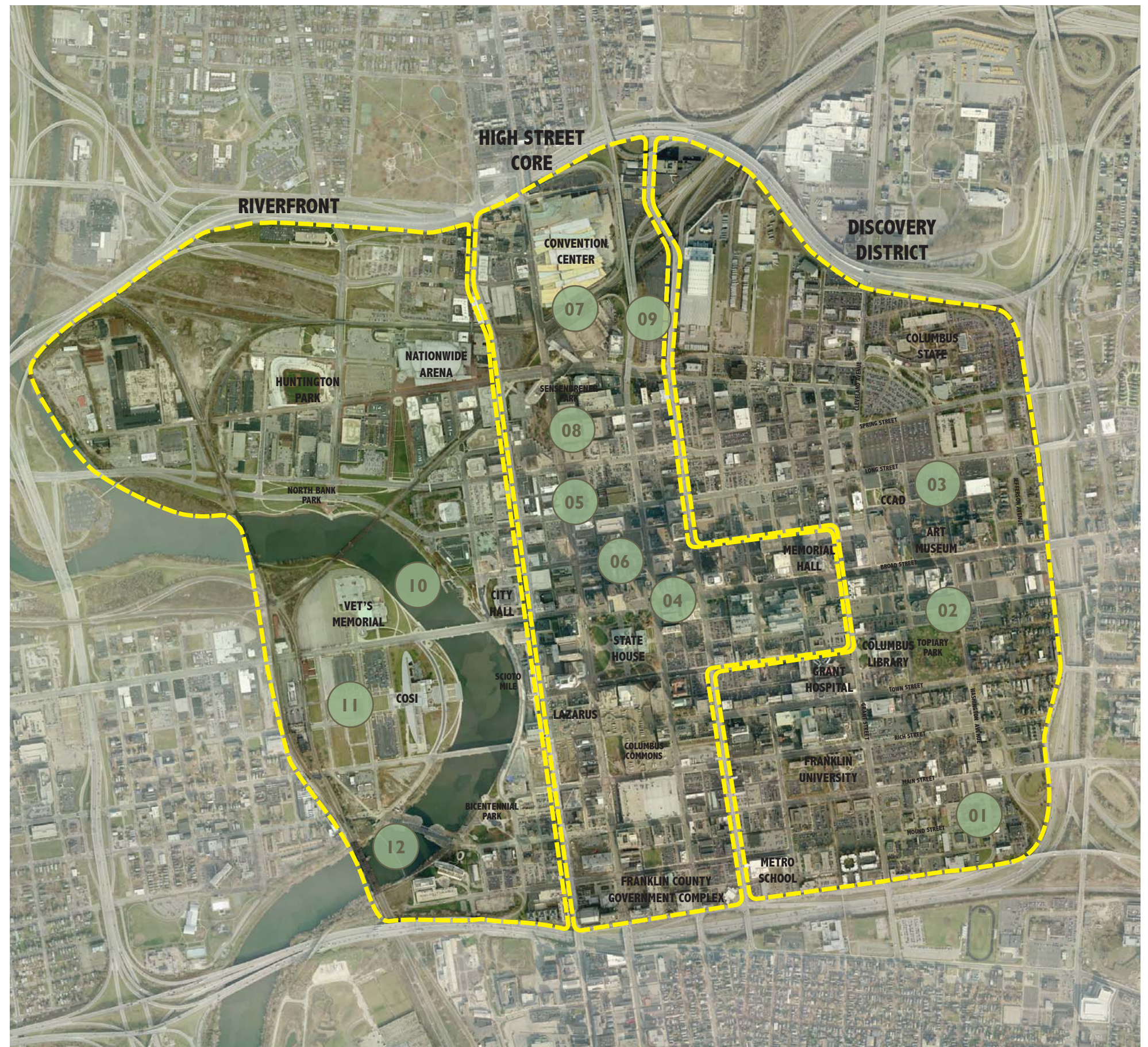


Figure 13 - Downtown Planning Areas - 1"=1200'



# 12 IDEAS

## DISCOVERY DISTRICT

### Introduction

Located east of Fourth Street, the Discovery District is dominated by education and arts and cultural institutions. These uses include: Columbus State Community College, Columbus College of Art and Design, Franklin University, the Columbus Museum of Art, the Main Branch of the Columbus Metropolitan Library, and Topiary Park. In addition to these education and arts and cultural institutions, there are also major office and medical employers in this portion of downtown, including State Auto, Motorists Insurance and Grant Hospital. East of Fourth Street, downtown transitions into more of a neighborhood character. This part of downtown is home to several unique neighborhoods including, the Warehouse District, Jefferson Center, Town-Franklin, Market Exchange and the Red Brick District.

Despite the Discovery District moniker and the seemingly compatible uses, this area of downtown has not yet fully taken advantage of the synergies that exist. This is due, in part, to the automobile-oriented nature of this part of downtown. The District is flanked by I-70/I-71 on the south and east, I-670 on the north and the wide Fourth Street arterial on the west. Hemmed in by major automobile traffic on the edges, the Discovery District is also bisected by Long and Spring, and Rich and Main streets, which are major east-west one-way pairs connecting to I-71. Broad Street also runs across the district, connecting to I-71 and the major neighborhoods to the east. In addition to these major thoroughfares, the institutional and office uses in the Discovery District create a massive demand for parking. As a result, there is an over-abundance of surface parking lots in this portion of downtown. Combined with an overall lack of green space and dispersed residential density, this district is characterized by large areas of harsh, desolate urban spaces.

### Embracing the Urban Fabric

Over the past several years, however, the Discovery District has begun to change as major institutions have expanded and begun to embrace the urban fabric that surrounds them. CCAD turned a parking lot into a new quad, built a new dormitory at Gay Street and Cleveland Avenue, opened the Crane Center for Design, and created new design studios on Broad Street at the old Byers building. Columbus State Community College built new buildings along Cleveland Avenue, including a new bookstore and workforce development center. The Columbus Museum of Art is also undergoing expansion and State Auto has added jobs to its downtown headquarters. Grant Hospital completed a major expansion and Franklin University bought and renovated the old MORPC building on Main Street. New housing was added throughout the district including the Commons on Grant, Rich Street Walk and the renovated Seneca Hotel. More residential is planned as Neighborhood Launch continues to expand along Gay Street and as Daimler plans new residential at Grant and Gay streets.

There are also numerous changes planned for the Discovery District over the next several years. The I-70/I-71 improvements will create new urban avenues on the edges of the district and consolidate the entrance and exit ramps that exist today. Primary access points will be at the north and south ends of I-71, eliminating ramps and Spring, Long, Broad, Main and Rich. This will significantly calm traffic, alleviate the auto-oriented feel of the streets within the district and create new downtown and neighborhood gateway opportunities. Along with this work on urban avenues, all of the bridge crossings will be rebuilt creating new opportunities to reconnect the surrounding urban neighborhoods with the Discovery District.

The three ideas for the Discovery District seek to build upon these recent and planned improvements to better integrate this portion of downtown into the surrounding urban fabric.

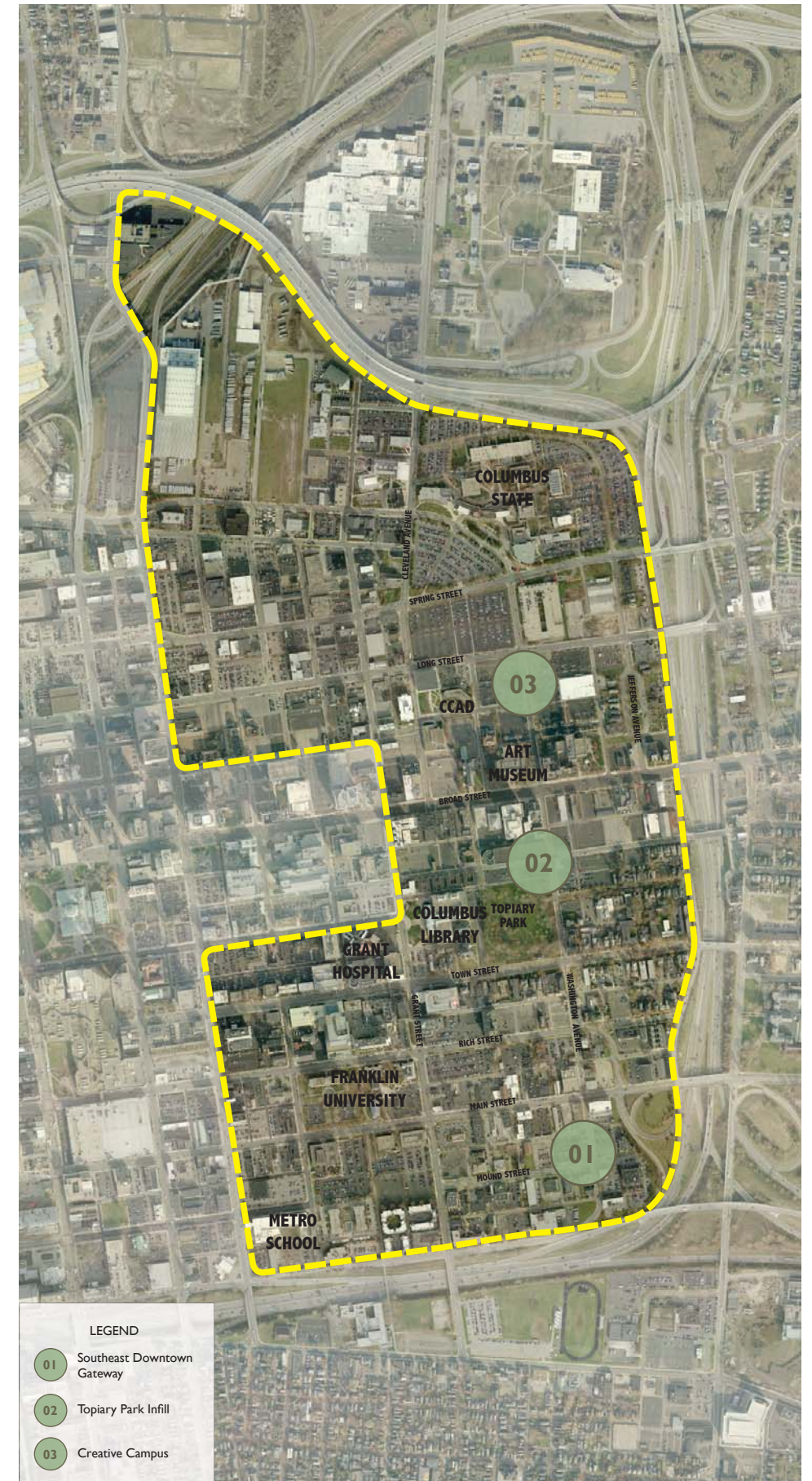


Figure 14 - Discovery District Planning Area



THERE ARE **NUMEROUS CHANGES PLANNED** FOR THE DISCOVERY DISTRICT OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS

**CURRENT CHALLENGES**



From the north end to the south end of the Discovery District there is ample vacant and underutilized land.

**CURRENT ASSETS**



The new CCAD dorm on and the Topiary Park represent the diversity of the assets in the Discovery District



The Discovery District is dominated by surface parking lots.

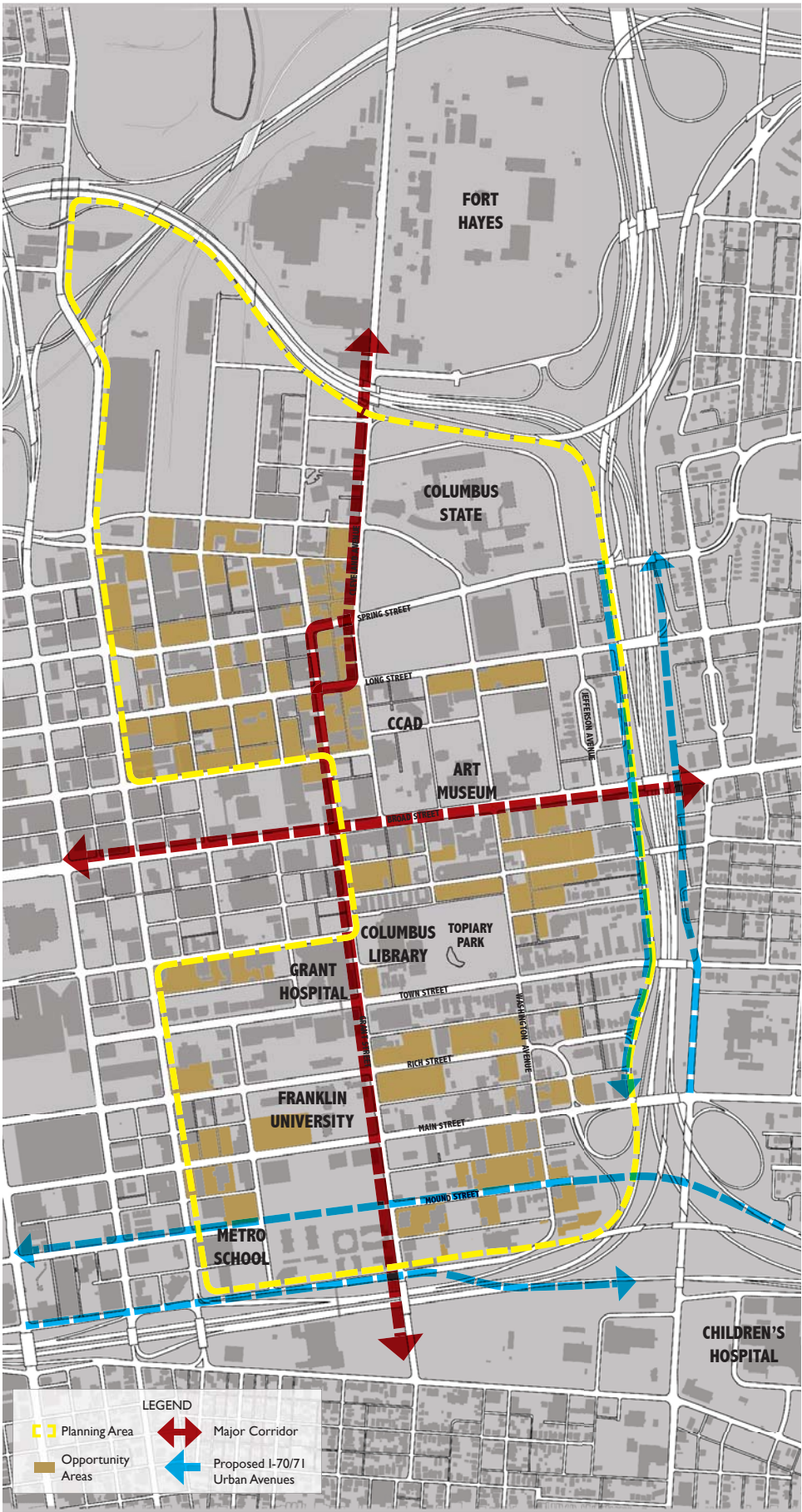


Figure 15 - Discovery District Opportunity Areas



# 12 IDEAS

## 01. SOUTHEAST DOWNTOWN GATEWAY OPPORTUNITY

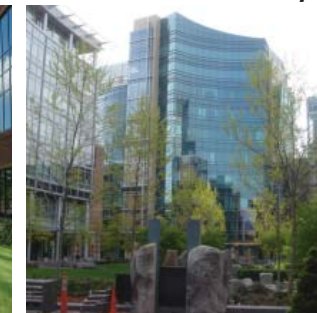
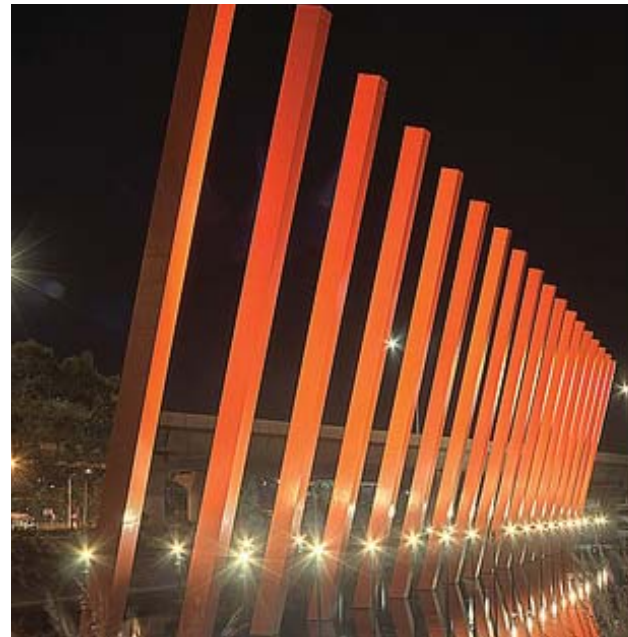
This largely under-utilized area of Downtown Columbus south of Main Street between Fourth Street and I-71 will see significant change as a result of the improvements to I-70/I-71. Mound and Fulton streets will be rebuilt as urban avenues connecting the east side of Downtown Columbus to I-70/I-71. Additionally, the Grant Avenue bridge will be rebuilt as part of the I-70/I-71 project. This will create an opportunity for a new downtown gateway on Mound Street and a new neighborhood gateway on Grant Avenue. As a result, this area will become more accessible, visible and attractive for mixed-use redevelopment.

Given the proximity to Children’s Hospital, which is in the midst of a \$1 billion campus expansion, Grant Hospital’s recent expansion, and Franklin University’s bustling campus, there are strong existing synergies in this area of Downtown Columbus. In addition to these influential institutions, the Southeast Area is also close to the Parsons’ Avenue Business District and German Village. Taken together with the improvements planned for the Mound, Fulton and Grant corridors, this area represents a significant economic development opportunity for office and residential infill. A 2006 study by Bay Area Economics estimated that the office redevelopment potential of ground adjacent to these corridors could result in significant new office and residential development that could generate an additional \$9 million of annual tax revenues to the City of Columbus.

The design of the downtown and neighborhood gateways and the new urban avenues will be critical to the success of the redevelopment potential of the Southeast Downtown Gateway. While Mound and Fulton will be designed as one-way streets, these three-lane urban avenues are planned to have bump outs, on-street parking and a high quality streetscape. It is essential that these streets are designed as “Complete Streets” and function on a more neighborhood scale and not as high speed arterials that characterize the streets that currently connect downtown to I-70/I-71.

The gateways are also important. Mound Street will be the major gateway into Downtown Columbus from the east, and as such there is an opportunity to use green space, public art and other innovative architectural features to announce the entry into downtown. There is also an opportunity to create a new neighborhood gateway at Grant Avenue. This bridge crossing should be rebuilt to enhance the pedestrian and visual connection between downtown and German Village.

### GATEWAY EXAMPLES



### OFFICE/RESIDENTIAL MIXED-USE

### NEXT STEPS

- CDDC and the City should work with major property owners and other investors to explore development possibilities within this new growth area for downtown.
- The City should continue to work with ODOT to ensure the new urban avenues that are part of the I-70/I-71 project meet its “Complete Streets” standards and provide a suitable context to attract new private investment.





THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A NEW DOWNTOWN GATEWAY ON MOUND STREET AND A NEW NEIGHBORHOOD GATEWAY ON GRANT AVENUE

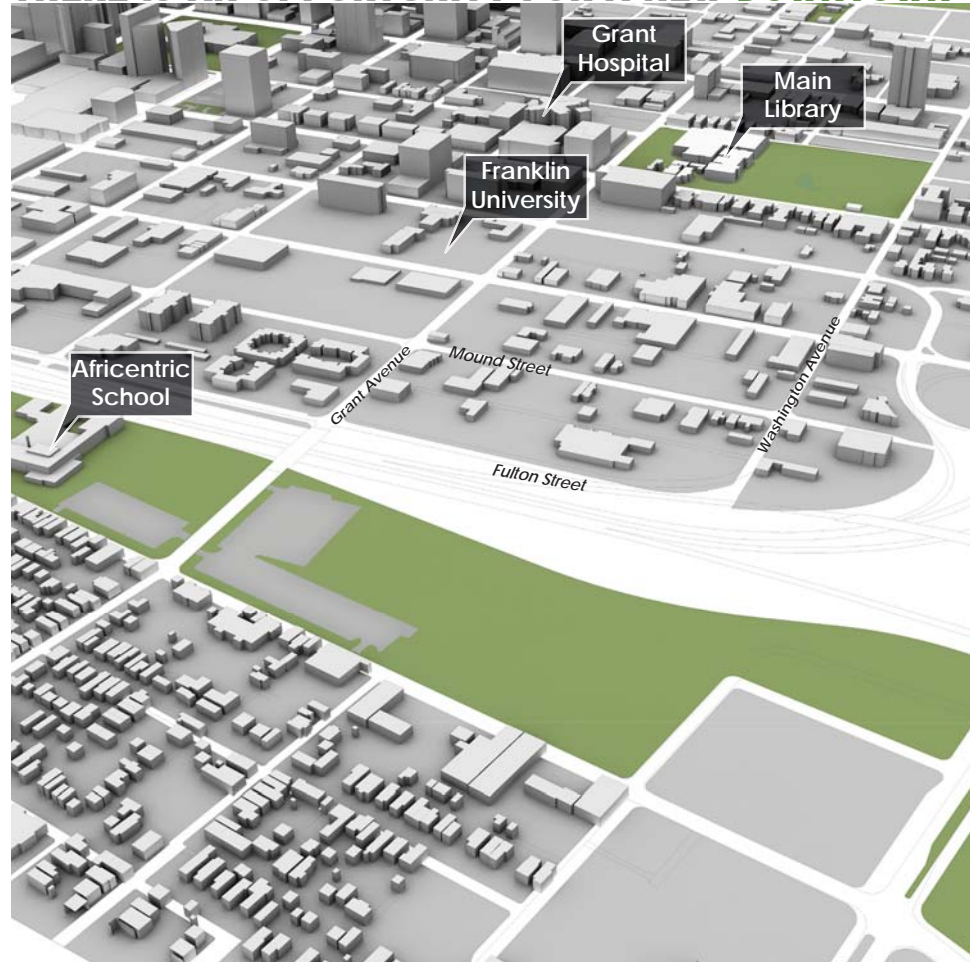


Figure 16 - Existing Southeast Downtown Area

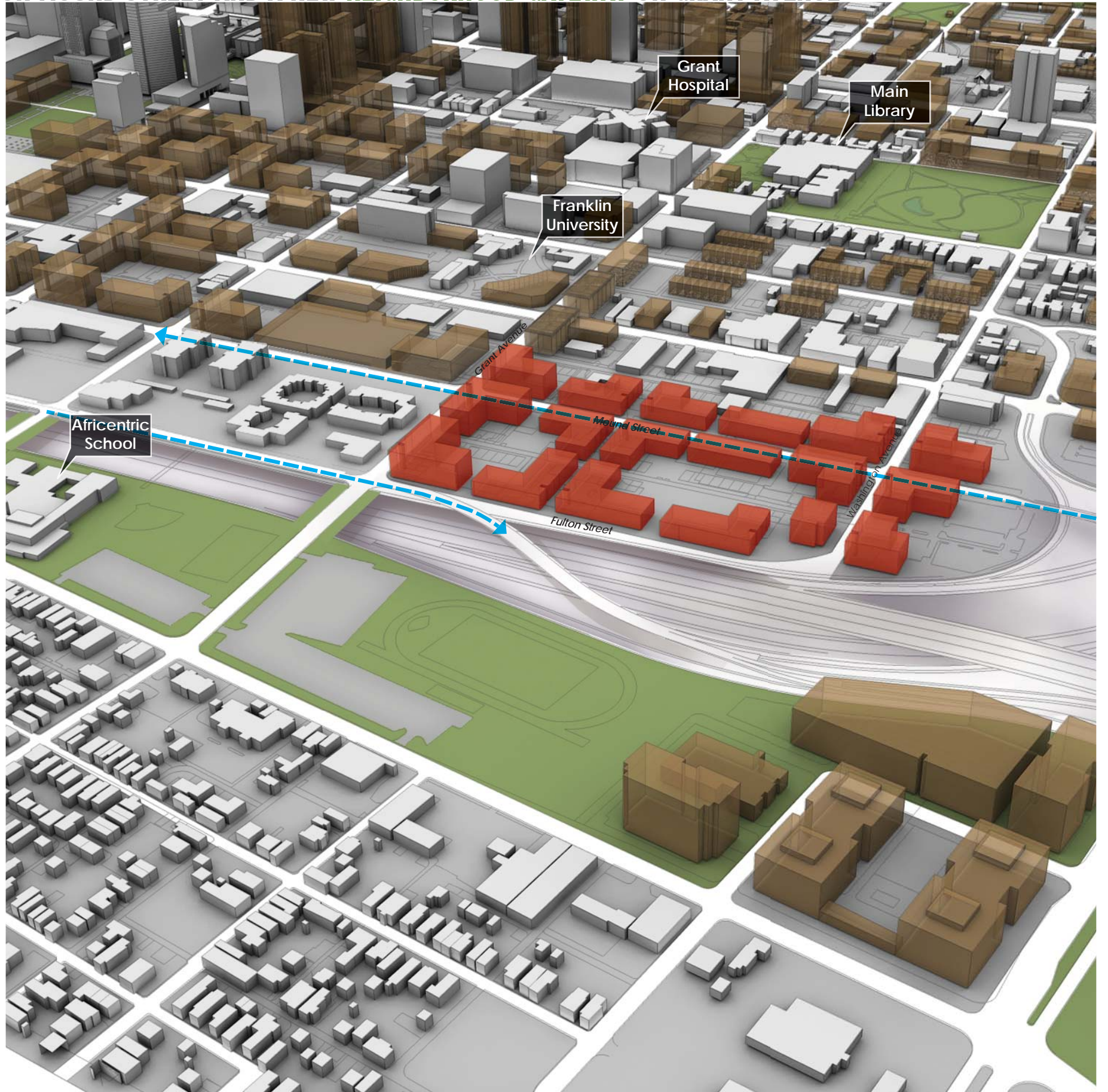


Figure 17 - Proposed Southeast Downtown Gateway

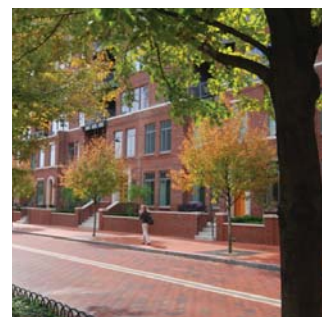


# 12 IDEAS

## 02. INFILL HOUSING AROUND TOPIARY PARK

Topiary Park has the potential to be a catalyst for residential infill. While the surrounding neighborhood has several excellent residential streets, the northern and eastern edges of the park are underdeveloped and occupied by surface parking lots. To create a true neighborhood around this unique green asset, resident development should be encouraged through existing city incentive programs and the City working with major property owners should provide a parking solution. This will require a new parking structure as part of the new development or on another nearby site. An influx of residents would help to enliven the existing neighborhood and strengthen the market for retail uses and other amenities that are currently lacking.

### INFILL RESIDENTIAL & ACTIVATION OF FIRST FLOOR USES



### NEXT STEPS

- CDDC and stakeholders should work with key property owners to develop the identified multi-story residential development.
- The City should continue to maintain and enhance this unique and outstanding public park as the anchor for continued residential investment, while also working to solve parking needs within this key neighborhood.
- The City should continue to work with property owners in the adjacent neighborhoods, including the East Town Street Historic District to facilitate appropriate reinvestment.





**TOPIARY PARK HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE A CATALYST FOR RESIDENTIAL INFILL**

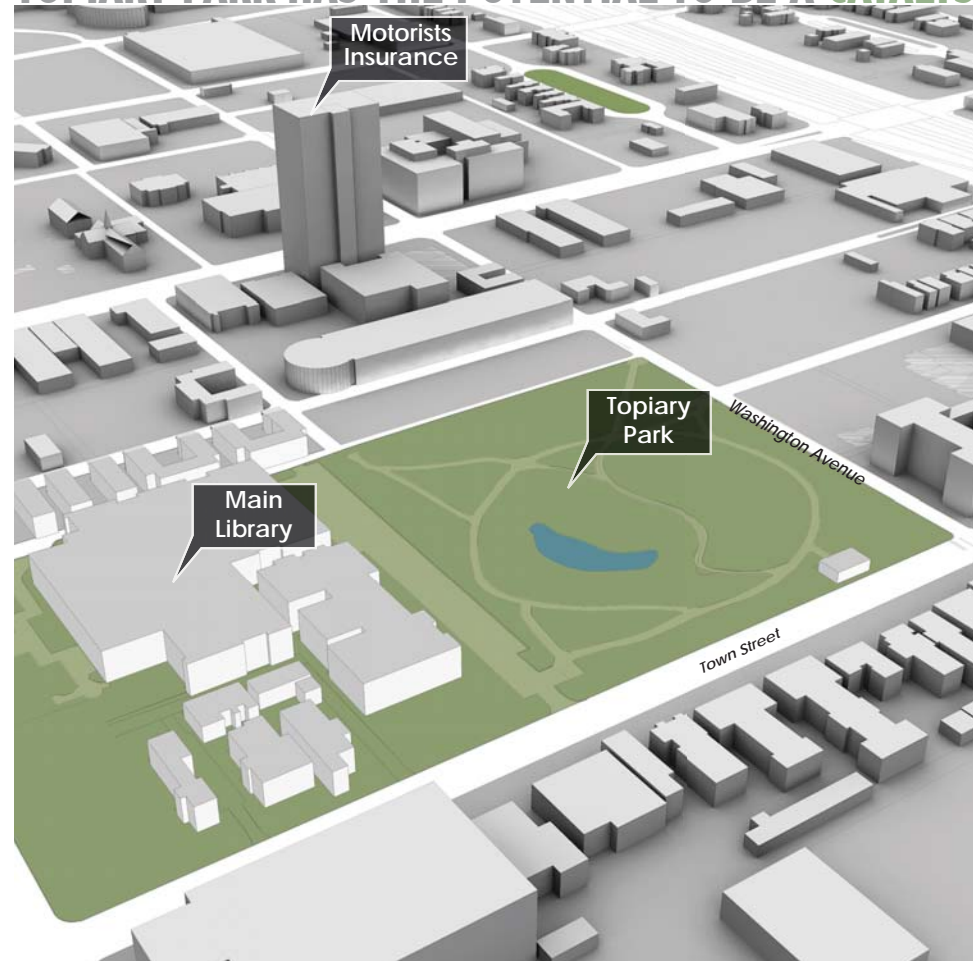


Figure 18 - Existing Topiary Park Area



Figure 19 - Proposed Topiary Park Infill



# 12 IDEAS

## 03. THE CREATIVE CAMPUS

The expansion of the Columbus Museum of Art and recent additions to the CCAD campus has sparked renewed discussion about the creation of a Creative Campus. Building on recent projects by CCAD and Columbus State and planned expansion by the Columbus Museum of Art, this concept proposes open space, new streetscapes, mixed-use infill and a parking garage to create an interconnected and active Creative Campus.

While this concept has many components, one of the first is the construction of a shared parking garage that would help to eliminate surface parking lots and allow for redevelopment. Gay Street is reimagined as a shared use street that calms traffic and welcomes pedestrian activity. This spine is the heart of the Creative Campus, pulling the energy of Gay Street east through CCAD's campus, the Museum of Art and connecting to Jefferson Center across the State Auto campus.

New green space is also central to the creation of the Creative Campus. Working together with the First Congregational Church, it may be possible to extend the Columbus Museum's green to the west, replacing surface parking with high quality park space. There is also a new green space proposed for the block between Cleveland and Grant avenues and Long and Spring streets. Identified in the 2002 North Discovery District Plan, this needed green space joins the campus edges of Columbus State and CCAD and connects to the new residential proposed for Gay Street. Adding this green space provides a framework for the redevelopment of the adjoining properties and creates a key neighborhood amenity for future residents and workers. It also better defines the connection between Grant Avenue and Cleveland Avenue by formalizing this north-south connection.

### OPEN SPACE + PUBLIC ART

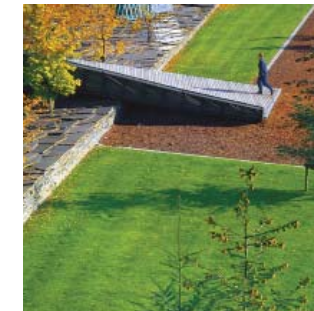
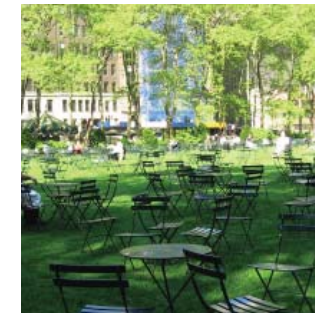
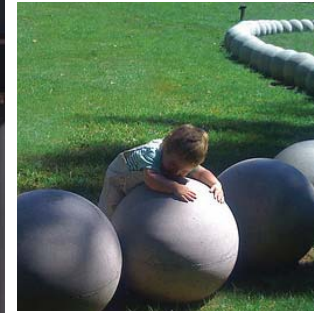
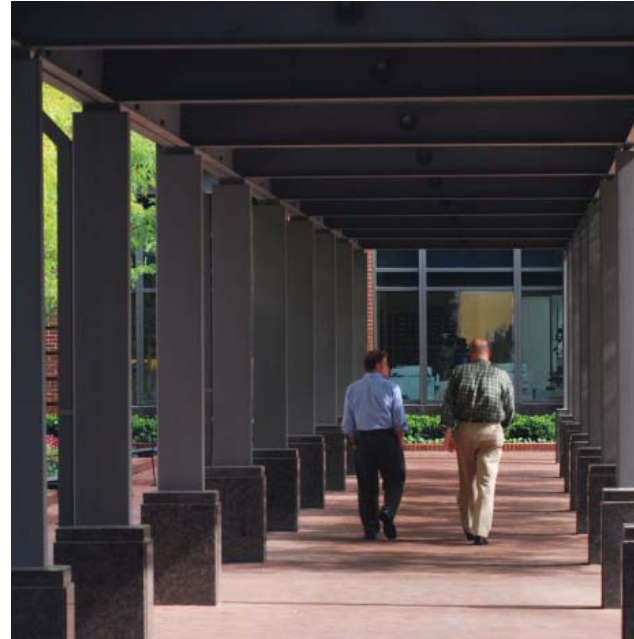






Figure 20 - Existing Museum Area

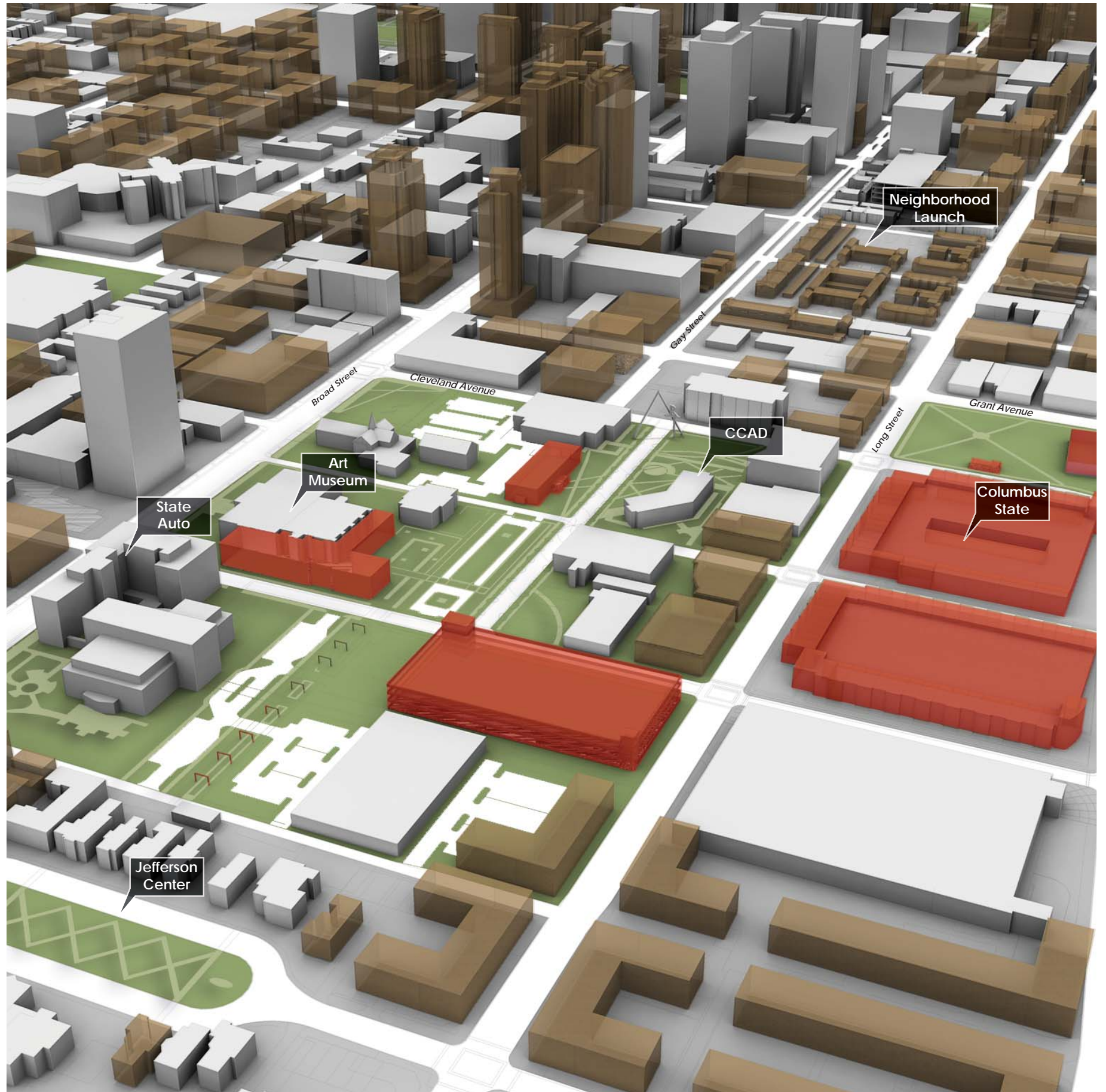


Figure 21 - Proposed Creative Campus



# 12 IDEAS

## 03. THE CREATIVE CAMPUS - CONTINUED

Filling in the surface parking lots along the Long Street edge of the Columbus State campus is another critical component. The two large surface parking lots east of the proposed open space along Long Street interrupt the continuity of the street making it unfriendly to pedestrians. The challenge here will be to accommodate Columbus State's parking needs, while also injecting vibrancy into the streetscape. This concept proposes two new parking garages that are fronted by residential and retail uses to screen the garages and provide more street-level activity.

Bridging these significant gaps with open space and residential and retail redevelopment is essential to improving the east-west connections within the Discovery District and to the neighborhoods at its edges. Infill development along Long Street will help to draw the energy of the Creative Campus east toward the Long Street Cap over I-71 and into the King Lincoln District. Taken together, the Creative Campus will create a new cultural neighborhood that is interconnected and vibrant.

### SHARED USE STREETS + MIXED USE



### GARAGES WITH FIRST FLOOR USES



### NEXT STEPS

- The institutional, corporate and cultural anchors of the Creative Campus should continue to work toward their own master plans, while coordinating investments and improvements – in particular, working with the CDDC on a new parking garage.
- The City, the Discovery District SID and other area stakeholders should investigate signage and other streetscape enhancements that identify and celebrate the Creative Campus, including traffic calming and other measures to ensure a safe, walkable environment.
- The CDDC, along with Columbus State, CCAD and other neighborhood stakeholders, should lead the effort to develop new residential housing in this neighborhood and to establish additional public green space.
- The City should continue to work with ODOT relative to I-70/I-71 reconstruction and promote development of a great bridge connector where Long Street crosses the highway.

### HIGHWAY CAPS + NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS





**THE CREATIVE CAMPUS WILL CREATE A NEW CULTURAL NEIGHBORHOOD THAT IS INTERCONNECTED AND VIBRANT**

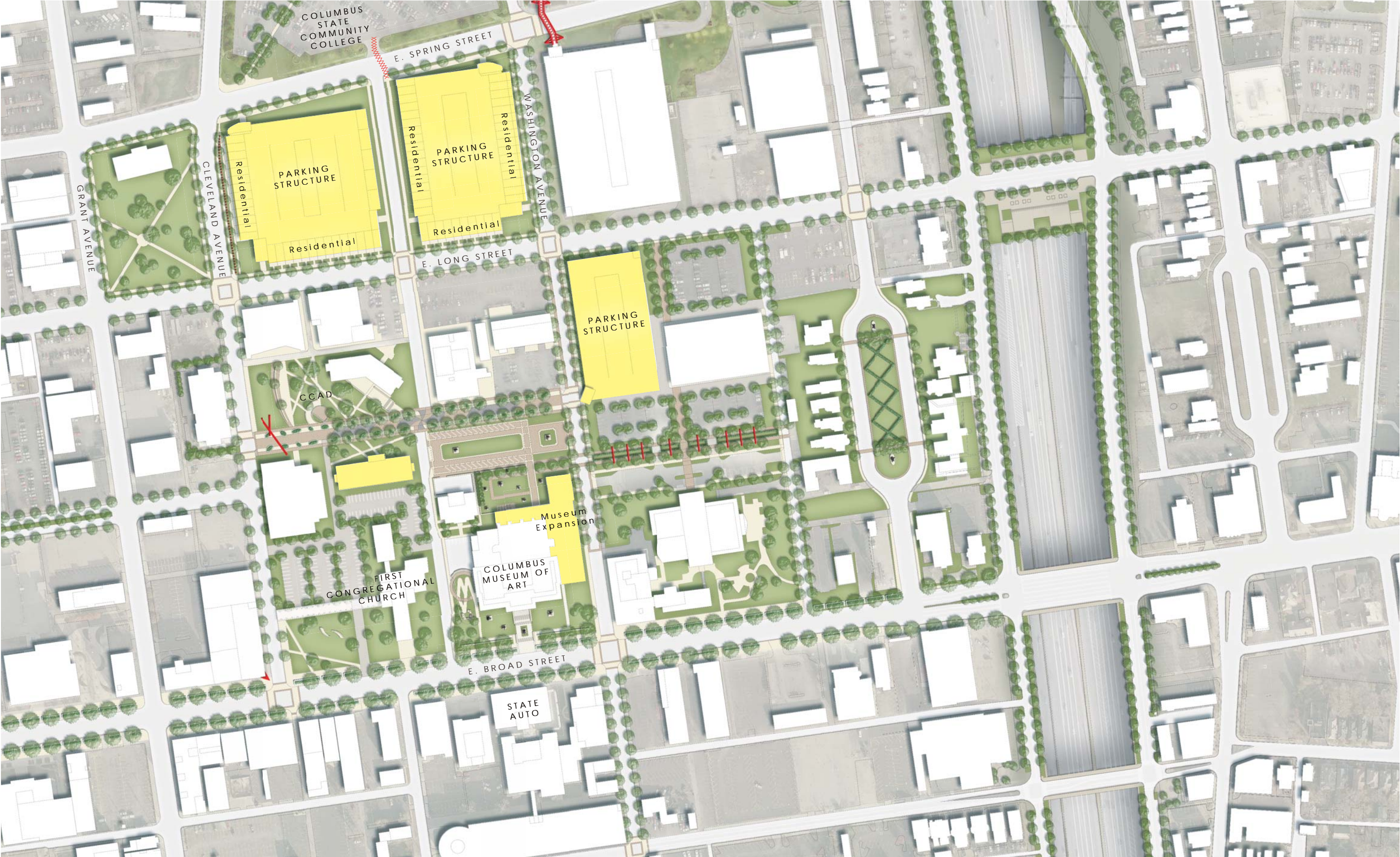


Figure 22 - Proposed Creative Campus



# 12 IDEAS

## HIGH STREET CORE

### Introduction

High Street is the physical and psychological front door for both downtown and the City of Columbus. As the central spine of Columbus, High Street connects downtown not only to The Ohio State University but also to many of the exceptional neighborhoods and inner-ring suburbs that make Columbus great. In Downtown, High Street is the hub of government, commercial and entertainment activity. It is the common thread that links the Convention Center, the Arena District, the State House, office skyscrapers, numerous theaters and the Franklin County Government Complex together.

Since 2002, the core of Downtown Columbus has seen dramatic reinvestment. The development at Broad and High streets reintroduced retail and street level activity to the center of the city. Numerous condominium and apartments are repopulating the downtown core. Dozens of new restaurants, retail storefronts and a bustling bi-weekly farmer's market are making downtown a more vibrant and exciting destination. New parks are under construction at the Scioto Mile and Columbus Commons. The CDDC-renovated Lazarus department store is now a premier LEED-certified office building with ground floor retail spaces. Two new parking garages have been built. On the south end of High Street the Franklin County Courthouse is nearing completion. A new full-service convention center hotel is also planned for north High Street.

The City is also focusing efforts on improving retail storefronts with its Mile On High incentive program that provides tax abatements, grants, tax credits and loans to assist existing businesses and encourage new ventures. Building on this effort, the Capital Crossroads Special Improvement District (CCSID) is implementing a public realm enhancement plan to improve the downtown core. The CCSID will begin these efforts by installing improved bike infrastructure in downtown, including bike shelters and other secure bike parking. Other planned improvements include revamping Lynn/Pearl Alleys and implementing various streetscape improvements.

### Achieving High Street's Potential

Despite these significant attributes and reinvestment, High Street fails to feel vibrant through the entire length of downtown because of several stretches of underutilized properties, vacant lots and buildings, and surface parking lots. These blocks that are devoid of activity are a liability today, but represent a significant future redevelopment opportunity if planned for correctly.

While the recent and planned improvements address current needs throughout the High Street Core, more needs to be done for Downtown Columbus to achieve its full potential. The following concepts build on the success of the last decade by completely rethinking the downtown streetscape, proposing new solutions to connectivity and transportation issues, and identifying catalytic projects.

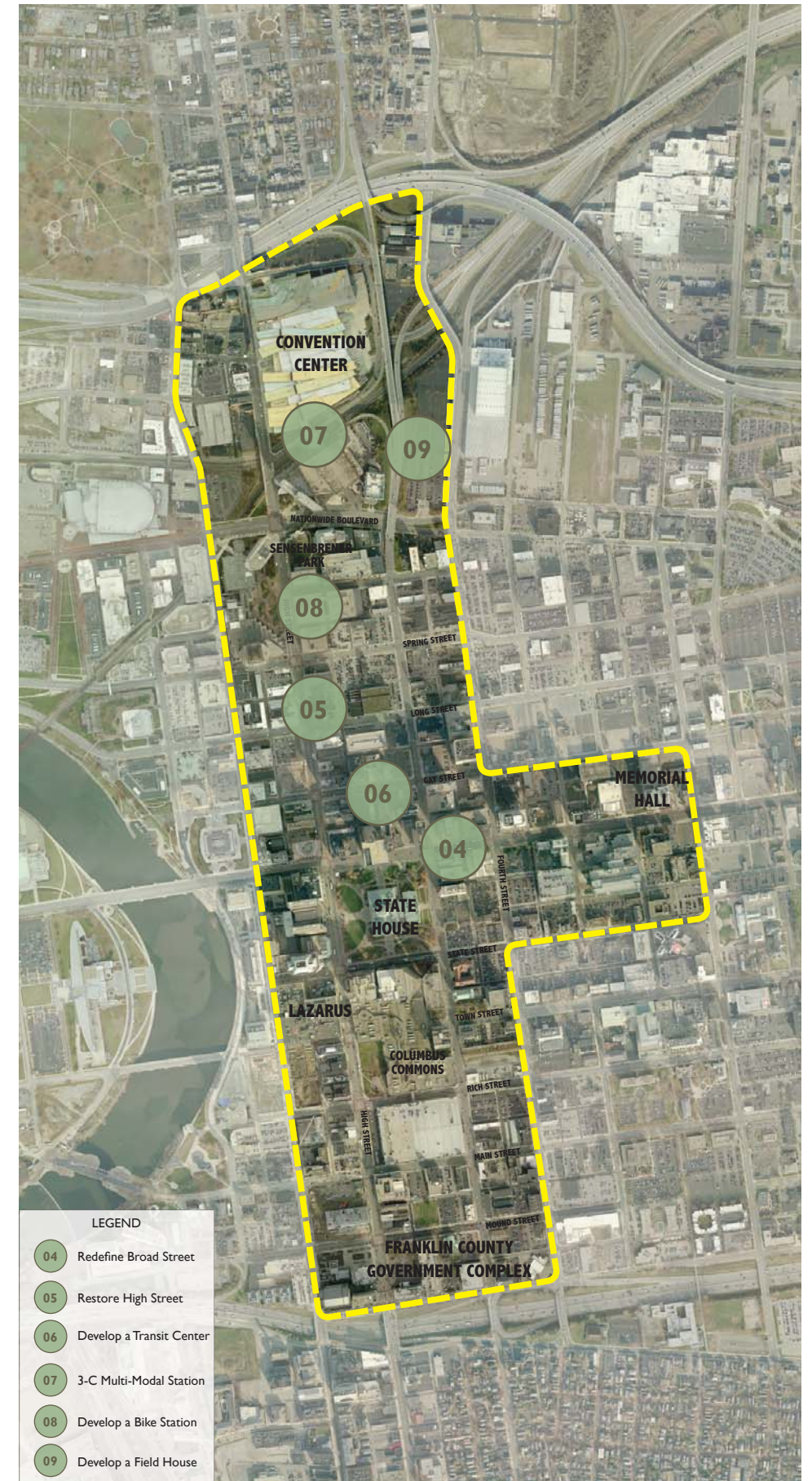


Figure 23 -High Street Core Planning Area



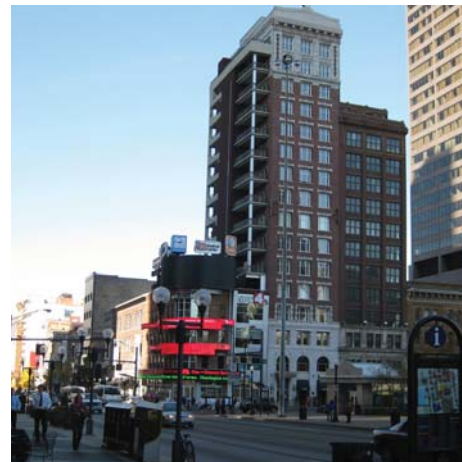
# HIGH STREET IS THE FRONT DOOR FOR BOTH DOWNTOWN AND THE CITY OF COLUMBUS

## CURRENT CHALLENGES

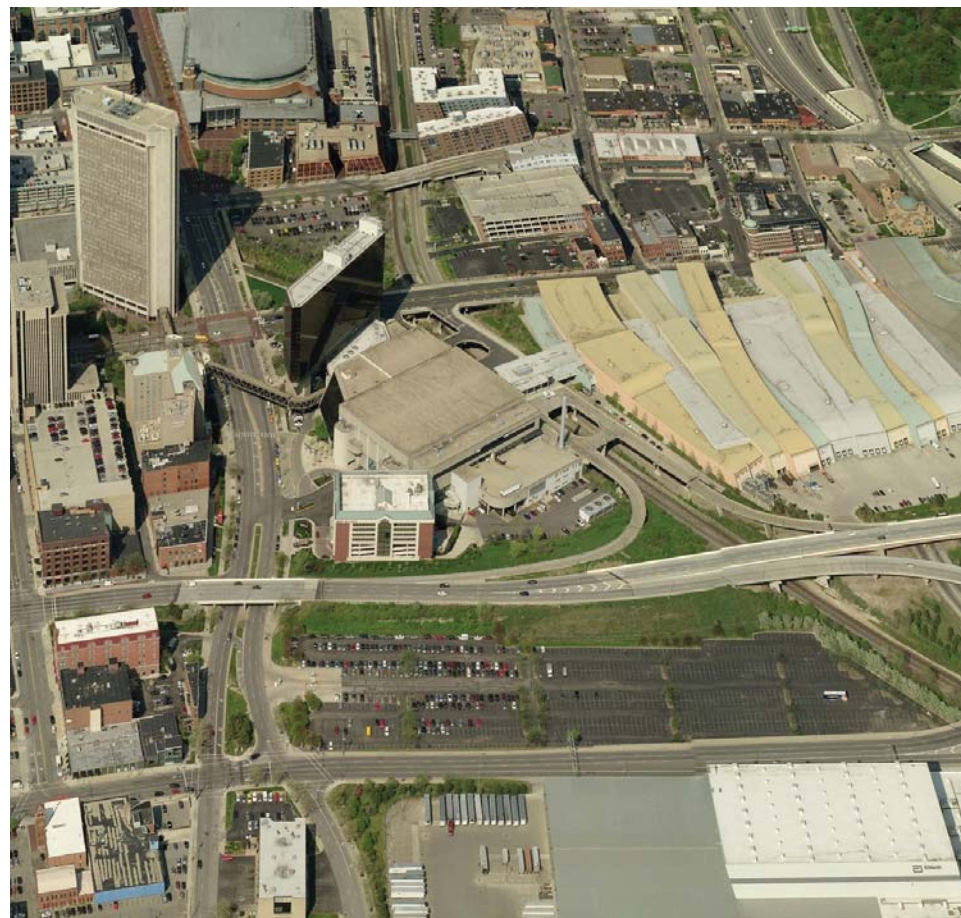


Bus congestion along High Street is one issue that hampers successful retail.

## CURRENT ASSETS



The center of downtown is at Broad and High streets.



The Convention Center will soon have a new full-service hotel, but there are more opportunities to explore.

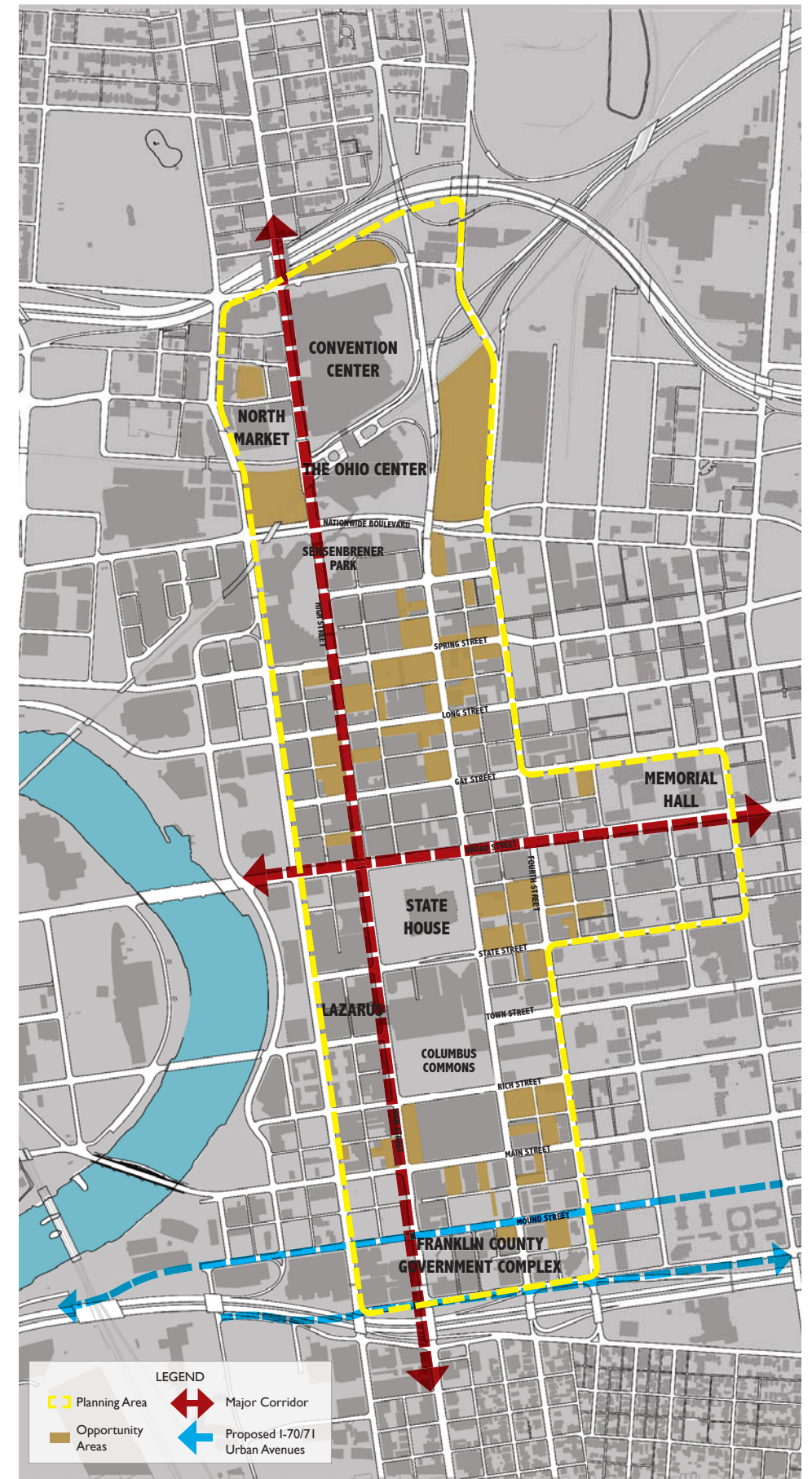


Figure 24 -High Street Core Opportunity Area



# 12 IDEAS

## 04. REDEFINE BROAD STREET

Historically, Broad Street has acted as the civic spine for the City of Columbus. As such, Broad Street used to have a streetscape that reflected its importance. Today, Broad Street at eight lanes across is comparable in width to SR 315. While the mansions have been replaced by office towers, there is still an opportunity to restore the grandeur to this once majestic street.

It is no longer necessary for Broad Street to be eight lanes wide through Downtown Columbus. The I-70/I-71 improvements will remove ramp access to and from Broad Street, lessening its importance as an access corridor to those entering and leaving Downtown Columbus from the highway. Even before this change, Broad Street has been carrying fewer and fewer cars on a daily basis. In 1994 Broad Street served a daily average of 36,320 trips. In 2006 that number was 22,500. As a point of comparison, that is roughly the same amount of traffic that is served by the five lane section of Indianola Avenue near East North Broadway. While Broad Street will continue to be an important east-west connection, it is clearly time to put it on a “road diet.”

Broad Street was originally designed with an esplanade and carriageway that reduced the width of the street to a more human scale. Previous proposals have suggested that Broad Street be retrofitted with medians to improve its civic presence. However, it may be possible to revisit the historic intent of Broad Street and, instead of creating a median that no one can use, develop a new linear system of green space that brings life back to the street and encourages reinvestment.

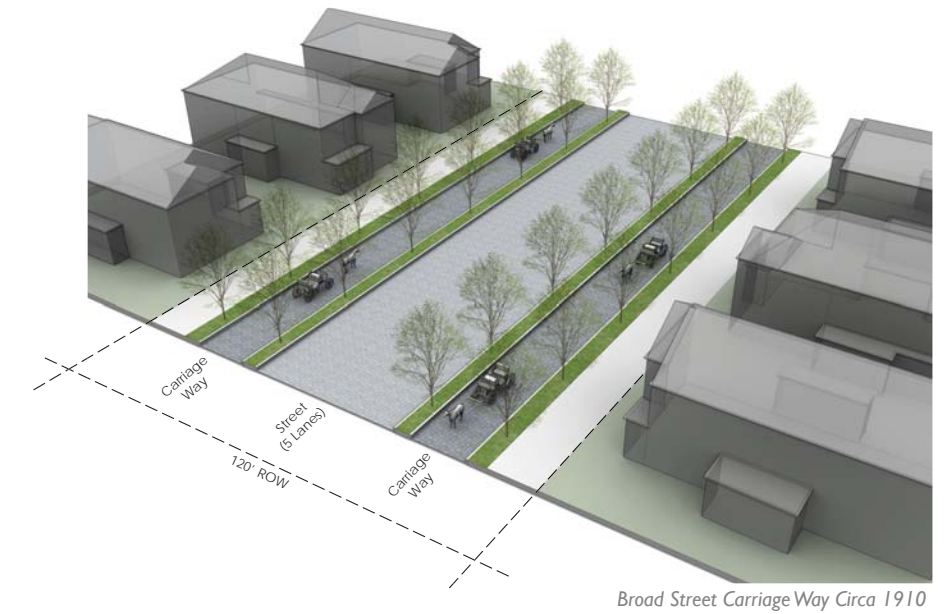
Utilizing the same right-of-way that is available today, this concept for Broad Street removes travel lanes to create additional space for pedestrians, bicyclists and landscaping on both sides of the street. This is more than a street, it is a linear park of usable green space that activates the streetscape, engages people, provides an amenity for nearby residential development, and enhances adjacent property values. Running from the Scioto River to the Near East Side, this is an essential east-west connection. By widening the sidewalk and adding landscaping, this new streetscape can accommodate not only pedestrians, but also bicyclists. Added trees and green space could also be designed to manage stormwater runoff, making Broad Street the most sustainable street in the Midwest.



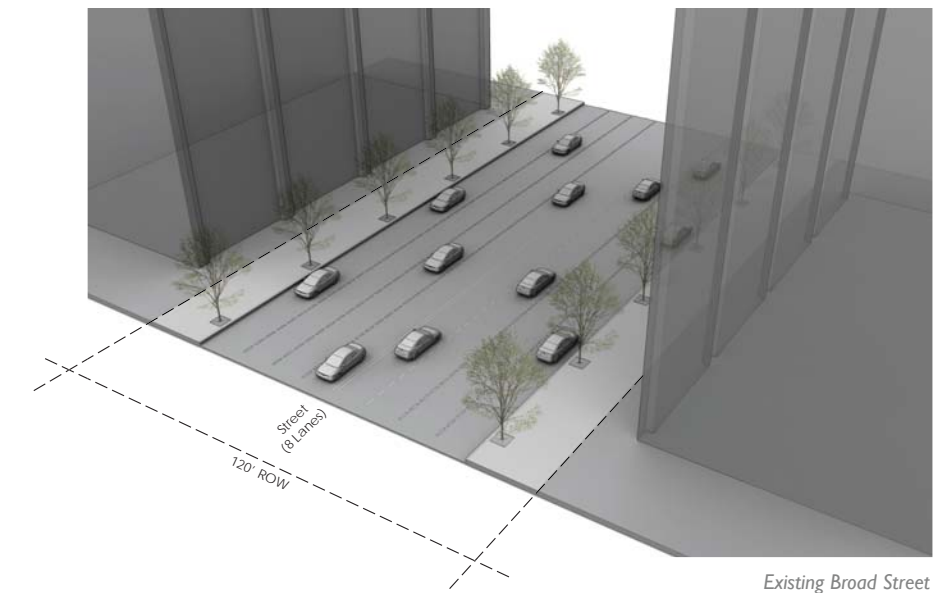
Broad Street Carriage Way Circa 1910

*Public improvement went hand and hand with private enterprise; our principal streets and leading thoroughfares began to assume that character of evenly-graded, well-paved, and spacious avenues which makes them the admiration of visitors. On Broad Street, for instance, had been set out four rows of trees, which now give it the appearance of a long and beautiful grove, through which is a rounded roadway in the center, forty-three feet wide; a carriage-way on each side, twenty feet wide; and neatly paved sidewalks-making the street an handsome avenue, one hundred and twenty feet wide.*

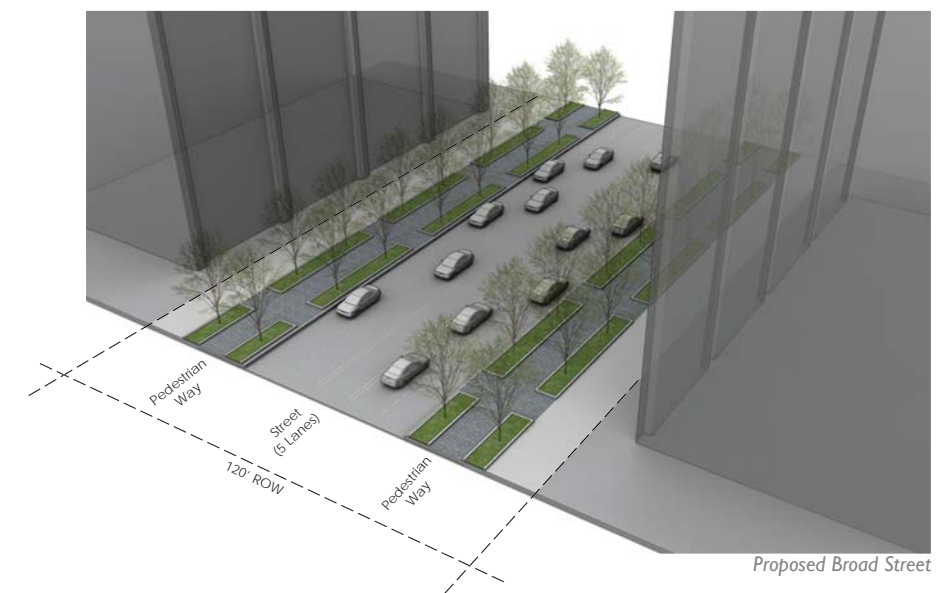
*Columbus, Ohio: Its history, resources, and progress  
Jacob Henry Studer  
1873*



Broad Street Carriage Way Circa 1910



Existing Broad Street



Proposed Broad Street

### NEXT STEPS

- The City should conduct a traffic study to provide a strategy to construct this idea without adversely impacting the larger road network. The study should take into account the loss of the Broad/I-71 interchange and the development implications of this Plan.
- The City and CDDC should explore funding options for constructing and maintaining these improvements, including benefit districts, tax increment financing, federal sources and corporate sponsorship.

IT IS TIME TO PUT BROAD STREET ON A “ROAD DIET”





Existing Broad Street



Proposed Broad Street



# 12 IDEAS

## 05. RESTORE HIGH STREET

High Street has always been a primary commercial corridor of Downtown Columbus, and the City as a whole. High Street is the hub of government, commercial and entertainment activity, however it faces numerous challenges. Despite recent reinvestment and redevelopment, High Street has tens of thousands of square feet of vacant storefronts and is pock-marked with surface parking lots. The bus transit mall that occupies High Street increases bus congestion, blocks storefronts and prevents on-street parking. The streetscape is aging and new street trees and street furnishings are badly needed.

The concept for restoring High Street as downtown's commercial corridor builds on the City's Mile On High incentive program by proposing an improved corridor that offers on-street parking and a revitalized streetscape, while still accommodating transit and traffic demands. This also includes new streetlights and mast arms, street trees, sidewalk paving, and revamped intersection treatments. These changes will enable ground floor retail storefronts to be more successful, attract infill development and bring more people to High Street.

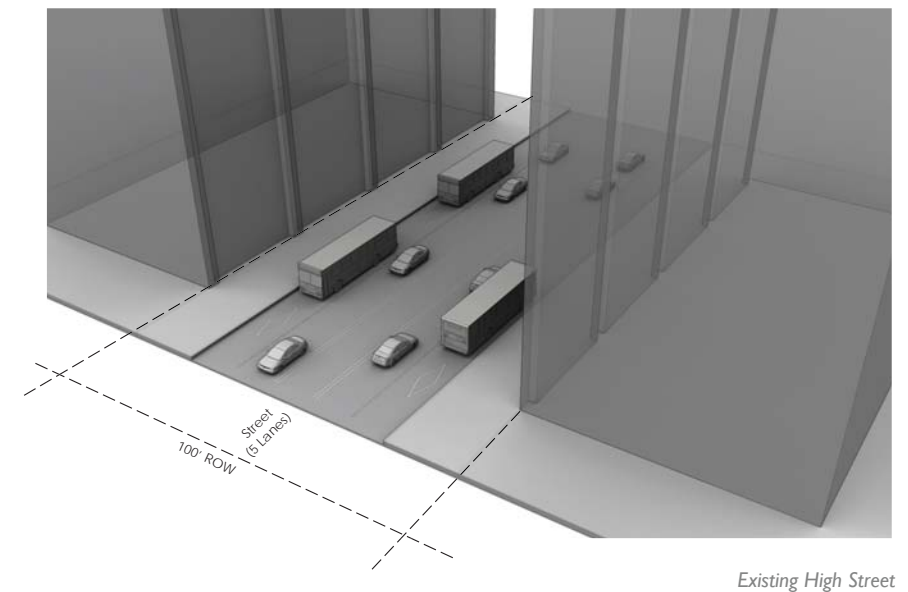


Historic High Street Circa 1910

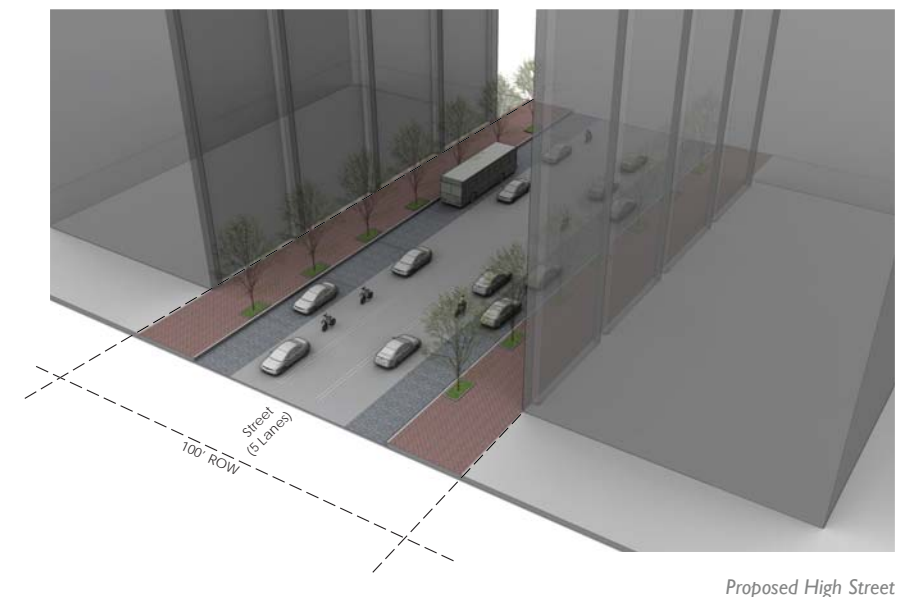
### NEXT STEPS

- The Downtown District should be revised by the City to better direct high density development to the Mile on High (as well as reflect the density recommendations of this Plan).
- The City, Capital Crossroads SID and CDDC should continue to promote retail incentives to attract new investment to the core.
- The City, along with the CDDC and Capital Crossroads SID and other stakeholders, should undertake a streetscape study of the Mile on High to recommend enhancements to the streetscape consistent with recent investments on Gay and Front Streets. This should include the addition of on-street parking and the reduction of bus congestion along High Street.

**THESE CHANGES WILL ENABLE RETAIL STOREFRONTS TO BE MORE SUCCESSFUL, ATTRACT INFILL DEVELOPMENT AND BRING MORE PEOPLE TO HIGH STREET**



Existing High Street



Proposed High Street





Existing High Street



Proposed High Street



# 12 IDEAS

## 06. DEVELOP A DOWNTOWN TRANSIT CENTER TO REPLACE THE HIGH STREET TRANSIT MALL

In the past few years, dozens of U.S. cities have opened new, state-of-the-art bus transit centers to better serve riders. From Charlotte, North Carolina to Nashville, Tennessee, these new transit centers have been developed to improve the level of service by providing a secure, efficient and attractive environment for transit customers. These cities decided to move replace existing transit malls with new transit centers to reduce bus congestion on downtown streets, simplify routes and stops, and give passengers a defined location for transfers. Far more than just indoor waiting areas, these new successful transit centers offer ticket and bus pass services, retail and office space, and community meeting rooms. Many of these new downtown transit centers make strong architectural statements, directly contributing to the positive image of both downtown and the transit authority.

Today, COTA uses High Street and Broad Street as its primary downtown transit spines. Forty-six bus lines serve Downtown Columbus and dozens of buses converge on the corner of Broad and High streets and at the facility in the City Center garage. While the garage location offers weather protection, the transfer point at the corner of Broad and High streets offers little to no cover to bus riders. This problem could be solved with a dedicated facility that provides riders with a much improved transit experience. This site needs to be located within the core of downtown, providing both bus access and proximity to employment centers for riders. For those transferring buses in downtown and heading elsewhere, this facility would provide a more efficient, pleasant transit experience and protection from inclement weather.

This new downtown transit center could have numerous positive spin-off effects. Reducing the bus congestion on High Street will allow for the proposed streetscape improvements and the return of on-street parking. To more efficiently serve the downtown area, cities such as Nashville have also instituted free, aggressively marketed and branded downtown circulator buses. With the advent of a transit center, there is an opportunity to revive COTA's "Link" service within Downtown Columbus and between its adjacent neighborhoods. There is also an opportunity to build a parking garage associated with the transit center that could both serve the center and adjacent commercial development within the core of Downtown. Designed properly, the transit center could become an icon that contributes to the image of Downtown and spurs the economic revitalization of Downtown Columbus.

### EXISTING CONDITIONS



COTA's existing transit center at the City Center parking garage is dark and uninviting. At Broad and High streets bus riders must wait outside to transfer buses.

### NEXT STEPS

- The City, CDDC and COTA should jointly undertake a locational, feasibility and financing study of the transit center. Opportunities for Federal funding should be fully explored.
- Following supportive findings and a plan, undertake design, construction and operation of the transit center.

**THE TRANSIT CENTER COULD BECOME AN ICON THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE IMAGE OF DOWNTOWN AND SPURS THE ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION OF DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS**



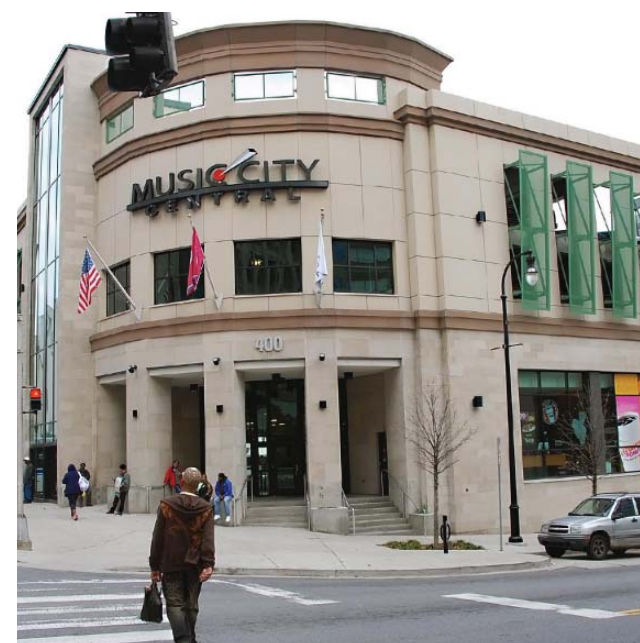
## TRANSIT CENTERS



**CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA – Downtown Transit Station**  
 Opened: 2007  
 Sq. Ft.: 11,200  
 Serves: City buses, UVA trolley, bike station, adjacent to Amtrak station



**CHARLOTTE, NC – Charlotte Transportation Center**  
 Opened: 1995  
 Serves: City/regional buses, adjacent to Lynx Light Rail  
 Other: Retail, office



**NASHVILLE, TN – Music City Central**  
 Opened: 2008  
 Sq. Ft.: 428,000  
 Serves: City/regional buses  
 Other: 432-car garage, retail, office



## DOWNTOWN CIRCULATORS



Nashville



Washington, DC



**DURHAM, NC – Durham Station**  
 Opened: 2010  
 Sq. Ft.: 10,000  
 Serves: City buses, Greyhound, bike lockers, adjacent to Amtrak Station



# 12 IDEAS

## 07. 3-C MULTI-MODAL STATION

Now is the time to begin planning for a permanent and iconic Multi-Modal Station that takes full advantage of its location in Downtown Columbus to be a hub for not only transportation, but also activity. Located in the midst of the Greater Columbus Convention Center, the multi-modal station would be a draw for conventioners from around the state and daily commuter traffic would help to stimulate not only street level activity, but also enliven the existing retail that is part of the Ohio Center.

Planned properly, a Multi-Modal Station would provide Columbus with access to not only national and regional rail systems, but it could also act as the hub for commuter rail. With the implementation of the 3-C corridor, the community conversation about light rail and streetcars should be revived. This location would be highly utilized by commuters, visitors, OSU students and downtown residents. Improving local, regional and national connectivity, and embracing alternative transportation will be essential to the future success of both downtown and the region.

### MULTIPLE RAIL MODES



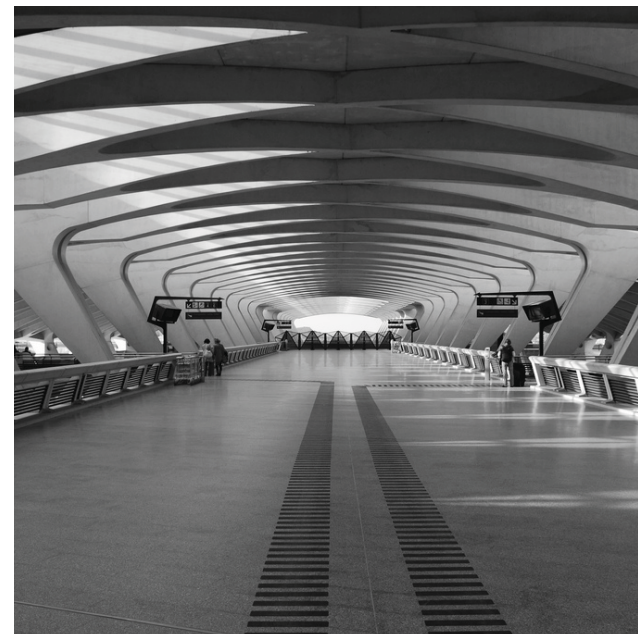
High Speed Regional Rail



Light Rail



Streetcars



Station Platforms

## IMPROVING LOCAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL RAIL CONNECTIVITY IS ESSENTIAL TO THE FUTURE OF DOWNTOWN AND THE REGION AS A WHOLE

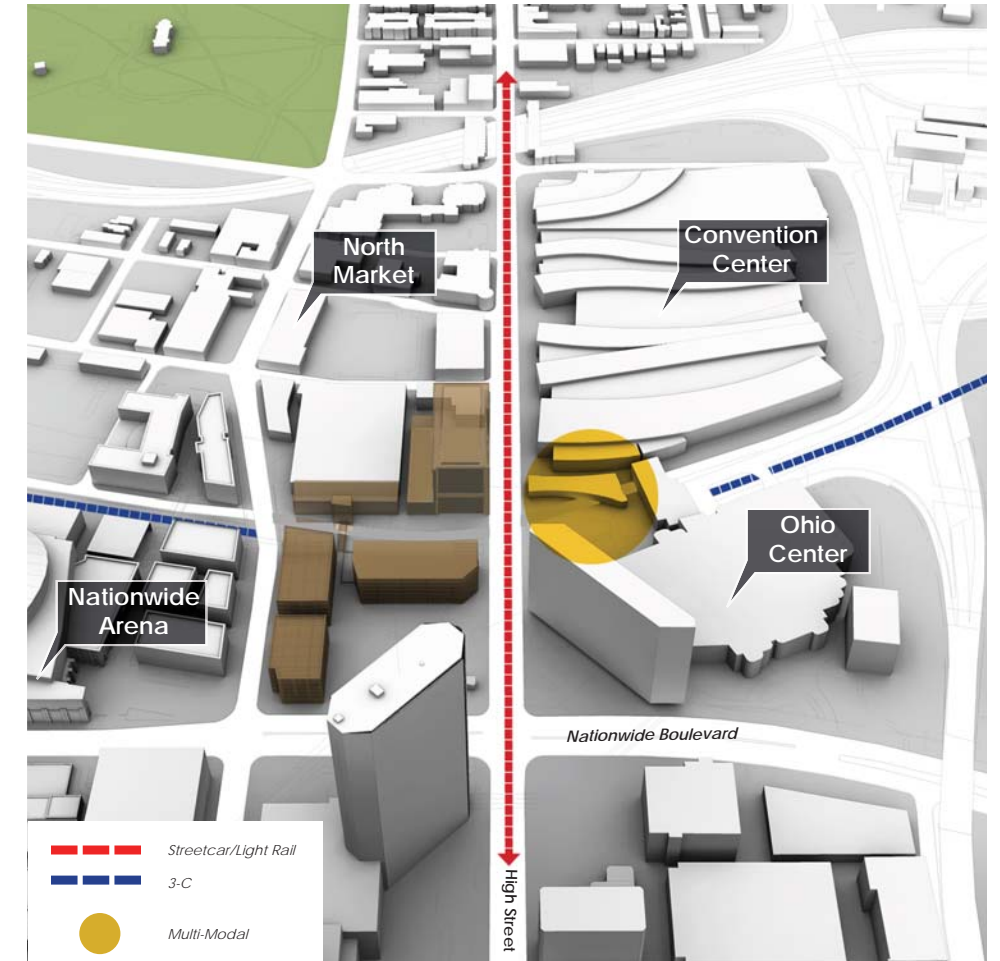
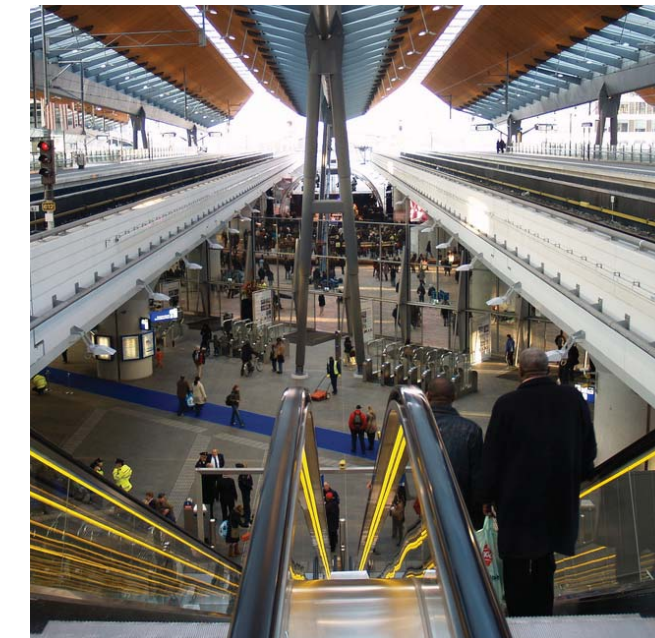


Figure 25 - Proposed Multi Modal Station



### NEXT STEPS

- The City should continue to work with ODOT and the FCCFA in the implementation of the 3-C rail station at the Convention Center to serve initial service.
- Once service is established and when it is proposed for expansion, the City should work with ODOT and the FCCFA to explore a larger, iconic rail station. Plans should accommodate future light rail and streetcar service through and/or adjacent to this facility.
- COTA should work with ODOT to ensure supporting bus service is timed and routed to support the rail schedule. FCCFA should work with taxi service providers as well.



## A BIKE STATION WOULD FURTHER ENCOURAGE AND PROMOTE CYCLING AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO AUTOMOBILE TRANSPORTATION FOR BOTH RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

### 08. DEVELOP A DOWNTOWN BIKE STATION

Numerous bike infrastructure investments are currently planned to take place Downtown. The City is working to implement its Bicentennial Bikeways Plan by installing sharrow markings on High Street and constructing new bike lanes. The Capital Crossroads Special Improvement District recently was awarded federal funding to build end-of-ride facilities such as bike shelters, garage parking and bike lockers. As recommended in the City's Bicentennial Bike Plan, the next step is a Bike Station that combines storage facilities, lockers and showers for commuters, in addition to bike rentals and repairs. Bike stations could be built as stand-alone structures or be co-located with other transit facilities. Cities from Chicago to Washington, DC have built these facilities as a way to further encourage and promote cycling as an alternative to automobile transportation for both residents and visitors.

#### BIKE STATIONS

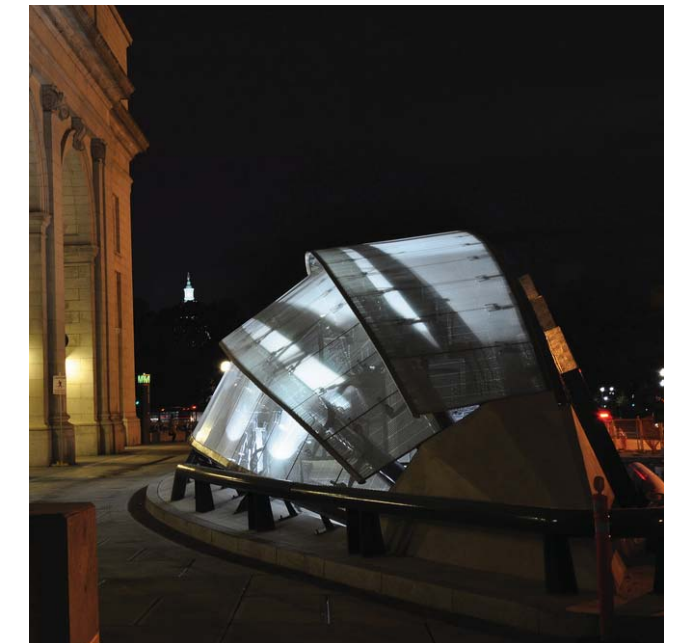


#### NEXT STEPS

- The City and the Capital Crossroads SID should undertake a feasibility and financing study to determine the best location and funding for construction and operation.
- Following supportive findings and a plan, undertake design, construction and operation.



Chicago's McDonald's Cycle Center features secure bike parking, showers and lockers, and bike rental and repair services.



Bikestation Washington, DC features secure bike parking, changing rooms and lockers, bike rental, repair and retail services.



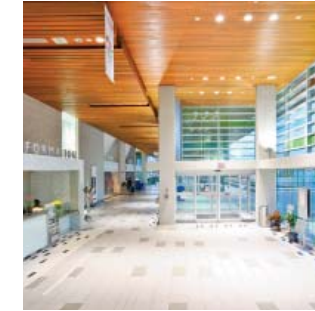
# 12 IDEAS

## 09. DEVELOP A DOWNTOWN FIELD HOUSE

The Greater Columbus Convention Center (GCCC) has had great success in recent years attracting sports events to Columbus. The GCCC hosted 34 sports events in 2009, leading to 53,500 hotel rooms being booked and \$104.6 million in economic impact. Even in a down economy, the GCCC will grow this segment of its business in 2010 with 42 events scheduled to take place.

The new Downtown Field House, located on the Convention Facilities Authority's parking lot east of the Ohio Center, would allow the GCCC to expand its sports event capacity and boost the downtown and local economy. A dedicated facility, designed especially for sports activities and events, would be a significant upgrade over current facilities that were designed for trade shows and other business events. With the sports events moved to a new facility, space would free up in the Convention Center to add to its convention business. In addition to sports events, this facility could also have gym space for downtown residents and office workers—providing a needed downtown amenity, as well as provide opportunity for programming by other downtown institutions and colleges.

### INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES



### NEXT STEPS

- FCCFA and the Greater Columbus Sports Commission should undertake a feasibility and financing study to fully understand the capital and operating needs of the field house.
- Following supportive findings and a plan, FCCFA should undertake a design study and financing plan to construct the facility. Corporate sponsorship could be helpful in financing the facility.



**THE GCCC WILL GROW THIS SEGMENT OF ITS BUSINESS IN 2010 WITH 42 EVENTS SCHEDULED**





Figure 26 - Existing Area between 3rd and 4th streets

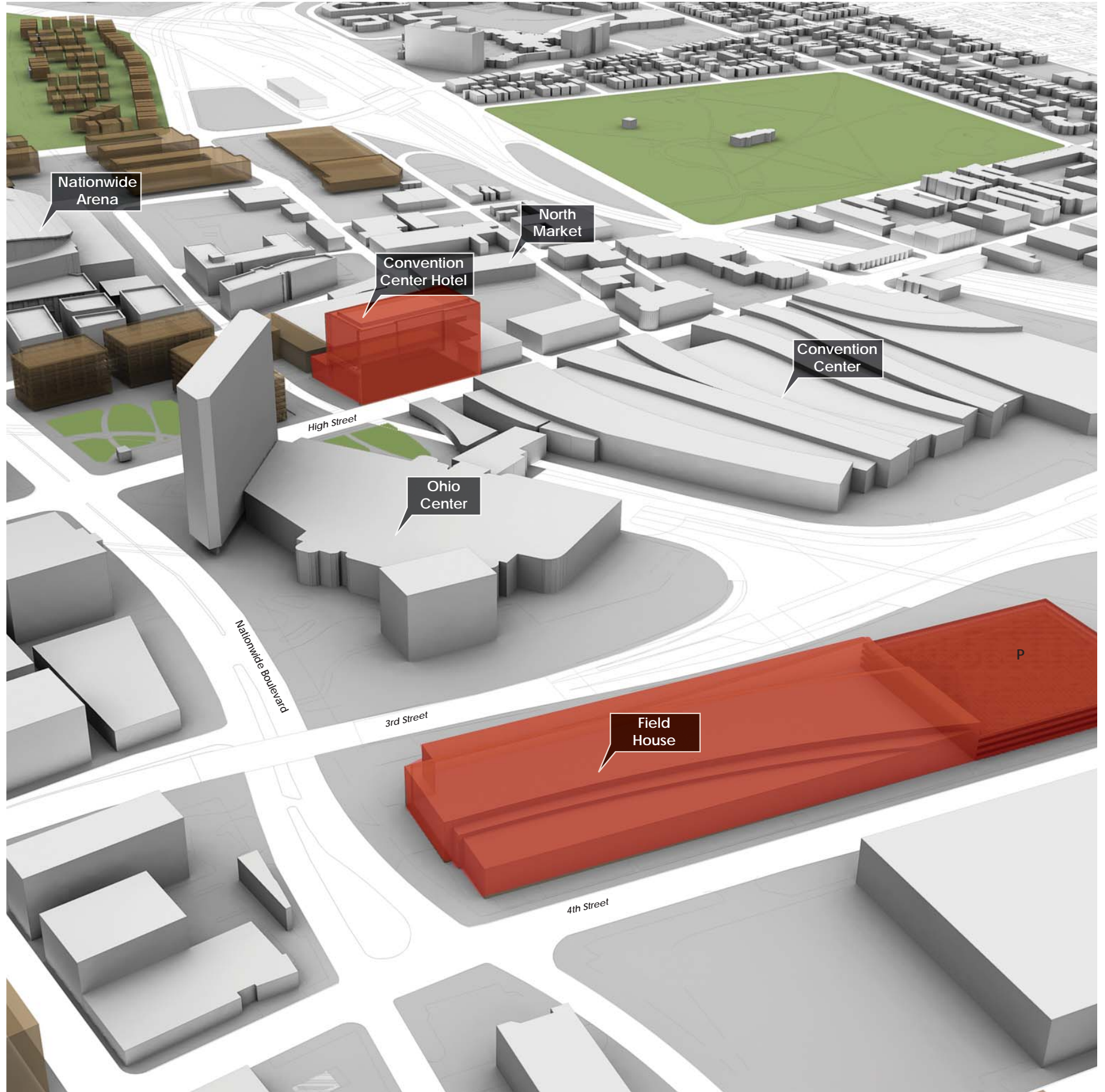


Figure 27 - Proposed Field House



# 12 IDEAS

## RIVERFRONT

### Introduction

Columbus' riverfront has been the subject of many plans over the last 100 years. The most prominent was the 1908 Plan that conceived of a civic center that extended from the State House across the Scioto River. This civic complex was never built, largely due to financial constraints and the devastating flood of 1913. While the 1908 Plan was never realized, the idea of a set of civic buildings along the riverfront came to fruition in the 1920s. This resulted in several buildings over the years including Central High School, Veterans Memorial Hall, City Hall, the U.S. Courthouse and the State Office Buildings. Instead of the east-west alignment of the civic mall envisioned in the 1908 Plan, the riverfront has developed in a north-south orientation that frames both sides of the Scioto River.

More recently, plans have focused on the Scioto Peninsula, which has been branded as the City's "Cultural Peninsula." This vision resulted in the new Center of Science and Industry (COSI) museum along with a new system of parks and trails. Connectivity across the Scioto River is also being addressed with the new Main Street and Rich Street bridges, but the Scioto Peninsula is far from complete.

### Substantial Opportunity

There are approximately 31 acres of City-owned ground on the Scioto Peninsula that are vacant or taken up by surface parking lots. Another approximately 15.5 acres is occupied by Veterans Memorial, which is owned by Franklin County. While many argue that the focus for redevelopment within downtown should be in the downtown core, having this amount of urban acreage already assembled and in public hands is a unique opportunity. Developing the Scioto Peninsula could also encourage the revitalization of the adjacent Franklinton neighborhood that has suffered from disinvestment.

On the eastern side of the river, the Scioto Mile project is under construction. This linear park system will connect North Bank Park on the north with the Whittier Peninsula on the south. This series of new parks, plazas, open spaces and bikeways has the potential re-energize the riverfront.

The concepts for the Riverfront build upon the new park projects by proposing a new mixed-use sustainable neighborhood, additional cultural institutions and civic open space, new connections, and a completely re-imagined river corridor.

**THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 31 ACRES OF CITY-OWNED GROUND ON THE SCIOTO PENINSULA THAT ARE VACANT OR TAKEN UP BY SURFACE PARKING LOTS.**



THE PROPOSED CIVIC CENTER

The 1908 Plan envisioned an east-west civic center that terminated on the Scioto Peninsula



Figure 28 - Riverfront Planning Area

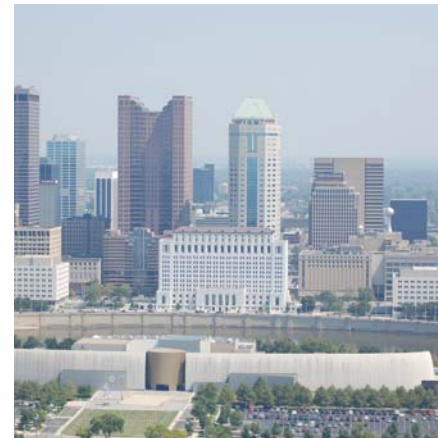


**CURRENT CHALLENGES**

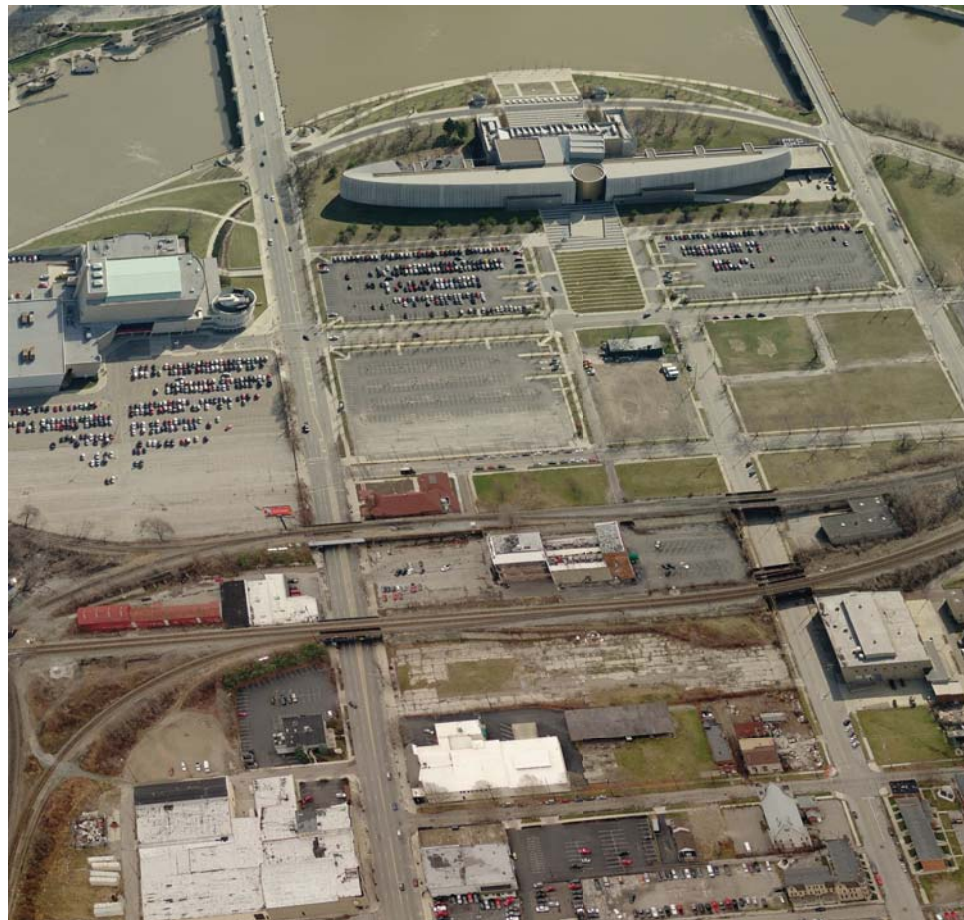


There are more than 30 acres of City-owned land on the Scioto Peninsula, much of it vacant.

**CURRENT ASSETS**



Nationwide Arena and COSI are strong anchors along the riverfront.



This large amount of contiguous development ground in downtown is a unique opportunity.

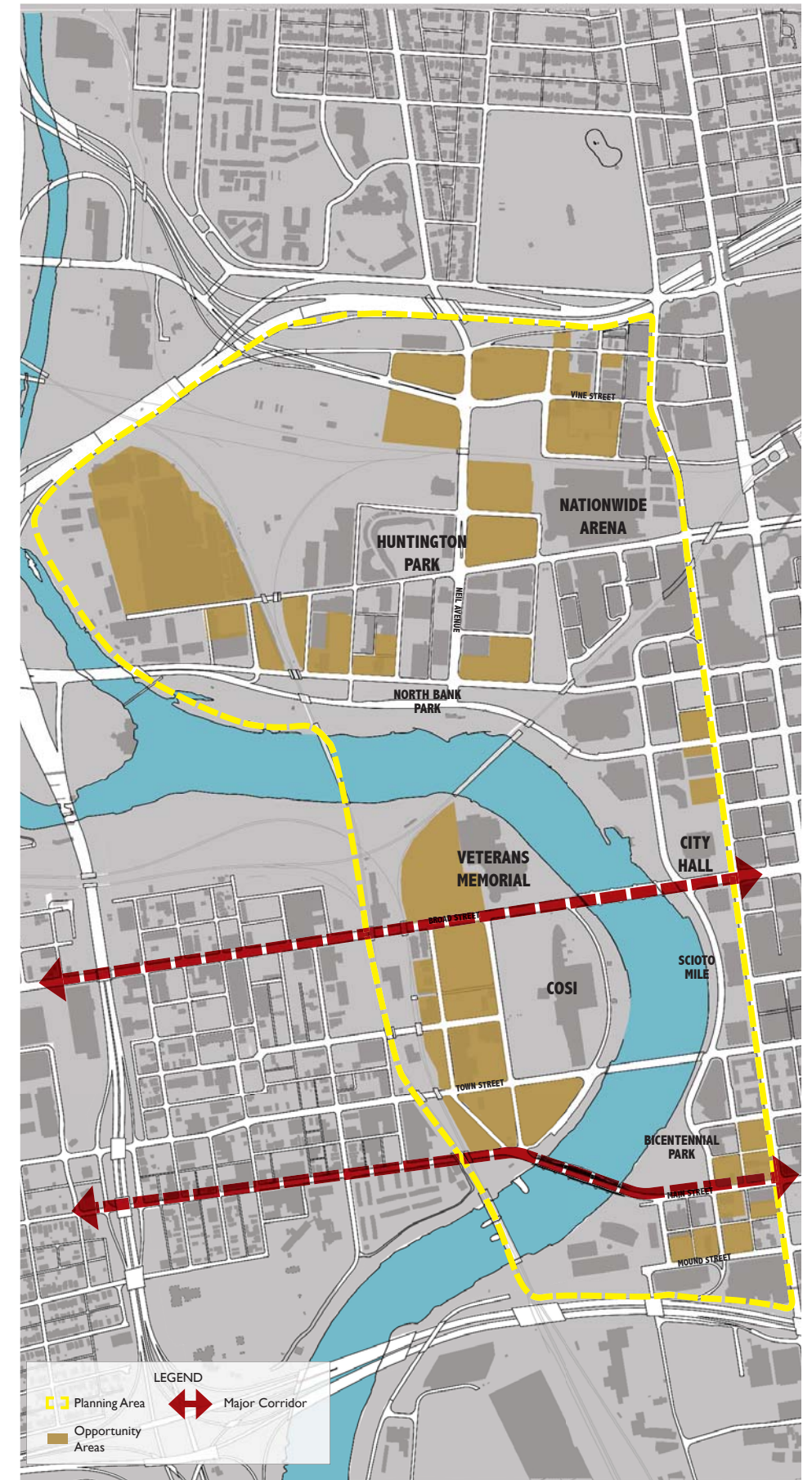


Figure 29 - Riverfront Opportunity Areas

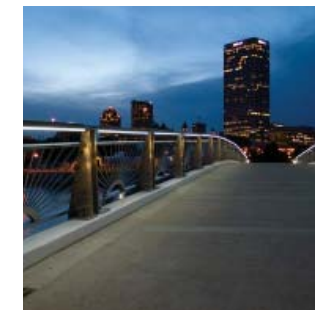


# 12 IDEAS

## 10. PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE CONNECTING ARENA DISTRICT TO SCIOTO PENINSULA

Activity centers are often times not well-linked throughout Downtown Columbus. Such is the case with the Arena District and COSI. To better link these two important attractions in downtown, a pedestrian bridge could be built across the Scioto River that connects North Bank Park on the east side of the river and Veterans Memorial/COSI on the west side of the river. While the exact location still needs to be determined, this bridge would allow for pedestrians and bicyclists to easily and quickly access activity centers on both sides of the river. This bridge also provides an opportunity to enhance downtown's skyline by creating a unique, iconic structure.

### ICONIC BRIDGE EXAMPLES



### NEXT STEPS

- As the City undertakes the design of the pedestrian bridge, the process and final product should result in a structure that is of international caliber, celebrating the riverfront and engaging pedestrians and cyclists. The capital and operational costs should be a consideration.
- Capital funding to construct the bridge would then be identified, including the potential of corporate sponsorship and federal grants.
- Once funds are secured, construction should be undertaken.

**THE PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENHANCE DOWNTOWN'S SKYLINE BY CREATING A UNIQUE, ICONIC STRUCTURE**





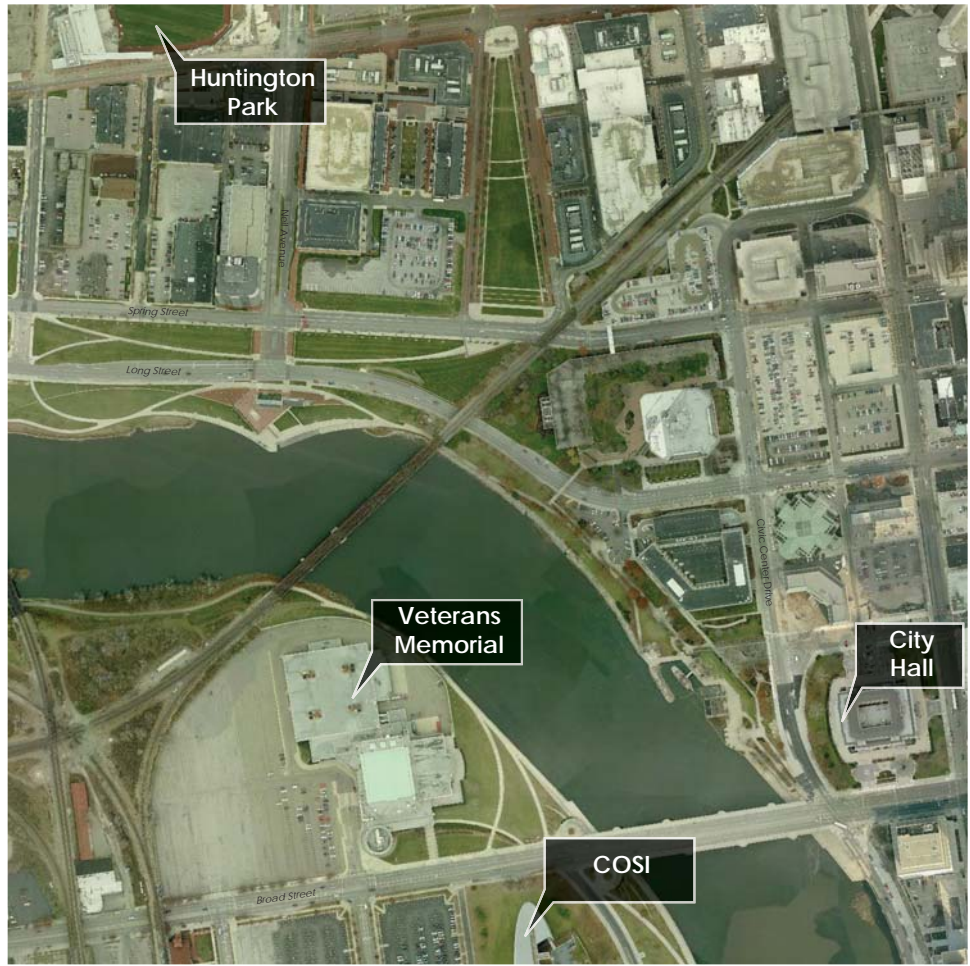


Figure 30 - Existing Area between the Arena District and COSI

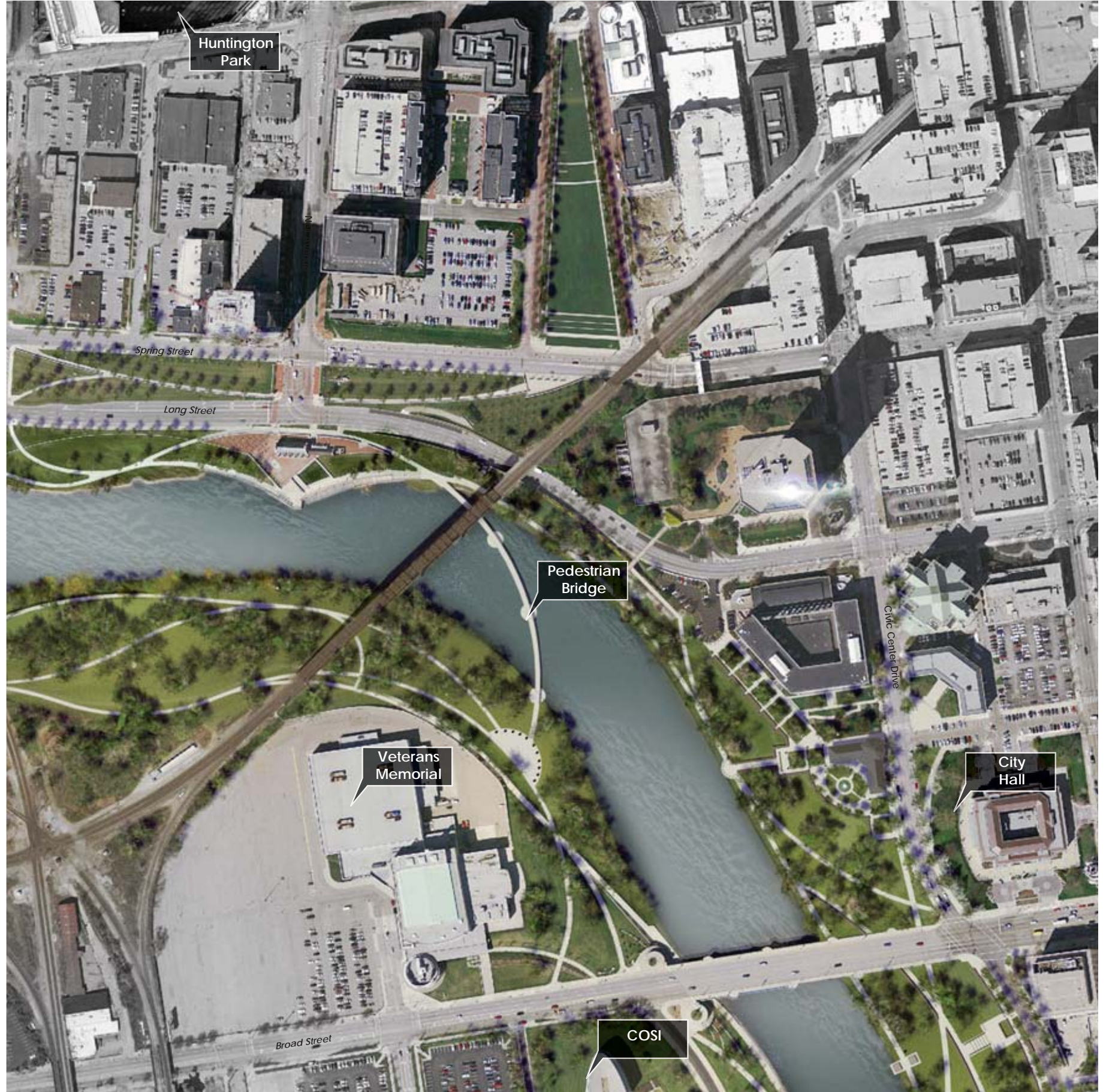


Figure 31 - Proposed Pedestrian Bridge



# 12 IDEAS

## 11. CONTINUE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCIOTO PENINSULA

### Introduction

The Scioto Peninsula represents an opportunity because nearly all of the land is owned by the City of Columbus. The approximately 31-acre contiguous development site has outstanding views of Downtown and access to cultural and civic amenities. While COSI and the riverfront are strong anchors for the Scioto Peninsula, more can be done to maximize their potential. The following are components of the Scioto Peninsula conceptual plan.

### COSI

Turning COSI inside out by creating a new science and nature park on the riverfront side of the museum will provide a new front door for the museum and activate the riverfront. These improvements should also include a ground level and publicly accessible outdoor café that takes advantage of the outstanding views of the downtown skyline, while also introducing the museum to an expanded audience.

### Cultural Promenade/Museum Center

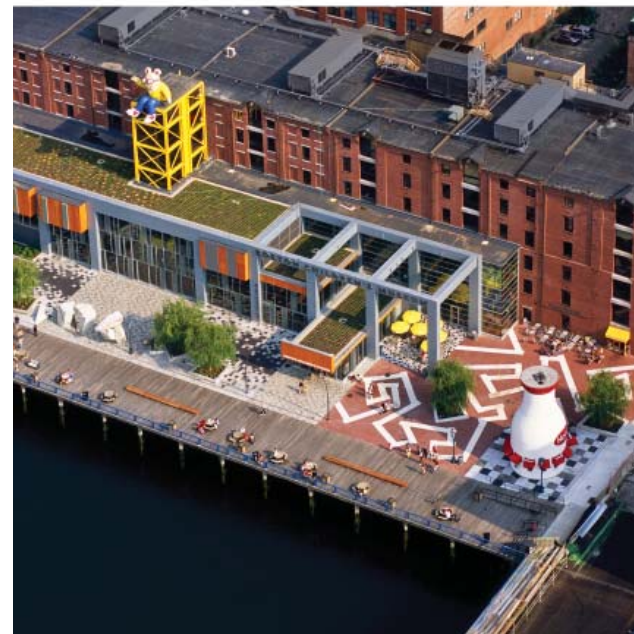
A new cultural promenade could provide a showcase for public art in downtown, establish new public green spaces, and create a new edge along the Scioto River. The proposed Pedestrian Bridge would provide access from the promenade to North Bank Park and would serve as part of the Scioto River bikeway.

Further, directly west of COSI, there is ample land available for other smaller museum structures. These could be performance art spaces, art gardens or local history museums. If this land is redeveloped, current parking would be placed underground to replace the surface parking lots. This consolidates the original Cultural Peninsula idea into a more manageable project, while still providing a multi-faceted Museum Center that would build off the success of COSI.

KIDS' PARK



CULTURAL PROMENADE





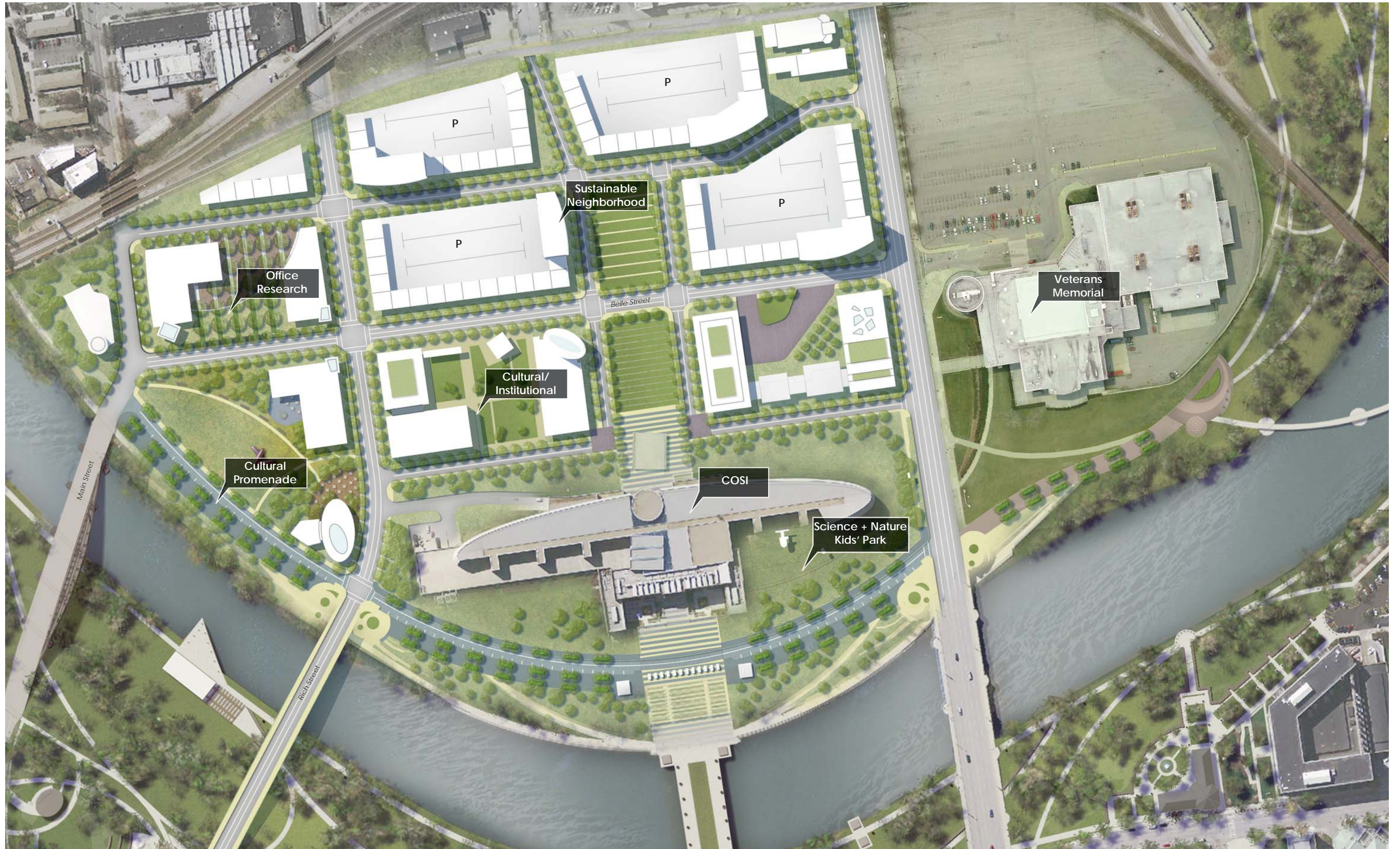


Figure 32 - Proposed Scioto Peninsula



# 12 IDEAS

## 11. CONTINUE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCIOTO PENINSULA - CONTINUED

### Mixed-Use Sustainable Neighborhood

The largely vacant ground between COSI and the railroad tracks is ideal for new cultural, residential and office/research development that takes advantage of the impressive views of the downtown skyline, while stepping down on the west side to protect the neighborhood scale of Franklinton. Parking would be provided in garages internal to development blocks that could service demand for both residential and office uses, and overflow parking from the High Street Core. This new mixed-use neighborhood of townhomes and residential towers could showcase the latest in sustainable technology including energy efficiency, green roofs, green stormwater infrastructure and solar power – an “off the grid” Midwest model.

When taken together with the Main Street and Rich Street bridges, a revitalized Scioto Peninsula could become a new gateway to Downtown and help to catalyze redevelopment in Franklinton.



### MIXED-USE SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBORHOOD



### NEXT STEPS

#### COSI

- COSI should undertake design and financing studies to implement this recommendation, including corporate sponsorship opportunities.
- Improvements should be prioritized based on funding availability with at least one major improvement undertaken by 2012.

#### Cultural Promenade

- Construction of the promenade should be programmed into the City's capital improvement plan and budget, with the initial phase completed by 2012.
- A public art master plan for the Scioto River should be undertaken in 2011 with the goal that the first piece of permanent artwork be constructed on the Promenade in 2012.

#### Mixed-Use Sustainable Neighborhood

- The CDDC should undertake a real estate market, conceptual design, infrastructure and financing study to fully explore this recommendation of a mixed-use neighborhood that includes cultural institutions, office and research, and residential uses.
- Based upon its findings, the CDDC should undertake the first phase of this project.





**A REVITALIZED SCIOTO PENINSULA COULD BECOME A NEW GATEWAY TO DOWNTOWN AND HELP TO CATALYZE REDEVELOPMENT IN FRANKLINTON**

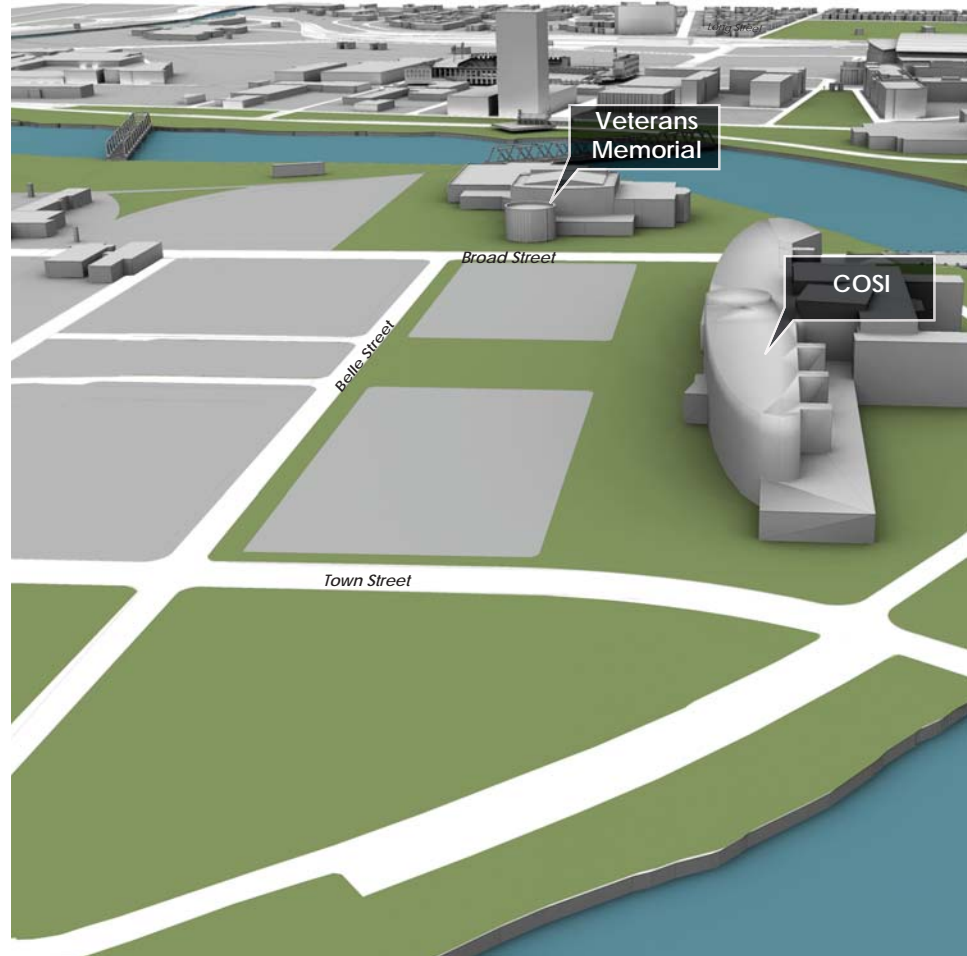


Figure 33 - Existing Scioto Peninsula



Figure 34 - Proposed Scioto Peninsula

**OFFICE + RESEARCH**





# 12 IDEAS

## 12. SCIOTO-OLENTANGY GREENWAY CORRIDOR

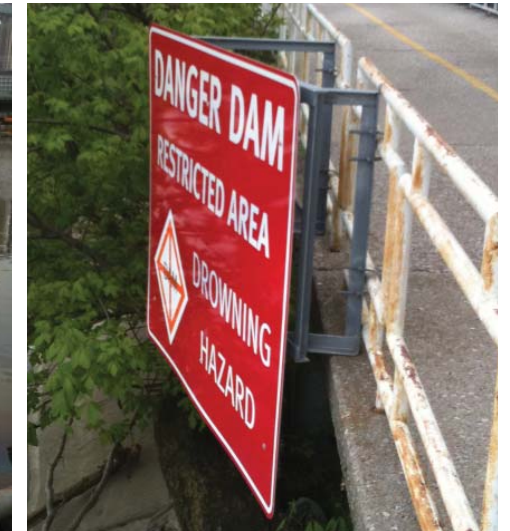
### Introduction

Cities around the world are rediscovering riverfronts as unique natural amenities that add vibrancy and life to the urban environment. With the creation of three new riverfront parks, the City of Columbus is already at the forefront of this return to the river. Starting at North Bank Park, along the Scioto Mile that is currently under construction, and ending at the recently-opened Grange Insurance Audubon Center, the Scioto River now has three world-class park destinations within downtown.

While we have been successful in building beautiful new parks that are distinctive urban amenities, we have not yet taken the steps necessary to actually clean our rivers, repair environmental damage, or make them usable for recreation. The first step in restoring the river's health is already underway. The City's \$2.5 billion Wet Weather Management Program will reduce the potential for Combined Sewer Overflows that impact the Scioto and Olentangy Rivers. With this process underway, the next logical step in restoring the river ecosystem is to return both rivers to their natural watercourses. This can be accomplished by removing the low-head dams that unnaturally widen both the Scioto and Olentangy Rivers, impede river flow, inhibit river habitat and create safety hazards. Cleaning the rivers and removing low-head dams would restore the natural river course, reintroduce river habitat as a tranquil amenity, and create more green space and recreational opportunities.

### Main Street Dam Removal

The Scioto-Olentangy Greenway Corridor begins with the removal of the Main Street dam. Currently the Main Street dam creates a lake condition downtown and is designated as a Modified Warm Water Habitat by the Ohio EPA due to the lower expectations for aquatic habitat and biological success in this area. The Scioto River can attain a higher aquatic habitat use if the physical impairments are addressed. This dam carries no utilities and offers no flood control protection. By removing the Main Street dam, the river width would drop from 600 feet today to a new width of between 200 to 300 feet. This could allow for the creation of approximately 45 acres of green space in Downtown Columbus. Surrounding this revitalized river and additional green space is nearly 100 acres of vacant and underutilized land that is primed for redevelopment.



The Main Street dam creates an unnaturally-wide, lake-like condition in downtown and poses a serious drowning hazard.

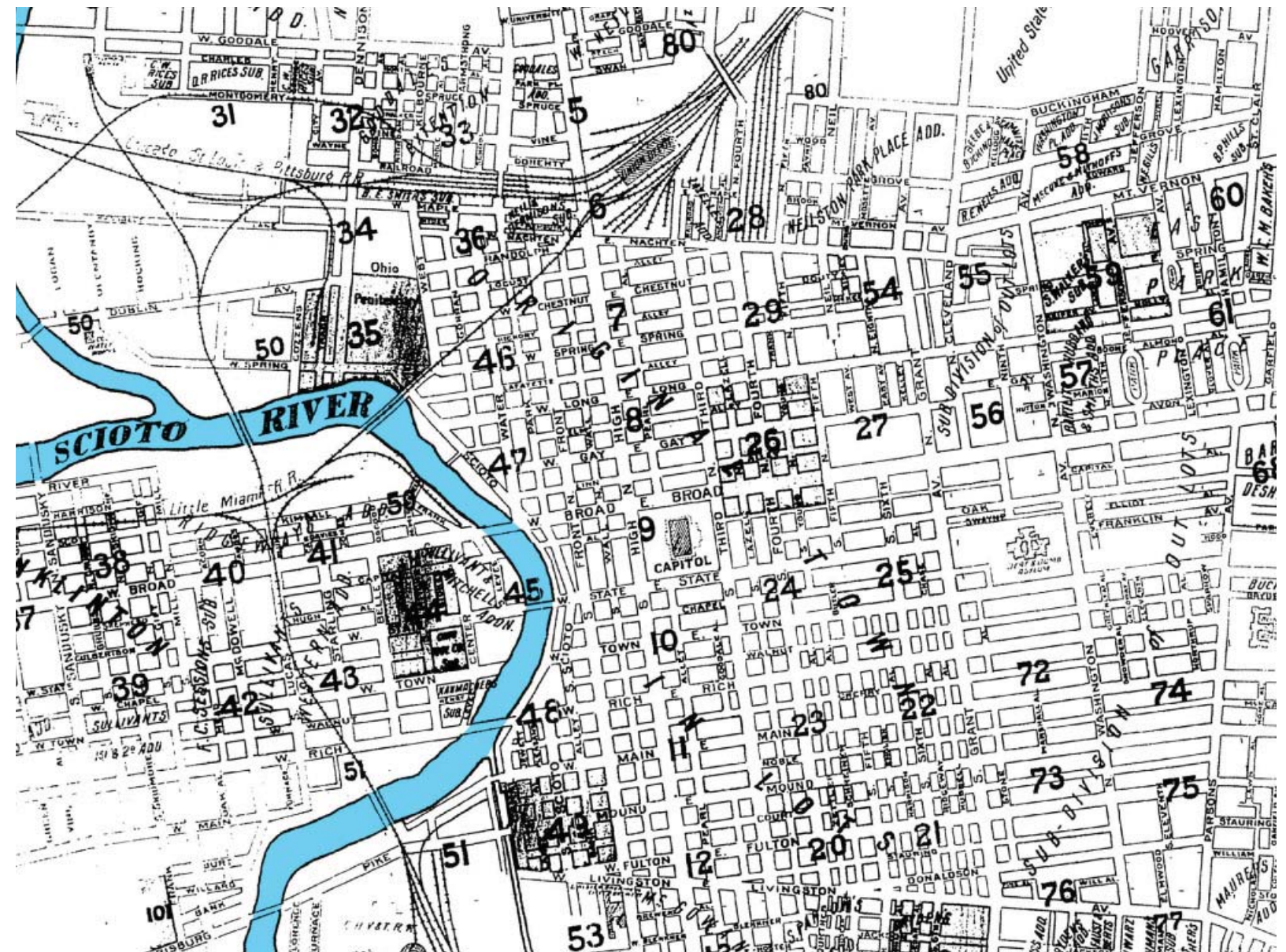


Figure 35 - Scioto River 1877 when the Scioto River was 200 to 300 feet wide. (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map)



WE HAVE NOT YET TAKEN THE STEPS NECESSARY TO CLEAN OUR RIVERS, REPAIR ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE, OR MAKE THEM USABLE FOR RECREATION.

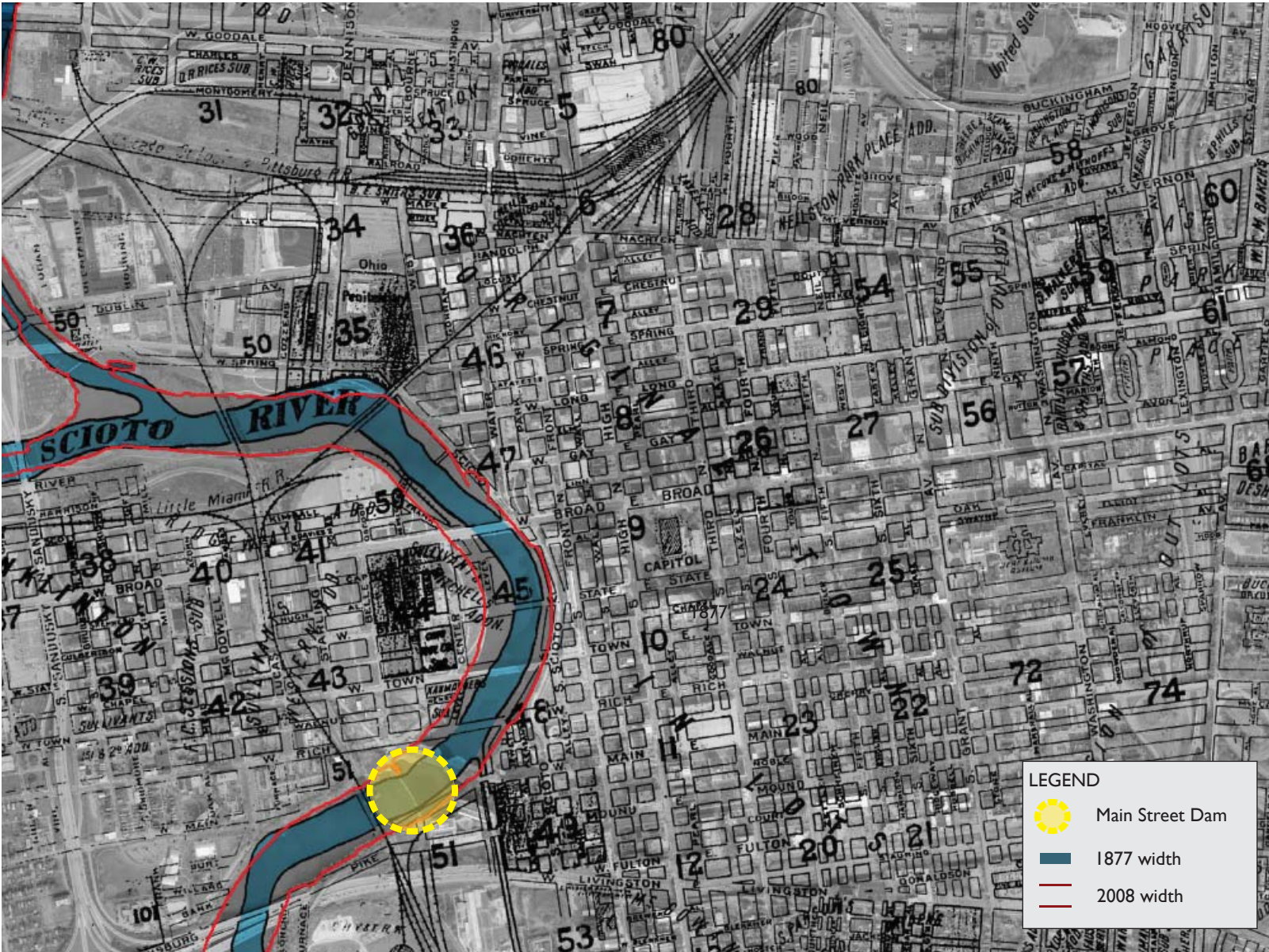


Figure 36 - Scioto River 1877 overlaid with 2008 aerial. Main Street Dam creates a 600-foot-wide river in Downtown Columbus.



Figure 37 - Proposed removal of the Main Street dam creates 45 acres of new green space Downtown and influences almost 100 acres of under developed and vacant land.



# 12 IDEAS

## 12. SCIOTO-OLENTANGY GREENWAY CORRIDOR - CONTINUED

### A New Urban Riverfront

Today, we have the opportunity to create an unparalleled green river corridor that runs through the heart of the Downtown Columbus. Building on the Scioto Mile, this new urban riverfront downtown could be expanded with 45 acres of new green space and pathways that encourage interaction at the river level. This park space could also be used to enhance the environmental sustainability of the river by treating stormwater runoff and handling flood events.

A narrower river downtown would also enhance connectivity. A new pedestrian bridge could link COSI with the Scioto Mile Promenade, shortening the distance between the downtown core and the Scioto Peninsula and creating a new downtown destination. The narrower river could also allow pedestrian bridges that link Dodge Park to the Scioto Audubon Metro Park, McFerson Commons to the Scioto Peninsula, and Franklinton to the Arena District.



Existing Scioto River Downtown



Proposed Scioto River Downtown





Figure 38 - Proposed Scioto-Olentangy Corridor, Downtown Reach



# 12 IDEAS

## 12. SCIOTO-OLENTANGY GREENWAY CORRIDOR - CONTINUED

### Strengthen the OSU to Downtown Connection

In Central Ohio, we have already successfully removed two low-head dams on Alum Creek. On the Olentangy River, plans to remove the 5th Avenue low head dam are well underway. With the 5th Avenue dam and the Main Street dam removed, a seamless, navigable linkage from OSU through downtown would be created. A narrower river channel would also create a more robust green corridor that could have enhanced pedestrian and bicycle pathways and allow access for other recreational activities such as canoeing or kayaking. This will further strengthen and expand the existing Olentangy Greenway Trail and solidify the linkage between OSU and Downtown Columbus.



Existing Olentangy River at 5th Avenue



Proposed Olentangy River at 5th Avenue





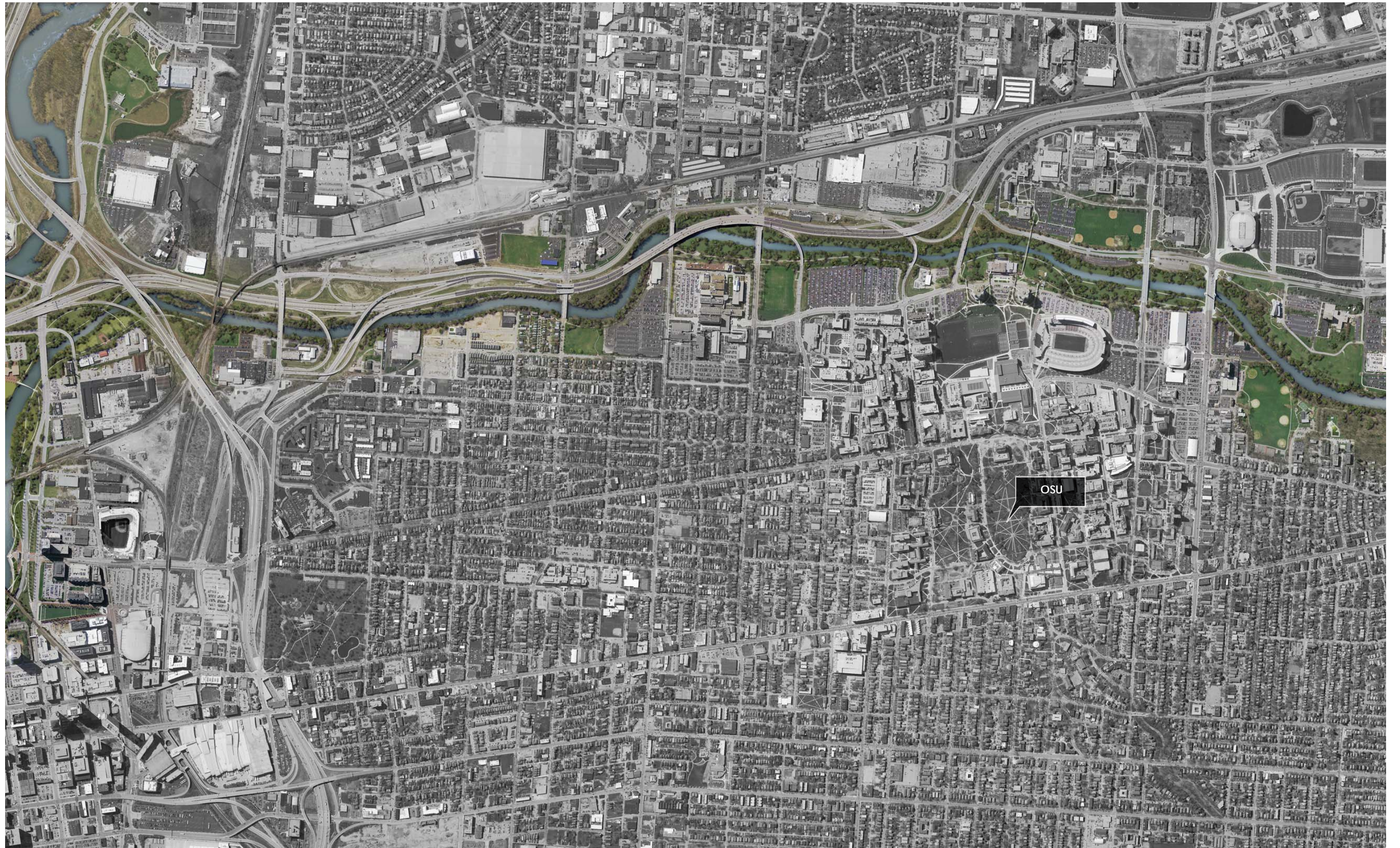


Figure 39 - Proposed Scioto-Olentangy Greenway Downtown to OSU Reach



# 12 IDEAS

## 12. SCIOTO-OLENTANGY GREENWAY CORRIDOR - CONTINUED

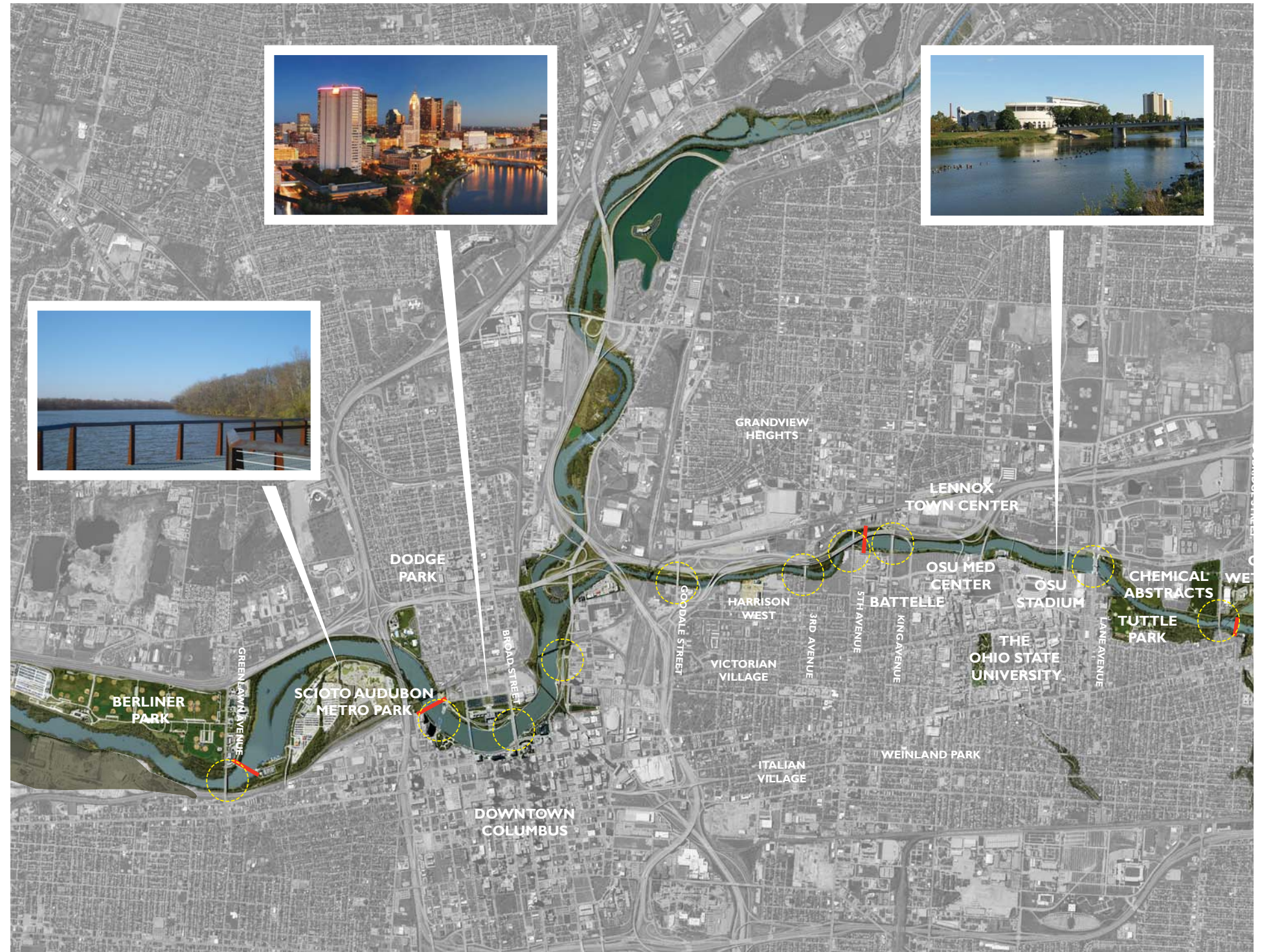
### The Highbanks to Scioto Audubon Connection

The Scioto and Olentangy River corridors touch dozens of Columbus neighborhoods and inner-ring suburbs. While the Olentangy Greenway Trail provides connectivity today, if the entire river corridor was restored to its natural condition and new parkland developed along its edges, it could become a world-class green connection through the City's core. With the City's Wet Weather Management Plan underway to reduce the potential for Combined Sewer Overflows and the planned removal of the 5th Avenue Dam, the stage is now set to link Highbanks Metro Park to the Scioto Audubon Metro Park. This unrivaled 16.5 mile green river corridor would integrate parks, neighborhoods, OSU, downtown, and cultural attractions and create a vibrant, active spine through the City. While the removal of the dams above 5th Avenue is inherently more difficult due to sewer lines and other utilities, it would build upon the 45 acres of additional green space in Downtown Columbus by creating approximately 125 acres of additional green space along the entire corridor.

If we are to truly embrace our rivers and take our environmental responsibilities seriously, we, as a community, need to do everything in our power to reverse the environmental damage that has besotted our waterways. In the context of a \$2.5 billion plan to separate storm and sanitary sewers, the potential cost of removing these low-head dams is far outweighed by the environmental and community benefits that would result. Improving the health of the river increases its value to the community, creating a more prosperous, competitive metropolis for the 21st century.

### NEXT STEPS

- CDDC and the City of Columbus should undertake an engineering feasibility study to understand the implications of demolishing the Main Street dam with a clearly delineated implementation plan
- CDDC and the City should undertake a design study to understand the potential for new park space relative to demolishing the Main Street dam, including capital and operational costs and financing
- Given the feasibility and funding considerations, implementation of this recommendation should be initiated.
- CDDC and the City should conduct a feasibility study to develop design solutions that allow for the removal of the five additional low-head dams above 5th Avenue, connecting Highbanks Metro Park and the Scioto Audubon Metro Park.
- All facets of the project should take advantage of all available Federal funding opportunities, environmental grants, corporate sponsorship, and other outside funding sources.





**THE POTENTIAL COST OF REMOVING THE LOW-HEAD DAMS IS FAR OUTWEIGHED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS**



Figure 40 - Existing Scioto-Olentangy Greenway Downtown to Highbanks Metro Park







# 2010 DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS STRATEGIC PLAN

## **8 STRATEGIES**

*To enable and encourage the **12 Ideas** presented in the previous section, there are **8 Strategies** that need to be enacted and employed. The strategies outlined in this section will provide the framework needed to guide the appropriate redevelopment of Downtown Columbus.*





# 8 STRATEGIES

## INTRODUCTION

The **12 Ideas** presented in this plan express the community's vision for the future, but individual projects alone will not be enough to guide the revitalization of Downtown Columbus. From transportation to sustainability, there must be a holistic approach to address the overarching urban issues facing downtown. While the **12 Ideas** in themselves are transformational, each of them must be supported by a broader set of strategies. As these **12 Ideas** are developed into actual projects, additional downtown development will likely take place as a result. The purpose of the following **8 Strategies** is to outline a strong framework that will shape all future development in Downtown Columbus as well as ensuring and supporting the success of the **12 Ideas**.

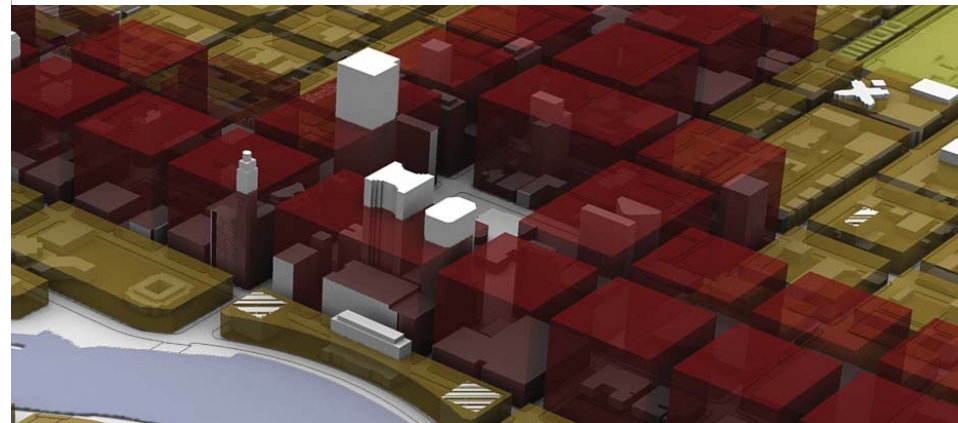
Building upon the input from the public process and the support for the **12 Ideas**, the planning team created a set of **8 Strategies** that address the following areas:

- 01 Urban Form
- 02 Transit
- 03 Parking
- 04 Parks and Green Space
- 05 Streetscape and Street Network
- 06 Sustainability
- 07 Arts and Culture
- 08 Connections

These **8 Strategies** are summarized here and then outlined in greater detail in the following pages. Each strategy area defines an objective, explains an issue and outlines a specific set of proposed action strategies. These recommendations will advance the implementation of the **12 Ideas** and enable appropriate redevelopment of Downtown Columbus.

### 01 URBAN FORM

**ESTABLISH MINIMUM DENSITY, HEIGHT AND DESIGN STANDARDS FOR DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT**



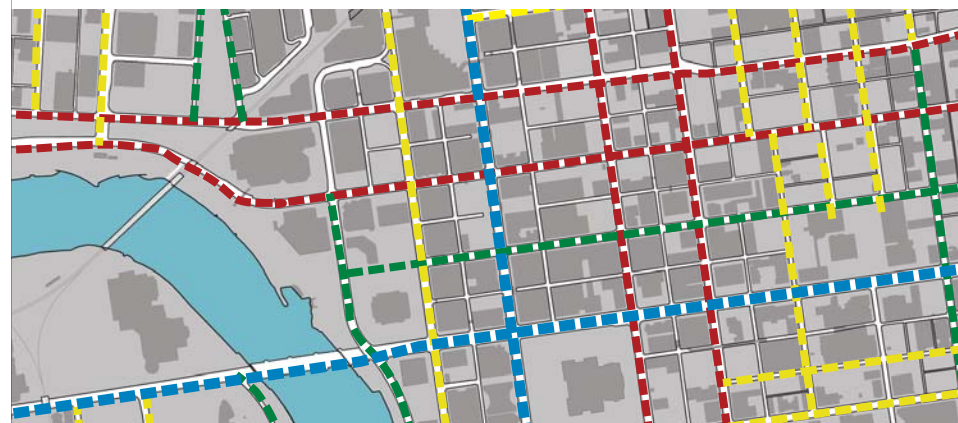
### 02 TRANSIT

**IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND EXPAND MOBILITY OPTIONS TO PROVIDE ALTERNATIVES TO AUTOMOBILE TRAVEL**



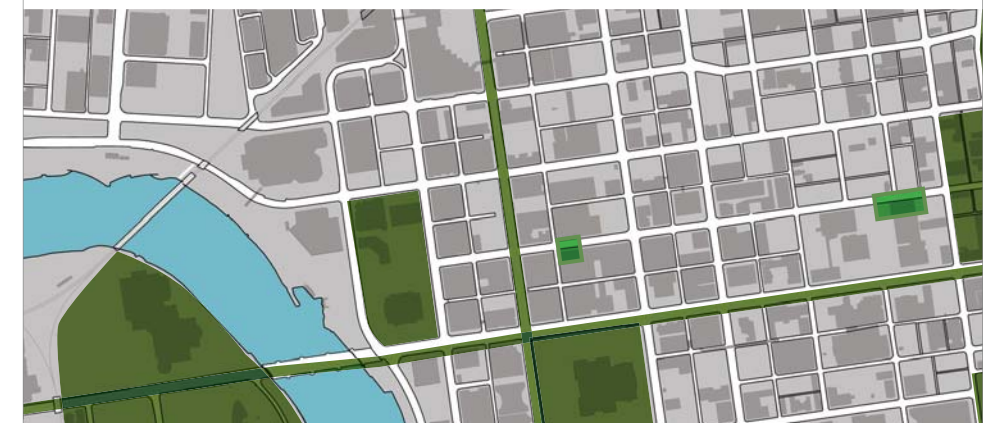
### 05 STREETScape AND STREET NETWORK

**CREATE A HIERARCHICAL STREET NETWORK THAT ENABLES AND FACILITATES MULTIPLE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION**



### 06 SUSTAINABILITY

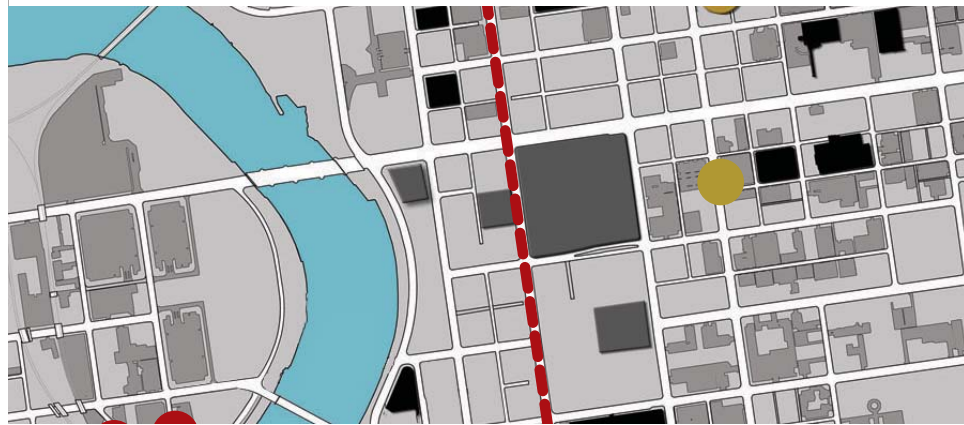
**ESTABLISH DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS AS THE GREEN CAPITAL OF THE MIDWEST BY PRIORITIZING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**





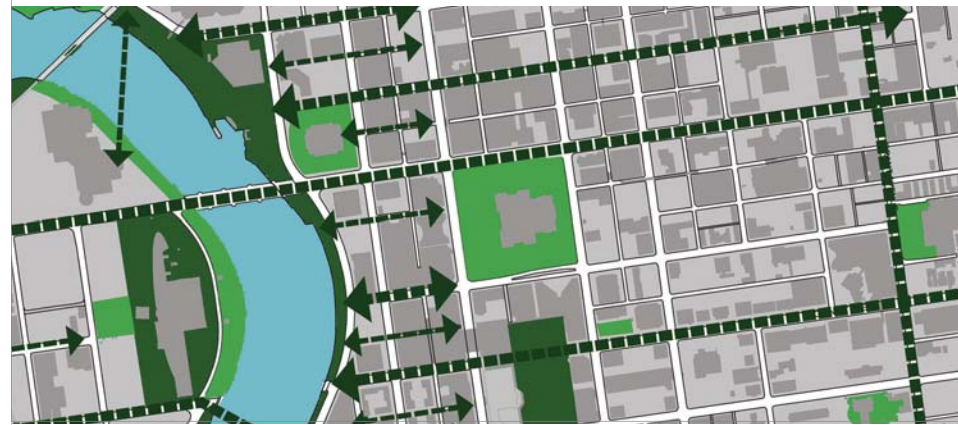
03 PARKING

DEVELOP A **MULTIFACETED PLAN** TO ENHANCE TRANSPORTATION, CONSTRUCT GARAGES, AND IMPROVE MANAGEMENT OF GARAGES AND ON-STREET PARKING



04 PARKS AND GREEN SPACE

INCREASE THE **AMOUNT AND CONNECTIVITY** OF URBAN GREEN SPACE IN DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS



07 ARTS AND CULTURE

INVEST IN ARTS AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS, VENUES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO ENSURE DOWNTOWN'S PLACE AS THE PREEMINENT **CREATIVE HUB** OF CENTRAL OHIO



08 CONNECTIONS

**CONNECT USES, DISTRICTS AND PEOPLE BOTH** THROUGHOUT DOWNTOWN AND WITH ADJACENT NEIGHBORHOODS





# 8 STRATEGIES

## 01 URBAN FORM

### Objective

Establish minimum density, height and design standards for downtown development to ensure an orderly and appropriate development pattern and concentrate neighborhood and retail nodes to achieve a vibrant and active downtown.

### Issue

Downtown population peaked in 1950 at nearly 30,000 residents. While there has been a net population gain during this decade for the first time since 1950, there is a need for density and minimum height regulations to ensure that the redevelopment of downtown parcels results in the creation of enough critical population mass to revitalize downtown. This population density is needed to achieve the retail and development goals for downtown. There are currently no density requirements in Downtown Columbus. While height is regulated, there are no minimum standards. This has resulted in lower than desired densities in many areas of downtown where one story buildings occupy sites that would be better served by greater land utilization.

While the majority of new residential construction in downtown have been built to appropriate densities, lower density housing has been constructed that does not make the best use of land or public investment dollars. Establishing density and minimum height standards will provide the framework for carrying out the community's vision for the build-out potential of 22,000 residents (see Table 8).

While reaching 22,000 residents may seem daunting, it is helpful to consider the "2% Solution." In order for downtowns to be successful, some urban experts maintain that they must have downtown residents equal to 2% of the city or regional population. Furthermore, studies have indicated that this is a minimum threshold of the untapped market for urban living in cities. For Columbus, this would mean roughly 14,000 downtown residents using today's city population, or 30,000 people using the regional population. Put in this context, and taking into account the fact that downtown used to have 30,000 downtown residents, the goal of 22,000 residents and beyond becomes a realistic one for the eventual build out of downtown.

In addition to density standards, incentives need to be put into place that help to focus redevelopment energy on concentrating new residential development in neighborhood clusters and locating it adjacent to neighborhood retail activity and employment centers. Taken together, this approach will increase the number of downtown residents, making downtown more viable and attractive.

### STRATEGIES

- Update height standards and adopt density standards to ensure the appropriate build out of downtown consistent with plan recommendations (see diagram on opposite page).
- Implement parking and transit policies in this plan that facilitate the redevelopment of surface parking lots and create a denser urban form.
- Concentrate office and government development in the Mile On High and encourage supportive retail, entertainment and service businesses.
- Facilitate concentrations of residential development to create neighborhood nodes at critical locations in the downtown, while encouraging supportive retail and services businesses.
- Continue to implement incentive packages/programs that encourage the construction of a broad range of housing types and price points.
- Continue to implement incentive packages/programs that attract office and retail development at key locations and corridors

**DENSITY AND MINIMUM HEIGHT REGULATIONS WILL PROVIDE THE NECESSARY POPULATION TO REVITALIZE DOWNTOWN**

## POTENTIAL BUILD OUT

Downtown Columbus	Existing	Additional	Total Build-Out
Commercial (sq. ft.)	21,000,000	5,900,000	<b>26,900,000</b>
Residential (units)	4,132	10,500	<b>14,632</b>
Workers	100,000	35,000	<b>135,000</b>
Residents	5,500	16,500	<b>22,000</b>

Table 8 - Downtown Build-Out

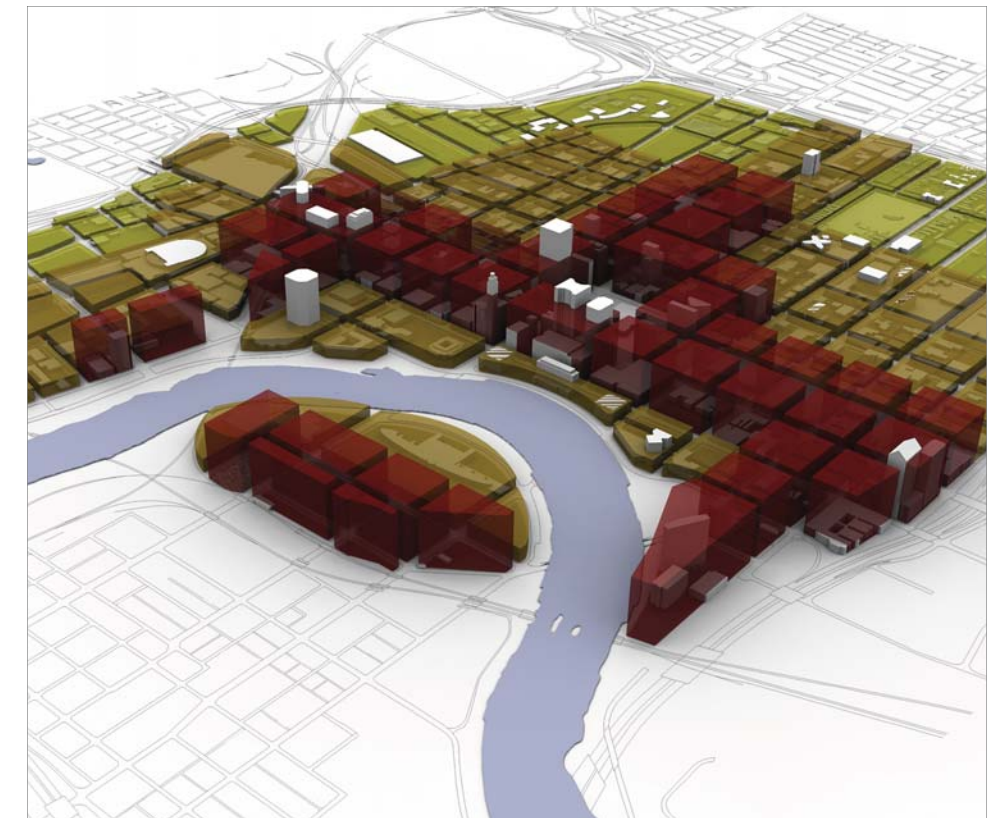


Figure 41 - Proposed Density Massing Diagram



## ESTABLISH URBAN FORM

The following proposed density diagram for Downtown Columbus sets three different minimum building height requirements for areas of downtown. The highest density is proposed along High Street and Broad Street (District A) and then mid-scale buildings built around this core area (District B). The rest of the downtown area reflects the current lower density neighborhood scale (District C). Using these densities and assumptions about office and residential uses, the planning team was able to forecast a potential build-out of Downtown Columbus (see Table 8).

### District A

- Primary urban core / downtown commercial district
- Highest densities
- 10+ stories acceptable and additional height encouraged where appropriate.
  - 8+ stories preferred for new development
  - Primary destination for downtown office workers, some arts, retail and entertainment visitors
  - Limited residential uses on Broad or High streets, unless within higher density mixed-use buildings
  - Full transit service and walkable

### District B

- Urban density zone - mixed retail, residential, entertainment, office district
- Significant densities required and strong urban character
- 5+ stories preferred for redevelopment
  - Primary destination area for downtown visitors/tourists
  - Significant residential – best location for true “urban style” living opportunities
  - Transit service in close proximity, but walkable

### District C

- Urban neighborhood/campus zone – neighborhood residential, institutional, academic, service-oriented retail and office
- Lower densities allowed with traditional urban character
- 2-5 stories preferred for redevelopment
  - Primary education/medical area downtown
  - Full transit service and walkable
  - Significant residential – transition to adjacent neighborhoods with traditional neighborhood design
  - Some transit service, but walkable



Figure 42 - Proposed Density Diagram



# 8 STRATEGIES

## 02 TRANSIT

### Objective

Improve transportation infrastructure and expand mobility options to provide alternatives to automobile travel and enable continued growth for both Downtown Columbus and the region as a whole.

### Issue

Columbus is currently over-reliant on highways and roadways as its primary method of moving people throughout the region. With roadway capacity reaching peak levels, parking garages full, parking lots redeveloping, and energy supplies in high demand, implementing alternative transportation options will be critical to the ability of Downtown Columbus and Central Ohio to compete in the 21st century. While more and more people are utilizing the COTA bus system, emphasis is needed to expand options that provide for a truly sustainable transportation network.

Columbus is the largest city in the country without rail service. As other peer cities continue to implement commuter rail and streetcar systems, Columbus is falling behind the competition. Rail detractors insist that Columbus has too much of a “car culture” to overcome, yet cities across the car-centric sunbelt from Charlotte to Phoenix have invested in light rail and streetcar systems over the last decade. With the shift in nationwide priorities, more Federal funding is available for alternative transportation. Cities such as Dallas and Tucson recently won Federal funding for most of its planned streetcar systems.

Improving transportation options will make downtown more accessible and convenient to both residents and commuters. With better accessibility into, out of and within the downtown area, it will become more attractive to employers, residents and visitors. Given the inherent limitations of the highway and roadway systems, improved transportation options will greatly enhance downtown’s employment capacity and drive economic development by allowing more people to live in and easily access the downtown area on a daily basis. Recent alternative transportation plans including the City’s Bicentennial Bikeways Plan, the starter streetcar effort, COTA’s Light Rail Study, and the 3-C rail corridor, are elements that need to be actively pursued and enacted in order to improve transportation options and allow Columbus to compete in the 21st century.

### STRATEGIES

- Continue to improve bus service operations to and within downtown, and investigate a downtown Bus Transit Center located in close proximity to employment centers and services.
- Ensure that downtown is accessible to those that are transit dependent.
- Continue to implement the Bikeways Plan with an emphasis downtown on bike lanes, sharrows, storage facilities and bike stations.
- Study bike sharing as a method for linking downtown with nearby neighborhoods.
- Build a comprehensive streetcar system to link downtown with OSU and other nearby neighborhoods and significant activity nodes.
- Continue to study other alternative modes of transportation (light rail, bus rapid transit, and heavy commuter rail) to facilitate long term growth both in downtown and the region.
- Explore the development of a stronger transit connection between Port Columbus and downtown.
- Support the 3-C plan to connect Cincinnati, Columbus and Cleveland with passenger rail, including construction of a rail station at the Convention Center.

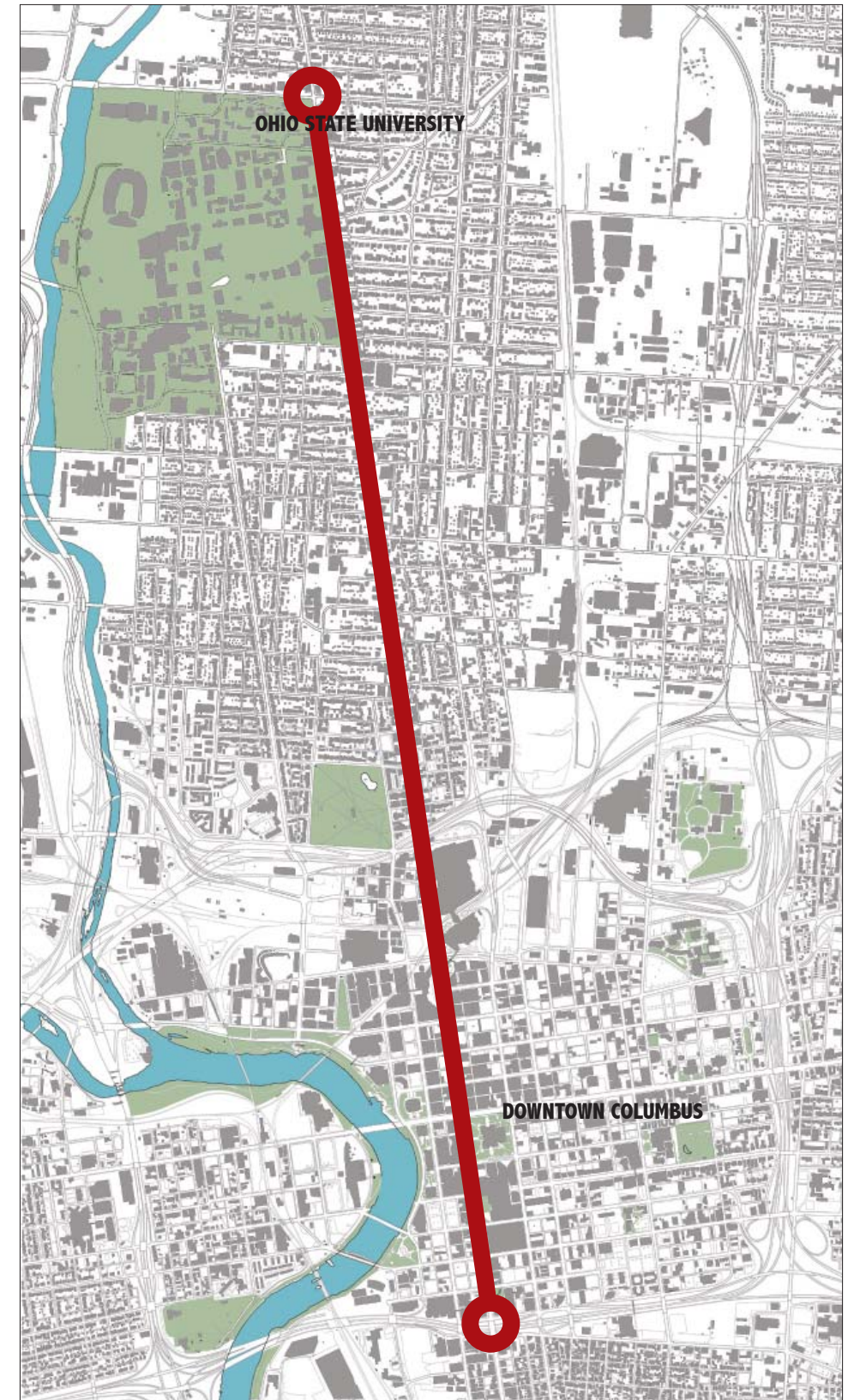
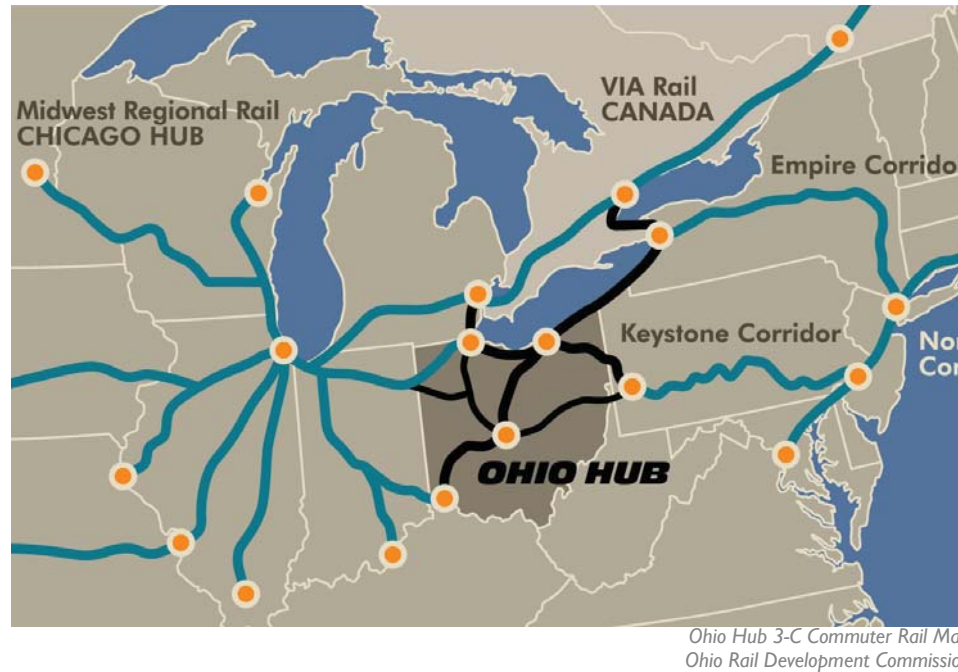
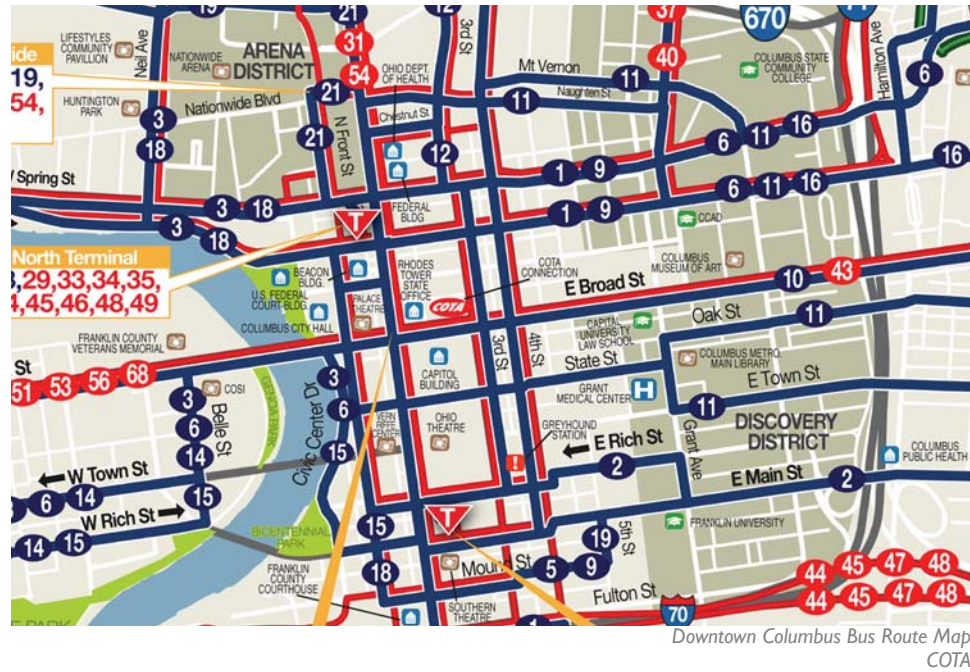


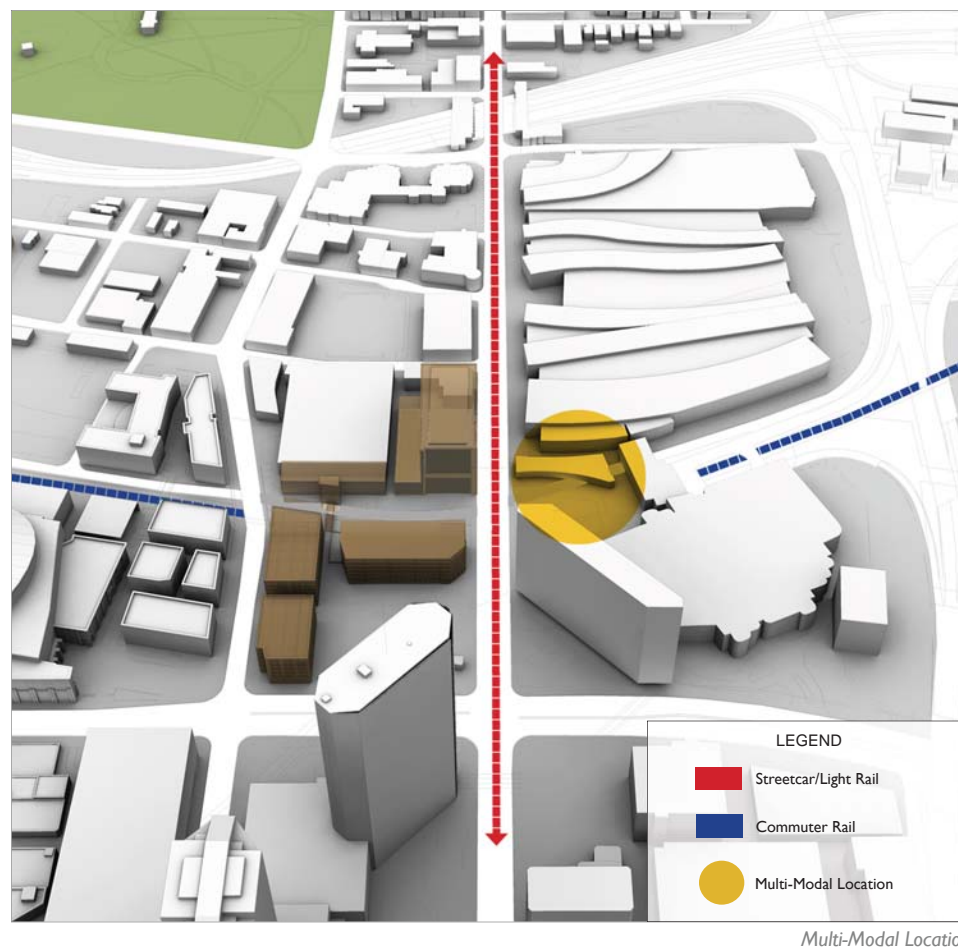
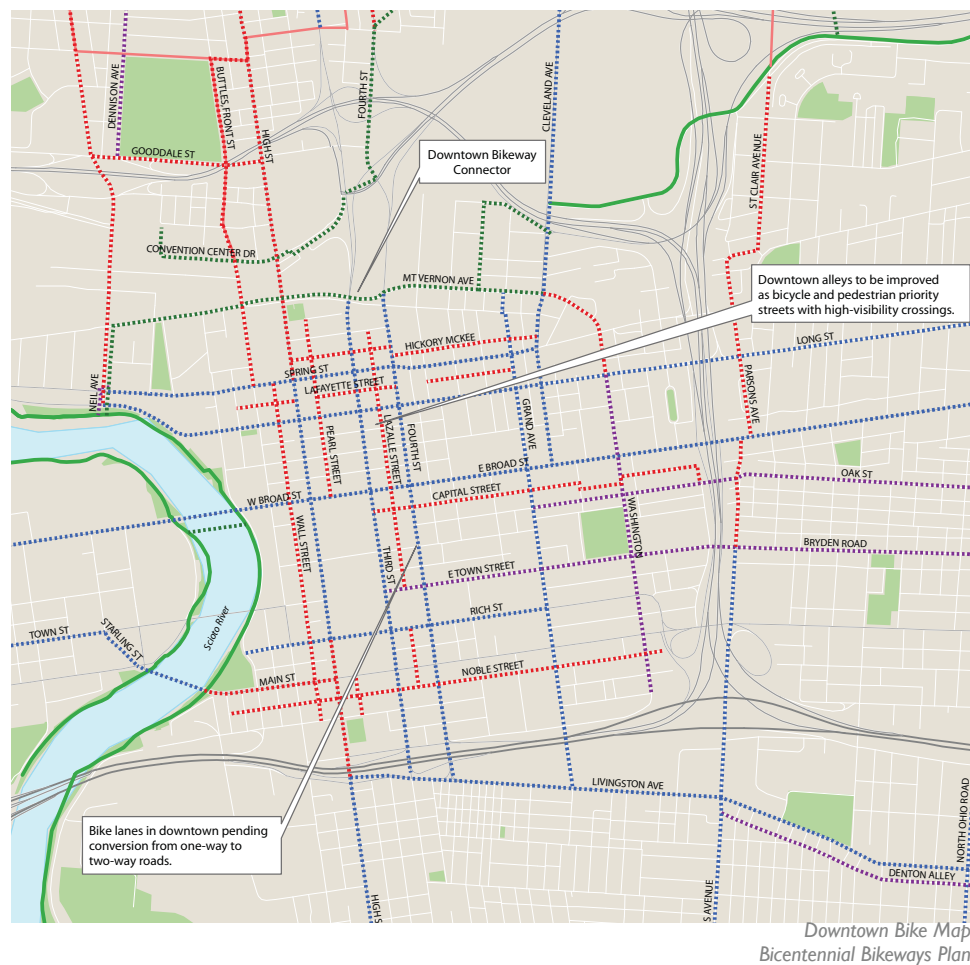
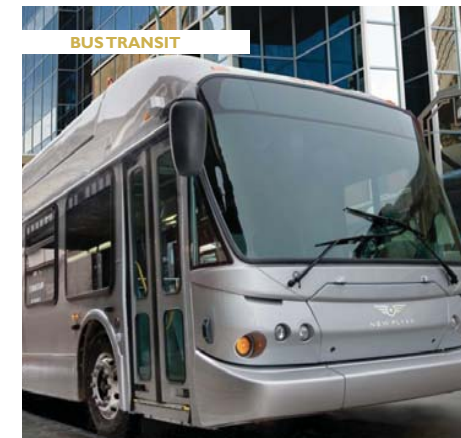
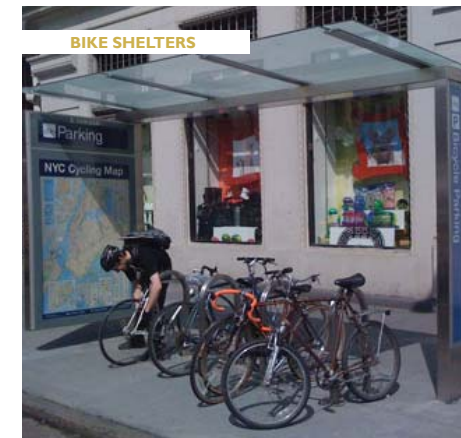
Figure 43 - Proposed High Street Streetcar



# COLUMBUS IS THE LARGEST CITY IN THE NATION WITHOUT RAIL SERVICE



## ACCOMMODATING MULTIPLE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION





# 8 STRATEGIES

## 03 PARKING

### Objective

Implement a multifaceted plan that includes enhanced transportation, the construction of additional garages in strategic locations, and improved management of parking garages and on-street parking in order to achieve build-out potential of Downtown.

### Issue:

Parking has proved to be a continual challenge for many American cities over the course of the last 100 years. By trying to compete with suburban locations and building office towers without requiring the provision of adjacent parking garages, the perfect market was created for the demolition of buildings in favor of surface parking lots. In turn, these surface parking lots sapped the vitality of the urban fabric of the city.

Recently, downtown has experienced a resurgence in new construction and some of these surface lots are being redeveloped. To meet current and future demand for parking, garages are being built to offset this loss of surface lots. More garages in strategic locations will be needed in the short term to free up surface parking lots for development. Over time, as Columbus catches up with its peer cities in terms of transportation alternatives, the need for constructing parking garages to enable redevelopment will likely decline. A first step toward solving the parking problem and unlocking development sites will be to conduct an comprehensive parking study that takes into account parking needs, the realities of the marketplace, and the aesthetics of the urban environment.

### STRATEGIES

- *Conduct a comprehensive parking study related to the land use and density requirements outlined in this plan.*
- *As part of the above study, investigate and implement the following strategies as appropriate:*
  - *The creation of parking districts to guide the construction of parking facilities where economically supported.*
  - *Prioritize garage locations and provide improved access to structured parking via transportation links in key areas of Downtown.*
  - *Mandate that all large development provide structured parking.*
  - *Create a system of peripheral parking “sinks” and transportation circulator to link them to downtown activity centers.*
  - *Continue to use innovative financing solutions and public/private partnerships to build new parking garages.*
  - *To allow garages to contribute to the urban fabric, encourage garages to be fronted by buildings, include first floor retail and use architectural screening.*
- *Enact policies to better regulate existing surface parking lots in terms of aesthetics and screening.*
- *Study the creation of financial incentives that encourage surface parking lot owners to develop property as contributing uses to downtown.*
- *Encourage taxi service, centralized valet service, car sharing and bike sharing and other similar strategies downtown to enable residents, workers and visitors to park once and visit multiple locations within downtown.*
- *Continue to study mass transportation systems to alleviate the pressure for automobile access into and out of downtown, reduce the need for costly parking structures, and enable greater density.*
- *Provide on-street parking on downtown streets to the maximum extent possible as an amenity to retail development.*



*Parking structures should accommodate active first floor uses.*



*Parking structures can be signature architectural elements.*



**GARAGES IN STRATEGIC LOCATIONS WILL BE NEEDED IN THE SHORT TERM TO FREE UP SURFACE PARKING LOTS FOR REDEVELOPMENT.**

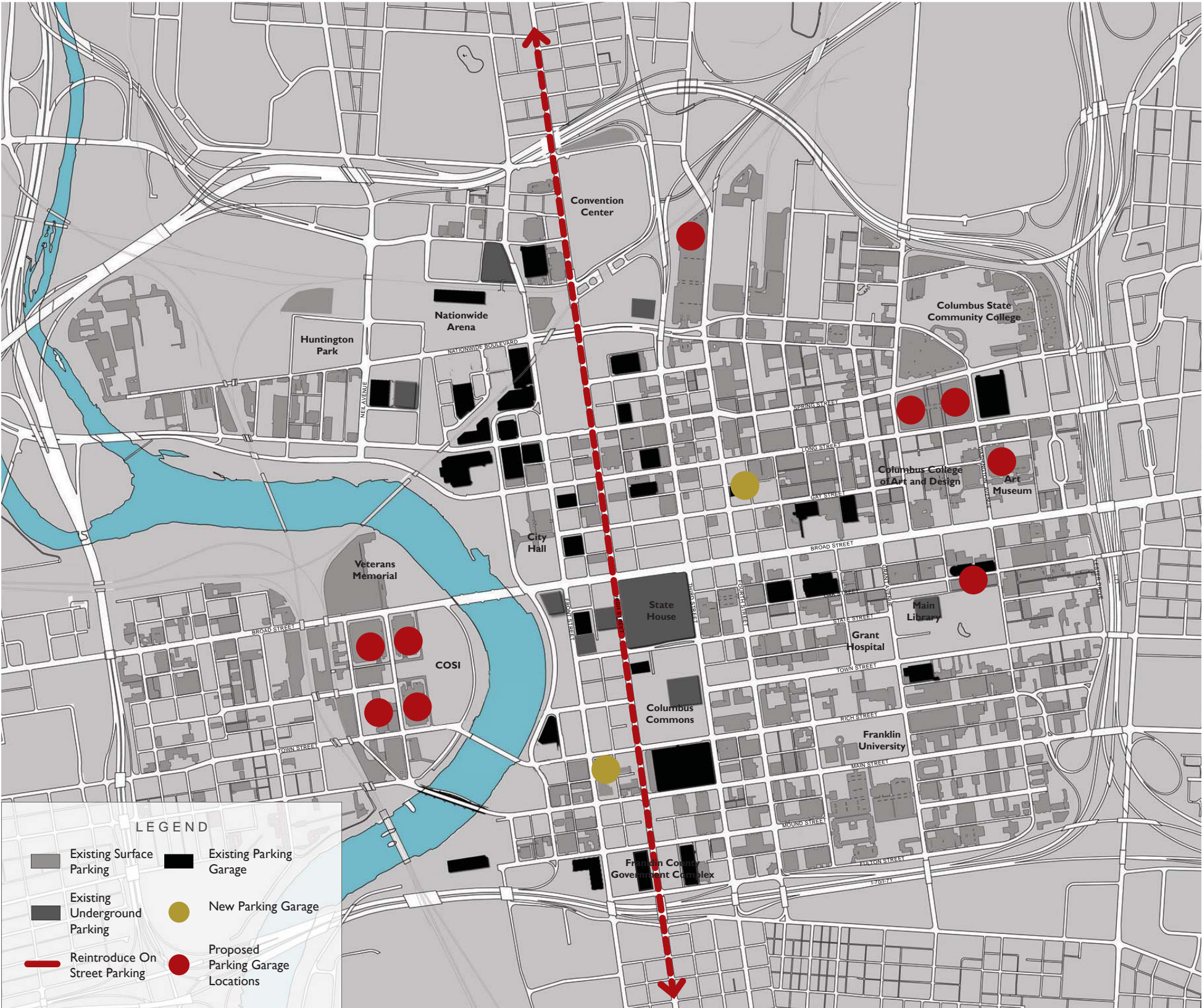


Figure 44 - Current, Proposed and Potential Parking - 1"=1200'



# 8 STRATEGIES

## 04 PARKS/OPEN SPACE

### Objective

Increase the amount and connectivity of urban green space in Downtown Columbus by prioritizing park projects, developing green connections, and creating a set of site standards that leads to the development of high-quality green spaces that occur as public improvements or as part of private development projects.

### Issue

There is a measurable lack of public parks and green space in Downtown Columbus. Aside from the riverfront park system that has seen significant investment and improvement over the past decade, the remainder of downtown is devoid of meaningful green space. What little green space does exist is not clearly or adequately connected to the surrounding urban fabric.

As has been demonstrated in the Arena District and elsewhere in urban centers throughout the country, well-designed and located green space can be a driver of economic growth and residential development. Urban green space provides a gathering place for workers, residents and visitors and is an attractive amenity for employers. New and improved green space can take many forms including space for active and passive recreation, urban pocket parks and linear networks along public streets. Green connections that include lush, tree-lined streets, ample sidewalks, and bike accommodations, should link downtown open spaces together.



Green connections should link parks and open space throughout downtown.

### STRATEGIES

- Continue current and planned park initiatives.
- Establish a network of “green connections” that link existing green spaces downtown with residential, employment and activity centers.
- Prioritize new parks and green spaces throughout downtown to increase the amount and quality of green space and provide amenities to attract new residential development.
- Ensure the construction of expanded bridges and green caps as part of the I-70/I-71 project to better connect downtown with its adjacent neighborhoods.
- Require the provision of public or private green space as part of all new major development in the downtown area.
- Ensure quality, long-term maintenance and programming for all downtown parks, plazas and event spaces through an endowment and an entity charged with such duties.
- Implement a public art program in the downtown that targets public green space and plazas and public facilities.



Figure 45 - Current Parks and Open Space Diagram - 1"=2000'



Figure 46 - Planned and Proposed Parks and Open Space Diagram - 1"=2000'



WELL-DESIGNED AND LOCATED GREEN SPACE CAN BE A DRIVER OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT.



North Bank Park is the first piece of the Scioto Mile riverfront park system.

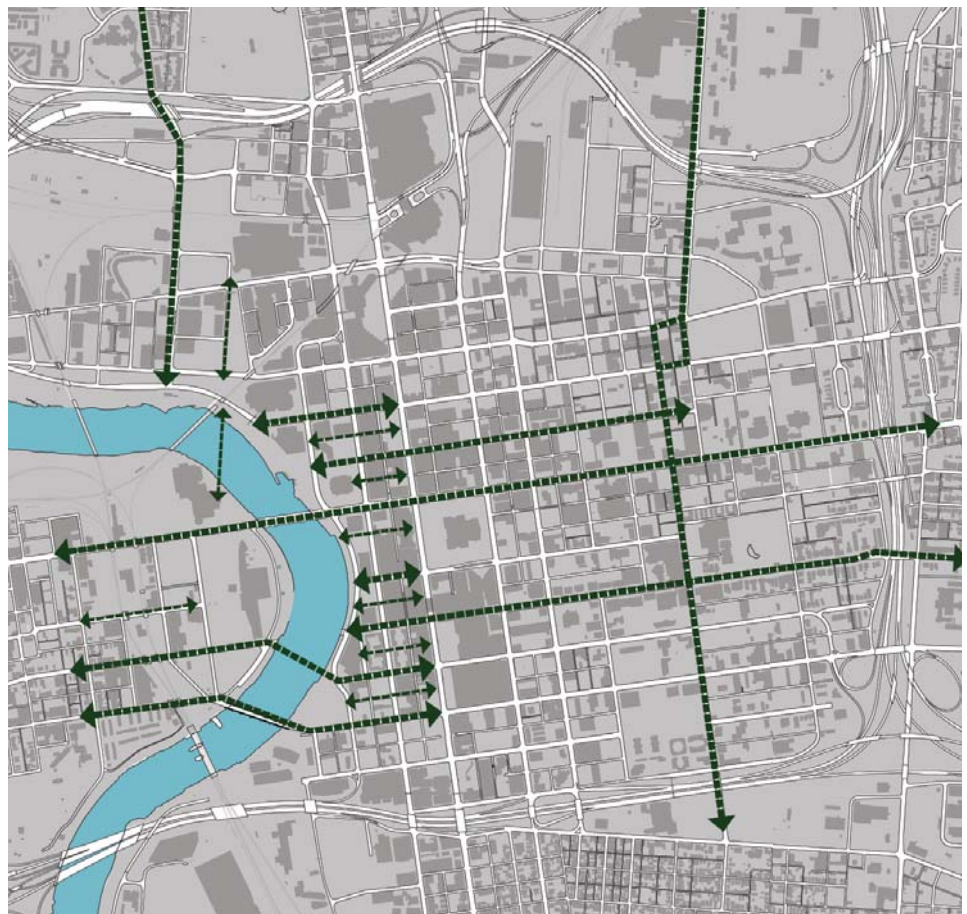


Figure 47 - Green Connections Diagram - 1"=2000'

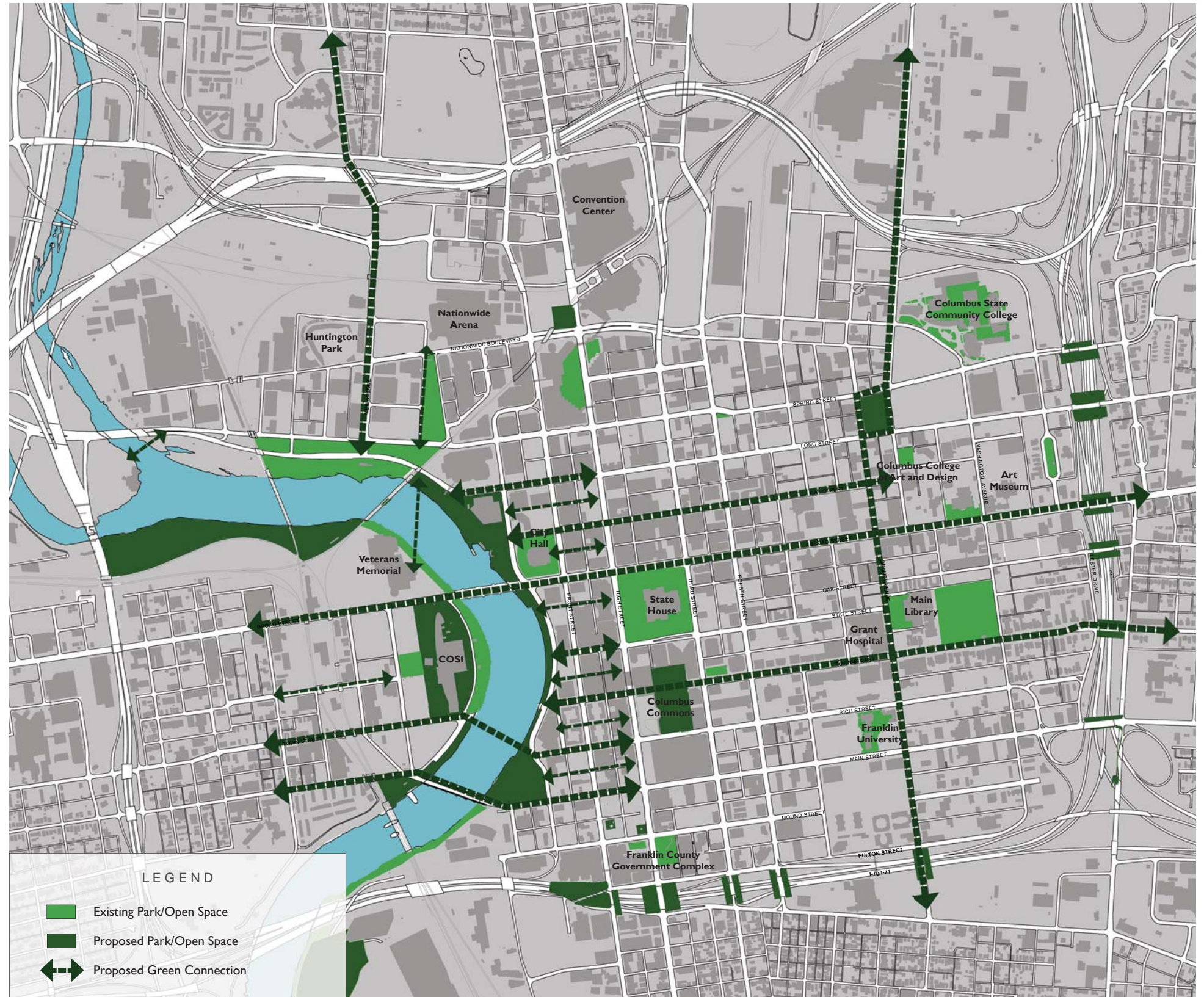


Figure 48 - Current, Planned, and Proposed Parks and Green Connections - 1"=1200'



## 05 STREETScape/STREET NETWORK

### Objective

Create a hierarchical street network that enables and facilitates multiple modes of transportation seamlessly, efficiently and comfortably while also creating an attractive streetscape that contributes to the urban fabric and activity.

### Issue

Downtown's street network is designed to primarily facilitate the movement of traffic to and from the downtown core. While this is necessary to a certain degree to ensure the accessibility of downtown, this has been done to the detriment of other modes of travel, as well as the pedestrian and retail environment. The predominance of one-way streets, lack of pedestrian amenities, and deficiency of bike infrastructure has created a downtown that is difficult to navigate on foot and bicycle as well as by automobile. Recent efforts, such as the conversion of Gay Street and Civic Center Drive to two-way traffic and the conversion of sections of Front Street (including associated traffic calming measures), represent a good start, but more work needs to be done to improve the downtown street system.

### STRATEGIES

- Update the Downtown Columbus Circulation Study as a means of implementing the downtown Plan.
- Apply the City's "Complete Streets" policies and standards into the downtown street, pedestrian and cycling network taking into account existing conditions and prioritizing aesthetics.
- Implement traffic calming measures in areas with high pedestrian traffic.
- Balance the needs of ADA requirements with the need to activate the streetscape with such things as outdoor dining and cafes.
- Prioritize streetscape improvements along key corridors concurrent with major roadway projects, such as the improvements proposed for Broad and High streets and for the four new urban avenues as part of the I-70/I-71 improvements.
- Ensure full development of caps, expanded bridges and the development of four urban avenues as great city streets as part of I-70/I-71 project to improve the pedestrian connection between downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.
- Study the conversion of all but essential one-way street pairs to two-way traffic flow.

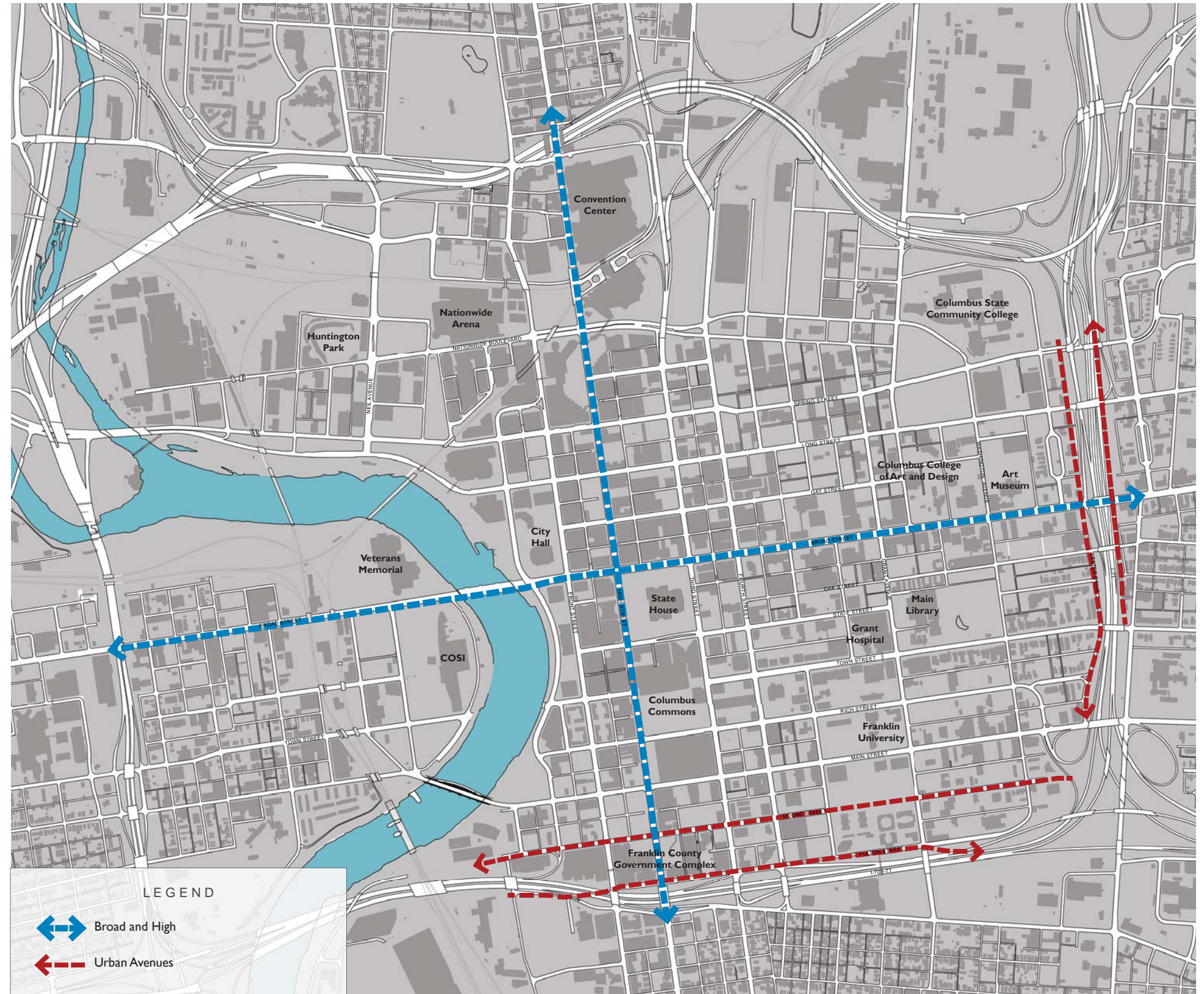


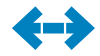
Figure 49 - Prioritized Streetscape Improvement Projects- 1"=1200'



# THE DOWNTOWN STREET NETWORK SHOULD ENABLE AND FACILITATE MULTIPLE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

## DOWNTOWN STREET TYPOLOGIES

This typology diagram represents long-term street directionality and general recommendations regarding street character, recognizing that design variations will be necessary given specific corridor constraints.



**Downtown Signature**  
Broad Street and High Street  
(specific recommendations are located on pages 54-57.)



**Downtown Distributor**  
One-way traffic designation, typically with up to three driving lanes. This includes parking lanes on each side of the street with bump outs at intersections.



**Downtown Specialty**  
Two-way traffic designation with varying width. Includes wider sidewalks and enhanced materials (such as brick, granite curbs, etc.) and design (such as median) that relate to its significance to the downtown street hierarchy.



**Downtown Standard**  
Two-way traffic designation, typically with two driving lanes and a center turn lane. This includes parking lanes on each side of the street with bump outs at intersections.

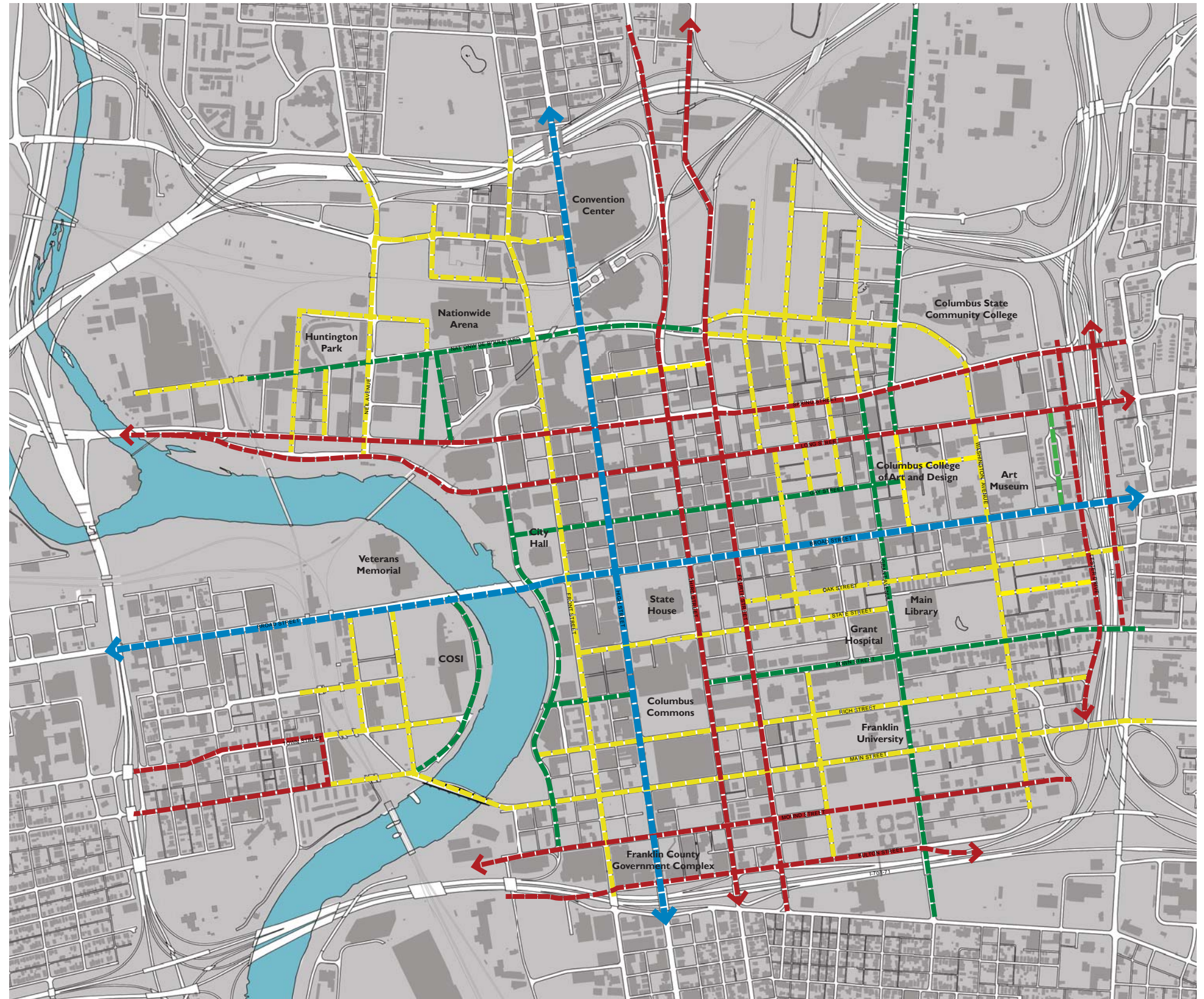


Figure 50 - Proposed Updates to the Downtown Columbus Circulation Study - 1"=1200'



# 8 STRATEGIES

## 06 SUSTAINABILITY

### Objective

Establish Downtown Columbus as the green capital of the Midwest by prioritizing environmental sustainability through coordinated investment in green infrastructure, the development of incentives for green buildings, and the creation of green-oriented job growth.

### Issue

Environmental sustainability is emerging as a high-growth sector in the nation's economy and has become a priority for location decisions of young professionals and the "Creative Class." Cities such as Chicago and Portland, that have embraced sustainability, have fostered a "green economy" that is propelling them into the 21st century. With its "Get Green Columbus" initiative, the city of Columbus has taken steps toward promoting sustainability by reducing parking requirements, mandating bicycle parking, and building green streets in downtown. The CDDC renovated the Lazarus building into a LEED-certified mixed-use office and retail building, complete with a green roof.

However, a coordinated approach is needed that prioritizes sustainability through increased public investment in green infrastructure and the creation of incentives for green buildings and infrastructure. With the volatile energy market and dwindling natural resources, improving efficiency and reducing downtown's carbon footprint will become an economic necessity. Fostering a local green economy will lead to job growth and ensure that Downtown Columbus remains competitive and attractive in today's marketplace.

### STRATEGIES

- Develop a comprehensive green strategy for Downtown Columbus that will enable and encourage green infrastructure and construction practices for both the public and private sectors.
- Develop a robust system of incentives (and in some cases requirements) to encourage green roofs, energy efficient buildings and other sustainability measures.
- Educate citizens and business owners about the benefits of "going green" and provide information to link suppliers with customers.
- Pursue construction of the transit center to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from idled COTA buses along the High Street Transit Mall.
- Encourage investment in downtown-wide solutions such as green roofs and rain gardens to address stormwater issues, such as at RiverSouth.
- Monitor new and existing green infrastructure to document its impact.
- Explore development of Scioto Peninsula as a model green development.
- Explore creation of Scioto-Olentangy Greenway to return river corridors to their natural condition.
- Encourage State, City and County governments and other downtown medical and educational institutions to take a lead in developing sustainable practices in their planned future projects.
- Promote the Green Columbus Fund to help offset the costs of sustainability projects downtown.



Portland, Oregon has developed numerous incentives for green roofs, green streets, and other green infrastructure which has reduced the cost of city infrastructure.

## GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE DEFINED

### GREEN STREETS

Through the use of rain gardens and other methods, Green Streets transform impervious street surfaces into landscaped green spaces that capture stormwater runoff and let water soak into the ground as plants and soil filter pollutants. Green Streets convert stormwater from a waste directed into a pipe, to a resource that replenishes groundwater supplies. (Source: City of Portland, Oregon)

### GREEN ROOFS

Green roofs replace conventional roofing with a living, breathing vegetated roof system. A green roof consists of a layer of vegetation over a growing medium on top of a synthetic, waterproof membrane. A green roof significantly decreases stormwater runoff, saves energy, reduces pollution and erosion, and helps preserve

fish habitat. Green roofs also absorb carbon dioxide, cool urban heat islands, and filter air pollutants. Green roofs increase habitat for birds and insects and provide much needed greenspace for urban dwellers. (Source: City of Portland, Oregon)

### LEED BUILDING

LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is an internationally recognized green building certification system, providing third-party verification that a building or community was designed and built using strategies aimed at improving performance across all the metrics that matter most: energy savings, water efficiency, CO2 emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts. (Source: US Green Building Council)



Green streets are an example of a downtown-wide solution to stormwater management.



FOSTERING A **LOCAL GREEN ECONOMY** WILL LEAD TO **JOB GROWTH** AND **ENSURE THAT DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS REMAINS COMPETITIVE** IN TODAY'S MARKETPLACE.

**GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS**



The green roof atop the Lazarus Building retains and slows the flow of stormwater into the City's combined sewer and stormwater system.



Rain gardens on Town Street slow the flow of stormwater and beautify the streetscape.



Figure 51 - Green Infrastructure Diagram



# 8 STRATEGIES

## 07 ARTS AND CULTURE

### Objective

Invest in and establish dependable funding sources for arts and cultural institutions, venues and organizations to ensure downtown's place as the preeminent creative hub of Central Ohio.

### Issue

A vibrant arts and culture community is vital to a successful downtown. Downtown Columbus has several historic theatres and newer performance spaces, a well-established art museum, a ballet company and symphony, and a thriving science and industry museum with an IMAX theater. Community support for these institutions and venues has been generally positive overall, although a few have suffered budgetary issues in the past several years. In order for Downtown Columbus to remain the cultural hub of Central Ohio, the city and the community need to invest in arts and culture institutions, venues and organizations. This could include new and improved venues, creating a city-managed public art program, and establishing a network of support for local artists. Arts and culture institutions, installations, and events should be prominent and visible in everyday life downtown.



The Institute of Contemporary Art has turned South Boston Waterfront into the city's most up-and-coming neighborhood.



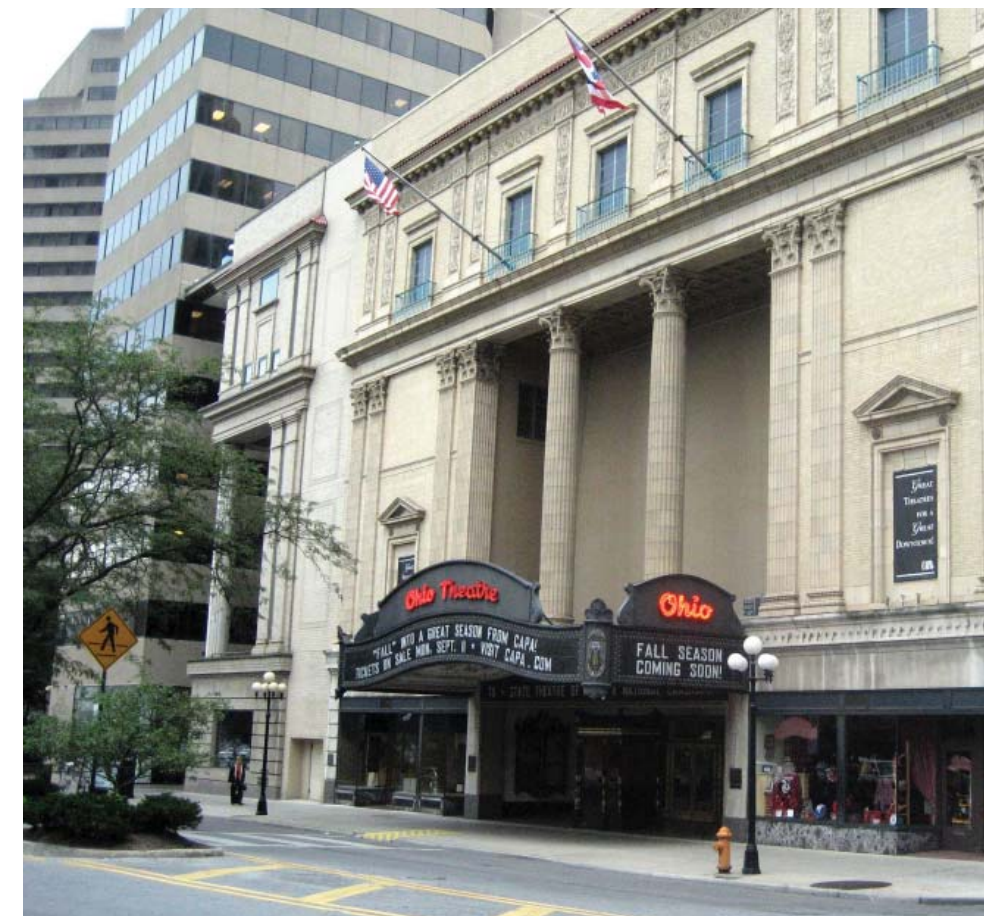
Funding public art projects, both large and small, can activate downtown areas and provide a unique sense of place.

### STRATEGIES

- Continue to fund and champion existing arts institutions and organizations.
- Create a City-managed public art program focused on public spaces in the entire downtown under the leadership of the Columbus Art Commission.
- Continue to sponsor and promote arts and cultural events and happenings Downtown (such as Independents Day on Gay Street and art exhibitions and installations).
- Explore an expand role for public art, art facilities and arts-related events on the Scioto River corridor.
- Focus retail and entertainment businesses around Downtown theatre locations to provide nodes of activity throughout the day and evening.



Columbus is home to a significant independent arts scene that is flourishing but needs continued support.



Established arts organizations make Downtown Columbus the arts and cultural hub of Central Ohio.



**A VIBRANT ARTS AND CULTURE COMMUNITY IS VITAL TO THE SUCCESS OF DOWNTOWN.**

**ARTS AND CULTURE ATTRACTIONS DOWNTOWN**

1. Veterans Memorial
2. Center of Science and Industry
3. The Santa Maria
4. Palace Theater
5. The Statehouse Museum
6. Riffe Center
7. Ohio Theater
8. OSU Urban Arts Center
9. Cultural Arts Center
10. Southern Theater
11. Main Branch - Columbus Metropolitan Library
12. Columbus Dance Theatre
13. Columbus Performing Arts Center
14. The Thurber House
15. Columbus Museum of Art
16. Canzani Center Gallery
17. BalletMet
18. MadLab
19. Columbus Children's Theatre

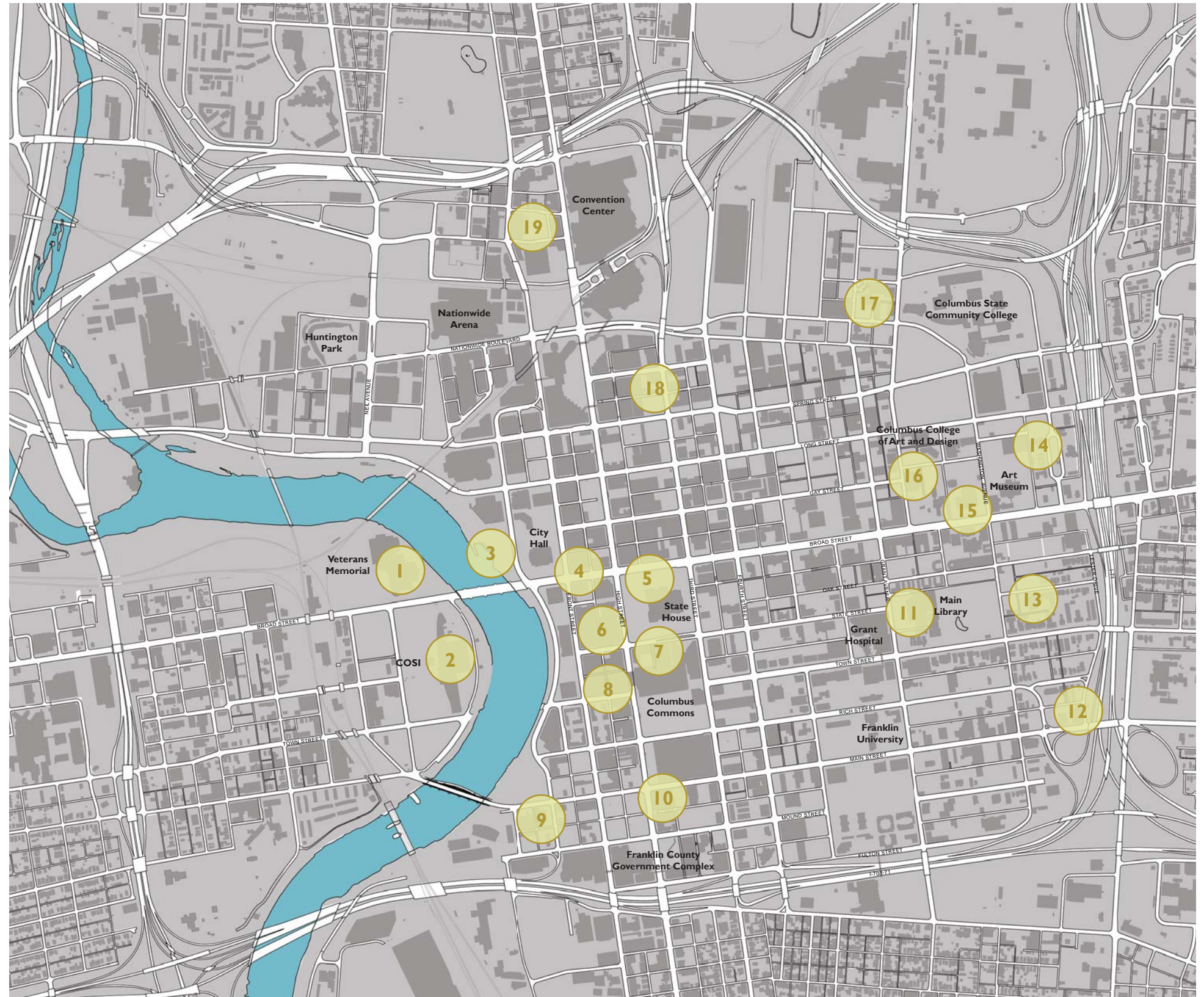


Figure 52 - Arts and Culture Attractions Diagram



# 8 STRATEGIES

## 08 CONNECTIONS

### Objective

Connect uses, districts and people both throughout downtown and with adjacent neighborhoods to fill in gaps in activity and make the urban core more accessible.

### Issue

Downtown is surrounded by a dozen urban neighborhoods that are thriving, in the midst of a comeback or poised for new investment. Downtown should take advantage of this adjacent energy by re-establishing seamless connections. This has already happened with the High Street Cap that allows the vibrancy of the Short North to seep into the Convention Center and North Market District, other opportunities to link the edges of downtown to near neighborhoods should be explored. The new Main Street and Rich Street bridges will enhance connectivity between Downtown and the Scioto Peninsula and Franklinton.

The planned improvements to I-70/I-71 involve rebuilding all 13 bridge crossings between Downtown Columbus and the surrounding neighborhoods. This represents a once in a generation opportunity to reknit the urban fabric that was disrupted when the urban highway system was built.

### STRATEGIES

- Ensure the success of downtown and its adjacent neighborhoods (both east-west and north-south) by improving the ability to access downtown by biking, walking and other forms of transit.
- Implement I-70/I-71 project to connect near neighborhoods to downtown through the use of gateways, building caps, park caps and expanded bridges.
- Identify additional improvements to the High Street corridor to better connect downtown with OSU including transit.
- Continue to maintain and enhance the connectivity between OSU, and Downtown Columbus and the Whittier Peninsula via the Olentangy Bikeway.
- Explore the removal of the Main Street and Fifth Avenue low-head dams to restore unimpeded river flow between OSU and Downtown.
- Study the removal of the five low-head dams above Fifth Avenue to complete a 16.5 mile greenway along the Olentangy and Scioto Rivers between Highbanks and Scioto Audubon Metroparks

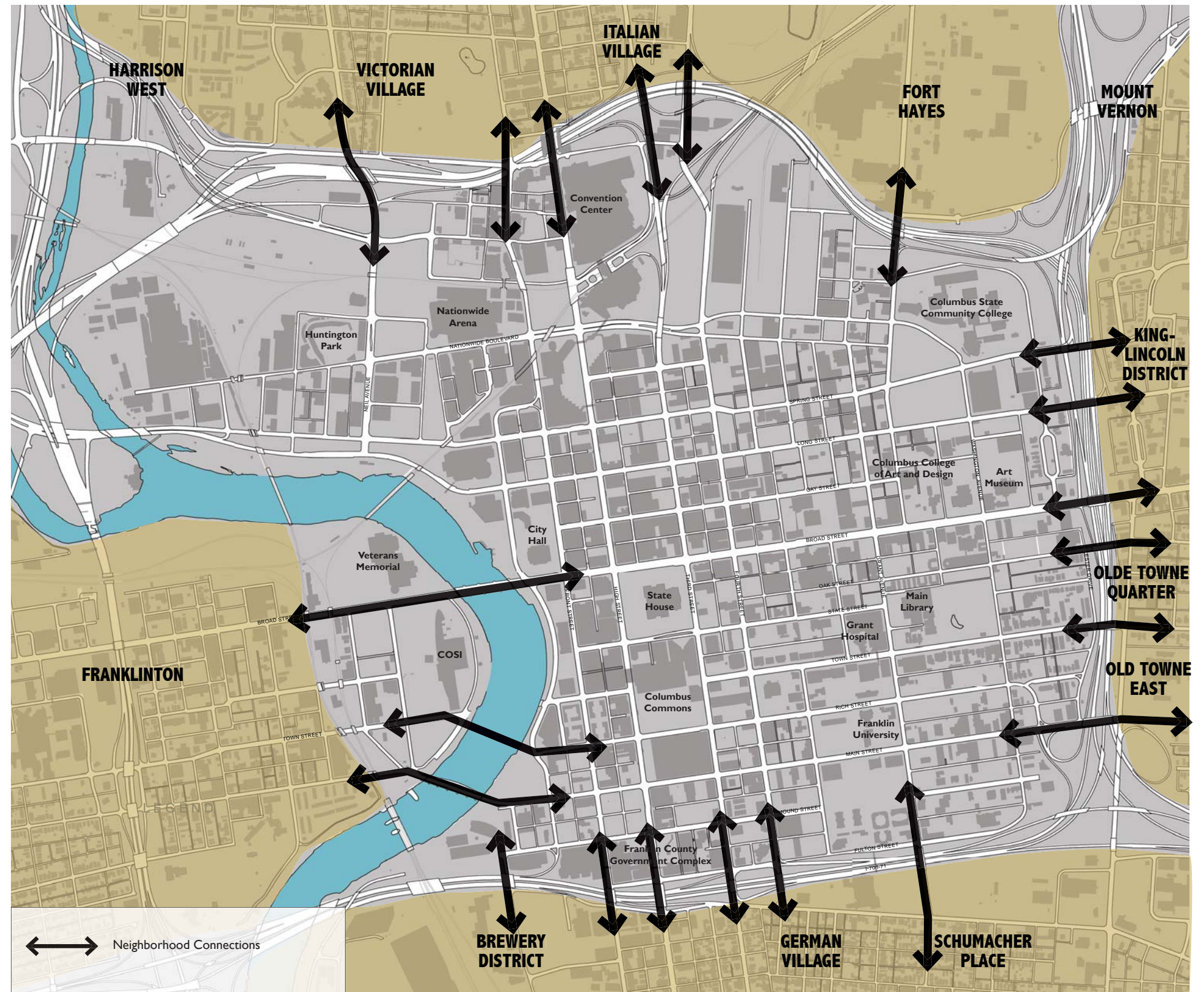


Figure 53 - Connections Diagram - 1"=1200'

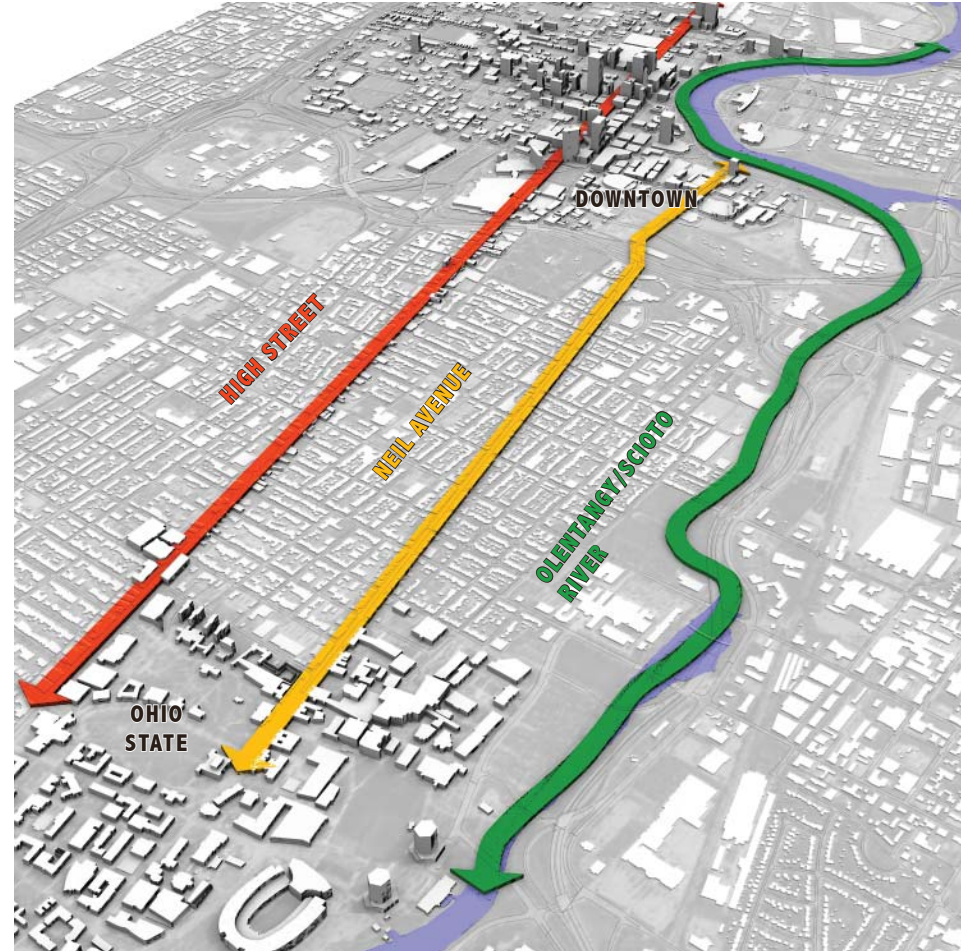


DOWNTOWN IS SURROUNDED BY A DOZEN URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS THAT ARE THRIVING, IN THE MIDST OF A COMEBACK OR POISED FOR NEW INVESTMENT.

**EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS**



**DOWNTOWN TO OSU CONNECTIONS**



**HIGH STREET**



← Wexner Center for the Arts



→ Ohio Statehouse

**NEIL AVENUE**



← Ohio State Library



→ North Bank Park

**OLENTANGY/SCIOTO RIVERS**



← Ohio Stadium



← Downtown Riverfront



→ Scioto Audubon Metro Park

Beyond adjacent connections, Downtown should be better connected to The Ohio State University. Improving the connection to this key resource of 60,000 students and faculty and staff will be essential in enhancing the vitality of downtown. Focusing on the proposed Scioto/Olentangy Greenway Corridor, the High Street corridor and other north-south linkages will create a world-class corridor that connects the major educational, arts, civic and employment nodes in the entire city.



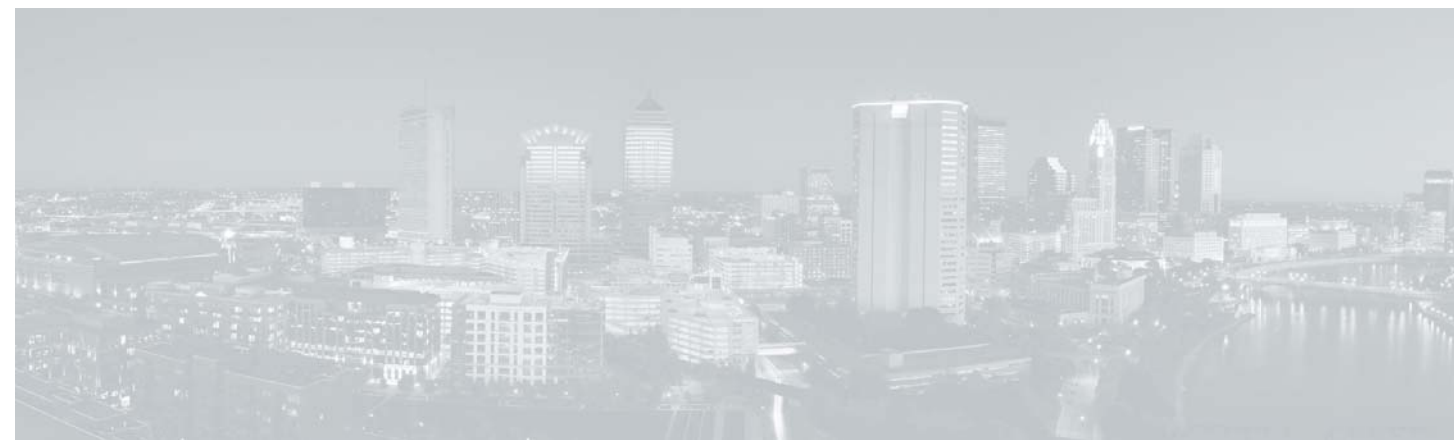




# 2010 DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS STRATEGIC PLAN

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

*Downtown Columbus has experienced a resurgence during this decade as more residents and investment has returned downtown. The 2010 Downtown Columbus Strategic Plan seeks to build on this momentum and establish a vision for Downtown Columbus. A thriving downtown core is essential for the long-term success of the City of Columbus and the Central Ohio region. With proper leadership, strategic investment and public/private cooperation, this vision can be achieved. To guide implementation, all of the strategy recommendations are summarized, and an overall project idea matrix provides a method for tracking progress and assessing priorities.*





# IMPLEMENTATION

## INTRODUCTION

The 2010 Downtown Columbus Strategic Plan contains **12 Ideas** and **8 Strategies** that aim to improve downtown and solidify its place as the employment, governmental, institutional, entertainment and commercial core of Central Ohio. This implementation section pulls together all the project ideas and strategy recommendations raised in earlier sections to establish a roadmap that systematically guides actions regarding public and private investments. These will be political investments in policy and financial investments in infrastructure and project funding.

To guide the implementation of the **12 Ideas** and **8 Strategies** the following matrix and summary have been created. The **8 Strategies** have been cataloged to provide a comprehensive list of the action items necessary to advance the overall vision of the Plan. The **12 Ideas** matrix goes into greater detail and identifies the potential public and private sector actors and leaders in charge of implementing the next steps for each proposed project. A potential timeframe has also been estimated for each project. Short term identifies projects that could be completed within one to three years, medium term represents three to five years, and long term represents five to ten years.










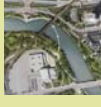


While the **12 Ideas** and **8 Strategies** will require further discussion and analysis, the implementation matrix and summary table provide a starting point for implementation. As projects get implemented and conditions change, this list can be revisited to add and subtract projects and act as a benchmark for the continued revitalization of Downtown Columbus.

The 2010 Downtown Columbus Strategic Plan represents the first step in a longer planning process. The plan should be continuously revisited and updated over the coming years to ensure that projects and policies still meet the intended goals and to ensure that there is adequate political support for these ongoing planning efforts. Continued community discussion and cooperation will be necessary to guarantee that the vision for downtown remains a priority for all parties involved over the long-term.

## POTENTIAL ACTORS GLOSSARY

<b>CCAD</b>	Columbus College of Art and Design
<b>CDDC</b>	Columbus Downtown Development Corporation
<b>COSI</b>	Center of Science and Industry
<b>COTA</b>	Central Ohio Transit Authority
<b>FCCFA</b>	Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority
<b>GCSC</b>	Greater Columbus Sports Commission
<b>MORPC</b>	Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission
<b>ODNR</b>	Ohio Department of Natural Resources
<b>ODOT</b>	Ohio Department of Transportation
<b>OEPA</b>	Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
<b>OSU</b>	The Ohio State University
<b>SID</b>	Special Improvement District

## 12 IDEAS IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

12 IDEAS	POTENTIAL ACTORS	POTENTIAL LEAD	POTENTIAL TIMEFRAME*	
<b>DISCOVERY DISTRICT</b>				
	<b>01 Southeast Downtown Gateway Opportunity</b>	CDDC, Property Owners, Institutions, ODOT, City, Discovery District SID	CDDC	Long-Term
	<b>02 Infill Housing around Topiary Park</b>	CDDC, City, Property Owners, Discovery District SID	CDDC	Short to Medium-Term
	<b>03 The Creative Campus</b>	CDDC, City, CCAD, Columbus State, Columbus Museum of Art, State Auto, Property Owners, ODOT, Discovery District SID	CDDC, Institutions	Short to Long-Term
<b>HIGH STREET CORE</b>				
	<b>04 Redefine Broad Street as the civic spine of the City</b>	CDDC, City, ODOT, Capital Crossroads SID	City, CDDC	Medium to Long-Term
	<b>05 Restore High Street as Downtown's commercial corridor</b>	CDDC, City, COTA, Capital Crossroads SID	City, CDDC	Medium to Long-Term
	<b>06 Develop a Downtown Transit Center to replace High Street Transit Mall</b>	CDDC, City, COTA	City, CDDC, COTA	Medium-Term
	<b>07 3-C Multi-Modal Station</b>	City, ODOT, FCCFA, COTA	City, ODOT	Short-Term
	<b>08 Develop a Downtown Bike Station</b>	City, Capital Crossroads SID	City	Short to Medium-Term
	<b>09 Develop a Downtown Field House</b>	FCCFA, GCSC, City, Capital Crossroads SID	FCCFA, GCSC	Medium to Long-Term
<b>RIVERFRONT</b>				
	<b>10 Pedestrian Bridge connecting Arena District to Scioto Peninsula</b>	City	City	Short to Medium-Term
	<b>11 Continue the Development of the Scioto Peninsula</b>	CDDC, City, COSI, Franklin County, Private Developers	CDDC, City	Short to Long-Term
	<b>12 Scioto-Olentangy Greenway Corridor</b>	CDDC, City, Army Corps, OEPA, OSU, Metro Parks, ODNR, MORPC, Stakeholders	CDDC, City	Medium to Long-Term

\* Short-Term = 1-3 years; Medium-Term = 3-5 years; Long-Term = 5-10 years



## 8 STRATEGIES SUMMARY

### 01 URBAN FORM

Update height standards and adopt density standards to ensure the appropriate build out of downtown consistent with plan recommendations.

Implement parking and transit policies in this plan that facilitate the redevelopment of surface parking lots and create a denser urban form.

Concentrate office and government development in the Mile On High and encourage supportive retail, entertainment and service businesses.

Facilitate concentrations of residential development to create neighborhood nodes at critical locations in the downtown, while encouraging supportive retail and services businesses.

Continue to implement incentive packages/programs that encourage the construction of a broad range of housing types and price points.

Continue to implement incentive packages/programs that attract office and retail development at key locations and corridors

### 02 TRANSIT

Continue to improve bus service operations to and within downtown, and investigate a downtown Bus Transit Center located in close proximity to downtown employment centers and services.

Ensure that downtown is accessible to those that are transit dependent.

Continue to implement the Bikeways Plan with an emphasis downtown on bike lanes, sharrows, storage facilities and bike stations.

Study bike sharing as a method for linking downtown with nearby neighborhoods

Build a comprehensive streetcar system to link downtown with OSU and other nearby neighborhoods and significant activity nodes

Continue to study other alternative modes of transportation (light rail, bus rapid transit, and heavy commuter rail) to facilitate long term-growth both in downtown and the region.

Explore the development of a stronger transit connection between Port Columbus and downtown.

Support the 3-C plan to connect Cincinnati, Columbus and Cleveland with passenger rail, including construction of a rail station at the Convention Center.

### 03 PARKING

Conduct a comprehensive parking study related to the land use and density requirements outlined in this plan.

As part of the above study, investigate and implement the following strategies as appropriate:

- The creation of parking districts to guide the construction of parking facilities where economically supported.
- Prioritize garage locations and provide improved access to structured parking via transportation links in key areas of downtown.
- Mandate that all large development provide structured parking.
- Create a system of peripheral parking “sinks” and transportation circulator to link them to downtown activity centers.
- Continue to use innovative financing solutions and public/private partnerships to build new parking garages.
- To allow garages to contribute to the urban fabric, encourage garages to be fronted by buildings, include first floor retail and use architectural screening

### 03 PARKING continued

Enact policies to better regulate existing surface parking lots in terms of aesthetics and screening.

Study the creation of financial incentives that encourage surface parking lot owners to develop property as contributing uses to downtown.

Encourage taxi service, centralized valet service, car sharing and bike sharing and other similar strategies downtown to enable residents, workers and visitors to park once and visit multiple locations within downtown.

Continue to study mass transportation systems to alleviate the pressure for automobile access into and out of downtown, reduce the need for costly parking structures, and enable greater density.

Provide on-street parking on downtown streets to the maximum extent possible as an amenity to retail development.

### 04 PARKS/OPEN SPACE

Continue current and planned park initiatives.

Establish a network of “green connections” that link existing green spaces downtown with residential, employment and activity centers.

Prioritize new parks and green spaces throughout downtown to increase the amount and quality of green space and provide amenities to attract new residential development.

Ensure the construction of expanded bridges and park caps as part of the I-70/I-71 project to better connect downtown with its adjacent neighborhoods.

Require the provision of public or private green space as part of all new major development in the downtown area.

Ensure quality, long-term maintenance and programming for all downtown parks, plazas and event spaces through an endowment and an entity charged with such duties.

Implement a public art program in the Downtown that targets public green space and plazas and public facilities.

### 05 STREETScape/STREET NETWORK

Update the Downtown Columbus Circulation Study as a means of implementing the Plan.

Apply the City’s “Complete Streets” policies and standards into the downtown street, pedestrian and cycling network taking into account existing conditions and prioritizing aesthetics.

Implement traffic calming measures in areas with high pedestrian traffic.

Balance the needs of ADA requirements with the need to activate the streetscape with such things as outdoor dining and cafes.

Prioritize streetscape improvements along key corridors concurrent with major roadway projects, such as the improvements proposed for Broad and High streets and for the four new urban avenues as part of the I-70/I-71 improvements.

Ensure full development of caps, expanded bridges, and the development of four urban avenues as great city streets as part of I-70/I-71 project to improve the pedestrian connection between downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.

Study the conversion all but essential one-way street pairs to two-way traffic flow.

### 06 SUSTAINABILITY

Develop a comprehensive green strategy for Downtown Columbus that will enable and encourage green infrastructure and construction practices for both the public and private sectors.

Develop a robust system of incentives (and in some cases requirements) to encourage green roofs, energy efficient buildings and other sustainability measures.

Educate citizens and business owners about the benefits of “going green” and provide information to link suppliers with customers.

Pursue construction of the transit center to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from idled COTA buses along the High Street Transit Mall.

Encourage investment in downtown-wide solutions such as green roofs and rain gardens to address stormwater issues, such as at RiverSouth.

Monitor new and existing green infrastructure to document its impact.

Explore development of Scioto Peninsula as a model green development.

Explore creation of Scioto-Olentangy Greenway to return river corridors to their natural condition.

Encourage State, City and County governments and other downtown medical and educational institutions to take a lead in developing sustainable practices in their planned future projects.

Promote the Green Columbus Fund to help offset the costs of sustainability projects downtown.

### 07 ARTS AND CULTURE

Continue to fund and champion existing arts institutions and organizations.

Create a City-managed public art program focused on public spaces in the entire downtown under the leadership of the Columbus Art Commission.

Continue to sponsor and promote arts and cultural events and happenings downtown (such as Independents Day on Gay Street and art exhibitions and installations).

Explore an expand role for public art, art facilities and arts-related events on the Scioto River corridor.

Focus retail and entertainment businesses around downtown theatre locations to provide nodes of activity throughout the day and evening.

### 08 CONNECTIONS

Ensure the success of downtown and its adjacent neighborhoods (both east-west and north-south) by improving the ability to access downtown by biking, walking and other forms of transit.

Implement I-70/I-71 project to connect near neighborhoods to downtown through the use of gateways, building caps, park caps and expanded bridges.

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Explore the removal of the Main Street and Fifth Avenue low-head dams to restore unimpeded river flow between OSU and downtown.

Study the removal of the five low-head dams above Fifth Avenue to complete a 16.5 mile greenway along the Olentangy and Scioto Rivers between Highbanks and Scioto Audubon Metroparks.



# IMPLEMENTATION

## ACHIEVING THE DOWNTOWN VISION

Downtown Columbus has the potential to be a vibrant, thriving community core. Already the employment, arts, and entertainment center of Central Ohio, Downtown Columbus has the opportunity use these strengths to attract more residents, workers and visitors. The 2010 Downtown Columbus Strategic Plan provides the framework for the projects and strategies that need to be implemented to help downtown fulfill its potential.

Achieving this Plan will take a concerted effort over the next few decades. As has been demonstrated on numerous recent successful projects, such as the Arena District, Huntington Park, the Scioto Mile and Columbus Commons, a strong public/private partnership will be critical in achieving the vision that has been illustrated in this Plan. The 2010 Downtown Columbus Strategic Plan will only be successful if there is collaboration with elected leadership, downtown development and planning entities, and other members of the downtown community. The public and private sectors need to continue to collaborate to advance needed and numerous policy changes, make strategic investments, and enable private sector development. Aligning both the public and private support for downtown planning will be critical in instilling an ongoing collective sense of priority for the Plan.

Now is the time to build on the success of the last decade. With renewed attention on Downtown Columbus comes the opportunity to transform not only the urban core, but the City as a whole. This plan establishes a long-term framework for downtown and identifies the strategic drivers for successful growth. Strong public/private partnerships and continued attention to project implementation and policy adoption will allow the 2010 Downtown Columbus Strategic Plan to have greater longevity and effectiveness. A successful downtown will, in turn, create a more successful region that is both nationally and globally competitive.

**THE 2010 DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS STRATEGIC PLAN WILL ONLY BE SUCCESSFUL IF THERE IS COLLABORATION WITH ELECTED LEADERSHIP, DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING ENTITIES, AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY.**







Downtown Vision