



THE GREATER DOWNTOWN DAYTON PLAN

PROGRESS REPORT

MARCH 2012



Momentum continues for the Greater Downtown Dayton Plan, a long-term, strategic blueprint for creating a more vibrant, thriving center city — and, in turn, a more stable, prosperous region. The community-driven Plan builds on Greater Downtown's existing assets to enhance it as a regional economic engine and urban center attractive to investors, employees, residents, students and visitors. It's the type of active, diverse, convenient place more and more people — and the businesses and organizations that want to employ them — increasingly demand today.

Greater Downtown remains one of two major employment centers for the Dayton region. With 42,000 employees; 20,000 residents; 40,000 students; and 7 million annual visitors to its major destinations, **Greater Downtown has an annual economic impact of \$5 billion.** The region's other major employment center, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and surrounding areas, has an annual economic impact of \$5.1 billion.

A great deal of work, which is summarized in this report, was accomplished in 2011. For additional information about the Plan, visit www.downtowndayton.org/plan or www.daytonohio.gov or call **937-224-1518**.

New Investment in Downtown Designed for Job Growth

In 2011, interest from investors in downtown increased — with many projects poised to grow jobs and positively impact the downtown environment in the long and short terms.

- > **Premier Health Partners** — the second-largest employer in the region and the largest health care system in southwest Ohio — purchased the **110 N. Main St.** building for its new corporate headquarters.
- > Construction began on **GE Aviation's** new \$51 million research center on the University of Dayton's campus and in the state-established **Aerospace Hub of Innovation and Opportunity**, a job creation and live/work/play strategy.
- > A local billboard company, **Key-Ads Inc.**, purchased 50 E. Third St. for its headquarters.
- > **Sinclair Community College** continued to experience record enrollment, and in 2012 will be examining the feasibility of a \$25 million campus expansion.
- > Progress continues at **Chaminade-Julienne** on the school's master plan and campus expansion with the opening of such facilities as the Eagle Tennis Center.
- > Dayton Public Schools' new **River's Edge Montessori School** opened.
- > Construction continues at **Grandview Medical Center's** \$40 million new hospital wing, and **Children's Medical Center of Dayton's** \$5.3 million SoIn Pediatric Trauma and Emergency Center.
- > Lima-based **Heartlight Pharmacy**, a provider of products and services for diagnostic imaging centers and hospitals, opened its renovated location at the Canal North office building, 6 S. Patterson Blvd.



Key-Ads Inc.'s future downtown headquarters



Chaminade Julienne's new Eagle Tennis Center

Improvements Being Made to Downtown's Environment

Attractive, user-friendly spaces improve quality of life and likewise attract people, businesses and investment.

- > Development continued on the \$2 million **Patterson Boulevard Canal Parkway Project**, which will establish connections between the riverfront and the Oregon Arts District. Construction will begin in 2012.
- > Downtown stakeholders improved two downtown green spaces. **CareSource** and the **City of Dayton** partnered to renovate the **Private Fair Plaza**, a key downtown gateway. Volunteers from the **Neighborhood Leadership Institute** renovated what's being called the **First Friday Park**, located between St. Clair Street and Patterson Boulevard.
- > Lighting was added to the **Transportation Center Garage**, brightening a key downtown gateway and establishing a connection to the Oregon Arts District.
- > The **City of Dayton's Livable Streets policy** earned high rankings by the National Complete Streets Coalition. The policy will improve access and safety for all users of public streets.



Private Fair Plaza

Funding Strategies, Priority Projects Identified

Significant investments have been made in Greater Downtown since the spring 2010 launch of the Plan, and more projects are on the drawing board for future investment. Priorities for 2011-2013 and beyond were identified in 2011, along with funding strategies. Work on the Plan in 2012 will focus on the projects below:

- > **River Run project:** The next phase of development at RiverScape MetroPark includes the removal of a dangerous low dam and addition of new paddling features that will make downtown a regional recreation destination.
- > **Re-energizing Courthouse Square:** This effort includes upgrading the facilities in this public space in the heart of downtown and adding new programming.
- > **Transitioning key downtown buildings:** Establishing strategies to help renovate downtown buildings into more productive uses, such as housing, will add vibrancy.
- > **Connecting downtown assets through lighting:** This project includes connecting the key activity centers of Cooper Park, Dave Hall Plaza, RiverScape Metro Park and Fifth Third Field, and the Oregon Arts District.
- > **Marketing connections:** Coordinated, strategic promotions that reinforce downtown's position as the region's premier arts and entertainment district will be developed.



RiverScape River Run project



New lighting on and beneath the Transportation Center garage

Small Businesses Attracted to Downtown Location

Downtown's central location and easy access to a variety of amenities continues to make the center city a desirable address for new and growing small businesses.

- > Interest in downtown space increased in 2011, when the Downtown Dayton Partnership's **Site Seeker** program, which helps prospects find available space, conducted 72 site searches — an increase from 52 in 2010. Activity in the program has quadrupled since 2008.
- > Downtown continues to be a hotspot for **creative services businesses**. Firms that opened downtown offices in 2011 include **Jon Morton Photography, Vella Inc.** and **Showdown Visual**.
- > Members of the young professional organizations updayton and Generation Dayton launched **Activated Spaces**, an initiative to fill now-vacant storefronts with local art and/or temporary retail shops. Activated Spaces' **Pop-Up Project** facilitated the opening of three businesses during the project's pilot phase in November 2011. To date, two businesses are looking to convert their temporary leases into traditional long-term leases while two other businesses were attracted downtown thanks to the project.
- > As part of the Downtown Dayton Partnership's **Business Retention and Expansion** and **Downtown Dayton Leadership Network** visitation programs, 95 percent of businesses visited were retained.



Vella Inc.'s new downtown office

Increased Interest in Downtown Living

Increasing housing options and building downtown's neighborhood is crucial to creating a more robust center city and encouraging the development of new amenities that support these residents.

- > A successful suburban developer, Charles Simms, was attracted to the downtown market and launched the development of **Patterson Square**. It includes 18 townhomes at the northwest corner of First Street and Patterson Boulevard, 15 of which already have been sold.
- > Philadelphia-based Lindy Property Management, new to the Dayton market, purchased the **St. Clair Lofts** and has been upgrading the exterior and interior of the building, with a focus on improvements designed to spur new interest in the building's street-level retail spaces.
- > The **Lighthouse Canal Block** development continues to progress, with the construction of three new environmentally friendly units.
- > Occupancy rates in downtown housing remained high. A Gem Real Estate Group Inc. study conducted during the first half of 2011 found **occupancy rates in downtown Dayton apartments increased** to 94.67 percent in 2011, versus 92.9 percent in 2010. A 2011 analysis of 2010 census data showed a 17.2 percent **increase in the census tract that represents most of downtown and the Oregon Arts District**, the largest population gain in the City of Dayton. Two properties — First Place Luxury Apartments and The Landing — were **100 percent occupied** during much of 2011.
- > Preliminary work got underway on potential residential and mixed-use projects, including the renovation of the **Centre City Building**, the **Mendelson Building** adjacent to Fifth Third Field and **The Merc**.
- > A housing project near the University of Dayton campus redeveloped the former Frank Z auto dealership property on Brown Street into a \$30 million complex housing **400 student apartments**.
- > The City of Dayton has begun the next phase of the **Strategic Building Reuse Project**. Four targeted downtown buildings are being studied for possible redevelopment as residential or mixed-use sites.



The living room of a Patterson Square townhome



St. Clair Lofts building upgrades include modern awnings and a new sign for the property



Proposed design of the Mendelson Building

New Entertainment Options Added to Downtown's Offerings

A variety of rich entertainment options make downtown a vibrant, thriving city and strengthen its position as the region's premier arts and entertainment destination.

- > **First Friday**, downtown's free monthly art hop, expanded significantly. A new summer concert series, **First Friday @ 5**, was launched at the RiverScape MetroPark pavilion. AAA Miami Valley began offering the **AAA First Friday Passport Program**, which included a \$1,000 grand prize. Young professional organization updayton launched the **First Friday Scavenger Hunt**, and Clear Channel Radio, Heidelberg Distributing, the Oregon District Business Association and WYSO-FM joined First Friday as sponsors.
- > Lunchtime entertainment returned to Courthouse Square with the launch of **The Square Is Where ...**, which included a variety of entertainment on the Square's stage.
- > The cross-promotional campaign "Roaring Deals" was launched in conjunction with performances of Disney's **The Lion King**. Downtown businesses offered special discounts to patrons of the show.
- > Several entertainment-related businesses opened, including **Roost Modern Italian, Lucky's Taproom and Eatery, Mr. Hyman's Fine Dining, Pulse Nite Club, Press Coffee Shop, Olive, Sa-Bai Asian Cuisine, The Vault**, and **Deaf Monty's Wine**.
- > **K12 Gallery for Young People** expanded its downtown facility, nearly doubling its size and adding new classes, and mounted a series of large-scale murals on a vacant downtown building.
- > The **Dayton Dragons** continued to be a huge downtown success story. The team set a national sports record at Fifth Third Field July 9 when the team had its 815th consecutive sellout home game.



First Friday @ 5 concert



Dayton Dragons' mascots Heater and Gem celebrate the team's record-breaking season

Options Grow for Outdoor Recreation and Active Living

Today, more and more people are seeking the type of active, convenient lifestyle a compact urban environment allows, as well as amenities that not only make downtown more desirable for residents and visitors, but make it a more attractive location for businesses and organizations that want to provide their employees with active living opportunities.

- > Five Rivers MetroParks and its partners made a great deal of progress on the next phase of **RiverScape MetroPark**. As of the end of 2011, project planners were close to reaching the \$4 million fundraising goal.
- > Also at RiverScape MetroPark, **new year-round experiences and programming** were added to the park's offerings.
- > Work continues toward making Greater Downtown more **bike-friendly**. The Plan Board unanimously approved the **City of Dayton 2025 Bicycle Action Plan**, FiveRivers MetroParks actively promoted the use of its **bike hub at RiverScape MetroPark**, and the City of Dayton was awarded funding for **bike lane projects**.



Downtown continues to become more bike friendly, with the help of FiveRivers MetroParks' Bike Hub

Momentum Continues on Long-Term Projects

Work is underway on a number of projects aimed at improving the downtown environment on a variety of fronts.

- > A committee met throughout the year to examine the feasibility of a **downtown grocery store**. Best practices research was conducted, and the committee reached out to local and independent grocers to assess interest in a downtown location. That research currently is being evaluated.
- > The City of Dayton and its partners continue to examine the feasibility of building on existing assets to deploy a more robust **broadband network** and expand the use of the **geothermal well field** for more energy-efficient heating and cooling downtown buildings.
- > As part of a long-term effort to establish Greater Downtown as a green and sustainable community, the **Dayton Regional Green 3 program** was launched to promote greener government, business and personal practices.



The Dayton Regional Green 3 program recognizes local environmentally responsible businesses and organizations

Public and Private Sector Investment in the Plan

The public and private sectors have invested in numerous projects, with funds secured through a mix of federal and state funds and grants. Those projects include infrastructure and transportation improvements, the completion of major facilities, construction of new housing, development studies, and new lighting. Total investments, not including the reconstruction of I-75, are below:

- > **Projects Completed Since the Launch of Greater Downtown Plan:** \$264 million
- > **Projects Currently Underway:** \$148 million
- > **Projects Currently in Development:** \$57 million



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