

## Bridge Street Corridor Study: Background themes

Goody Clancy 8 October 2009

### Forces of growth and change

- **Dublin faces greater competition.** Dublin succeeded well when there was little competition for its groundbreaking suburban office and residential development models. Now, there is real competition from suburbs, Columbus and other regions within and beyond the US. Dublin has the opportunity to remain competitive by taking leadership in defining innovative development concepts that complement the community's traditional character -- "adding a layer" to Dublin's identity without redefining it.
- **Dublin's employers are finding it harder to attract the staff they need.** The city's employers – large and small alike – need help attracting the diverse, skilled workforce they need to the region – even in today's recession. Employers with offices in other cities tend to find recruitment more difficult here. Top-level, well-educated workers have other attractive regions to choose from, and many workers at lower wage levels are turned off by expensive housing or difficult commutes.
- **Households are seeking new and broader choices of places to live.** Next-generation households largely desire a broader set of housing choices and amenities than those that attracted people to Dublin in the past. Demographic trends that will continue for at least 15 years are fostering demand from across the age spectrum for a broader variety of housing choices – including lofts, apartments and townhouses – while demand for single family houses is abating. Golf-oriented communities appeal to a smaller proportion of households than they used to, while more people are seeking neighborhoods that have shops and parks accessible via an inviting walk or bike ride. Dublin's strong schools will remain a key amenity. Traditional neighborhoods stand to benefit from expanded housing choices: New housing that attracts young people to establish roots in Dublin will reinforce the local market for existing single-family houses in the future, and added households will also support retail and other amenities benefiting all of Dublin.
- **There is significant demand for housing in the Bridge Street Corridor.** There is projected demand for about 1,500 housing units over the next 5-7 years in the study area, according to a current study by Zimmerman/Volk Associates, a national leader in identifying emerging housing markets.
- **Dublin desires a still stronger sense of community and identity.** Design and programming can help nurture this in the Bridge Street Corridor with better formal and informal civic gathering places, defined gateways, distinct neighborhoods and districts, and better cross-river connections. These can bring people together around shared activities and landmark places.
- **Development concepts need to respond to market opportunity.** Current trends suggest that Dublin will have less discretionary money to spend than in the past. Thus, it is more important than ever that development provide a strong return on public investment. Public/private finance tools like Tax-Increment Financing (TIF) have worked well in Dublin and should continue to be used strategically to shape market-based development in ways that provide important community benefits.

## Opportunities and challenges

- **Market-based housing demand can shape desirable, high quality, walkable settings** for living, working, shopping and recreation along the Bridge Street Corridor. *Challenge: Building new housing to create neighborhoods, not just developments, that welcome a variety of people and housing options, and weave neatly into existing neighborhoods, greenways and street networks.*
- **New development can reinforce Historic Dublin as a community center and thriving business district** by expanding demand for services in the district, creating a central civic space, and making it easier to navigate by car, foot, transit or bike. *Challenges: Finding the right mix of housing, retail, office and civic uses that complements the district's assets, keeps it active weekdays, evenings and weekends alike, and stimulates long-term economic value. Mitigating the divide created by Bridge Street traffic, uniting the two halves of the district with sidewalks and parking that is convenient, inviting and safe.*
- **Transportation choices can improve** in the corridor as new pedestrian-oriented buildings and streets favor walking over driving for short trips, new recreation paths and bike lanes expand the city's biking network, and compact development creates concentrations of workers, residents and shops that could support expanded transit service in the future. *Challenge: Accommodating peak traffic flows along Bridge Street and at its major intersections, while also making the street a better setting for new development, walking, biking and transit.*
- **Dublin's greenway and open space network can grow** as a framework for recreation, resource protection and new development. Improved paths and lookouts can add new opportunities to experience the beautiful settings of Scioto River and Indian Run Creek. Existing greenway and recreational path corridors can extend to and through Historic Dublin and cross east of the Scioto to anchor attractive new neighborhoods. *Challenges: Improving access across the river, securing continuous corridors, and minimizing impacts on sensitive natural areas.*
- **The Dublin community can grow stronger and more sustainable** as neighborhoods are connected across the Scioto and across Bridge Street by more walkable, beautiful streets and greenways, a variety of residents come together regularly around shared activities and favorite places, and new jobs and investment reinforce the City's economic future. *Challenge: Managing the complexities of growth and change to create community benefits, through effective public engagement and public- and private-sector leadership.*

## Why focus on the Bridge Street Corridor?

The Bridge Street corridor study area offers significant opportunity for long-term infill development and redevelopment that can benefit Dublin in a variety of ways as it addresses the issues above

- It centers on **Historic Dublin**, which remains Dublin's perceived center of community as it has been for 200 years, and serves an important and growing role as a unique retail and restaurant district, residential neighborhood, and home of Dublin's well-used library.
- The corridor contains **significant redevelopment opportunity** due to the presence of several large parcels of land under single ownership, and several property owners seeking higher-value uses for their land. There is interest by landowners as well as the larger community in creating higher quality development on many retail sites in particular.
- Steering redevelopment to the study area would **avoid negative impacts on Dublin's traditional neighborhoods**, which are generally inappropriate places for higher-density development. Those neighborhood areas in the study area (primarily in Historic Dublin), as well as adjacent neighborhoods, deserve special protection from adverse impacts.
- Corridor redevelopment holds the important potential to **improve linkages** between areas of Dublin, especially the east and west sides of the Scioto River.
- The corridor has **good transportation infrastructure** and access. Although traffic levels in the corridor clearly pose challenges now and in the future, they also represent significant opportunity to attract high-quality development and improve walking, biking and transit options.