A HANDBOOK
to understanding the Placemaking Initiative
for Piqua, Ohio

June 15 2016
The aim of this project is to redesign downtown public spaces to celebrate and enhance the spatial relationships between destinations; to create public spaces that offer an inviting public realm that contributes positively to the surrounding built environment and promotes high quality of place and quality of life experiences.
Concept sketch for connecting Lock Nine Park to the river

The Great Miami River and River Trail
INTRODUCTION

This Placemaking Initiative represents an implementation component of the Riverfront District Development Strategy (CityVisions Associates, 2013) and the Historic East Piqua Plan (MKSK, June 2015). The infrastructure and public space improvements directly relate to the goals of the community. The project advances a series of urban design interventions that catalyze private investment and should not be viewed merely as an open space beautification plan.

The design of the spaces within the public realm downtown – the former Miami and Erie canal corridor, recreational trail area, Lock Nine Park and mid-block connections - support the economic vitality of the city and fit within an overall development strategy that keeps existing businesses, attracts new activity and forges a stronger sense of place.

The initiative focuses on connectivity and seamless transitions between destinations. The connection to the river needs to be enhanced in order to connect downtown to the local and regional trail system and provide non-trail users attractive new gathering points to view the river and the activities on it. The redesign effort re-establishes the link between downtown and the river by overcoming the physical characteristics of Lock Nine Park so that it may serve as the central, celebratory space that fully integrates the Great Miami River and its trail system with the downtown business district. Modifications to the levee wall in the form of widening and terracing are required to accomplish this while still maintaining the line of protection for flood control.

The connection between the downtown riverfront and Historic East Piqua is enhanced through the trail system, a street extension and riverway improvements. The canal corridor increases activity between Spring and
Ash Streets and the riverfront, recalling the vitality that once sliced through the city along the Miami and Erie Canal. This historical connection to the heritage of the city has been lost and the improvements reconnect the city to the canal by celebrating the interface. The project allows for immersive experiences and provides hands-on connections to the past.

The project’s signature open space is Lock Nine Park. It is the trailhead to the local system and the 300 mile regional trail network. It offers exquisite views upstream and downstream, provides for adjacent commercial activity right atop the levee (a condition rare along the entire length of the Great Miami River) and incorporates historical artifacts of the actual (mostly buried) lock infrastructure. Through comprehensive design and infrastructure improvements such as lighting, water, landscaping treatments and public art, the pedestrian experience through downtown is amplified and celebrates Piqua’s unique role as a recreational riverfront destination.

**FIVE FOCUS AREAS**

1. Lock Nine Park
2. Railroad Bridge
3. Mid-Block Connections
4. Canal Corridor
5. Mo’s Lounge
Map of downtown Piqua, Ohio and five focus areas under study in this initiative
The revitalized Lock Nine Park includes terraced seating, a performance pavilion, spray park, and open lawn. Two tree groves anchor the open space which is designed to allow for a high degree of flexibility. When large scale events are planned for the performance area, controlled access points and greeter tents line the perimeter of the open space. Underground infrastructure enables lighting, sound systems and hook-ups for food vendors. A children’s play area with water jets continues the former Miami and Erie Canal alignment north towards the Artisan Alley. Food, beverage and entertainment areas occupy spaces in the ground floors of the adjacent historic buildings that spill out onto outdoor terraces. While the existing levee wall is a barrier to a riverfront connection, with modifications it can be transformed into an asset with places to sit and view the Great Miami River.
DESIGN COMPONENTS LOCK NINE PARK

Open lawn

- Large gathering space for events
- Seasonal ice-skating in cold weather months
- Performance pavilion with stage and integral lighting and sound capabilities

Terraced seating

- Planted / landscaped steps leading from the stage to the lower bike trail
- Reconfigured levee wall and regional flood protection armoring

Water feature

- Terraced fountain along historic Miami and Erie Canal alignment
- Kids spray jets and artistic lighting
- Reuse of limestone from existing lock
- Interpretative signage and educational components

Picnic areas

- Tree groves that define the Lawn with outdoor seating
- Terraces for entertainment and commercial activities

Additional amenities

- Ornate rail/low wall along Water Street
- Pedestrian scaled lighting
- Electrical hook-ups for special event vendors
Arial view of rehabilitated Lock Nine Park and major activity zones.

- Planted / landscaped steps
- Terraced fountain along historic canal alignment
- Reuse of limestone from existing lock
- Pedestrian scaled lighting
LOCK 9 PARK

- Large gathering space for performances
- Tree groves
- Ornate rail / low wall along Water Street
- Outdoor seating under shade
- Kids spray jets and artistic lighting
- Terraced seating for river overlook
- Performance pavilion with roof-mounted solar panels
- Terraced seating for river overlook
Park uses anticipating large-scale events

Enlargement area of Lock Nine Park during a live concert performance
Cross section of Lock Nine Park

Winter view of rehabilitated Piqua Granite and Piqua Mill buildings
02 LINEAR PARK BRIDGE
Ohio’s Miami Valley benefits from a remarkable network of trails and bikeways and Ohio boasts over 800 river miles on 14 watercourses throughout the state. These placemaking enhancements make it easier for people walking, biking or running to negotiate the change in elevation between the downtown and the riverfront through a series of new trails, terraces, ramps and steps. Terraced steps connect the top of the levee to the lower bike path along the river and provides opportunities to enjoy the natural habitat and aquatic life. A new ramp terminates the repurposed railroad-era bridge and makes the path accessible for individuals of all abilities. New bike infrastructure and recreational amenities along the trail network grow and enhance the connectedness of the river and trails with the community and the downtown core.

View towards the linear park bridge and bike trail
LINEAR PARK BRIDGE

Design components

- Removal of bridge wood decking and substructure
- Removal of existing railing
- New metal subdecking and poured-in-place concrete deck
- Glass block band along center span between existing trusses
- New steel and metal handrail with mesh infill panels
- Accent lighting and artistic lighting treatments
- Signage and wayfinding
- New handicapped-accessible ramp at terminus of bridge
- Maintenance and repairs of concrete abutments
- Vertical light tower as visual marker for trail and bridge
Current condition of Linear Park Bridge

Conceptual design of Linear Park Bridge

- Handrail with integral LED accent lighting
- Metal mesh infill panels
- Steel C-channel with continuous LED accent downlight
- Poured concrete deck
- Glass block band
- Metal decking
- Cross bracing
- Existing steel trusses
- LED uplight
New metal decking
and poured-in-place concrete deck

Vertical light-tower as visual marker for trail and bridge

New steel and metal handrail with mesh infill panels

Glass block band along center span

Accent lighting and artistic lighting treatments

New accessible ramp

Arial view of accessibility ramp at terminus of linear park bridge
03 MID-BLOCK CONNECTIONS
Through-block connections foster pedestrian activity between downtown destinations. They augment travel along Piqua’s sidewalks rather than taking activity away by providing an alternate route to travel between destinations. **The canal corridor, once the center of economic life in the city, is poised to be transformed again in the form of a shared street that allows pedestrians, cyclists and cars to share space.** A variety of paving surfaces form a consistent pattern upon which pedestrian-scaled lighting and consistent signage forge a new identity for the pathways. Historic buildings, such as the Piqua Edison Electric Illuminating Company is already experiencing a rebirth. Paved surfaces are complimented with raingardens and bioswales that filter water collected off of nearby rooftops.

*p* View south towards rehabilitated Edison Building and proposed market place.
MID-BLOCK CONNECTIONS

Design components

- Integration of bioswales and stormwater retention areas
- New tree planting in selected areas
- Planting beds with native grasses and landscaping
- Buffer zones to surface parking
- Signage and wayfinding
- Consistent paving patterns
- Pedestrian-scaled lighting
- Light bollards
- Paved crosswalks across street right-of-ways
Proposed paving pattern

![Proposed paving pattern images]
MID-BLOCK CONNECTIONS

- Paved crosswalks across street right-of-ways
- New tree planting in selected areas
- Integration of bioswales and stormwater retention areas
- Planting beds with native grasses and landscaping
- Consistent paving patterns

Arial view of enhanced mid-block connection
Communities across the country are eager to showcase and celebrate aspects of their authenticity and uniqueness. The former Miami and Erie Canal alignment that contributed to the growth and prosperity of the community will be transformed into an inviting public space that integrates with adjoining buildings along the corridor. What were once the rear of buildings will be re-oriented to become funky front doors for artisanal studios, indoor shops and organic food markets. The canal corridor will be a shared street that allows access for service vehicles but includes a bike path to forge a stronger connection between the downtown businesses and the Great Miami River Trail. Consistent signage and wayfinding assists in repositioning the modestly-scaled buildings into active new uses.
CANAL CORRIDOR

Design components

- Relocation of existing utilities and overhead power lines
- Integration of bioswales and stormwater retention areas
- New tree planting in selected areas
- Planting beds with native grasses and landscaping
- Accent lighting and artistic lighting treatments
- Signage and wayfinding
- Consistent paving patterns
- Pedestrian-scaled lighting
- Light bollards
- Paved crosswalks across street right-of-ways
- Pervious pavements
Relocation of existing overhead utilities

Cross section former Miami and Erie canal corridor

- Bioswales and stormwater retention areas
- Pedestrian scaled lighting
- Signage and wayfinding
- Rooftop amenity
- Light bollards
New tree planting in selected areas

Integration of bioswales and stormwater retention areas

Pervious pavements

Planting beds with native grasses and landscaping

Consistent paving patterns

Light bollards

Rooftop amenity

Arial view of canal corridor
The Piqua Place-Making initiative supports, complements and enhances the overall Downtown and Riverfront District Development Strategy. The strategy prioritized the redesign and redevelopment of Lock Nine Park and identified a number of catalytic development projects downtown and along the river that would be ideal candidates for renewal. **Piqua is one of a very few locations with existing buildings on the levee itself, providing services, amenities, and magnificent river views directly on the trail system.** One such building is the former Mo’s restaurant. The front of the building faces Main Street and the rear of the building faces the trail. It is vitally important that the design for this building be fully integrated with the public spaces that surround it. Outdoor seating areas enliven the area on the Main Street Level. Lower level amenities like a bike repair shop or canoe put-in serve the trail.

*View of rehabilitated Mo’s building on Main Street and enhanced access to the river*
MO'S LOUNGE

Design components

- Demolition of rear/east addition
- Removal of tree overgrowth and underbrush
- Redesign of interior spaces for restaurant and dining
- Exterior terraces, decks and river overlook
- Main Street façade improvements
- Lower-level trail amenities
- Expanded trail path
- Signage and wayfinding
- Stairway connection between Main Street and Trail
View of former Mo’s lounge on Main Street

Install new blade signage  Install bike lane  Establish new riverfront access
Demolish structure  Increase transparency  Rehabilitate building  Add street trees
Remove underbrush
Stairway connection between Main Street and Trail

Redesign of interior spaces for restaurant and dining

Expanded trail path

Exterior terraces, decks and river overlook

Removal of tree overgrowth and underbrush

Lower-level trail amenities

Arial view of rehabilitated Mo’s building and enhanced access to the river
NEXT STEPS FOR PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

1. Initiate Construction Documents for Riverfront Park / Lock Nine Park

2. Initiate Design Work for the former Miami and Erie Canal Corridor – Downtown Ped / Bike Connector
   - Phase I: Water to High (including Farmers Market Public Parking Lot at Main and Water and High Street streetscape from Main to Spring including treatments at Main and High and the public square area)
   - Phase II: High to Greene

3. Riverwalk and Watercraft Access (including all of the existing and proposed park space from Bike Bridge south to East Main Street Bridge, and GMR to Main Street – including areas between Piqua Milling and Mo’s and area between Mo’s and E. Main Street bridge)

4. ADA Ramp and Bridge Improvements

5. Zollinger Commons (including midblock pedestrian way north to Fort Piqua Plaza)
The Piqua Placemaking Initiative forges stronger connections between downtown and the Great Miami River

Please refer to side sleeve for project pocket guide