



## ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

Downtown's abundant arts, entertainment, cultural and historic attractions make it a desirable place for residents, workers and visitors to spend quality time. Indeed, Greater Downtown has an extremely strong arts, entertainment, cultural and historic community. According to *Cities Ranked and Rated, 2007*, Dayton ranks No. 1 in arts and culture among mid-sized U.S. cities. Studies show the arts are the third most important factor, behind the economy and schools, considered by businesses and employees in relocation discussions. And local arts groups generate approximately \$122 million every year in economic impact for our region. Growing this downtown cornerstone — and particularly creating a network that allows all arts, entertainment, cultural and historic organizations to function as a comprehensive district — will do much to increase that impact.

### Overall Goals

Leverage and strengthen established and emerging arts, entertainment, cultural and historic assets to create a unique entertainment destination and experience to attract new audiences. Create a network that allows Greater Downtown to function as a single, comprehensive entertainment district.

### Core objectives

- Position Greater Downtown as *the* premier arts, entertainment, cultural and historic destination for the region.
- Increase the audience for downtown's arts, entertainment, cultural and historic assets, with a focus on attracting new audiences.
- Create a more walkable downtown with a unique sense of place that improves Greater Downtown's quality of life and ties together key destinations.
- Collectively work to more effectively use resources and allow Greater Downtown to better function as a comprehensive entertainment district.
- Provide the necessary resources for Greater Downtown's arts, entertainment, cultural and historic assets to be successful economic development catalysts.
- Increase the depth and breadth of public programming, particularly in public spaces.
- Promote the health, stability and growth of local arts, entertainment, cultural and historic organizations, artists and business owners.
- Encourage the development of and nurture new and emerging arts, entertainment, cultural and historic venues, businesses and events.

## Key Recommendations

### **Create a network that allows all arts, entertainment, cultural and historic organizations and other assets to function as a comprehensive district.**

Action steps include: (1) Establish concentrated, collaborative marketing and promotions; (2) establish additional cooperative programming; and (3) coordinate and centralize responsibility and accountability for overseeing implementation of projects and initiatives related to arts, entertainment, culture and history.

### **Develop an urban design strategy to create a walkable downtown that connects existing and emerging arts, entertainment, cultural and historic assets.**

Action steps include: (1) identify barriers to connectivity and prioritize the pathways to improve first, with a focus on connecting key destinations; (2) beautify priority pathways to ensure those areas are safe, clean and well-lit; (3) establish a process that will allow for, encourage and fund public art and outdoor performance and gathering spaces; (4) develop programming for those new outdoor spaces; (4) create street banners with a consistent visual design; (5) develop a wayfinding system; and (6) establish free or low-cost transportation service from key arts, entertainment, cultural and historic destinations in Greater Downtown.

### **Coordinate more effective cross-promotions and collective public relations efforts, with a focus on attracting new, diverse and targeted audiences to Greater Downtown's arts, entertainment and cultural life.**

Action steps include: (1) identify targeted audiences and determine how to best reach them; (2) create new and compelling ways for them to experience and be engaged in arts, entertainment, culture and history downtown; (3) identify key partners to work together on collaborative promotions and develop a network for them to do so; (4) position and promote downtown as the region's premiere destination for arts, entertainment, recreation, culture and history; and (5) establish ways to communicate with people while they're downtown about other entertainment opportunities.

### **Encourage more activity on streets and in other public spaces.**

Action steps include: (1) develop a busker's license for street performers; (2) establish a process that will allow for, encourage and fund the creation of new outdoor performance and gathering spaces; (3) transform Courthouse Square; (4) develop strategies to fill underutilized street space on the priority pathways; (5) develop a strategic re-use plan for formerly active but now unused/under-used entertainment venues in Greater Downtown; (6) examine the feasibility of car-free weekends; (7) identify city and state codes and regulations that might make it difficult for businesses to expand activity into the street and find solutions; and (8) create a mechanism for organizing and funding additional programming throughout Greater Downtown.

### **Encourage the development and growth of arts, entertainment, cultural and historic assets in Greater Downtown.**

Action steps include: (1) identify city and state codes and regulations that inhibit development; (2) create a virtual incubator to connect arts, entertainment, cultural and historic ventures and organizations with available resources, as well as provide online training and networking; (3) develop projects, programs and incentives that encourage and support productive use of vacant buildings; (4) continue the work that began in 2009 to determine the feasibility of an events center in Greater Downtown; (5) closely work and collaborate with the owners and developers of the Arcade complex; (6) establish financial incentives for artists and arts, entertainment and cultural ventures to locate downtown, especially along priority pathways; (7) create portable kiosks for microenterprise businesses; (8) target and aggressively recruit commercial companies with the capacity to redevelop properties for arts, entertainment, recreation, cultural and historic ventures; and (9) create affordable live/work housing and studio/microenterprise space.