



City of Dublin

Office of the City Manager

5200 Emerald Parkway • Dublin, OH 43017-1090
Phone: 614-410-4400 • Fax: 614-410-4490

Memo

To: Members of Dublin City Council

From: Marsha I. Grigsby, City Manager 

Date: October 10, 2013

Initiated By: Sara G. Ott, Sr. Project Manager

Re: 270/33 Interchange Aesthetics Update

Background

While commencing the aesthetic design component of the 270/33 interchange, discussion ensued with multiple stakeholders about what success will look like in the aesthetic treatments. Six words consistently arose in these discussions – implementable, welcoming, sustainable, authentic, timeless, and signature. Using these measures, progress has continued on the aesthetic designs and two major milestones have occurred.

First, CT Consultants/EDGE Group has presented conceptual design work for the landscape components of the project. The selected landscape design being pursued will result in a series of grids, each outlined by a horizontal hardscape, within each grid being various grasses that provide a contrast of color and texture. Looking into the landmass, the viewer might be reminded of agriculture fields seen from high overhead. The plant material would be specifically chosen not only to provide the desired visual effects but also take into account maintenance and to the degree possible, anticipated poor soils. Selective areas will contain trees, shrubs and seasonal color but given the magnitude of the land masses involved, these areas will be carefully chosen to provide maximum visual impact but minimizing operating costs. The grid type of design will also allow for flexibility in the design of the art component that is being developed for the walls, parapets and other aspects of the transportation infrastructure of the project. As the design develops, irrigation needs, including utilizing storm water for that purpose, architectural accents within the interior spaces and further refinements of the sustainability aspects of design will be detailed. More details can be found in attached exhibit A.

Second, 79 residents and stakeholders gathered to participate in focus groups with Steven Weitzman, CEO and President of Creative Design Resolutions, "CDR", to help inform CDR on community identity and attributes that could be translated into imagery on infrastructure for the project. A summary of the focus groups is attached for your review as exhibit B. Individuals can also respond to questions from Mr. Weitzman online at www.27033interchange/signaturegateway through Oct. 14. Over 30 residents have taken advantage of the online inquiry option.

Next Steps

Ultimately, the Ohio Department of Transportation ("ODOT") has the final decision making authority to permit or deny the inclusion of specific imagery and landscape elements within the interchange. ODOT has been very supportive of allowing Dublin to enhance the aesthetics beyond the minimum ODOT design standards and has actively engaged with Dublin in advancing the aesthetics package.

CDR is currently preparing three conceptual designs and constructing a three-dimensional computer model of the interchange that includes the proposed designs. Due to the compressed time schedule for overall design of the interchange, one conceptual design needs to be selected to advance to intermediate design no later than November 22.

To meet the selection deadline, City staff and the DAC staff recommend the use of a selection committee. This committee, composed of a cross section of the community, would be charged with distilling the community's input and responses to CDR's three concepts and selecting one concept as the preferred design and a second concept as the alternative design. It is recommended that the committee include 5-7 appointees, including representatives of residents, corporate residents, Dublin City Council, Dublin Arts Council board and an arts professional. Specific responsibilities and details are attached in exhibit C.

The following schedule had been established for finalizing the conceptual design work:

Sept. 30 – Nov. 8	CDR develops computer-aided modeling and 3 design concepts
Oct. 14	Project update at City Council
Oct. 28	Aesthetic Design Selection Committee Appointed by City Council
Nov. 8	Technical Review of CDR design concepts by ODOT, CH2M HILL and Dublin staff commences
Nov. 13	Community Presentation of design concepts in Abbey Theater, 7-8 pm; first meeting of Aesthetics Design Selection Committee; online information and response opportunity launched
Nov. 18	City staff provide summary of design concepts at City Council meeting for City Council response and input for Aesthetic Design Selection Committee
Nov. 19 or 20	Aesthetic Design Selection Committee makes final recommendation to ODOT, via City staff
Nov. 21	Technical Review completed
Nov. 22	Selected Concept communicated to CDR

Recommendation

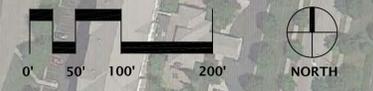
City Council feedback is requested on the creation and role of an Aesthetic Design Selection Committee. If Council is supportive of this approach, a recommendation of citizens to serve will be brought back for consideration at the October 28 Council meeting.

LEGEND

- A. Tilted plane (slope) with limestone
- B. Flat infield of gridded crushed stone & alternating fields of manicured lawn, no-mow fescue & meadow
- C. Plant bed shelf of low plantings & tree massing



Exhibit A



Implementable

Welcoming

Sustainable

Authentic

Timeless

Signature

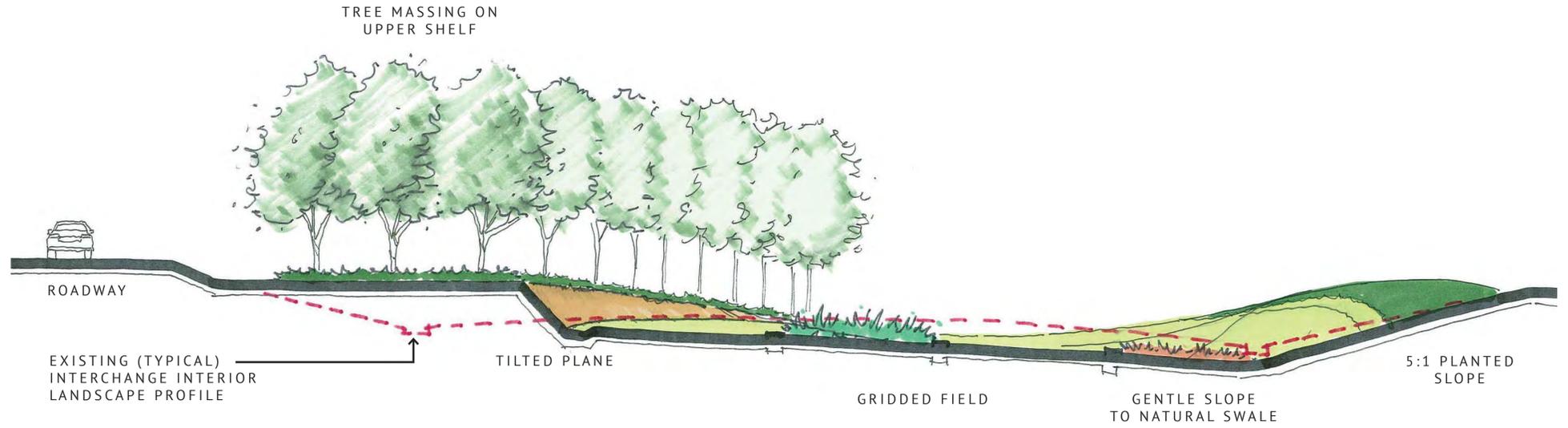
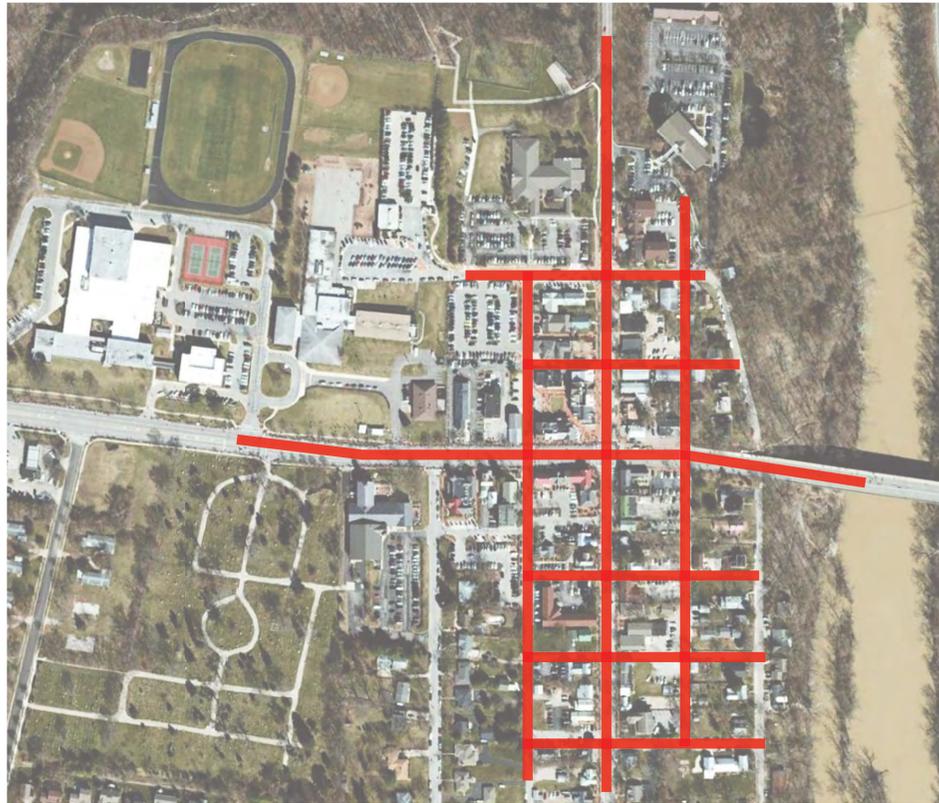


270/33 INTERCHANGE LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT CONCEPTS

Dublin, Ohio

September 16, 2013





Implementable

Welcoming

Sustainable

Authentic

Timeless

Signature

270/33 INTERCHANGE LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT CONCEPTS
 Dublin, Ohio
 September 16, 2013



This concept utilizes similar elements and materials with abstract forms and clean lines of **'Modern Dublin'**. Essentially, the concept takes advantage of the multiple slopes and broad views created by the interchange ramps with tilted planes of hardscape which create an opportunity for a contained plant bed of trees and potential understory plants as well. Along the four flatter portions of the interchange infield areas a grid of hardscaped lines give organization to the various 'fields' containing different plant monocultures and/or levels of maintenance. The grid pays tribute to the settlement of the area and the fields of course honor the rural history of Dublin.

Plant Beds on the Slopes:

Tilted Planes: As a part of any major interchange, several shallow slopes are produced with the stacking of lanes for uninterrupted travels. The tilted planes are envisioned to be faced with limestone, respecting the Avery Rd. Interchange and the limestone that is used throughout Dublin. The tilted planes would be at a steeper slope (2:1) than the engineered slopes and would taper along their face from approximately 2' in height to upwards of 15' or 20' making broad gestures for travelers passing by at speeds of 50 to 70 mph. The stone treatment minimizes the maintenance requirements of these steepened slopes and alternative treatments can be explored as the design develops.

Plant Beds: The tilted planes will create a flat shelf (perpendicular to the engineered slopes) that gradually arises vertically across the engineered slope. These plant beds provide opportunities for larger tree masses or groves that are visible from a distance yet they have been placed adjacent to other portions of the roads which would allow for smaller plantings to be seen as one travels through the interchange.

Flat Infield Areas:

Grids: The grids are envisioned to be similar to a crush stone drive and roughly 8' wide. These grids act as both a design element and to assist with maintenance and access. The grid will contain the various 'fields' providing a clean edge for areas that have weekly mowing for manicured turf as well as a clean line for fields with various maintenance schedules. The maintenance of the grids themselves will be minimal and alternative construction methods can be explored through design development.

Fields: Currently, the fields are envisioned to be an even mixture of manicured and no-mow fescue to provide a contrast to one another while honoring the manicured and links-style open spaces throughout Dublin. We also envision a few panels to be monoculture of a different plant species (to be determined) but feel that introducing more than these three might lose the desired effect. These fields could also be incorporated into bio-retention/rain gardens that water could be channeled toward them and then detained in the various cells or fields.

Other Considerations:



270/33 FOCUS GROUPS



Route 216, Baltimore, Maryland.

SUMMARY

On Monday, September 30th, 2013, the City of Dublin, in partnership with the Dublin Arts Council, held two community focus groups to inform the aesthetics of the upcoming I-270/U.S. 33 Northwest Interchange Improvement Project.



270/33 FOCUS GROUPS

SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

On Monday, September 30th, 2013, The City of Dublin held two community focus groups to inform the aesthetics of the upcoming I-270/U.S. 33 Northwest Interchange Improvement Project.

The goal of the focus groups was for Steven Weitzman, President and CEO of Creative Design Resolutions, Inc. (CDR) to cull input from residents and stakeholders about the ideas and imagery that comprise Dublin's identity. Weitzman and CDR have been hired to work with landscape architects in developing an aesthetic master plan for the interchange.

The first meeting had 49 attendees, while the second had 30. Of the 79 total attendees, 55 completed demographic response cards. Of this group, 89% reported being over the age of 45. Just two reported being under 35, and of those, one reported being under 25. The largest age group represented was ages 55-64, comprising over 30% of respondents. Mr. Weitzman would later note that most attendees were Caucasian. 31 respondents were female, and 24 were male.

When asked the question, "How long have you lived/worked in Dublin?" attendees responded with a wide range of answers. The shortest amount

of time reported was one year and the longest, 90 years. The median number of years attendees reported having lived or worked in Dublin was 14, and the average was 19.

The meetings each began with Sara Ott, Senior Project Manager with the City of Dublin, providing background information on the interchange expansion project, which will take shape in two phases over the next ten years.

Next, David Guion, Executive Director of the Dublin Arts Council, made a few remarks emphasizing the importance of public art.

Mr. Weitzman then gave a 20 to 30-minute presentation to each focus group. The presentation introduced Mr. Weitzman professionally, while providing visual examples of similar projects he has worked on throughout the country, including the Big Rock Interchange in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Weitzman explained his community engagement process for these projects, and introduced some relevant technical terminology: *MSE wall, parapet, form liner, pier,*

modularity.

Weitzman then addressed the group: "What is Dublin to you? . . . Give me two or three words about who, or what, is Dublin."

DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Total Attendees: 79

Total Survey Respondents: 55

- Men: 24
- Women: 31

Respondents age 45 & up: 49

Highest age reported: 90+

Lowest age reported: Under 24

"Do you live or work in Dublin?"

- Live: 28
- Work: 8
- Both: 17
- Neither: 2

"How long have you lived/worked in Dublin?"

- Longest time reported: 90 years
- Shortest time reported: 1 year
- Average: 19 years
- Median: 14 years

SESSION I

The tone of each meeting was unique. During the first meeting, attendees engaged in a discussion that focused on points of identity and iconic imagery.

A number of different ideas were presented. While several residents took pride in Dublin's "Irish" identity, others voiced concerns that the label was not a genuine representation of the city. One attendee said he worried the image was more of a marketing ploy than an accurate portrayal of Dublin's history and culture. Several others echoed his concerns, noting that historically, Dublin's largest immigrant group has been German, not Irish.

Mr. Weitzman took an informal survey: "How many would feel comfortable with Irish being part of the theme?" Roughly a quarter of attendees raised their hands.

A concept nearly as contentious as the Irish theme was that of Dublin as a "Golf City." Some residents cited Jack Nicklaus and The Memorial Tournament as reasons golf should be considered in the theme, while others were less convinced of its centrality in Dublin's identity.

Other ideas that seemed to garner wide support were the themes of nature, wildlife, the Scioto River, bike trails, community planning and green space. When asked if they supported the idea of flora and fauna as part of the aesthetics, roughly three fourths of attendees raised their hands.

An idea on which there was wide agreement was that of Dublin being an active and engaged community, characterized by generosity and

volunteerism. Family-friendliness was another point of pride for many.

One idea that was mentioned briefly, but was met with relative enthusiasm, was the idea of Dublin as a symbolic and literal crossroads. Progress, fluidity, and the future were also brief but popular topics of discussion.

One resident mentioned decorative lighting as an option for aesthetic design. Weitzman explained that due to the fast-tracked nature of the project, lighting would not be an option for Phase I. He noted, however, that it was not off the table for Phase II.

SESSION II

The second meeting—which was held in the evening and had fewer attendees—saw a discussion that addressed Mr. Weitzman's prompts, in addition to posing some questions. For example, a couple attendees wanted to know the exact price of the project, a number that was not readily available.

Another citizen asked to know where the funding for the project was coming from. At this point, Sara Ott stepped in and explained to the group that the project has two funding sources—the hotel/motel tax and tax increment financing.

Residents had logistical questions about the landscape and hardscape as well. If there were going to be ten MSE walls, where would they be?

Who would take care of the landscaping? If an existing bridge was expanded, how would the "new" and "old" sides be reconciled? What did "modularity" have to do with aesthetics?

After addressing each of these concerns briefly, Mr. Weitzman turned the focus back to



The Big Rock Interchange in Little Rock, Arkansas is an example of Creative Design Resolutions' previous work.

aesthetics.

A variety of ideas were offered up in the second round. Dublin's meticulous community planning was mentioned more than once as a point of pride for residents. Natural beauty and green space, again, were popular ideas.

Once again, Weitzman asked the group what they thought of "Irish" as an important theme. This time, roughly a third of attendees raised their hands.

Weitzman then asked if the group thought agriculture was important as a theme. Again, about a third raised their hands.

As with the first session, there were a few dominant, recurring themes, including: family, children, schools, bike trails and green space. One idea that was popular in the second session was the idea that Dublin is welcoming, and "a great place to live and work." More than one resident expressed a desire for this "welcoming" attribute to be included somehow in the theme.

Decorative lighting was again brought up as a possible enhancement to the interchange.

CONCLUSION

The focus groups saw a number of ideas, and a range of different perspectives. While some saw golf and "Irish-ness" as points of identity to be reinforced, others were hesitant to embrace them as aesthetic themes.

Two concepts that were largely popular in both groups were nature and wildlife. Related to these were green space, community planning and bike trails. Family, community, volunteerism and overall quality of life were all fairly popular as points of pride in Dublin.

WHAT IS DUBLIN TO YOU?

"We are stewards. Of knowledge, of people . . . we're volunteers, bike ambassadors. We're a very hands-on community, very involved with each other. We help each other in times of need."

"Dublin has the largest population of Japanese nationals in Ohio. There is a very high amount of Japanese investment in this community. I'd like to see a nod to that."

"Our ability to change. We're a little over 200 years old. For 150 years, we were a German community. Now we're Irish."

"Beautiful flowers. Trees, birds, animals . . . we're very nature-related. Maybe that's better than Irish or German."

"Daily, I see families. Moms and dads playing with their kids. Kids playing soccer."

"Very family friendly."

"Hérons, along the waterway. So many of them. Eagles, deer, foxes . . . there's rich wildlife in this community."

"75,000 people work here. We're a huge business community."

Exhibit C

I-270/U.S. 33 Northwest Interchange Aesthetic Design Selection Committee

Goals

1. Analyze and critically assess Creative Design Resolution's (CDR) preliminary designs and concepts.
2. Choose a design concept that best expresses your understanding of community identity as based on community discussions and online feedback.
3. Choose alternate concept.

Outcomes

1. Community input is assessed and overall community preference of conceptual designs is prioritized.
2. City staff is provided guidance about preferred elements of conceptual design.
3. The concept that proves most successful is chosen and recommended to ODOT for final approval.
4. Secondary concept recommendation is also identified.

Selection Committee Tasks

Each committee member will

- Uniquely represent the community
- Be a steward of public funds
- Attend and actively participate in, two (2) meetings.
 - Nov. 13, 6-8:30 pm: Selection Committee Orientation and Presentation of concepts by Steven Weitzman, CDR
 - Nov. 19 or 20: Meeting to discuss, choose final concept
- Commit time between meetings to review materials

Selection Committee Composition

Voting Members

- Corporate/Business representative
- At-large resident representative(s)
- Dublin Arts Council board member
- Public official
- Arts professional

Ex-Officio/non-voting

- David S. Guion, Executive Director Dublin Arts Council
- Sara Ott, Senior Project Manager, City of Dublin