

Executive Summary

Across Dublin there are hundreds of business people, property owners, developers, government officials, concerned residents, consultants and other specialists who are striving to improve the economic viability of Historic Dublin. One of the great challenges for Historic Dublin's future success is preserving the District's very essence and character while creating a successful business climate. Long-term success for Historic Dublin will clearly depend upon the ability to recognize the unique opportunities and attributes of the District and set a clear course of direction that is consistently followed.

Continued forward progress is vital at this point in time. Historic Dublin issues have been pondered and analyzed time and again for the last 15 years. As with all downtown areas, there will always be mixed opinions on every issue; and different groups tasked with creating recommendations for revitalization have existed that could never achieve a clear consensus and outcry of support.

The purpose of the Historic Dublin Working Group's research, report and recommendations was not to duplicate the efforts of past task forces formed to merely list issues in Historic Dublin, but to review the Historic District in its current environment and create an exciting and driving vision that will set a clear course for future decision-making. Without the framework of a bigger vision, past recommendations have made little difference in creating significant change. The

recommendations should be utilized as a tool within the context of the larger goal, guiding the short-term and long-term planning direction within the District.

The Historic Dublin Working Group was charged with the purpose of creating a professional and well-contemplated master plan and vision for Historic Dublin. As public servants from a wide range of backgrounds, the recommendations within this report have been considered from multiple viewpoints and have the opportunity to provide positive, long-term direction and winning results. The time has come for a unified vision.

The group studied and toured other communities' historic districts and downtowns to understand what works and what doesn't as it relates to successful revitalization. Group members toured Olde Worthington, Gahanna's Creekside redevelopment and downtown Grove City. In particular, it was noted that other areas had basic key ingredients that are missing in Historic Dublin:

1. Good access to water features;
2. Clear orientation and focus on pedestrians;
3. Broad mixes of uses;
4. Inviting, open, and colorful pedestrian ways and facades;
5. Well-defined civic and public spaces; and
6. Quality, coordinated streetscape designs.

While other downtown districts may have many elements not found in Dublin, the Historic District has many notable building blocks that

can create the foundation of a successful community center. In particular, Historic Dublin has a significant base of historic integrity that can be found in a broad range of residential, commercial and civic structures. The District also has a significant potential for access to water. However, little effort has been made and broad community understanding of those features is not present. Broad architectural quality and streetscape character are also important elements that are better recognized and should be a future focus. Within this natural, cultural, and architectural framework, there exists huge potential for positive redevelopment and new growth potential that, if harnessed properly, can create unbelievable possibilities for Historic Dublin's future.

This report consists of many identified issues and recommendations on a wide range of topics that are aimed at capitalizing on strengths, as well as improving on the weaknesses that are apparent. The following are key findings that must be considered for the future success of the District:

- General traffic, access, and circulation problems must be addressed to provide a safe environment not only for motorists, but more importantly for pedestrians;
- Parking solutions will only be addressed by looking at the larger vision. Depending upon piecemeal solutions will not resolve ongoing concerns;
- Streetscapes throughout the District lack proper pedestrian orientation and must be resolved to make a truly successful walkable environment;

- Proper establishment of architecture is key to creating a comfortable pedestrian environment and streetscape;
- Evaluating and obtaining a proper mix of businesses and specific focus or market niche is important to creating destination to attract visitors; and
- Multiple methods to address traffic movement and speed must be employed to maintain an environment that will provide the opportunity for success.

While modifications to the physical environment can be made to the District to facilitate success, other key intangibles should be given equal consideration:

- In a downtown with many divergent interests, a clear consensus is an unlikely objective. A course of action that will provide long-term success for the district, as a whole, should be the clear goal
- The City should be a proactive player within Historic Dublin and drive development or growth forward toward a single, well-defined vision; and
- While the City can play a significant role, the private sector must also improve efforts to work toward common goals and create partnerships.

Within the framework of these findings, the Historic Dublin Revitalization Plan includes a planning vision that proposes significant change for a historically unchanged place. Significant growth, redevelopment, and integration of the natural and historic environment are all part of a

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larger, better and more vibrant Historic Dublin. The Historic Dublin Working Group hopes that all who have a vested interest in sustaining the future of Historic Dublin will participate in the public process and join in the revitalization effort. With big visions and common goals, Dublin's historic downtown can truly become a vibrant and active destination place.

